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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

StatMan

Bangor 1520 - Mill Quest @ 5/4 with Paddy Power

Lucky 7 Naps

Worcester 1325 - Kalahari Queen @ 6/4 with Ladbrokes

Two Percent Club

Bangor 1625 - Royal Ruby @ 7/2 with bet365

England Play Croatia And Spain In "Friendlies" - By Ian Hudson

England would probably swap 100 wins over Croatia in the UEFA Nations League for a victory in the semi-finals in this year's World Cup. The wheel keeps turning and we are now in the next two-year cycle of international football which culminates in the final of Euro 2020 at Wembley. The semi-finals and decider of the European Championships are being played at the national stadium. However, when those matches take place Wembley could be in private hands.

The owner of Fulham Football Club is looking to increase his business interests in sport in England by buying the iconic venue. The bait for the FA is a big investment in grass roots football but those against the deal suggest it is false economy. There might be financial gains but the sport will have sold its soul. The deal could go through and only then will be the effect on the national sport be known. In fact, it might be a good thing to take the England team around the provinces.

When Wembley was being rebuilt England played competitive home matches and friendlies in the midlands and north. It was a special occasion to see an England international at Anfield or Old Trafford. There clearly is an appetite to see England play around the country. Taking fixtures away from Wembley could work but it's the future for the playoffs and minor cup finals that worry traditionalists. The potential buyer owns an NFL team and the end game could be setting up a franchise in London.

England play in Croatia in the new-fangled UEFA competition on Friday and visit Spain next Monday in the three-team group. Apparently not winning the group could provide an easier route to the finals of Euro 2020 but these matches are glorified friendlies. If 100 people were surveyed and asked would you prefer England to win the World Cup or Euros or Nations League the latter would get a big fat zero. The matches will still be used for experience but nobody really cares about the outcome.

Gareth Southgate sees some value in the matches but only to introduce young players into the squad environment. Jadon Sancho gets a call-up at the age of 18. He left Manchester City to join Dortmund where he had a better chance of first team football. He has started his career in the Bundesliga with assists and goals. Sancho is the first player born in the new millennium to be selected for the England national squad. He is one of several youngsters who are being fast-tracked from their age group and two age-related world championship winning squads.

Croatia were worthy winners against England at the World Cup. They took the initiative at the start of the second half and England paid for not scoring a crucial second goal. England were 22 minutes away from reaching the World Cup final but the equaliser was coming and Croatia deserved the winning goal in extra time. France were too good for them in the final but a questionable penalty decision in

favour of France was key. The current squad is pretty much the same as the World Cup squad and in Luka Modric they have the FIFA world player of the year. England can avoid defeat against Croatia but not losing to Spain in Seville on Monday is a different matter. Spain underperformed at the World Cup but have a good record at home and Seville is a tough place for visiting teams. England might not win either match in the Nations League during the international break but throwing teenagers into the squad scenario will be more valuable than winning meaningless matches.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Bale Big Miss For Wales Against Spain

Wales are playing Spain in Cardiff tonight in an international friendly but not the Nations League but both types of fixtures are basically the same. Wales have a poor record in non-competitive fixtures and their cause is not helped by the absence of Gareth Bale, their one world class player. When Bale plays for Wales anything is possible and any player who has scored 30 goals in 72 internationals will be missed. In his playing days Ryan Giggs missed many friendlies so its ironic he now suffers from a weakened team in his role as the manager. Spain are as short as 4/11 but home advantage can help Wales to secure the DRAW at 4/1 **Betfair**.

Scotland beat Albania in their first Nations League match and they can take charge of a weak group with a win in Israel tonight. The away team had a poor record on the road but secured maximum points in Lithuania and Malta during qualifying for the last World Cup but still did not qualify for Russia. The rules of the Nations League are that it could provide Scotland with a route to the finals of the European Championships so the matches for them are more than friendlies. Israel are not a strong outfit so SCOTLAND are the bet to win this match at 8/5 with **Ladbrokes**.

By a twist of fate (or a fixed draw) Francesco Molinari and Tommy Flertwood are in the same three ball in the first round of the British Masters. The numbers are made up by Thorbjorn Olesen who was a team mate in the Ryder Cup. The Old Course at Walton Heath is ideally suited to the attributes in the game of MOLINARI so he should be backed to beat Fleetwood and Olesen over 18 holes at 7/5 with **bet365**.

There are four meetings in Britain today and the racing is no better than ordinary. No race is worth more than £10,000 and most horses running will not cover the cost of being in training from the prize money. You could say the grandstand at Bangor won't be overcrowded but the track is the only one in Britain without that facility. Race goers watch the action from a grass verge in front of the track. Today they can back FLYING VERSE at 10/1 with **William Hill** to win the handicap hurdle at 2.15.