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# BetFan

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## TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

[The Inside Edge](#)

Newbury 15.00 - Invincible Army (Each-Way) @ 6/1

[Neo Investments](#)

Ripon 15.30 - Mikmak (Win) @ 13/8

[Sean Haren Racing](#)

Lingfield 17.45 - Ashazuri (Win) @ 15/8

## **Backing Favourites?** - By The Champagne Kid

Members of my service will be aware that I do not tip too many favourites. There is a good reason for this. Blindly backing favourites will lead to losses. 100% guaranteed. One good measure for this is that, in general, you will not find much difference between bookmaker SP and Betfair SP on race favourites.

It is widely acknowledged, and I subscribe to the view, that the Betfair market at the off time is the most accurate representation that you will find of the actual chances of each horse in a race. This is because with most race markets being bet to about 101% after a lengthy period of time for market fluctuations to settle to final SP's, the 'wisdom of the market' does indeed predict each horse's actual chance reasonably accurately.

So, what can we learn from comparing bookmaker SP to Betfair SP? Well, the most obvious observation is that at the front end of the market, there is generally little divergence between the two different SP's. A horse going off at a bookmaker SP of 3/1 (4.0 as a decimal price) will probably be returned at a similar Betfair SP; perhaps 4.1 or 4.2, but quite often at a lower price. That is not good news for favourite backers on the exchanges, as there is also the commission factor to take into account. Given the bookmaker over-round in every race which guarantees the bookies long-term profits, a higher premium is required at Betfair SP on favourites to make favourite-backing on the exchange a viable long-term strategy.

At the other end of the market, you will see striking variances between bookmaker and exchange SP's. This variance helps to reduce the effect of what is known as the Favourite-Longshot Bias which has been much written about over the years. This bias states that you will lose much less backing horses at the front end of the market than you will lose backing outsiders. The chance of a favourite at bookmaker odds is much closer to its actual chance than it is at the other end of the market.

For example, the actual chance of a horse at SP 3/1 may generally be about 7/2 to 4/1. But the actual chance of a horse returned at a bookmaker SP of 33/1 is probably more like 66/1, 80/1 or 100/1. Or higher! Going back to the theory of the Betfair SP being a reasonably accurate representation of a horse's actual chance, and bearing in mind the lack of any large divergence between bookmaker and exchange SP's for favourites, it is clear to see that outsiders are more reasonably priced on the exchanges than in the on-course / betting shop market. Let's look at examples from one race yesterday, the 2yo Novice Stakes at 2.00 at Newbury. Some of the longer priced horses in that race went off at (SP v BSP) in decimal odds of (21 v 32), (34 v 46), (34 v 54), (67 v 96), (81 v 206), (126 v 600) and (151 v 411).

So, if you ever find a horse that you fancy which is priced at 125/1 (126), you might well get 599/1 (600) as in the example above if you put your bet on at Betfair SP.



Backing such horses at bookmaker odds is just mad. You will virtually always get much, much better odds on outsiders on the exchanges.

All that said, I do not wish to knock those who back favourites. I do so myself even if only occasionally, but I always look for an angle that has shown favourites in certain circumstances to be actually under-bet. Following are some such circumstances...

Back 2yo favourites who were declared a non-runner in the preceding four days. In the last 10 years on the turf these are 41 wins from 95 runs for £29.74 BSP profit after 5% commission (31.3% ROI).

Back the progeny of the sire Champs Elysees on the all-weather. To date, they have won 46 races from 84 for a BSP profit of £46.48 (55.3% ROI).

Back horses which are favourites for the first time on the all-weather when ridden by Nicky Mackay. Such horses are 33 from 58 for BSP profit £20.27 (34.9% ROI).

Note: The majority of these (25 from 38 = 65.8%) were for trainer John Gosden.

Back Aidan O'Brien favourites at Chester. In the last 10 years, they have won 18 from 31 (51.8%) for a BSP profit of £15.71 (50.7% ROI).

There are many, many other angles to be found for backing favourites. It's really just a case of researching and digging deep for profitable angles, but the work can be very rewarding. It can also serve as a method of giving some respite during a poor run for those, such as me, who generally play at longer prices.

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## **The Curious Case of Joe Root** - By Dave Owens

England's thrilling series win over India in the one day internationals rounded off a quite brilliant week for England's test captain Joe Root who took the brilliant Indian spinners, who had dominated the 20 over and early 50 over exchange by making superb scores of 113 not out and 100 not in the 2nd and 3rd match's to see England home, claim man of the series, move up to No2 in the rankings behind one of the greatest one day batsman of all time in Virat Kohli and move his one day average up to a brilliant 51 from well over 100 international match's.

It therefore seems quite incredible that he was left out of the England side for the deciding 20/20 series decider against India the week before. A decision that most pundits predicted and to a big degree supported. Root has an excellent average of over 35 per innings in the most volatile of formats. Not many sides in world cricket could realistically leave out a player with such a fantastic record, let alone England who for years and years were playing catch up to the new more aggressive and

attacking style of one day cricket that the last few decades has brought to the international game.

Root's omission from the 20 over side is a result of England's ultra-aggressive batting line up, with an array of destructive batsman who can clear the ropes from ball one at any time during an innings. Root shares a seat at the top table of batsman in the world with Kohli, Smith and Kane Williamson. It's the comparison with Williamson that is the most interesting with regards to their 20 over careers. Root and Williamson have had strikingly similar trajectories to their careers, with both earmarked as future great batsman for their countries at young ages as well as predicted to lead their test sides as captains. Both of which have come to fruition. It's also the style of batting where the similarities continue with them both employing excellent technique and favouring the more orthodox style of play as opposed to bigger reliance on power in the limited overs format.

With similarities in style, record and reputation. It is interesting that Joe Root has never been selected to play for an IPL team, whereas Williamson has captained and starred in the successful Sunrisers side and is a leading light in a highly successful New Zealand international side where Root has just lost his place in the England side.

A closer look at the sides Williamson has starred for at the highest-level show two teams highly reliant on fantastic bowling units with the Sunrisers possessing a quite brilliant bowling line up in Bhuvni Kumar, Sid Kaul, Shakib Al-Hasan and the best 20/20 bowler in the world in Rashid Khan. The Sunrisers employed a tactic the total opposite of England's power house batting with Williamson used at the top of the order and to guide his side to a reasonable total and bat most of the innings and accumulating runs at a reasonable if not brutal rate, which Root is so adept at for England in the 50 over format.

In New Zealand colours they have a couple of dynamite batsman in Guptill and Munro at the top of the order with Williamson at 3 playing the long accumulating role for the Kiwis with not having the strength and power in the middle and lower middle order to play so expansively throughout the entire innings – a role Root would be quite brilliant at, but is not needed or applicable within the current England line up. Both are players of the highest order, but as is so often the way in top level sport – your career success or otherwise, can be hugely directed by being in the right or wrong place at the right or wrong time. Root will surely be a part of England's 20 over future – but he could well have had an easier ride and dynamic within England's current line up at present.

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## **Trackside In Ireland** - By Declan O'Donoghue

It's not often we hear of drought conditions in Ireland but that's very much the case this summer with a sub-tropical like climate which shows no signs of easing off just yet.

There was a very brief lull at Killarney on Sunday on the opening session of their five day Racing Festival, a nice dress rehearsal for Galway the week after next.

Like Galway it's a mixed jumps and flat racing jamboree so there was ample watering at this scenic lakeside venue in the build up.

That combined with some badly needed but all too brief rain showers meant that, for once this summer, horses that like some give in the ground got their opportunity.

The Dermot Weld trained Bella Estrella took full advantage in the day's feature the Cairn Rouge Stakes, the previous course winner clinging on gamely for Declan McDonogh at 12/1.

Favourite backers never stood a chance with recent smart Curragh winner Petticoat the first one beaten.

The 11/4 jolly was out the back door all the way, lost a hind shoe and had mild colic post race.

Mind you the day had kicked off well for followers of the money as the 10/11 hotpot Anthony Van Dyck absolutely scooted home for Donnacha O'Brien. The Ballydoyle team have won juvenile races at the track in the past with budding stars like Wings Of Eagles and Kew Gardens.

While nobody would put Anthony Van Dyck - named after a famous Flemish portrait artist - in that kind of category just yet, he could be a bit special. Beach Bar had his rivals all at sea as Sean Davis kicked the 8/1 shot a mile clear from flagfall and they won doing handstands.

Tony The Gent was the 2/1 market leader and stayed on well in second, but is becoming hard to win with.

It's no coincidence that by far his best performance this season was his close second to Band Of Outlaws at The Curragh.

That was the only time this year that he raced at a right handed track, he's much better going that way and should prove the point at Galway.

Classy 7 lbs. claimer Davis was also on board one of two John Oxx trained winners Miss Zizi, a 12/1 shot who also made all on a track that suits front runners.

Oxx's other winner Shringara did the layers a huge favour as the 25/1 chance held off the strongly supported 5/2 fancy Echo Park.

The bookies were certainly having the better of things but nicely backed 2/1 chance Dawn Hooper got many punters the petrol money in the last. Overall though the layers were on good terms with the world on the short journey back into the town - but the tide turned big time on Monday evening. Six winning favourites and a strongly supported 11/4 fancy also obliging had the bookies crying into their gin and tonics well into Tuesday morning. Yet in ways both the layers and players were merely sparring and shadow boxing at Killarney.

The real action will begin when the high rollers cut loose at around teatime at Galway next Monday week.

Pat Smullen is happily very much on the mend and already once more very involved with the Weld team, and no doubt he'll be giving Declan McDonogh the instructions at Ballybrit.

**Another good week for Declan's Irish Racing Service with Pdraig O'Conaire 3/1 (won 7/4), Beautiful Citi 11/4 (w 6/4); Miss Sapphire 5/2 (w 11/8); Waikuku 2/1 (w 11/10) and Longhouse Sale 10/11 (w 1/2).**

**Sign up today for Irish Oaks weekend at The Curragh and of course the big gambles at Galway like Plate winner Lord Scoundrel 33/1 (w 10/1).**

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