

RUBY'S RED HOT TIPS

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL



RUBY WALSH

TUESDAY MARCH 12

DAY ONE

1.30PM SUPREME NOVICES HURDLE

It's very open but **Aramon** has form and the highest level and could be value each-way in the opening race of Cheltenham 2019.

2.10PM: ARKLE CHASE

The one that interests me is **Defi Du Seuil** if he drops back in trip here instead of running in Thursday's 2m 4f JLT Chase. But he mightn't. Willie Mullins' **Duc Des Genievres** or Gordon Elliott's **Hardline** looks solid Irish challengers too.

2.50PM: FESTIVAL HANDICAP CHASE

If **Up for Review** runs in this for Willie Mullins he'll have a lovely racing weight and a really good chance.

3.30PM CHAMPION HURDLE

I ride **Laurina** has the potential to win a Champion Hurdle but she'll have to improve by about 7lb to thwart Buveur D'air & Apples Jade. I hope she can.

4.10PM MARES HURDLE

Benie Des Dieux looks my best ride of the meeting. She's unbeaten since we got her and I hope it stays that way on Tuesday!

4.50PM NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE

Riders On the Storm was a good winner in Punchestown and could still be improving in a very competitive handicap. I'd also be looking out for **Tower Bridge**.

5.30PM NATIONAL HUNT CHASE

This looks a match between **Ballyward** and **OK Corral** and I'm hoping Ballward and Patrick Mullins can come out on top.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13

DAY TWO

1.30PM BALLYMORE HURDLE

BattleoverDoyen was one of the few horses in Ireland to take your eye when winning a maiden hurdle and followed it up at Navan and looks hard to beat. If **Easy Game** runs he could be an each-way play having won a couple of Grade 3 contests.

2.10PM RSA CHASE

I don't think we'll have any runners but I'd love to be able to ride Gordon Elliott's **Delta Work** as he looks hard to beat in this.

3.30PM CHAMPION CHASE

We all know how good **Altior** is so if it all goes the way it's gone before - we'll be all running for the places against Nicky Henderson's superstar.

4.10PM CROSS COUNTRY CHASE

Tiger Roll won this before winning the Grand National last year and should win this race again. **Auvergnat** each-way looks a play also.

4.50PM FRED WINTER JUVENILE HURDLE

La Sorelita has been disappointing since her first run in Leopardstown but started favourite and

finished a long way third to Surin beat Gardens of Babylon at Fairyhouse. If she can improve on that she might have an each-way chance at a price.

5.30PM CHAMPION BUMPER

We only have one bumper runner this year in **Blue Sari**, so he's our best hope in Wednesday's finale. He's only a four-year-old though and while his one won was impressive - the favourite **Envoi Allen** may be too tough for him.

THURSDAY MARCH 14

DAY THREE

1.30PM JLT CHASE

Duc De Genieve could have an each-way chance in a race where there mightn't be too many runners if a couple defect to the Arkle Chase. If **Defi Du Seuil** runs here - he should win.

2.10PM PERTEMPS FINAL HURDLE

We've nothing in this race but if I was pushed I'd go for **Sykes** each-way. He looks an improver.

2.50PM THE RYANAIR CHASE

Min has won over 2m 4f over fences while Footpad did win in France as a juvenile hurdler over the trip. Noel Meade's **Tout Est Permis** could run a big race for the sponsors.

3.30PM STAYERS HURDLE

Faugheen has recovered from his fall behind Apples Jade at Christmas but **Paisley Park** has been the stand-out stayer this season and he's going to be hard to beat. But I'm hopeful Faugheen can run a big race and I'm really looking forward to riding him.

4.50PM MARES NOVICE HURDLE

Epatante has been winning very well but I am a **Honeysuckle** fan.

5.30PM KIM MUIR CHALLENGE CUP

Livelovelaugh could run here but I'm not sure the 3m 2f trip will suit. I think my dad's horse **Any Second Now** has a good chance. I think the trip will suit him.

FRIDAY MARCH 15

DAY FOUR

1.30PM TRIUMPH HURDLE

Sir Erec has been touted as the Irish banker and he was very impressive winner at the Dublin Racing Festival. **Tiger Tap Tap** was only beaten a neck by him in a maiden hurdle at Christmas but was well behind him the last time. We've done a lot more work with Tiger Tap so hopefully he can get a lot closer this time.

2.10PM COUNTY HURDLE

Whiskey Sour finished third here last year and is only 1lb higher in the weights. He could be interesting for us.

2.50PM ALBERTT BARTLETT NOVICES' HURDLE

The one big stat that stands out in this race is that horses need at least three runs over hurdles to

triumph. Our **Allaho** just meets that criteria and looks to be improving after his win at Clonmel but you might want something more battle-hardened.

3.30PM CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP

We've three live chances in **Bellshill**, **Kemboy** and **Al Boum Photo**. It's easy to make a case for each one but it's also easy to pick holes in their form also. I hope I pick the right one.

It's very open and the fact that **Presenting Percy** has only had one run over hurdles this season - and no runs over fences outside of novice company - is not a textbook preparation for a Gold Cup.

That could make him vulnerable. Paul Nicholls' **Clan Des Obeaux** has been the massive improver all season since winning the King George and then

following up at Ascot. The more rain the better for last year's winner up **Native River**.

4.10PM FOXHUNTER'S CHASE

Ucello Conti looks the one they must beat in what's known as the amateur's Gold Cup.

4.50PM GRAND ANNUAL CHASE

Cadmium could be our only runner here but doesn't look to have much in hand of the handicapper. Joseph O'Brien's **Us and Them** could be a player if he ran in this race.

5.30PM MARTIN PIPE

Dallas Des Pictons has improved all season but if Uradel doesn't make it into the Coral Cup he could be a leading player here to close out this year's Festival.

RUBY WALSH NAP

Benie Des Dieux MARES HURDLE TUESDAY

Lucky 15

Ballyward NATIONAL HUNT CHASE TUESDAY
Altior CHAMPION CHASE WEDNESDAY

Delta Work RSA CHASE WEDNESDAY
Sir Erec TRIUMPH HURDLE FRIDAY