

The week that was: 11th – 17th Dec 2017

Handicappers to follow?

Chasers

Bernardelli (15.12.17 Bangor) Not too much to say about this old rogue except that, as noted at the time of this run, he has won on the third start of the season for the last four years and as such he is worth watching on his next run. No doubt the headgear will switch again. If he is a decent price he may be worth playing just on that basis alone.

Wotzizname (15.12.17 Cheltenham) This lightly raced chaser found Cheltenham's fences all a bit too much and I think you can put a line through this. Maybe he will be underestimated when he next runs but he needs returning to a track with easier fences. He must have lost ground at nearly every jump here and never got into a rhythm. He had won a C3 novice handicap chase at Exeter before this and maybe this course/grade was beyond him.

Hurdlers

Okotoks (15.12.17 Cheltenham) Owner Malcolm Denmark appears to have moved a few horses from Tony Martin and Fergal O'Brien has been one of the beneficiaries. This horse was weak enough in the market when making his seasonal reappearance and stable debut here. He was also plenty fresh/keen in a slowly run race. In the end it was a rather tame effort which suggested that better days lie ahead. I want to keep an eye on him as he is lightly raced in handicaps and there should be more to come given the ability he has shown in his career to date. (NHF + maiden hurdle wins) It could be Fergal has a plan.

John Constable (16.12.17 Chelt) He ran in the International Hurdle here and maybe he's had his sights raised outside of handicap company. Pre-race Evan Williams wasn't that confident of a big run, citing how the horse usually comes alive in the spring. However, I'm sure this one went into many a notebook here, probably along with *Chitibello*. They both travelled ominously well here before fading late on. Maybe this race won't work out that well but this was eye-catching and no doubt Evan has a plan. He is only 6 and there could be more to come this season. He is going to pop up in a decent race somewhere next year.

Shantou Bob (15.11.17 Cheltenham) This run indicated that this lightly raced 9-year-old could win another big field handicap much like the one at Chepstow last December. He is clearly a talented beast but he needs everything to drop right. He is a dour stayer and the bigger the field and the stronger the gallop, the better. This race would not have suited given there was a lone front runner who dictated and nearly held on. He got outpaced at a crucial stage but rallied again after the last, beaten 8l in the end. A combination of a big field, strong pace, 3m, soft, C2 could see him win a race this season, provided they can keep him sound. He's only raced in 4 handicap hurdles over 3m+.

Both **Arthurs Gift** and **Jester Jet** ran good races also and have more wins in them. The former clearly stays well and may benefit from an even stronger pace. He could be a staying chaser of the future. Jester Jet may have just got bogged down after the last here, having done most of his winning on a sounder surface. He still looks progressive. **Sykes** seems back to his best and could make all again some point soon. This was a decent run, with unexposed horses around him.

Stats The Way To Do It

Harry Bannister

Our own Nick Mazur got in touch and asked me to have a look at Harry Bannister's stats, having caught his eye. (as an aside I'm always open to such research ideas for my weekly articles)

Harry lost his claim early in 2017 and that can lead to a lack of opportunities for a young jockey. Not for Harry.

I have just focussed on all his rides in 2017 to date and the stats are quite something...

167 bets / 39 wins / 72 places / 23% sr / +72 SP / +104 BFSP / AE 1.27

Odds-

- 28/1+ : 0/17,0p
- 13/2 or shorter SP: 32/103,59p, +40 BFSP, AE 1.21

Just looking at those priced 25/1 or shorter SP...

The Trainers

A jockey's fortunes can be linked to who they ride for and Harry appears to have some noteworthy supporters, most notably Harry Whittington. (who I should take a closer look at in future) I don't know if he is officially stable jockey but it does look that way. As such when he rides a HW horse it may not be significant (in terms of 'oh, he's booked jockey X') but he can clearly ride. The following link ups may be worth keeping an eye on. When riding for...

- Mick Easterby: 6/15, 9p, +13
- W Greatrex: 5/17,8p, +54
- Charlie Mann: 7/27,13p, +38
- Henry Oliver: 2/6,3p, +12
- H Whittington: 17/62,31p, +19

Race Type

Focusing on his rides in standard (non novice/seller etc) handicaps (Chases + Hurdles) (25/1< guide)

79 bets / 24 wins / 36 places / 30% sr / +95 SP / +121 BFSP / AE 1.67

Plenty of these mounts are well supported late on (no doubt Harry W and Mick E like a bet!) as you could have made +30 points above SP just by taking opening show odds, 10 mins or so before the off. Returns at morning prices would be even greater.

It should also be noted that these 24 wins come from 17 different horses.

Unsurprisingly he has a decent record on more unexposed horses (who by their nature are open to more improvement, rather than 'been there and done it' exposed handicappers), which could also be linked to the methods of the trainers he rides for.

Those with 0-2 wins in the handicap NH race type (so running in a handicap hurdle, 0-2 handicap hurdle wins) are...

63 bets / 22 wins / 32 places / 35% sr / +101 SP / +127 BFSP / AE 1.88

On those handicappers he's ridden five times or fewer...

61 best / 21 wins / 30 places / 34% sr / +102 SP / +128 BFSP / AE 2.06

Those handicappers carrying 11-6-11-11...

15/23,19p, +63 BFSP

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Miss R McDonald

This young jockey is another who has been seen to good effect in 2017. She's stuck in my mind having ridden old Harry The Viking a few times, and made all at Musselburgh yesterday on Buckled.

Before this year she had a total of 6 winners under rules to her name. In 2017 to date:

49 bets / 10 wins / 17 places / 20% sr / +48 SP / +60 BFSP / AE 1.47

Her wins this year have come in three race types: NH Flat / Handicap Chase / Handicap Hurdle:

38 bets / 10 wins / 17 places / 26% sr / +59 SP / +71 BFSP / AE 1.63

All but one of those wins has come for Sandy Thompson and two of those winners have been 25/1.

I wouldn't necessarily start backing her mounts blind but she is a capable rider on the evidence we have and her mounts always look worth a second glance.

She's more than adept at front running or running on the pace. If she looks likely to get the lead or there is no pace in the race her mounts may be worth even closer scrutiny.

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Richard Hobson

Now, this could be a trainer to follow.

Much like Tom Lacey he has a different modus operandi to many, in the sense that he doesn't just train. (Tom is very much a selling yard and his wife trains pointers... as does Fergal O'Brien's. Maybe there's something in that!) This ex jumps jockey is primarily a bloodstock agent but he gave an interesting interview on RUK that hinted at a promising future. In recent months/years buying horses from France has become increasingly expensive and out of reach for many owners. He's turned his attention to buying yearlings and foals and playing a long term waiting game. In the last couple of years he has really upped the training game in terms of numbers and winners. Given the list of horses he has purchased for others there is every reason to hope there may be a steady stream of young horses that he trains to success. No doubt he will be looking for buyers for many of them, as well as wanting to maintain an income as an agent. So, it's in his interest to train winners.

This is the man who sourced Hurricane Fly, Sir Des Champs, Saint Are and six other G1 winners, as well as numerous others. (well, over 300 purchased winners to date) You'd like to think he will be buying some exciting ones for himself, that he will hope to sell on one day. The fact he buys many of the horses he trains (he is the agent) and rears them from young marks him out as a bit different.

Some stats...

In 2016 + 2017, all runners:

102 bets / 19 wins / 31 places / 19% sr / +45 SP / +89 BFSP

Micro

Horses aged 3-6, 20/1 or shorter SP –

44 bets / 16 wins / 23 places / 36% sr / +71 SP / +110 BFSP / AE 1.78

(3/37,6 with those aged 7+)

To date he's appeared adept at placing his horses to great success. Having just read his website/news update he appears to be generous with pre-race information. He didn't exactly put readers off his 16/1 bumper winner at Ffos Las!! Shame I didn't read that beforehand or have these stats as a foundation.

He is 'only' 1/19 with Irish Bred horses to date. Unsurprisingly his record with French Breds isn't bad nor with German breds.

Fingers crossed he is worth keeping an eye on. He appears to fly under the radar but clearly knows the time of day and there are plenty of logical reasons for why he should remain successful. I have noted how he likes riders to be aggressive on his horses, a few making all from recent memory. That's the obvious tactic to adopt if you want to give your horse the best chance of winning.

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That's all for this week.

Hopefully something of interest buried away in there.

Happy Punting,
Josh