

## The week that was: 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017

### Handicappers to follow?

#### Chasers

**Gold Present** (23.12.17, Ascot) This one won't exactly go under the radar, but this was an impressive win. I underestimated this unexposed chaser and paid the price. He arrived here in form having just won LTO on seasonal reappearance and was entitled to come on for it again. He also stepped up to 3m for the first time. That was the key. He had decent form in the book, having gone close in the novice handicap chase at the Festival. He is a big strapping chaser who relished every yard of this. He won it well in the end and from a decent horse in Frodon. The front three were well clear here. This could prove to be decent form and the third, Walk On The Mill, may be worth keeping an eye on also. He won't bump into a Frodon or a Gold Present every time he runs! It will be interesting to see how this one progresses, but Henderson mentioned him as an Aintree horse of the future. A potential Becher winner next year before going on to run in the big one?? We shall see! He has more wins in him this season.

**Heurtevent** (21.12.17 Towcester) Any EW S2 backers will have been annoyed with his UR here as to my eyes at least he was going to place at the very least. He was backed from 16s into 8s and was running his best race for quite some time. The first-time visor appeared to perk him up, whether it will do so again time will tell. His mark has plummeted and if they can find the key he should be winning again soon. We may need to wait for his trainer to find some form. Carroll has been on a shocking run in recent months and is freezing cold. (more on that later)

#### Hurdlers

**Verdana Blue** (23.12.17 Ascot) I've mentioned this one before and she has won since. She finished a decent third in this race and I thought it was an interesting run. Firstly, the trainer voiced concerns over the ground. It may well have been soft enough for her. In any case she was held up right out the back and raced wide into the straight. She was left with an awful lot to do but swept into contention in eye-catching fashion- like a horse who still has wins in her from this mark. There was no disgrace in finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> behind two unexposed types. She has been running well in decent hurdle races all season and I want to keep an eye on her. I wonder if Nicky may plot something for Cheltenham or Aintree on decent spring ground. She may improve even more for it.

**Colt Lightning** (31.12.17 Warwick) This one qualified against my Lacey angle and he had the misfortune of being 'tipped' in the notes. That pressure seemed to tell in this race as he was pulled up having tailed off after the third last. I put that down to the heavy ground, but it would appear something may have gone amiss according to the trainer's blog. He didn't blame the ground and assumed something had gone wrong. They were going to run some tests and try to find out. This one will keep reappearing on the Lacey micro until he wins I think, which given his unexposed profile should be soon enough with any luck. I'd like to think he will show himself to be very well handicapped at some point.

**Craiganboy** (22.12.17 Ayr) Another tip who may still be running. This run just looked a bit 'odd' to my eye and I still don't know what I think. He tanked through this hurdle race and looked the winner for a long way. His effort flattened out two from home when I thought he would just sweep past. It's hard to know with Brian Hughes what they have left and maybe he needed the run a bit after 53 days off and/or he didn't see out the trip. I thought he would stay. It will be interesting where he goes next but he travelled like a well handicapped horse who was on good terms with himself.

**The Lady Rules** (23.12.17 Newcastle) I fancied this one on handicap debut but the market told the story, drifting out to 25/1. She ran ok in 3<sup>rd</sup> and while clearly no world beater she has time on her side. Maybe she wants further and/or needs time to strengthen up. She travelled well for a long way without really being put into it. It 'looked' an odd ride but that may have been the jockey's technique! One to watch given how unexposed she is. Mark Walford knows the time of day.

\*

### **Stats The Way To Do It**

*This week I have looked at Irish trainer jumps horses running in the UK and Jonjo O'Neill's handicap debutants.*

### **Irish Trainers Horses Running In The UK**

2015-

All runners/all codes: 3657 bets / 500 wins / 1249 places / 13.67% sr / -572 SP / +106 BFSP / AE 0.9

18/1+ SP: 14/920, 102 places, 1.52%, -392, -98 BFSP

For now I will just focus on National Hunt runners. I have little interest in the all-weather (sorry!) but will take a closer look at any Flat Turf runners later in the year (do remind me)

Just looking at Handicaps...

- National Hunt Handicaps
- Trainer located in Ireland
- Horse running in UK
- Last Ran At: *Fairyhouse / Galway / Navan*
- 16/1 or shorter SP

Bets	Wins	Win%	P/L(SP)	Places	Place%	Races	Race%	ROI(SP)	P/L(BF)	P/L(Plc)	A/E
106	24	22.64	115.2	43	40.57	96	25	108.68	146.82	33.62	1.59

From those stats, of note...

- Ran in a non-handicap LTO: **8/32,12p, +72**
- Running at The Cheltenham Festival: **6/19,7p, +66**
  - Includes 3 winners, +30 points or so not covered in Micro 1 below.
- 17 different trainers are responsible for these figures.

From that angle above, if you just focussed on handicaps and those that didn't run in a hurdle race LTO...

### **Micro 1**

- National Hunt Handicap
- Trainer located in Ireland
- Horse running in UK
- Last Ran At: Fairyhouse / Galway / Navan
- NOT run in a hurdle race LTO
- 16/1 or shorter SP

	<b>Bets</b>	<b>Wins</b>	<b>Win%</b>	<b>P/L(SP)</b>	<b>Places</b>	<b>Place%</b>	<b>ROI(SP)</b>	<b>P/L(BF)</b>	<b>P/L(Plc)</b>	<b>A/E</b>
ALL	48	17	35.42	114.45	22	45.83	238.44	139.32	30.62	2.76
2017	14	6	42.86	61.5	7	50	439.29	68.86	18.29	3.82
2016	20	7	35	30.95	9	45	154.75	40.95	4.84	2.31
2015	14	4	28.57	22	6	42.86	157.14	29.5	7.49	2.56

There are a few tasty angles above for us to track, especially when it comes around to The Festival. I found it tough to find a 'way in' with Irish trainer jumpers running in the UK. The 'track last time out' was the only angle of note that I could find. It may just be luck and this angle won't repeat over time, or there is some logic there. Maybe it's the more competitive nature of racing at those tracks which enhances a horse's chance when they come over here. I'm not sure but it's something to keep an eye on. Those three tracks so stand out from the rest.

\*\*

### **Jonjo O'Neill**

Jonjo's 'Cloth Cap' (section 1 qualifier) won on handicap hurdle debut at Huntingdon on Boxing day. I didn't have a sodding penny on. It still annoys me as he was unexposed and making handicap hurdle debut, at a track where Jonjo does well. He was a double figure price. It should have been that simple but I tried to over-complicate things by focussing on the lack of 'distance move'. He wasn't 5/1. He was 10s+. No need to over-think.

Anyway, you must try and learn from your errors and I thought it would be wise to look at Jonjo's record with handicap debutants. Here I am looking at handicap debutants within the national hunt code. So, they could have run/won in a handicap hurdle, but today run in a handicap chase for the first time. There is a good mix of handicap hurdle debutants and Handicap Novice Chase debutants- they seem to be the two race types he targets.

So, since the start of 2015 –

All handicap debutants: 207 bets / 22 wins / 53 places / 11% sr / -61 SP / AE 0.82

### **10/1 or shorter SP**

- 128 bets / 21 wins / 42 places / 16% sr / 0 SP / AE 0.93
  - Huntingdon: 4/9,5p, +21 BFSP
  - Newbury (2/4,+12), Warwick (2/5,+12)

His runners in Class 4 races are the place to focus: 55 bets / 13 wins / 19 places / 24% sr / +34 BFSP

His runners that were moving into handicaps from 'novice' races last time out do not do very well either. (3/31,6p, -17) Pulling all that together gives us a micro to focus on...

### Micro

- Jonjo O'Neill
- Handicap Debut in Handicap NH Race Type
- Did NOT run in a 'novice' race LTO
- Class 4
- 10/1 or shorter SP (16/1 < ok too)

	Bets	Wins	Win%	P/L(SP)	Places	Place%	ROI(SP)	P/L(BF)	P/L(Plc)	A/E
ALL	33	10	30.3	31.5	14	42.42	95.45	41.81	6.34	1.53
2017	10	3	30	16	4	40	160	22.26	2.08	1.86
2016	9	2	22.22	0.25	3	33.33	2.78	1.27	-2.56	1
2015	14	5	35.71	15.25	7	50	108.93	18.28	6.82	1.71

- Those that finished 5<sup>th</sup> or worse LTO: 8/16,9 places, +49 BFSP
- Those sent off 12/1-16/1 are 1/9,1p, +8, so no reason to be put off by those as such.

There is plenty of logic to Jonjo doing well in Class 4s I think. I suspect they are more likely to have an official rating which doesn't fully reflect their ability and those running in this grade may well have more in hand, as opposed to those that run at C3 or above. I think there is some logic there!

\*

### ***What got me thinking this week...***

In recent days there have been a couple of jockey bookings which caught the eye pre-race. Said jockeys/horses would go on to win these races...

*Final Fling...* won at Wetherby for the stats/S2 and any SP2A subscribers, ridden by Adam Nicol. Now Adam had ridden the horse plenty before, but P Kirby also had a horse in the race, that he had ridden before. He has ridden 59 winners for Kirby from 409 rides. It's his main source of ammunition, or has been. And here he was riding for Rose Dobbin who he was 2/26 with, before this win. I noted it pre-race at the time in section 2, although not in that detail. I tipped the Kirby horse, typically! I suspect Nicol had the choice and he/his agent chose wisely. No doubt Dobbin was keen to have him on for a reason. So here we had a jockey who appeared to have a clear choice of two to ride in the race, where you'd have expected him to ride Kirby's horse. Something to bear in mind. This happened a few days before at Huntingdon also...

*Norse Light...* won at Huntingdon for any S4 backers, drifting out to 4/1 which was welcome. What caught the eye here was the booking of David Bass. Maybe nothing unusual but considering his boss, Kim Bailey, had a fancied horse in the race also, I thought it odd. Bass had ridden Trojan Star before but in fairness Tom Bellamy had ridden him on 4 of his last 5 starts. Maybe it was an owner's decision but it was interesting nonetheless. I assumed Bass rode all of Kim's horses when available to do so, but clearly not.

\*

***Finally, which trainers are as cold as ice...***

It was looking at Heurtevent and Tony Carrol which got me thinking about this...

*Tony Carrol*- he is 115 runners since his last winner. Something isn't right. He could have a few well handicapped horses on his hands when he finds form. These stats would suggest there must be illness in the yard or something. It's been a torrid 90+ days.

P Holmes – he is 124 runners since his last winner. Will he bounce back into form at some point?

Other trainers of note with 0 winners from 1<sup>st</sup> November to the end of 2017...

- J Tuite: 0/34,5p
- P Phelan: 0/32, 2p
- Mrs S N Evans: 0/27,1p

\*\*

That's all for this week's article. Plenty to get stuck into there and take away I hope.

Happy Punting,  
Josh