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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

[Sean Haren Racing](#)

Win Bet - Ffos Las 16:30 - Rock Force @ 5/2

[Neo Investments](#)

Win Bet - Chelmsford (A.W) 20:15 - Glenglade @ 11/8

[Two Percent Club](#)

Win Bet - Newmarket (July) 16:55 - Rebel Surge @ 11/2

Stratum Could Be A Group Horse Running In A Handicap - By Ian Hudson

Tony Bloom has a reputation for being a shrewd gambler but how ever he has made his living he has managed to acquire a small but select string of high-quality racehorses. His colours are predominantly blue which is appropriate because Bloom is the chairman and owner of Brighton Football Club who beat Manchester United at home in the Premier League last weekend. Bloom is also the owner of Stratum who is the ante post favourite for the Ebor Handicap which is the highlight of the fourth day of the York August meeting on Saturday. Stratum should get a place in the Ebor and is a worthy favourite.

The race that is named after the Roman word for York offers a lucrative prize in its own right but can be a stepping stone to the Melbourne Cup, the race that stops a nation in Australia. Both races are handicaps in name but they are more akin to conditions races because of the narrow band of weights in the handicap. The total prize fund for the Ebor is £500,000 but that will be doubled so it becomes a million pound race next season and that will attract Group class horses.

The Ebor is already the most valuable Flat handicap in Europe but the prize boost will take the race to another level. It will never be quite as famous as the Melbourne Cup but any race worth one million pounds is special. York are planning to install wider starting gates next year which means the maximum field will be two more than the current 20 runners. As a handicap each way bets will be settled at one quarter the odds for the first four places but some bookmakers may payout on five places.

Only one horse has won the Ebor more than once (Flint Jack in 1922 and 1922). Lester Piggott is the leading jockey with five wins, from 1958 to 1983, and the leading trainer also won the race five times but that run of success was in the 19th century. Since 1978 the only winner to carry 10 stone is Sea Pigeon the following year. The horse was unplaced in the Derby in 1973 and won two Champion Hurdles. Sea Pigeon is one of the best dual purpose horses in British racing history.

The last six winners carried more than nine stone but most of the field have had that weight in recent years. From 2002 to 2014 the winner was aged from four to six. Three-year-olds won the previous two renewals and the winner in 2015 was aged seven. Only Luca Cumani has won the Ebor more than once this century and Jamie Spencer is the leading jockey with two wins since 2007. The last winning favourite was in that year and the average price of the winner over the last 10 years is 17/1.

Stratum is trained by Willie Mullins and his runners in major Flat handicaps in Britain must be respected. He is mainly a jumps trainer but he targets lucrative Flat handicaps with his best dual purpose horses. Stratum won a lucrative Newbury handicap with something in hand in July and has the look of a Group horse running in a handicap so Bloom's runner can win the Ebor.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Back The Two Big Favourites At York

The third day of the Ebor meeting as York is being called Super Friday and indeed it will be super if you back Stradivarius and Battaash in the two feature races. Both horses have something in hand on form and ratings and if they are at their best the rest of the runners in their races will be running for second place. Sometimes in racing there is no point in ignoring the obvious and these are the best horses in their respective races. This is not an exact science whereby every horse runs to form but today at York there is no logical reason to oppose these two favourites. The **DOUBLE** on Stadivarius (2.25) and Battaash (3.35) pays 5/4 with **Ladbrokes**.

If that double comes and you have more than doubled your money there is a fixture in the Championship that brings together potential contenders for promotion to the top level. Premier League football is the Holy Grail for the better teams in the second tier. Middlesbrough and West Brom have aspirations to move up into the most lucrative domestic league in the world. Boro have won three league matches in a row and a draw would take them to the top of the table. However, their opponents are benefitting from a relatively unchanged squad from the one relegated last season. **WEST BROM** have scored 13 goals in four matches and they can find the net enough times to win this match and you can back that result at 21/10 with **bet365**.

Sussex visit Durham in the quarter-finals of the T20 Blast as a team in form. They won their last three matches to qualify for the knockout stages while Durham had a no result and defeat in their final two regular season fixtures. The shortest format of the game often sees bat beat ball but the Sussex bowling attack has been a vital part of their current run of form. **SUSSEX** are the team to back in this match and they are 8/11 with **William Hill** to progress to the last four and finals day.