



# What Really Wins Money

An Independent Review of Tipsters and Betting Systems

## The Cheltenham 2015 Special!

Welcome to February's edition of *What Really Wins Money* - our Cheltenham Festival special!. We kick off with Andrew David's form-reading of the key Cheltenham races. Plus his each-way plays.

The Statman looks at the winners in the last 10 years at Cheltenham, to see if they can serve as pointers for the future. Past winner trends can be strong in certain races and provide us with a way to shortlist contenders. Everything is tabulated so you get an at-a-glance look at the key trends in the big Cheltenham races.

Meanwhile, The Patriarch has his own take on the Cheltenham Festival and shows us how the *Racing Post* can be used to pinpoint those horses who are hitting the peak of their powers at just the right time.

I look at higher-risk staking plans for my 'Home-Grown' betting systems in reply to a number of emails this month. There'll be no Systems and Tipsters Update this month as the Cheltenham analysis takes hold of February's newsletter.

### CHEL TENHAM 2015

## Yes, You Can Make Good Money at Cheltenham With Each-Way Betting

It's here again! You won't find a better four-day's racing anywhere in the jumping world for quality and excitement. All the big guns will be arriving at Prestbury Park, hoping for glory in what is the cup final for each of the codes within Jumps racing.

Last year was a rare bloodbath for many, given the big guns of Willie Mullins, Paul Nicholls and Nicky Henderson failing to perform as expected with a combined return in the big races of only six winners between them! Thankfully, this is a rare occurrence.

Many of the much-trumpeted stats attached to some of the races failed to stand up in 2014. Then we had the

going: it was a lot quicker than expected and bore no resemblance to the ground most candidates had their prep race on. All in all, a very difficult 2014 festival.

As mentioned last year, I'm firmly of the opinion that if punters had the opportunity to back in these high-class races every day of the week and given a due bit of accurate form reading and cross referencing, they would finish on top more often than not.

The high win and place prize money on offer means every horse is 'trying' and therefore you can be confident the form you are evaluating is true. Unfortunately, the same can't be said of the form in a low-grade race on a wet Tuesday afternoon at Kelso.

Many selections listed at the time of writing have dual entries, with decisions likely to be made much closer to the race. Plans are still pretty fluid for most trainers. Therefore, simply follow and back all my selections in whatever race they are entered in on the day. We have to trust the trainers' judgement on what race they're finally declared in. No doubt we'll end up backing several in one race, but simply back them all, as the prices on offer make this a viable option.

This year I've also included a 'Lively Outsider/Alternative' selection on some races. It's up to you whether you want to have a small each-way play on them in case of any non-runners from my main selections.

First, a familiar bit of preamble on why I feel each-way betting has to be taken seriously as a staking option. This is mainly for new readers of *WRWM*, so if you've already read it then please move on to Day 1.

If there's ever a meeting where each-way betting has to be strongly considered, then it's at the Cheltenham Festival. Generous prices as a result of strong market liquidity, big field handicap races, extended place terms from many bookies - these all add up to great value for the punter. On the downside is the extremely competitive nature of the event, with the *crème de le crème* of the National Hunt scene competing for the large prize

*please turn over...*

money. Yet despite the ultra competitive nature of the event, we can narrow the field down to a few lively contenders in each race. So, by employing each-way staking, we can go some way to hedging our positions and thus give ourselves an increased chance of our chosen selection/s being captured in the placing spread. Especially nowadays, with selected bookies paying on up to five places on some feature races!

Even at prices as low 2/1, using each-way staking, you'll get 75% of your total stake returned in handicaps, and 70% in non-handicaps if your horse is placed. These regular returns flowing back to your betting bank are great for your betting confidence. More importantly, they keep you in the game for another throw.

Now on to the festival itself...

## DAY 1 – Tuesday 10 March

### 1.30 – Supreme Novices Hurdle

Vautour was a six-length winner last year from the Walsh/Mullins camp. **DOUVAN** is the very short-priced favourite this year at a general price of 2/1 as I write, and again from the same jockey/trainer combo. The favourite is already considered the Irish Banker of the meeting after the style and manner of his latest win at Punchestown. Mullins really is top of the league when it comes to these French imports and has described **DOUVAN** as having more gears Vautour, so expect a slightly different ride from Ruby. This year I'm opting for a single win bet as more of a saver on the favourite as my full each-way is going on the current third favourite **NICHOLS CANYON**.

**NICHOLS CANYON** seems to have put his jumping errors behind him and this two-mile-five-furlong race may just suit after pulling clear on his latest win at Leopardstown on 8 February, after previously unseating his rider at the same track over Christmas. There is no doubt he stays well on the Flat and it's great to see his jumping has improved, which firmly puts him in for each-way claims for this race if his trainer doesn't opt for the Neptune on Day 2 instead. He's best priced at around 12/1 and that's good enough for me.

**DOUVAN**: 1 point WIN only – 9/4 (888 Sport)

**NICHOLS CANYON**: 1 point each-way – 12/1 (Skybet)

Lively outsider: Jolly Cracked It – 50/1 (Boyles)

### 3.20 – Champion Hurdle

The feature race on Day 1, and a race where the ability to travel at speed and jump without losing momentum are crucial components. It's always been one of my favourites, ever since watching the great Istabraq taking the prize three times, and a horse I had the privilege to see in his well-earned retirement at J.P. McManus's Martinstown stud.

Another race with a strong market leader in Faugheen at around 5/4, with **THE NEW ONE** second-favourite at a general 3/1, and both looking unlikely to be much bigger on the day. Hurricane Fly is entered again for those wanting a sentimental bet at around 8/1, but I can't see it this year I'm afraid, up against the new kids on the block. Ruby Walsh no doubt feels the same way and instead opts for riding Faugheen.

Jezki took the prize last year but the true run of the race was skewed by the fatal fall of Our Conor who badly impeded **THE NEW ONE**. So I will put Jezki aside this year, especially after his jumping errors in two defeats by the Hurricane so far this campaign, albeit running the Hurricane close on both occasions.

**THE NEW ONE** is best of the British bunch by far and in great form. He could give Faugheen the most to do. However, Faugheen can quicken off a strong pace and that's a vital quality to have if you want to take a race of this nature: his current price certainly reflects that. Having said that there are still a few niggles with Faugheen for me to go in at that price. Therefore I'm opting for **THE NEW ONE** and at a price of 3/1 is at least nailed on for place, and a better-than-average chance of claiming the top prize.

**THE NEW ONE**: 1 point each-way – 3/1 (Generally available)

Alternative: Annie Power – 20/1 (William Hill)

### 4.40 – National Hunt Chase

A real stamina-sapping four miles for what is the oldest race run at the festival, so we need some serious stayers around Cheltenham to cut the mustard for this amateur jockeys' race. Another Mullins-trained horse is favourite for this in Don Poli, who's best priced at 9/2, and as low as 11/4 with some firms, thereby showing bookies are divided on this race.

Don Poli won both starts this season, but my preference here is for **WOUNDED WARRIOR**, currently priced around 8/1. The Noel Meade-trained horse was an easy winner over Rule The World at Naas in January, and on

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his next start I feel the trip was a little on the sharp side when only third of seven behind Gilgamboa.

**WOUNDED WARRIOR** wasn't beaten far behind Don Poli in a beginners' event at Gowran Park, going down by just over two lengths. However, with Cheltenham's usual quicker ground, I'm confident our selection could turn the tables on the Jolly, and at 8/1 has great win and place claims.

**WOUNDED WARRIOR:** 1 point each-way – 8/1 (Ladbrokes)

Lively outsiders: Southfield Theatre – 16/1 (Stan James); Very Wood – 10/1 (Ladbrokes)

## DAY 2 – Wednesday 11 March

### 1.30 – Neptune Hurdle

Here we have a race where bare stats alone can give us some great pointers in narrowing down the field. No less than 12 of the last 13 winners have finished first or second last time out, but where only three pre-race favourites have actually won, including last year's winner, Faugheen! In short, we are looking for young hurdlers with the previous form outlined above. The Irish raiders also have a great record in this race.

**NICHOLS CANYON** is the favourite here, if he doesn't go for the Supreme Novices Hurdle on Day 1. He is sure to relish the step up in trip. I will trust the trainer's judgment on whichever race **NICHOLS CANYON** lines up for come the day.

My other selection in the race is for **PARLOUR GAMES**, who has already won at Cheltenham in November, followed by winning the Betfred Grade 1 at Newbury on 29 December. He was an impressive winner when defeating the classy Blaklion at Cheltenham in Grade 2 company in November, where he stayed on well up the hill to win by four-and-a-half lengths. That form holds up well with the runner-up that day – Blaklion – returning to Cheltenham to win the Grade 2 Albert Bartlett Novices Hurdle by a wide margin over three miles. Sure to be there or thereabouts based on that form, so let's see if John Ferguson keeps his class act in on the boil come the day, and at 7/1 I'm prepared to take the chance.

**NICHOLS CANYON:** 1 point each-way – 7/1 (Bet365)

**PARLOUR GAMES:** 1 point each-way – 8/1 (Paddy Power)

**LIVELY OUTSIDER:** Vyta Du Roc – 33/1 (Skybet)

### 2.05 – RSA Chase

Run over a slightly shorter trip than the Gold Cup, the RSA is the staying novices equivalent and can be a great pointer to future winners of the Gold Cup, with

Denman, Bobs Worth, and Lord Windermere winning this race en route to Gold Cup glory. The Mullins-trained Don Poli could well go for this instead of the National Hunt Chase on Day 1, but my hunch is that Mullins will opt for the latter with the extra distance being the decider judging by his previous race wins.

I'm having two selections this year in the RSA: my first is **VALSEUR LIDO** – a horse I really like and provides the value for me especially if Don Poli takes his chance in the National Hunt Chase instead. The Mullins-trained mount has won two out of three this year and is considered a useful stayer, although admittedly will have a tad to prove over this extended distance.

His only defeat was to Apache Stronghold on 8 February at Leopardstown, going down by half a length and who he previously beat at Fairyhouse in November. It's interesting to note a positive market move for him, despite this defeat, which put him ahead in the market over Apache Stronghold at a current price of 12/1, which for me is a nice bit of value.

My second selection is **THE YOUNG MASTER**, who has performed very well under his trainer Neil Mulholland this campaign, winning no less than four on the bounce. Unfortunately, he was disqualified in his last-but-one race, for not being a 'qualified entry'. He still put in a mighty performance that day, winning by seven lengths at Wincanton and beating some useful sorts.

The RSA is a step up in class, but still feel he's progressing in the right direction and is worthy of an entry here at a nice each-way price of 10/1 to boot.

**VALSEUR LIDO:** 1 point each-way – 12/1 (Ladbrokes)

**THE YOUNG MASTER:** 1 point each-way – 10/1 (generally available)

Alternatives: Very Wood – 20/1 (Generally available); Coneygree – 6/1 (Paddy Power)

### 3.20 – Queen Mother Champion Chase

The feature race on Day 2. Speed and competent jumping are crucial for this race. Any slight error can quickly cost you the race, due to lost momentum, which can be hard to pull back when the rest of the field have pulled clear. As I write, Sire De Grugy may well have another run at Chepstow before defending his crown, after disappointing in his race at Newbury on 13 February after his nine months lay off. Trainer Gary Moore was upbeat about his charge after unseating.

Therefore I'm going for a win-only bet and each-way bet in this race. My straight win bet is on **SPRINTER SACRE**, who had his warm-up for this race on 7 January at Ascot, where he finished second-best to the Paul Nicholls-trained Dodging Bullets. Despite losing that day, it was still an encouraging display, especially

seeing as he was off the track for well over a year after a heart scare at Kempton in his previous race. He's still a class act and travelled well throughout, with his jockey Barry Geraghty not being overly forceful on him coming into the closing stages while Dodging Bullets was all out. I'm hoping with better ground, come March we'll see him grab the Queen Mother at a current price of 11/4.

Another with a decent chance is **CHAMPAGNE FEVER**: one who I'm confident will suit Cheltenham's undulating course and also goes well fresh. He has already won twice at Cheltenham and wasn't disgraced when second there to Western Warhorse in last year's Arkle, where he also beat Dodging Bullets, who is second-favourite as I write.

For me, **CHAMPAGNE FEVER** is a worthy each-way bet, especially at Cheltenham – a course he relishes. With a two-month gap between his last race and this, he has to go close, and at around 6/1 is just about in the value bracket for a nice each-way.

**SPRINTER SACRE**: 1 point WIN only – 11/4 (Paddy Power)

**CHAMPAGNE FEVER**: 1 point each-way – 6/1 (William Hill)

## DAY 3 – Thursday 12 March

### 1.30 – JLT Novices Chase

This is a very competitive handicap, with nine of the last 13 winners coming in below 10/1 at SP. Therefore it would be foolish to ignore this stat, come the day. As a rule, I do prefer to stay clear of any favourite where only two have obliged since 1977. Narrowing the field down to horses that have performed well at the track, and have either won or finished in the places against decent opposition, is a must. Apart from the rare exception, I then use this framework as a starting point from which to base any firm opinion when short-listing my selections.

**PTIT ZIG** is my pick for this one. The Nicholls-trained second-favourite put Josses Hill into his place with a convincing nine-length win at Ascot on 19 December; a quick re-appearance on 1 January saw him winning (and more importantly) at Cheltenham, beating Champagne West. The scopy five-year-old has always been on my watchlist to hit the big time, and this could be his day. He has gained plenty of experience with every run so far, and some intensive schooling at home with his jumping has put him right in contention for this one. As I write, **PTIT ZIG** fell in his race on 14 February, but that matters little to me, with his trainer Paul Nicholls stating: 'Ptit Zig was fine after his fall. He was a bit unfortunate as he was travelling well, but it was a novicey mistake and I would rather he do that here

than at Cheltenham.' He continued: 'He has not had a hard race and we will take him home, school him and sharpen him up for the JLT at Cheltenham.' That's good enough for me, especially with bookies reluctant to ease his price out, despite this fall. All in all, Nicholls has toughened **PTIT ZIG** to a level where he has to be respected, and at a nice each-way of 4/1, I'm in!

**PTIT ZIG**: 1 point each-way 9/2 – (Sporting Bet)

### 2.40 – Ryanair Chase

One of my favourite races, where form horses at the top end of the market usually perform up to expectations, with eight out of nine winners coming from the first three in the betting since its inception in 2005. Last year's winner (Dynaste) is now out for the season, which puts Don Cossack as market leader, at around 4/1. This year I feel we could see an upset with the winner coming from outside the top end of the market.

My first pick is **HIDDEN CYCLONE**, who finished second to the winner Dynaste in the same race last year. I'm opting for a big run from him this year, especially at the price of 16/1 with some bookmakers. I do hope his trainer 'The Shark' Hanlon sends the 10-year-old for this instead of the Queen Mother on Day 2. **HIDDEN CYCLONE** has finished second no less than four times in Grade 1 company, and I feel this could be his Cheltenham. Winning his latest start at Punchestown on 1 February, he now seems to have calmed down coming to his fences and is generally a more relaxed character. The harder the race, the more he'll relish it and is sure to appreciate the break between his last race at Punchestown and the festival. He's not the hardest of horses to get fit and is sure to be knocking heavily on the door coming up the Cheltenham hill.

As I write, Balder Success has just won at Ascot, beating another Ryanair entry **MA FILLEULE** into second, who is my second pick. I'm not really convinced about Balder Success getting around Cheltenham, where he has unseated and fallen, and so would rather go with **MA FILLEULE** as my other pick, with Nicky Henderson stating he will 'come on' for his second to Balder Success at Ascot. That's all we need to give us a decent each-way chance, and if anyone can get the best out of a horse and bring him on, it's Nicky Henderson.

**HIDDEN CYCLONE**: 1 point each-way – 16/1 (generally available)

**MA FILLEULE** – 1 point each-way – 10/1 (Corals)

### 3.20 World Hurdle

Again, for the second time in five years, I'm including this race, as it looks a very interesting affair with a few old faces taking part again. Big Bucks broke layers'

hearts in 2012 when he made it four out of four for the race. No horse had won it three times in a row, never mind four times, until he arrived on the scene. No such luck for him in 2013, but respect due for his terrific and record-breaking run.

Preference is for those that have won a Grade 1 or 2 race, and also a big plus is for those that arrive at the post having ran well at the course, which means we have to look at those priced in single figures. This leads me to having two selections in this race at the top end of the market, which is a bit of a mish-mash, betting-wise. My first is for the Mullins-trained **ANNIE POWER**, who last year finished second to the current market leader More of That, who again lines up. For me, there are too many niggles for More of That this year, so I'm going to overlook him here. It was a good performance from **ANNIE POWER** last year, finishing second with At Fishers Cross and Zarkandar in third and fourth respectively. It's reported that **ANNIE POWER** has been working well and been gently coaxed back into race fitness, after coming back from injury. Both her jockey Ruby Walsh and trainer Willie Mullins are confident of making Cheltenham this year, with Ruby commenting: 'I'm just glad that I'll be in the saddle when she's ready to reappear.' That's good enough for me to have a nice each-way, as she hopes to go one better than last year and prove what a class animal she is, despite an injury setback.

For my second selection in this race, I'm opting for **SAPHIR DU RHEU**. Sam Twiston-Davies was full of the joys after he rode **SAPHIR DU RHEU** to victory at Cheltenham on 24 January, beating Reve De Sivola into second. His trainer was equally delighted, especially considering he thought his charge was just short of match fitness, and come the day of the World Hurdle he can get him much better. His trainer's comments really seal it. Looking strictly on form, I feel he will be hard to beat on better ground, and at a price of 6/1, is a really cracking each-way bet.

**ANNIE POWER**: 1 point each-way – 8/1 (W Hill)

**SAPHIR DU RHEU**: 1 point each-way – 6/1 (Paddy Power)

Lively outsider: Un Temps Pour Tout – 12/1 (generally available)

## DAY 4 – Friday 13 March

### 1.30 – Triumph Hurdle

A race for four-year-old novices only and run at a fast pace that will test these youngsters to the limit. Best to shortlist those with some experience over hurdles and a proven ability to win, preferably in a good-class race.

The last time a favourite won this race was way back in 2006. On form however, the current favourite **PEACE & CO** will take all the beating at a best-priced 2/1.

Having said that, it's a skinny price for a very good reason: if you can get 2/1, then I think this juvenile will deliver for his backers who've ploughed on since his latest win on Trials Day at Cheltenham in January.

Nicky Henderson's charge ran a bit free on Trials Day, but was still full of running when caught behind a wall of runners. Coming to the last, Barry Geraghty made his move and squeezed alongside Karezak, and pulled clear to score smoothly by three lengths. All the major bookies were quick to cut his price, based on the manner and style of this victory and with very little to challenge him on the day.

The 9/4 or 2/1 could be good value and worth a nice win-only wager.

**PEACE & CO** – 2 points WIN-only – 9/4 (Coral)

Lively outsider: Petite Parisienne – 10/1 (Paddy Power)

### 2.40 – Albert Bartlett Novice Hurdle

The market can often give some great clues here, with only two outsiders winning at double-figure odds in the past 10 races, with Very Wood winning last year at 33/1! I can't see selections at that price winning in the big races this year (famous last words!). A well-backed six or seven-year-old in the Ante-Post market and with decent form in good company is what I'm looking for here. This year, I'm having two picks and one who is outside the single-price bracket – **MARTELLO TOWER**, considering how well the form lines are holding up. **MARTELLO** was giving the able Windsor Park 5lb on 25 January and still beat him by one-and-a-half lengths at Leopardstown, where he finished second, and Windsor Park in fourth. Windsor Park then finished second to Nichols Canyon in the Deloitte Hurdle on 8 February, again at Leopardstown. This is a strong form line that has to be taken seriously and, if all goes to plan, **MARTELLO TOWER** has a great chance. His current price of 10/1 provides value for an each-way crack for this useful novice.

My second pick here is for **BLACK HERCULES**. The Mullins-trained mount has some top-class form, beating amongst others Outlander by a neck. Outlander then went on to win a Grade 2 race at Leopardstown on 25 January, so the form line is holding up well for **BLACK HERCULES**. He certainly deserves his place at the head of the market this year, at around 6/1.

**MARTELLO TOWER**: 1 point each-way – 16/1 (Ladbrokes)

**BLACK HERCULES**: 1 point each-way – 7/1 (William Hill)

### 3.20 – Cheltenham Gold Cup

Now on to the centrepiece of the great Cheltenham Festival itself, with £550,000 in prize money up for grabs! I have to admit to completely overlooking Lord Windermere last year, and I guess I'm not the only one!

I have picked the current favourite – **SILVINIACO CONTI** – for the past two Gold Cups, and it has to be noted that Conti is now 0-3 at Cheltenham. So am I prepared to take the general 7/2 about him this year? The answer is a cautious 'Yes'. Why? Well Conti is still a class animal who just seems to fall short at Cheltenham, where I like my selections to have won, but I am prepared to make an exception this year, based more on the opposition than anything else.

Conti has five Grade 1 victories to his name and has a great temperament when coping with the hustle and bustle of big races, such as the King George and the Betfred Bowl at Aintree, so is clearly not fazed by the big occasion. Tactics played a part in his downfall last year, and I feel he is seeing out his races much better these days. The nine-year-old is taking his obstacles with more maturity these days, and that can only help him get around this demanding Gold Cup course.

If any trainer can bring a horse back better than ever to have another crack at the Gold Cup it's Paul Nicholls. There will be sceptics on the day with his 0-3 record at Prestbury Park, especially when falling in 2013, but I for one have confidence the Nicholls' camp can do the job and against this opposition.

This year I am also going to have a crack on Noel Meade's **ROAD TO RICHES**, and hope for a big run at a decent enough price. **ROAD TO RICHES** had a great win in the Lexus Chase on 28 December at Leopardstown, beating many class animals that day including Boston Bob and last year's Gold Cup winner Lord Windermere, which prompted a large cut in his price, now down to around the 9/1 mark. He's made great strides this campaign and in races with better ground, although it is noted he can handle testing conditions so, for me, the 9/1 makes plenty of each-way appeal.

**SILVINIACO CONTI**: 1 point each-way – 10/3 (Paddy Power)

**ROAD TO RICHES**: 1 point each-way – 9/1 (William Hill)

Alternative: Coneygree – 16/1 (Ladbrokes)

### 4.00 – The Foxhunters Chase

I love the Foxhunters Chase! We've had some nice-priced winners in this in the past, but not last year with Harbour Court letting us down. On form, I did highlight the winner – Tammy's Hill – but wasn't sure whether he would make the journey across the Irish Sea.

The Foxhunters is a race for amateur riders only, who would normally race in point-to-points. An interesting fact is that a staggering 23 of the past 29 winners of the Foxhunters have won on their last appearance! So the form lines in this race are fairly reliable and why I like the race so much.

My selection for this is for the current market leader – **ON THE FRINGE** – ridden by the very capable Nina Carberry. This is a horse that's never been out of the places in his last eight races. The Bolger-trained mount was not far away in his prep race at Leopardstown on 8 February, going down by just  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a length to the very useful short-priced favourite Prince De Beauchene. I feel on the day, **ON THE FRINGE** will be at his peak for a good shot at this, and at the current price of around 7/1 is a fairly solid each-way.

**ON THE FRINGE**: 1 point each-way – 6/1 (Paddy Power)

Alternative: Current Event

Well, those are my thoughts for Cheltenham 2015. I feel we (again) have a good sprinkling of strong contenders and lively outsiders.

Obviously, most of the selections picked here are based on the usual good going we get at Cheltenham, but who knows? Last year we had a deluge of rain in the weeks prior to the festival. Luckily, Cheltenham has excellent drainage but I did shout out a warning that if the rain continued we would see some oddball results – how right I was! My only advice here, should we get a sudden drastic change to the going, is to apply a little bit of market observation and stay clear of drifters. One of the key filters in racing is to make sure your horse goes on the ground. Class animals will win on any going, and I've picked a few in this article. However, such beasts are as rare as hen's teeth, unfortunately, so best to use the market as your guide.

Finally, if you're going this year, don't forget to top up your hip flask! That Gloucestershire wind can really make you wish you had bothered to!

## THE STATMAN PRESENTS

# "I've Crunched 10 Year's Worth of Stats And Discovered Some VERY Interesting Trends!"

As you can imagine, every year at this time of the season the cry goes out to provide something for the Cheltenham Festival, and every year I sit there with

my head in my hands trying to calculate a new angle. But this year, be prepared for something completely different – race profiling.

Instead of looking at how trainers or jockeys do (and perhaps in what races), we will take the reverse route and look, big race by big race, at the historical signposts that will most certainly not point us to each and every winner, but which will give us a hatful of clues to what has been needed in the past – which I am sure will be repeated on a few occasions over the week, and hopefully enough times to turn us a profit (and give us some fun to boot).

For those who like to record (or even check) my findings, let me make it clear once again that this time I am using the renewal of each major race over the last 10 years only – not every race can or will be covered, thanks to a lack of data, or simply no sensible useable data being uncovered. In all cases I will not be able to give a suggestion at this time for the likely winner, but I'm aiming to give you data that you can use on race day to uncover the most likely winner – so here we go...

Key to statistical headers:

**Nationality** – ENG (England) IRE (Ireland) or FRA (France) – this is where they are trained and does NOT apply to the letter after the horse's name, which is where they were bred. To find this information go to [www.racingpost.com](http://www.racingpost.com), click on 'Cards', go to the race

concerned, click on the respective trainer's name and the top left-hand side gives you a rough address.

**Official Rating Rank (ORR)** – This is their position according to the official ratings if put into numerical order – these figures are available on the same *Racing Post* race card to the right of the horse's name, under the heading 'OR'.

**The favourite (Fav)** – This column lists market position with 'J' meaning joint of two, 'C' meaning co-favourite, 'F' meaning favourite, and '2' meaning second-favourite.

**Headgear (HG)** – This is simply yes or no to any kind of headgear (blinkers visors and so on).

**Sex** – 'G' for gelding, 'H' for horse (ungelded male) or 'M' for mare – this can be easily discovered by clicking on each horse on the race cards described above.

**LTO** – This stands for 'Position Last Time Out' – where the horse finished in his last race.

## Day One – Tuesday 10 March 2015

### 1.30pm Supreme Novices Hurdle

The first race on the first day would be a good place to start with a winner, so here's hoping. Ten years of stats have shown the following information that we can and should use to our benefit:

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over hurdles
2005	Arcalis	5	20/1	Howard Johnson	ENG	Graham Lee	6	3		31	No	G	4
2006	Noland	5	6/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	2	1	2F	30	No	G	4
2007	Ebaziyah	6	40/1	Willie Mullins	IRE	Davy Condon	8	1		39	No	H	2
2008	Captain Cee Bee	7	17/2	Edward Harty	IRE	Robert Thornton	5	1		113	No	G	2
2009	Go Native	6	12/1	Noel Meade	IRE	P Carberry	4	1		16	No	G	5
2010	Menorah	5	12/1	Philip Hobbs	ENG	Richard Johnson	3	2		24	No	G	4
2011	Al Ferof	6	10/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	8	1		31	No	G	4
2012	Cinders And Ashes	5	10/1	Donald McCain	ENG	Jason Maguire	10	1		52	No	G	4
2013	Champagne Fever	6	5/1	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	6	1	J2F	31	No	G	4
2014	Vautour	5	7/2	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	1	1	JF	30	No	G	4

OK, so that's the facts out of the way, but what can we learn, I wonder, even at this early stage?

1. Reduce the field to the top-10 based on official ratings (10/10).
2. Further reduce to the top six on the ratings if you prefer (7/10).
3. Remove any mare from your list (0/10 winners).
4. Remove any horse wearing any headgear (0/10).
5. Look for any horse with four runs over hurdles to his name (7/10).

6. Look for horses priced at 12/1 or shorter (8/10).
7. Don't be afraid to go against the favourite or second-favourite (7/10).
8. Look for a horse who last ran within the last 40 days (8/10).
9. Ruby Walsh is good to have on your side, with four wins in the last ten years.
10. Willie Mullins has won three of the last ten and the last two in a row.

## 2.05pm Arkle Trophy

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav?	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences
2005	Contraband	7	7/1	Martin Pipe	ENG	Timmy Murphy	2	3	2F	52	No	G	4
2006	Voy Por Ustedes	5	15/2	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	4	1		24	No	G	4
2007	My Way De Solzen	7	7/2	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	6	1	2F	52	No	G	4
2008	Tidal Bay	7	6/1	Howard Johnson	ENG	Denis O'Regan	1	2	2F	38	No	G	4
2009	Forpadydeplasterer	7	8/1	Thomas Cooper	IRE	Barry Geraghty	4	2		23	No	G	2
2010	Sizing Europe	8	6/1	Henry De Bromhead	IRE	A E Lynch	1	1		80	No	G	4
2011	Captain Chris	7	6/1	Philip Hobbs	ENG	Richard Johnson	4	1		17	No	G	4
2012	Sprinter Sacre	6	8/11	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	1	1	F	25	No	G	3
2013	Simonsig	7	8/15	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	2	1	F	75	No	G	2
2014	Western Warhorse	6	33/1	David Pipe	ENG	Tom Scudamore	9	1		62	Yes	G	1

1. Look at all horses priced at 8/1 or less (9/10).
2. Look for English-trained runners (8/10).
3. Look for six or seven-year-olds (8/10).
4. Ignore any horse wearing headgear (9/10).
5. Look at the top-four according to official ratings (8/10).
6. Delete any horse who failed to make the first three last time out (10/10).
7. Focus on those who won last time out (7/10).
8. Barry Geraghty has ridden the most winners (3/10).
9. Nicky Henderson has trained two of the last three winners (2/10).
10. Take some note of the market – favourites or second-favourites do well here (5/10).

## 3.20pm Champion Hurdle

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav?	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over hurdles
2005	Hardy Eustace	8	7/2	D T Hughes	IRE	C O'Dwyer	7	1	JF	30	Yes	G	16
2006	Brave Inca	8	7/4	C A Murphy	IRE	A P McCoy	10	1	F	43		G	16
2007	Sublimity	7	16/1	John Carr	IRE	P Carberry	5	1		44		G	5
2008	Katchit	5	10/1	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	7	1		24		G	12
2009	Punjabi	6	22/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	4	3		24		G	10
2010	Binocular	6	9/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	A P McCoy	8	1		38		G	10
2011	Hurricane Fly	7	11/4	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	51		G	11
2012	Rock On Ruby	7	11/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Noel Fehily	4	2		78		G	6
2013	Hurricane Fly	9	13/8	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	44		G	19
2014	Jezki	6	9/1	Mrs J Harrington	IRE	Barry Geraghty	4	4		44	Yes	G	10

1. The Irish narrowly hold sway with six winners from the last 10 runners (6/10).
2. Six and seven-year-olds have the best record (6/10).
3. Gelded males have 100% record over the 10 years (10/10).
4. Experience over hurdles seems a bonus, with eight of the last 10 winners having 10 or more runs over hurdles (8/10).
5. The top five on official ratings are a good starting point (6/10).
6. Odds seem irrelevant, with winners at 16/1 and 22/1, but seven of the last 10 have started at 10/1 or less (7/10).
7. Two trainers to follow – Nicky Henderson with two winners and Willie Mullins with two winners head the trainers list (4/10).
8. Ruby Walsh and Barry Geraghty lead the jockeys (when riding for the same stables) (4/10).
9. Winning last time out is a big bonus! (7/10)
10. Running within the last 44 days seems to be a good point as well (8/10).

## Day 2 – Wednesday 11 March 2015

### 1.30pm Neptune Novices' Hurdle

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over hurdles
2005	No Refuge	5	17/2	Howard Johnson	ENG	Graham Lee	1	1		60		G	3



2006	Nicanor	5	17/2	Noel Meade	IRE	Paul Carberry	4	1		45		G	5
2007	Massini's Maguire	6	20/1	Philip Hobbs	ENG	Richard Johnson	4	3	F	46			9
2008	Fiveforthree	6	7/1	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	13	5		28			1
2009	Mikael D'Haguenet	5	5/2	Willie Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	1	1		38			4
2010	Peddlers Cross	5	7/1	Donald McCain	ENG	Jason Maguire	1	1		53			2
2011	First Lieutenant	6	7/1	M F Morris	IRE	Davy Russell	5	1		77			4
2012	Simonsig	6	2/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	1	1	F	28			2
2013	The New One	5	7/2	Nigel Twiston-Davies	ENG	Sam Twiston-Davies	2	2	2F	46			4
2014	Faugheen	6	6/4	W.Mullins	IRE	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	74			3

1. Only look at five or six-year-olds, as they have a 100% record between them (10/10).
2. Betting shows of 17/2 or less seem the way forward, with well supported runners doing very well (9/10).
3. Willie Mullins and Ruby Walsh have won the race three times together (3/10).
4. A recent run seems less imperative here than other races, and horses off the track for over 40 days have the best chance (7/10).
5. Finishing in the first three in their last race is a real positive (9/10).
6. Less is more – horses with less than ten runs over hurdles have won the last ten renewals (10/10).
7. Stick to the top five on official ratings (9/10).

### 2.05pm RSA Chase

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences
2005	Trabolgan	7	5/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	M Fitzgerald	7	2		53		G	3
2006	Star De Mohaison	5	14/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	B.Geraghty	4	1		47		G	4
2007	Denman	7	6/5	Paul Nicholls	ENG	R.Walsh	5	1	F	32		G	4
2008	Albertas Run	7	4/1	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	A P McCoy	1	1	F	26		G	4
2009	Cooldine	7	9/4	Willie Mullins	IRE	R. Walsh	2	1	F	24		G	3
2010	Weapon's Amnesty	7	10/1	Charles Byrnes	IRE	D.Russell	6	2		38		G	5
2011	Bostons Angel	7	16/1	Mrs J Harrington	IRE	R. Power	8	1		32		G	5
2012	Bobs Worth	7	9/2	Nicky Henderson	ENG	B.Geraghty	3	2	J2F	25		G	3
2013	Lord Windermere	7	8/1	Jim Culloty	IRE	Davy Russell	6	3		32		G	5
2014	O'Faolains Boy	7	12/1	Rebecca Curtis	ENG	Barry Geraghty	14	1		25		G	3

1. Seven-year-olds are the ones to consider first (9/10).
2. They must have finished in the first three last time out (10/10).
3. The top six in the rankings based on official ratings cuts it down further (7/10).
4. No headgear please (10/10).
5. Geldings only (10/10).
6. Barry Geraghty (3) Davy Russell (2) and Ruby Walsh (2) have won most recent renewals between them (7/10).
7. It looks like a very recent run is a negative with all 10 of the winners not seeing a track for at least 24 days before victory.
8. Odds are not the most reliable guide to this race, with winners at 16/1, 14/1, 12/1 and 10/1 – though nothing at odds larger than that (10/10).
9. Some experience over fences is a necessity, with a minimum of three runs required for victory (10/10).

### 3.20pm Queen Mother Champion Chase

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences
2005	Moscow Flyer	11	6/4	Mrs J Harrington	IRE	Barry Geraghty	7	1	F	45		G	22
2006	Newmill	8	16/1	John J Murphy	IRE	Andrew McNamara	7	0		54		G	8
2007	Voy Por Ustedes	6	5/1	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	1	UR		32		G	9
2008	Master Minded	5	3/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	2	1	2F	33		G	8
2009	Master Minded	6	4/11	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	53		G	12
2010	Big Zeb	9	10/1	C A Murphy	IRE	Barry Geraghty	4	1		45		G	13
2011	Sizing Europe	9	10/1	Henry De Bromhead	IRE	A E Lynch	7	3		45		G	9

2012	Finian's Rainbow	9	4/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	3	2	2F	53		G	7
2013	Sprinter Sacre	7	1/4	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	1	1	F	46		G	7
2014	Sire De Grugy	8	11/4	Gary Moore	ENG	Jamie Moore	1	1	F	53		G	11

- Age seems irrelevant, with winners from five to 11 – so don't let a horse's age put you off.
- Inexperienced horses need not attend, with a minimum of seven races over fences required (10/10).
- Ruby Walsh and Barry Geraghty have the best records (again), with six of the last 10 winners between them (6/10).
- Odds give few clues, with winners from 1/4 all the way out to 16/1 – though most winners are priced at 5/1 or lower (7/10).
- English-trained runners still have the edge over the last decade (6/10).
- Stick to the top-four on official ratings to increase your chances (7/10).
- A good rest between races seems to be of help with a minimum 32-day rest ahead of the big race (10/10).

## Day 3 – Thursday 12 March 2015

### 2.40pm Ryanair Chase

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences
2005	Thisthatandtother	9	9/2	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	3	2	J2F	46		G	11
2006	Fondmort	10	10/3	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Mick Fitzgerald	4	3	JF	26		G	27
2007	Taranis	6	9/2	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	4	1		40		G	7
2008	Our Vic	10	4/1	David Pipe	ENG	Timmy Murphy	4	2	J2F	47	Yes	G	17
2009	Imperial Commander	8	6/1	Nigel Twiston-Davies	ENG	Paddy Brennan	6	6	2F	76		G	5
2010	Albertas Run	9	14/1	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	A P McCoy	5	2		26		G	17
2011	Albertas Run	10	6/1	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	A P McCoy	2	PU	2F	61		G	22
2012	Riverside Theatre	8	7/2	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	1	1	F	26		G	8
2013	Cue Card	7	7/2	Colin Tizzard	ENG	Joe Tizzard	4	1	2F	26		G	8
2014	Dynaste	8	3/1	David Pipe	ENG	Tom Scudamore	1	5	F	77		G	7

- Age seems irrelevant, but the younger horses have come to the top of the pecking order in the last three years, so maybe focus on seven and eight-year-olds (4/10).
- I am scared to say this, but ignore all Irish and French runners and only consider English-trained entries (10/10).
- Gelding only (10/10).
- No headgear (9/10).
- The usual suspects of trainers David Pipe, Nicky Henderson, Jonjo O'Neill and Paul Nicholls dominate here (8/10).
- The market seems a pretty good guide, with odds of 6/1 or lower being the place to be (9/10).
- Favourites and second-favourites have a great record between them (8/10).
- Stick to the top-five on official ratings (9/10).
- A place or win last time out is an added bonus (7/10).

### 3.20pm Ladbroke World Hurdle

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav?	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over hurdles
2005	Inglis Drever	6	5/1	Howard Johnson	ENG	Graham Lee	4	1		26		G	9
2006	My Way De Solzen	6	8/1	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	3	1		25		G	9
2007	Inglis Drever	8	5/1	Howard Johnson	ENG	Paddy Brennan	3	2		47		G	16
2008	Inglis Drever	9	11/8	Howard Johnson	ENG	Denis O'Regan	1	1	F	47		G	20
2009	Big Buck's	6	6/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	3	1		47		G	15
2010	Big Buck's	7	5/6	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	79		G	18
2011	Big Buck's	8	10/11	P.Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	78		G	22
2012	Big Buck's	9	5/6	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	47		G	26
2013	Solwhit	9	17/2	C Byrnes	IRE	P Carberry	10	1		54		G	15
2014	More Of That	6	15/2	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	Barry Geraghty	6	1		89		G	4

1. English-trained runners have the edge over the Irish for a change (9/10).
2. Six to eight looks to be the age group to focus on (7/10).
3. Plenty of experience is historically the way to go, with 10 or more runs the best statistic (7/10).
4. Despite four winning favourites, not one second-favourite has scored, so delete him from your equations (10/10).
5. Horses who have had a recent run do not have the best of records – look for 47 days or more since their last race (8/10).
6. No headgear, thanks (10/10).
7. Only one horse took this without winning his previous race, so look for a ‘1’ against his name (9/10).
8. Geldings only (10/10).
9. No horse has won at double-figures, so only horses at less than 10/1, please (10/10).

## Day Four – Friday 13 March 2015

### 1.30pm Triumph Hurdle

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav?	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over hurdles
2005	Penzance	4	9/1	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	10	1		20		G	3
2006	Detroit City	4	7/2	Philip Hobbs	ENG	Richard Johnson	5	1	F	41	YES	G	3
2007	Katchit	4	11/2	Alan King	ENG	Robert Thornton	1	1	2F	48		G	6
2008	Celestial Halo	4	5/1	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	4	2	2F	41		G	2
2009	Zaynar	4	11/2	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	2	1		55	YES	G	2
2010	Soldatino	4	6/1	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Berry Geraghty	1	1		20		G	1
2011	Zarkandar	4	13/2	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Daryl Jacob	19	1		20		G	1
2012	Countrywide Flame	4	33/1	John Quinn	ENG	Dougie Costello	12	3		33		G	6
2013	Our Conor	4	4/1	D T Hughes	IRE	Bryan Cooper	1	1	J2F	34		G	3
2014	Tiger Roll	4	10/1	Gordon Elliott	IRE	Davy Russell	11	2		33		G	2

1. English-trained horses have held sway overall, even though the Irish have won the last two renewals (8/10).
2. No surprise to see the top trainers monopolising: Nicholls (2), Henderson (2), King (2) and Hobbs (1) (7/10).
3. A good run last time out is imperative, with 10/10 in the first three – winners are the ones to use to cut things down though (7/10).
4. Opposing the favourite would have made you good money over the years, with just the one winner in ten (9/10).
5. That said, outsiders don't do that well, so look for anything at 10/1 or below and your chances increase (9/10).
6. Those ranked highly on official ratings (in the top-five) do well enough, though there have been plenty of shocks as well (6/10).
7. A sensible gap between the last race and this one has been an advantage over the years, preferably 30 days or more (7/10).
8. No ladies or horses again, please – all renewals have been won by geldings (10/10).
9. Too much experience could be a bad thing – look for a horse with between one and three runs over hurdles if you want to reduce your list further (8/10).

### 3.20pm Cheltenham Gold Cup

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences
2005	Kicking King	7	4/1	Tom Taaffe	IRE	Barry Geraghty	12	1	F	82		G	11
2006	War Of Attrition	7	15/2	M F Morris	IRE	C O'Dwyer	18	2		79		G	9
2007	Kauto Star	7	5/4	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	1	1	F	34		G	10
2008	Denman	8	9/4	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Sam Thomas	3	1	2F	34		G	8
2009	Kauto Star	9	7/4	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Ruby Walsh	2	1	F	77		G	19
2010	Imperial Commander	9	7/1	Nigel Twiston-Davies	ENG	Paddy Brennan	3	5		83		G	9
2011	Long Run	6	7/2	Nicky Henderson	ENG	S Waley-Cohen	2	1	F	62		G	5
2012	Synchronised	9	8/1	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	A P McCoy	3	1		79		G	8
2013	Bobs Worth	8	11/4	Nicky Henderson	ENG	Barry Geraghty	3	1	F	104		G	5
2014	Lord Windermere	8	20/1	Jim Culloty	IRE	Davy Russell	12	8		33		G	9

1. No horse wearing headgear has won a Gold Cup in the last 10 years (10/10).
2. The betting is more informative than I expected – look for a horse priced at 8/1 or less (9/10).
3. English-trained runners do better than Irish-trained runners (7/10).
4. Age-wise seven to nine-year-olds are the ones to seriously consider (9/10).
5. Favourites and second-favourites account for more

winner than in any race I have assessed so far (6/10).

6. Also look for horses with 10 or less career outings over fences (perhaps surprisingly) (8/10).
7. Add horses who won or placed in the first three last time out (8/10), with winners your first port of call (7/10).
8. The top three in the official ratings for my final cut (7/10).

#### 4.00pm Cheltenham Foxhunter Chase

Year	Winner	Age	Odds	Trainer	Nationality	Jockey	ORR	LTO	Fav	Days Since Last Run	HG	Sex	Number of previous runs over fences (inc P2P)
2005	Sleeping Night	9	7/2	Paul Nicholls	ENG	Mr C J Sweeney	1	1	F	28		G	12
2006	Whyso Mayo	9	20/1	Raymond Hurley	IRE	Mr D Murphy	8	UR		32		G	22
2007	Drombeag	9	20/1	Jonjo O'Neill	ENG	Mr J T McNamara	7	10		325	YES	G	9
2008	Amicelli	9	33/1	Mrs C A Coward	ENG	Mr O Greenhall	6	PU		314		G	8
2009	Cappa Bleu	7	11/2	Mrs Edward Crow	ENG	Mr R Burton	15	1	2F	320		G	4
2010	Baby Run	10	9/2	Nigel Twiston-Davies	ENG	Sam Twiston-Davies	5	1	JF	21		G	9
2011	Zemsky	8	33/1	I R Ferguson	IRE	Mr Derek O'Connor	13	1		30	YES	G	16
2012	Salsify	7	7/1	Rodger Sweeney	IRE	Mr C J Sweeney	6	1		33		G	13
2013	Salsify	8	2/1	Rodger Sweeney	IRE	Mr C J Sweeney	1	1	F	34		G	19
2014	Tammys Hill	9	15/2	Liam Lennon	IRE	Mr J J Smyth	1	3		20		G	29

1. Look for an eight or nine-year-old to keep the stats on your side here (7/10).
2. Ten or more races over fences (including point to points labelled 'PTP' on the form) (6/10).
3. In the top 10 on official ratings (8/10).
4. Ran within the last 40 days (7/10).
5. A gelding (no horses or mares) (10/10).
6. No head gear (8/10).
7. Finished in the first three last time out (7/10).

## Conclusions

At this early stage I cannot give you any horse names, merely mini-lists and facts for you to go through. History is inclined to repeat itself in these types of races, and all I can say is I hope it does so again, as I will be following up all my hard work with my own cash! Once you know the runners, I suggest you go through the list of stats per race, striking out horses that fail to qualify – then either a) make your decision from the remaining list; or b) back them all (depending on how many you have left).

### THE PATRIARCH PRESENTS

## How to Profit by Using The Racing Post's Cheltenham Goldmine

Everyone likes to have a say for Cheltenham and I am no different, so I'll just add my voice to the

chorus. It won't be actual tips; rather general advice which hopefully might point in the direction of some winners. With the coming of betting exchanges, one sure-fire winning approach was reckoned to be laying every horse at the festival that started at a price of 3-1 or less (that's 4.00 in the decimal format, in which [www.betfair.com](http://www.betfair.com) and other betting exchanges operate).

I had the feeling that last year's festival results might have proved the theory to be wrong, so I took a closer look at what happened then. I was slightly surprised to find that the idea was successful then too. Using ordinary starting price, I found that 15 runners started at 3-1 or lower and of these there were 11 successful lays – or in other words, they produced four winners. These winners made a profit of 8 points, so the 11 successful lays were in profit by 3 points – not a fortune, to be sure, but still a profit of 20%. As I've said before, it makes the miniscule annual returns on ISAs etc look rather uninviting.

However, I'm rather hesitant this year at proposing the idea, when I consider some of the runners of trainers such as Willie Mullins, Nicky Henderson, Paul Nicholls and others, whose short-priced favourites at this early stage look capable of producing a crop of winners. For example, the opening day of the festival looks especially doubtful for the idea. Going by the prices available as I write, there are four horses that seem sure to start at 3-1 or less, and these are Douvan, Un de Sceaux, Faugheen and Annie Power. It would be a brave punter who would lay all of these. I'm not that punter. I'll leave the first day alone and see what happens, and then con-

tinue with the strategy on the remaining three days.

Having written the above, I began to have some niggling doubts about the strategy, wondering if, perhaps, the festival has changed in recent years. The plan used to be consistently successful, and although, as I've shown for last year it was profitable again, that profit was relatively small.

So, I decided to check out the previous two years – 2013 and 2012. Honesty demands that I tell you what I discovered: 2013 showed a small loss and 2012 was near enough all square. Perhaps the idea has come to the end of its shelf life, which does happen with systems, and that's why this year's results will be of particular interest.

My next suggestion may not produce single tips, but should help reduce the big fields to more manageable numbers. And remember, with the big prices available at Cheltenham, it can be a good idea to back two, or even more, in the one race. Since Prestbury Park is a very individual and distinctive course, it is clear that some horses are very well suited to it – and some are not. For more than most other courses, therefore, we are looking for horses that have proved they can win there, and better still, over the distance of the race. We are looking then for C and D winners ('C' stands for course and 'D' stands for distance).

At [www.racingpost.com](http://www.racingpost.com), by accessing the race cards in the usual manner (Cards – Today's Cards – Show all race cards for this meeting on one page), we need to look for a 'CD' next to the horse's name, as shown in the example below:

**3:45 BATHWICK TYRES HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 2) (4yo+) Winner £11,078 7 runners 2m1f Soft ATR**

**Race Conditions:** £17,500 guaranteed For 4yo+ Weight raised 3 Minimum weight 10-0 Penalties after February 7th, each hurdle won 7lb **Dell Arca's Handicap Mark:** 145 Entries: 10 pay £65 Penalty value: 1st £11,077.50 2nd £3,272.50 3rd £1,636.25 4th £819.00 5th £409.50

NO. FORM	HORSE	AGE	WGT	TRAINER	RTP%	JOCKEY	OR	TS	RPR
1 42552	<b>Dell Arca</b> 24 Shokohov (IRE) — Daisy Belle (GER) (Acatenango (GER))	6	11-12	David Pipe <sup>70</sup>		Tom Scudamore	145	140	147
2 216-38	<b>Fox Norton</b> h 101 Lando (GER) — Natt Musk (FR) (Kendor (FR))	5	11-7	Nick Williams <sup>50</sup>		Noel Fehily	140	113	147
3 2P-951	<b>Tornado In Milan</b> 21 Milan — Julka (GER) (Nebos (GER))	9	11-0	Evan Williams <sup>44</sup>		Paul Moloney	133	131	144
4 62151	<b>Dusky Lark</b> 12 Nayef (USA) — Snow Gosse (Polar Falcon (USA))	10	10-10	Colin Tezzard <sup>47</sup>		Daryl Jacob	129	124	144
5 P0-248	<b>Lough Kent</b> 50 Sarathes (IRE) — King's Doll (IRE) (King's Best (USA))	6	10-10	Nicky Henderson <sup>78</sup>		Nico de Boerville <sup>3</sup>	129	119	148
6 21-6	<b>Ibis Du Rheu</b> 24 Blau Bresl (FR) — Dona Du Rheu (FR) (Doni Pasquari (FR))	4	10-5	Faiz Hachou <sup>70</sup>		Sam Twiston-Davies	133	90	149
7 38-625	<b>Ronaldinho</b> h 45 Jeremy (USA) — Spring Glory (Dr Fong (USA))	5	10-0	Alan King <sup>50</sup>		Wayne Hutchinson	119	138	147

**Betting forecast:** 3/1 **Dell Arca**, 9/2 Tornado In Milan, 5/1 Dusky Lark, 6/1 Fox Norton, 6/1 Ibis Du Rheu, 6/1 Ronaldinho, 8/1 Lough Kent.

Can you see the 'CD' above? It indicates that those horses are course and distance winners. Incidentally, a 'D' on its own signals a distance winner and the 'BF' stands for beaten favourite (not 'big, friendly').

It doesn't have to be in a festival race, though that is very good, but in any good Cheltenham race, including the January trials.

We now go to the *Racing Post*: we'll deal with the RP ratings first. ('RP' stands simply for Racing Post.) A trainer will naturally use actual races to build up and improve his horse for Cheltenham. If he's successful in doing so, it should show in improving RP ratings

leading up to the festival. So, we are looking for runners whose RP ratings improve through the season, with their latest one being the highest.

This information is available via a dedicated table in the *Racing Post* newspaper. At [www.racingpost.com](http://www.racingpost.com), I believe you have to be a member to access the RPR (*Racing Post* rating) and Top speed tables (see below):

VERDICT	COMMENTS	MY NOTES	STATS	POSTDATA	OR	RPR	TOPSPEED	SELECTIONS	PAST WINNERS	BETTING
ADJ	TS	HORSE/WGT		LAST 6 RPR				LAST YR	BEST RPR	
								GOING	DIST	COURSE
139	120	Avista 10-12		125 117 132 121 139 136			139	139	—	—
126	113	Midnight Jazz 10-12		111 98 123 121 123 126			126	126	—	—
125	95	Leaderofthedance 10-12		— — — 113 125 39			125	113	39	—
125	85	Spellbound 10-12		— 99 105 105 104 125			125	125	125	125
122	87	Mother Melrum 10-12		— — — — 106 122			122	106	—	—
121	103	Mistress Mole 10-12		— — 119 84 81 121			121	119	—	119
118	61	Acas Over Eight's 10-12		— — 114 117 104 118			118	104	—	—
116	98	Glennaff 10-12		— 117 109 127 110 116			127	127	110	—
107	57	What A Jewel 10-12		— — 102 114 107 86			114	86	—	—
106	58	Madam Be 10-12		— — 101 99 96 101			101	96	—	—
102	28	Bella 10-2		— — — 64 97 102			102	102	—	102
100	36	Barrs Lane 10-12		— 91 110 105 100			100	100	0	91
82	51	Wojciech 10-12		— — 63 59 107 82			107	82	—	—
—	36	Cloudy Lady 10-12		— 105 76 107 107 78			—	76	78	—

RACING POST RATINGS SELECTION: **Avista** **SP** **Ret now**

This is how an RPR table is usually presented at [www.racingpost.com](http://www.racingpost.com) and similarly in the actual newspaper. I would like to draw your attention to Spellbound, who is a horse that so nearly has a perfect progression in RPR from left to right, with his progression of 99, 105, 105, 104, and 125. There is another horse, Bella, whose RPR rating has increased from 64, to 97 and then 102.

If you can spot this kind of a progression with a Cheltenham horse, that will be a real positive.

In exactly the same way, and for the same reasons, we look at Top speed figures. Again, we want our horse's last, most-recent Top speed figure to be the best one it has achieved throughout the season. All the necessary information is easily available in the *Racing Post* and the combination of these factors that I've dealt with should direct us towards some lively contenders.

Here's an example below. Look at At Reception. This horse's latest Top speed figure is the horse's best of the season.

VERDICT	COMMENTS	MY NOTES	STATS	POSTDATA	OR	RPR	TOPSPEED	SELECTIONS	PAST WINNERS	BETTING
ADJ	TS	HORSE/WGT		LAST 6 RATINGS				LAST YR	BEST TOPSPEED	
								GOING	DIST	COURSE
110	120	Solvey Sam 10-13		81 110			84 58 87	110	138	—
109	119	Playhara 11-9		42 71 107 46			— 91 109	107 71	109	
108	118	At Reception 11-9		73 60 64 84 84 108			108	84	—	
104	119	Ballythomas 10-13		63 — 71 104			— 104	104	104 71	
94	120	Always Tippy 11-12		44 75 42 75 75 94			94	75	—	
90	116	Not A Bother Boy 10-12		— — 61 — 71 90			90	61	— 61	
89	119	Harris 11-3		— — — — 89			104	84 30	0	
83	—	Cruachan 10-13		16 49 83 33 54 78			—	83	—	
80	114	A Hairy Koala 11-2		— 73 — 80 — 58			80	73	—	
78	120	Minella Hero 10-11		82 — 53 — — 78			78	112	—	
77	119	Wordy's Boy 11-7		51 — 11 — 77			77	90	— 0	
75	121	Waterlock 11-7		— — — 75 67 — 75			—	67	—	
73	111	The Cobbler Swayne 11-0		— — 62 — — 63 73			73	63 73	—	
73	89	Halcyon Days 10-9		— — — — — 73 73			—	73	—	
69	—	Agesilas 10-0		32 — 76 — — — 0			77	76 76	—	
66	120	Green Wizard 11-7		70 — — — 46 66 40			70	119	118 118	
40	118	Azure Aware 11-7		— — 83 36 — 40 — 40			40	83	—	

My final piece of advice for Cheltenham came from a racing friend a year or two ago, and strangely enough it cropped up in a general sense in something I read just the other day. What he said was this: consider very carefully any horse wearing any kind of headgear that is doing so for the first time in any race at the festival.

To back up his claim, he pointed to these three winners from the festival in 2013 (I've checked them and it's all true)... First there was Flaxen Flare, in blinkers, winning at a Betfair price of 40.0. Then we had Beneficient,

with a hood, winning at 27.93. Finally, there was Same Difference, in a visor, coming in at 18.21. Obviously there would have been some losers – how many I don't know – but I can't think there would have been very many sporting headgear for the very first time.

Perhaps at this point it's worth mentioning the various types of headgear that can be worn, and how it is shown in the *Racing Post*, for example. Different kinds of headgear are shown by different letters coming immediately after the horse's name on the race card: the letter 'b' shows blinkers; for a visor it is 'v'; and for a hood it is 'h'. Then we have 'e/s' for an eye shield; 't' for a tongue strap; and 'p' for cheek pieces. But most importantly, and what we are looking for, is the number 1 coming immediately after the letter, to indicate that it is being worn for the very first time. We can also hope that the number 1 will also show its position at the end of the race. Look out for a horse like this one:

| Tea Caddy tb 1  
47 Kadastrof (FR) — Li

Tea Caddy has the letters 'tb' after its name and the number 1, indicating a first time.

By coincidence, what I read the other day was that by backing every horse that was wearing headgear for the first time in National Hunt racing this year, you would have made a profit. This is certainly something worth investigation.

## REVIEWS

# Home-Grown Systems and Higher-Risk Strategies...

I spoke about having a betting portfolio in January's edition of *WRWM* and it is something I practise myself. So how does my betting portfolio look?

There are high-risk strategies which increase your returns by employing a staking plan where profits can skyrocket – but risk also, likewise, sky-rockets. With these strategies you need an element of luck as far as a decent run of results is concerned. I also take out my initial stake money, should my betting bank double, and then start again with OPM (other people's money...) When I review the Home-Grown betting strategies below, I'll share the high-risk alternative staking plans for you, as an alternative to the more conventional, and safer staking plans.

On to the Home-Grown system updates...

## Banker Bets

Did you know that I have been providing free banker bets (for the football) for you at [www.whatreallywins](http://www.whatreallywins)

[money.co.uk](http://money.co.uk) for going on three months now? They can be found under the title 'Bankers and Blowouts' and the strikerate from November 2014 to date is 89.6%. A 27-point profit to date is excellent, betting 10% of your starting bank (if you began with £100, your continued stake would be £10).

As I have been speaking about higher-risk staking plans, well, given the strike rate is so high, why not continue using level stakes, only this time increase the stakes to an eye-watering 33%? To a £100 starting stake, and keeping that stake at £33, has brought a 64-point profit. As football matches tend to kick off at the same regular times (3pm, 5pm, 7.45pm and so forth), I have been restricted solely to level-stakes betting. In order to look at riskier staking plans, I have decided to select one football match at one time and ensure the next football match does not kick off until the result of the first match is known.

The best starting point is to increase stakes as the betting bank increases, rather than rely solely on level stakes.

As we are teetering on an 86% strikerate, I decided to start betting with 20% of the betting bank; so to a £100 starting bank, with the first stake at £20, we have accrued a 42-point profit over 97 bets. This staking plan is riskier because when we hit a losing bet, the stake lost is greater than level stakes.

## Two-Horse Race Placers

Here we have two consecutive years of very good profits from the simplest of strategies. Selections are available for you at [www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk](http://www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk) under the imaginatively entitled heading 'Two-Horse Race Placers'. What you'll see is something like this:

**7 120 Chelmsford Betting Forecast:** 5/6 Zamoura, 100/30 Pin Up, 6/1 Duchess Of Marmite.

The '7' at the beginning tells us the number of runners. In this case the place-only market pays out for two places only. The Betting Forecast comes from [www.racingpost.com](http://www.racingpost.com) and the information is freely available. The idea here is to back the live market favourite in the Place-Only market at [www.betfair.com](http://www.betfair.com), as long as the place only odds fall between 1.1 and 1.5.

2015 is still young and the strategy has made only 2.7 points profit. How about a riskier staking plan? Well, I have two years of results to work with and this is the staking plan which profited in both of those years. How about a staking plan which has turned the same selections into a bank of £5,374 from a £100 starting bank, in 2013? How about a staking plan which followed that up in 2014 with a profit of £2,177? The largest stake in 2013 was £307 and that was when the betting bank reached £4,000. I tend to look at the largest stake size when determining which staking plans to choose.

In 2014 the largest stake size was £310, which again is tolerable given the profits reached. And what is this staking plan? Well, that's the tricky part, as it forms part of a group of staking plans within [www.thestakingmachine.com](http://www.thestakingmachine.com). An explanation for this staking plan can be found at <http://www.thestakingmachine.com/pro.php>.

This staking plan looks to win a target amount with each bet and employs an element of loss retrieval. Therein lies your higher risk! But the rewards, as we see (remembering from a £100 starting bank), suggests the risk may be worth it. Of course, the more bets you make, then theoretically the more profit you will make.

These profits were accrued looking to win £5 per race... Are you willing to take the risk? Do you realise your betting bank may reduce below your starting bank at some stage? Do you have faith in the 2013 and 2014 results being replicated in 2015? If your answer is yes, then increase the risk and potential reward!

### Laying the Top Weight in Handicaps at All-Weather Meetings

I wonder what the betting criteria here is? Simply follow the heading! Lay the singular top-weight in handicap races at All-Weather-only meetings (perhaps avoiding Chelmsford as it is a new venue in 2015). One caveat: lay any selection as long as their odds are below 10 decimals in [www.betfair.com](http://www.betfair.com)'s lay column.

A 104-point profit for 2014 is excellent, considering this is such a simple strategy. The profit was made using level-stakes laying, i.e. looking to win £10 per bet. And how about high-risk, higher-reward staking plans? Let's see if we can increase 2014's 104-points profit.

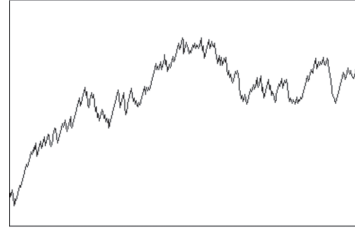
How about a 288-point profit? Then use this staking plan, laying all handicap top weights priced at 10 or lower. This staking plan is called the 1-4 staking plan, details of which can be found here at <http://www.thestakingmachine.com/lay14.php>.

Your maximum stake at any one time is £40, which means the money at risk is determined by the odds of the bet. Is this staking plan worth the risk? So far in 2015, we are running at a 9-point loss using the original level-stakes staking plan, so using the higher-risk 1-4 staking plan has resulted in an 89-point loss. The higher-risk staking plan giveth (2014) and the higher risk staking plan taketh away (2015 to date!).

Incidentally, if you had used this staking plan (1-4) on all selections, without restricting to laying at odds of 10 or lower, you would have profited in 2014 and currently be profiting in 2015. Risk is heightened because your liabilities will increase with the bigger-priced lays. I'll update you on performance throughout 2015, as I hope we will see another year-long profit.

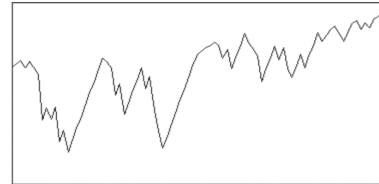
### Irish Bumpers

Laying the favourite in National Hunt Flat races in Ireland only was a profitable strategy in 2014. This strategy made 41-points profit, but the profit graph is not as encouraging as the two preceding strategies:



In this case, the beginning of 2014, right through the summer, produced some excellent results for the layers. The system then plodded from thereon in.

A higher risk alternative? How about the 1-4 laystaking plan again, which made a 113-point profit, nearly tripling the level-stakes profit. This staking plan has produced a 19-point profit for 2015 compared to a level stake loss currently of 1.2 points. Again, the higher-risk staking option seems to be paying off. We have to, though, accept a bit of a roller-coaster ride and maintain faith in the staking plan delivering a profit at year-end. Long-term focus is the key. The graph is a little less straightforward. It'll be interesting to see the long-term performance of all of these high-risk staking plans.



### The Worst Performing Favourites on the All-Weather

This is a strategy where I expected a possibly profitable lay system to emerge. But I was wrong! It pays to keep an open mind at times. Selecting qualifying bets is as easy as pie. We focus on All-Weather race meetings. Below you'll see two All-Weather meetings: Lingfield (AW) and Wolverhampton (AW). Guess what the 'AW' stands for? Your next job is to click on the FAVOURITES link, and take note of the race types with the smallest percentage of favourites winning. In the case of Lingfield below, which race type has the smallest percentage of winning favourites?

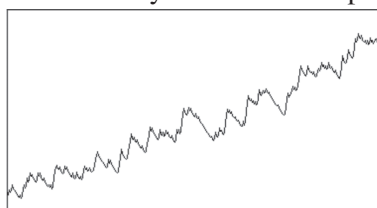
BY FAVOURITES		NON HANDICAP		HANDICAP	
WINS	PLACES	WINS	PLACES	WINS	PLACES
2yo	89	201	44	15	29
3yo	201	390	52	146	33
4yo	116	275	42	295	33
TOTAL	406	866	47	456	33

If you answered '2yo HANDICAP with 29%' then go to the top of the class. Your next step is to note the race times for any qualifying races. A '2 yo (year old) HANDICAP' is also known as a 'nursery handicap'. On this particular day, there are no nursery handicaps and therefore no qualifying bets.

When you do find a bet, you become a backer rather than a layer. Yes, I know: you'd have thought that laying favourites in the worse-performing races for favourites on the All-Weather would profit well. It doesn't, as you'll see below!

Simply backing the favourite in these qualifying races this year would have produced a 63-point profit which is excellent. Whether it has the consistency to profit again in 2015 we're yet to find out.

How would you like to see a profit graph like this one?



It looks excellent, doesn't it? And what if I told you that I could turn £100 into £1,093 with maximum stake of £27.50 and minimum stake of £10: would that interest you? It certainly piqued my interest.

This is what I look for in a betting system. A steady upwards profit. That the maximum stake is very reasonable. This staking plan is called 'Rolling Doubles' and a discussion on the plan can be found at [http://www.thestakingmachine.com/rolling\\_doubles.php](http://www.thestakingmachine.com/rolling_doubles.php). Rolling Doubles is a high-risk strategy and so far in 2015 we're suffering a 4-point loss.

The hope is that there will be enough winning favourites over the year, in these races, to ensure another profit.

Higher-risk staking plans? You can't get higher risk than our good pal loss retrieval. Profit of 129 points last year and 11-points profit so far in 2015 augurs well for this loss retrieval plan, which is called 'The Bookies Bank', a full explanation of which can be found at <http://www.thestakingmachine.com/bookiesbank.php>.

## Maidens, Claimers and Selling Stakes Races at All-Weather Venues

This betting strategy is easy. At all All-Weather '(AW)' venues, take a note of all maiden, claiming stakes and selling stakes races. Put them in time order, and lay the favourites.

A 72-point profit just laying each favourite to level stakes. Nice, simple, profitable. If you want to limit your risk to a tenner, for example, you'd still have made

63-points profit in 2014 using fixed liability laying.

Higher risk staking plans... Do you fancy boosting that profit to 207 points? Of course you do! It'll require a little more high risk. Welcome again to the 1-4 lay staking plan, details to remind you of which can be found at <http://www.thestakingmachine.com/lay14.php>.

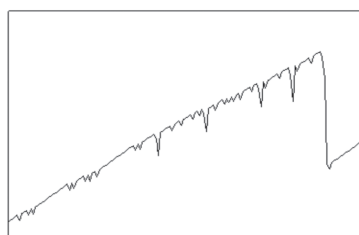
This strategy keeps giving. I featured a 'lay ladder' last month. Here's the basic idea: we lay all selections priced at odds of 3.5 or higher.

Bet 1 – Lay Horse A at odds of 3.5 for £10. The horse wins. You lost £25 because as a layer you want the horse to lose.

Bet 2 – Lay Horse B at odds of 3.5 to win £10 and £25 lost from Bet 1. Horse wins. You lose £87.50.

Bet 3 – Lay Horse C at odds of 3.5 to win £10 and £25 lost from Bet 1 and £87.50 lost from Bet 2. The horse loses. You win.

Let's look at the profit graph which shows the quick rewards but also the risk when we hit three losers:



A £100 betting bank quickly turned into £1,116. Then the moment of truth arrived: we hit a sticky patch of four consecutive losing lays. After the three-bet betting cycle ended, the betting bank was reduced to £453. The bank stands at £623 which is the profit figure for 2014: a reasonable return. The money lost when we hit four losers was OPM (other people's money).

Higher-risk staking plans again boost the betting bank considerably.

## Bottom Line

These are the standout profitable strategies at the moment. I have received a number of emails from [www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk](http://www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk) readers asking if there are any higher-risk staking plans, so I hope this article answers those questions. There are other strategies I'm working on, such as laying handicap favourites to place, laying the favourite in Irish chases (promising), and looking at novice chases and handicap chases. All are works in progress. I have some great new ideas to follow up in other-than-horse racing arenas, which I'll share with you when I make a breakthrough.

Remember to check out [www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk](http://www.whatreallywinsmoney.co.uk) for my selections, and new strategies.

Good luck at Cheltenham!