



ANGLES, POINTERS & CLUES - ROYAL ASCOT 2024....



a Special Research Report....

by Nick Pullen....

**(Races to be run Tuesday 18th June to
Saturday 22nd June)**

The best week of the year to play the best betting game ever invented....

Horse-racing is the best betting game ever invented – bar none....

.... and Royal Ascot week is the is the best week of the year be to playing that game – win, lose or draw....

The meeting is a coming together of the best domestic talent....

.... and multiple international operators....

.... in top-level races across all divisions....

It's the pinnacle of the flat game – a kind of championship meeting where all the best horses come together to fight it out and prove who holds the boss hand at what trip and in what age-group....

Everybody wants to win....

.... every trainer targets the top races with his/her best horses....

.... every horse is tuned to concert-pitch on the day....

.... nothing is being saved for some other occasion....

.... and that's just the Group 1 action....

For me – from a betting perspective – the handicaps are the most interesting races at the Royal meeting....

You couldn't find tougher betting puzzles to solve....

.... and Royal Ascot boasts a dozen handicaps across the 5-days....

Year-on-year big fields of evenly matched horses go to post for these events and in any field of 24 you could easily make a case for at least 18. That's a fact....

The Royal Ascot handicaps are red hot – as competitive as it gets....

.... and – in my book at least – they make for great betting heats....

Not everybody sees it the same way. Many punters steer clear of these handicap races....

They compare them to lotteries – impossible to call and with the winners emerging at random....

I can tell you for sure – these races are not lotteries. They're not as unfathomable as that....

... but I won't lie – the Royal Ascot handicaps are a tough environment – even for the most clued-up punter....

... and if you don't follow the racing regularly.... and you don't know the horses.... you're going to find it nigh on impossible to pick a winner....

The tough environment of handicaps is what I love most about racing....

And when I say love – I mean LOVE. I thrive on the big-field handicaps....

When races are so competitive the bookies and the market can make errors and misjudgements when assessing horses – allowing 'live' contenders to go off at big prices....

I make it my mission at Royal Ascot to spot these errors of judgement – and to capitalise on them....

The objective for me – at all the big meetings – is to back winners at value prices – and I've got a decent track-record of getting the job done too....

In every big-field handicap I target, my mission is to seek out a horse I believe is a 'live' contender – but which is underestimated, overlooked, and overpriced by the market....

That's the kind of horse I like to bet in the big-field handicaps....

... the right kind of horse trading at the wrong price – a price that underestimates its true chances of winning....

I get it wrong frequently. But I get it right too. At BIG prices....

And over the years I've got it right frequently enough....

... at the right kind of prices....

... to get in front on the bottom line....

It all starts with preparation ahead of the meeting....

.... and this Special Research Report can help you with that – or at least some of it....

Its purpose is to arm you with angles, pointers, and clues that will help you find decent bets in the biggest handicaps run at the Royal meeting....

.... angles, pointers, and clues that the wider market – the people you’re betting against – are completely unaware of....

Inside you will discover....

.... Key field-splitting stats that help make sense of the *Wokingham*....

.... Under-the-radar data that points the way in the *Royal Hunt Cup*....

.... The number picture that finds ‘live’ contenders in the *Ascot Stakes*....

.... A blueprint that earmarks likely types in the *Duke of Edinburgh Stakes*....

Have a look. I think you’ll find something to like – something to base a good bet on at this year’s Royal meeting....

Happy hunting!

Nick

Nick Pullen – *June 2024*

Against the Crowd

Field-splitting stats for the *Wokingham*....

Royal Ascot is fast creeping up on us....

There are a dozen big handicaps to target at that meeting – and they all need thinking about ahead of time....

The *Wokingham* might seem a strange place to start – given it’s run on the final day of the meeting....

.... but – with the exception of the *Royal Hunt Cup* – it’s the daddy handicap of the meeting for me and a logical race to look at first....

It's a race for horses aged 3yo+ and officially rated 0 to 110 – run up the straight 6f strip....

Expect a big field – 25+ runners went to post in **19** of the last 22 renewals....

Note: we had dead-heat winners in 2003. I class both **Fayr Jag** and **Ratio** as winners and I talk about **23** winners even though there have been just 22 editions since 2002....

Favourites won **4** of the last 22 editions. **Five** more winners were sent off in 2nd or 3rd spot in the betting. The average winning SP is just over **14s**....

Of the 86 horses to place (I include 5th place in fields of 20+), **44** were sent off at **16s** or bigger. There's plenty for each-way players to shoot at....

Key pointers....

Ahead of dividing runners into the probable, the possible and the no-hopers, it's worth looking at key features in the historic record – the strongest act as a useful guide....

- **19** of the 23 winners were 4yos or 5yos (the 5yos shade it 11-8)....
- **18** had raced between 9 and 24 times on turf....
- The last **12** winners were officially rated 99+....
- **14** of the last 23 winners carried a double-figure saddlecloth number – they were down the weights. **25** of the last 32 horses to place (2nd 3rd, 4th & 5th) also carried double-figure saddlecloths....
- **Frankie Dettori** knows how to ride the race. He's supposed to be retired from British racing – but he's still riding in America and I wouldn't put it past him to turn up at the Royal meeting for another swansong. His last 18 *Wokingham* rides produced a winner, six places and three 6th or 7th place finishes....
- **Jamie Spencer's** last 18 rides produced a winner, three places, three 5th placed finishes and a 7th – a fair record in a race that's effectively two big-field handicaps rolled into one....
- **Ryan Moore** is 2 wins & 4 places from his last 20 race rides. **William Buick** is 1 win and 3 places (and a 6th) from his 11 qualifying rides....

Ability and fitness are key considerations, of course. But the stats have a story to tell too. They're not infallible but they reveal what types of horses tend to do well – and it's always an advantage to know which runners conform to a prevailing blueprint and which don't....

A unique feature is a route in....

Unique features produce unique race circumstances....

.... and it's always interesting to assess what impact or effect those unique race circumstances might have on outcomes....

The *Wokingham* is unique in that it's the one big race run up the straight 6f at Ascot that habitually attracts 25+ runners....

.... 19 of the last 22 renewals saw between 25 and 29 runners emerge from the stalls – and a field of up to 29 runners stretches a long way across the Ascot track....

At the start of the race – when the horses are in the stalls – more of the track is potentially in play than is the case for any other race up the 6f strip....

If there's a part of the track which is quicker and more advantageous than other parts....

.... owing to drainage, compaction, conditions or whatever....

.... then the *Wokingham* is a race that should advertise that fact over time....

Draw analysis....

Of course, the stall in which a horse starts a race is not the be-all and end-all....

Pace – and where that is on the track – plays a big part. So too the tactics required by individual horses. It also matters which horses and jockeys are drawn in which clusters....

And nothing is more important than ability. Put five animals with just three legs apiece in the middle-5 stalls and it won't make any difference how advantaged or disadvantaged those middle stalls are – physical limitations will see to it that those horses don't win....

On top of that, track biases come and go. Conditions one week can alter biases which might otherwise have held steady for ten years....

Looking at the performance of individual stalls in the last **12** editions of the *Wokingham* (as we are about to do) won't tell us much about conditions on the track next month....

.... other races run at the meeting before the *Wokingham* will provide more pertinent real-time guidance....

But how stalls performed in previous editions of the unique Wokingham will tell us something worth knowing. It's a part of the information record worth consulting....

The story in numbers....

The table below shows the performance of each individual stall (in terms of % of opponents beaten) in each of the last **12** renewals of the *Wokingham*....

Stall	%btn	Stall	%btn	Stall	%btn
1	45.1	11	49.6	22	52.2
2	38.4	12	46.1	23	46.6
3	40.9	13	46.6	24	39.0
4	43.3	14	47.6	25	45.4
5	43.3	15	57.3	26	49.2
6	57.4	16	55.4	27	66.0
7	40.6	17	37.8	28	62.0
8	53.8	18	58.3	29	54.3
9	40.7	19	52.0	30	57.6
10	59.3	20	58.8	31	53.8
		21	56.0		

Now, I understand if your initial reaction to that table involves scratching your head...

Let me make it a little clearer by grouping the stalls into thirds – bottom-third, middle-third, and top-third....

Third	%btn
Bottom (1 to 10)	46.3
Middle (11 to 21)	51.5
Top (22 to 31)	53.2

Now, we see something a bit more useful....

The bias is not heavily pronounced. But it's there....

Horses drawn in the middle beat a bigger proportion of their opponents than the horses drawn low....

Horses drawn high beat a bigger percentage of their opponents than horses drawn in the low- and middle-third stalls....

In addition, I would say this: **10** of the top 11 performing stalls are numbered 10 or higher. **8** are numbered **16** or higher....

.... and **7** of the bottom ten performing stalls are single-digit stalls....

These observations alone won't lead directly to the winner, of course. But they help us take an informed view. They give us context to work with....

The individual runners, pace, tactics and all the rest of it will need to be considered – for sure....

.... but there's no getting away from the fact that 'live' contenders drawn high are better off than those drawn low....

That's something worth knowing....

.... I can guarantee that plenty of people you bet against at when Royal Ascot gets underway won't be aware of it....

Key data that help make sense of the Royal Hunt Cup....

The *Royal Hunt Cup* (run on Day 2) is a C2 event for horses aged 3yo+ up the straight mile....

A massive field always goes to post. 23+ started each of the last 22 renewals....

Just a **single** horse has managed to justify favouritism in the race over the last 22 years – but an additional **7** winners were sent off 2nd or 3rd in the betting....

15 of the 22 winners were sent off at double-figure SPs – so there's plenty of encouragement for price-hunting punters....

.... and **49** of the 88 placers (I include 5th place on account of field-size) were sent off **16s** or bigger....

The average winning SP amounts to just over **16s**....

Stand-out stats....

There are a couple of interesting points to note ahead of rooting out selections....

This is one of the biggest, most prestigious, and most fiercely contested handicaps on the programme....

.... and one of the few big British handicaps where winners officially rated 100+ are commonplace....

Twelve of the last 22 editions were won by such horses. That said **no horse** rated higher than 105 has won during that period....

The field is so big the runners are spread out across the entire width of the track. Where the pace unfolds is key to the outcome. But where you start is important too....

Since 2011 – when stall numbers at right-handed tracks were revised – **6** of the 13 winners exited stall 21 or higher....

Just **4** winners started from a single-figure stall – and just 5 of the 40 horses that finished 2nd, 3rd, or 4th....

We get a more nuanced picture of the effects of the draw when we look at the percentage of opponents beaten by horses starting from the bottom third, the mid-third and the high-third of the draw....

Third	%btn
Bottom (1 to 11)	44.4
Middle (12 to 22)	55.1
Top (23 to 33)	51.1

The majority of winners came from the high-third – as stated above....

.... but the table above reveals that horses in the middle-third perform best in terms of overall % of opponents beaten – and they might be undervalued by a market largely unaware of that fact....

The table below shows individual stall records – with the top-10 performing stalls shaded....

Stall	%btn	Stall	%btn	Stall	%btn
1	43.3	12	63.3	23	52.5
2	44.1	13	54.0	24	38.6
3	42.4	14	48.6	25	60.1
4	50.1	15	53.4	26	56.2
5	49.2	16	48.3	27	42.5
6	34.8	17	52.0	28	45.6
7	41.2	18	56.7	29	62.0
8	42.3	19	59.1	30	58.5
9	43.2	20	53.1	31	44.2
10	48.0	21	51.0	32	43.7
11	45.3	22	67.3	33	56.9

If you were looking for the most significant section of the draw, the cluster of stalls from 18 to 26 (where just one stalls registers a %btn figure below 50%) must be of interest....

The last 107 starters from that cluster produced **4** winners, **18** places and additional **5** horses that finished 6th. 'Live' horses drawn in that cluster might just have something going for them....

Note: If you'd like a copy of the Excel file with the individual stalls listed in order of % of opponents beaten (a little too long a list for the column), drop me a line at:
nick.pullen@oxonpress.co.uk....

Key pointers....

The *Royal Hunt Cup* is no place for a horse to ease into a longer trip. **20** of the last 22 winners had already won at a mile or further....

19 of the last 22 winners were aged either 4- or 5-years-old – so too were **66** of the 88 placers....

There will be no shortage of horses in that age-band going to post – but it's the area to look most closely in....

In ultra-competitive races like this, match-fitness is an obvious edge. Results bear the assumption out....

Only **5** of the last 22 winners had been off the track more than 8-weeks. Just **2** had been off for a three-figure number of days....

There hasn't been a single 3yo participant over the test-period and horses older than 5 have produced just **3** winners and **22** placers from 197 runners....

If you buy into the idea of individual yards possessing the knack in specific big races, there are five names of note....

Charlie Hills is probably the current main man – his 9 runners producing **2** wins and **2** places – plus a 7th....

.... along with **Saeed Bin Suroor** – his last 12 runners produced **2** wins and **2** places....

The Gosden yard produced **2** winners and **3** placers from its last 21 runners with **one** horse finishing 6th and **3** more horses finishing 7th – no bad return in a race with 27+ runners going to post most years....

James Fanshawe hasn't managed to find a proper *Royal Hunt Cup* horse in recent years. But his overall record across the test period reads **2** winners and **3** placers from 8 representatives. If he has one in the race this time, it is worth a detailed inspection....

Jamie Osborne's last 13 runners produced **one** winner, **3** places and another three that finished 6th or 7th. That's some record....

The number picture of an Ascot Stakes winner....

The *Ascot Stakes* is the first handicap run at the meeting – run on the Tuesday....

It's a C2 race for horses aged 4yo+ with official ratings of 0 to 100....

They go at it over the right-handed 2m4f trip – which comprises 4 bends....

Nineteen of the last 22 favourites were beaten....

.... **11** of the winners were sent off at double-figure SPs....

.... **36** of the 76 placers over the period were sent off at **14s** or bigger....

.... the average winning SP over the period amounts to just under **14s**....

There are one or two features of the race worth making a preliminary note of prior to setting to work on the race....

Only **5** of the last 22 renewals were won by a horse officially rated higher than 95....

.... but each of those came in the last seven renewals and this could be a statistic on the turn....

Much will be made of the fact that **12** of the last 22 winners were aged 4- or 5-years-old....

.... but it's another stat that doesn't stand a lot of scrutiny – and I wouldn't be taking it at face value....

Those two generations of horses account for most runners over the last 22 years and – as such – they are entitled to post the biggest volume of winners or placers....

For your information, the age stats break down like this....

.... **4yos** 5-25-119....

.... **5yos** 7-22-131....

.... **6yos** 1-12-89....

.... **7yos** 5-4-60....

.... **8yo+** 4-4-58....

Bottom line: the right horses have chances, whatever their respective ages....

NH yards do well....

Horses running out of yards more closely associated with National Hunt runners tend to do very well....

The extreme trip obviously lends itself to animals used to running over that type of trip – albeit under a different code....

.... and the NH trainers haven't been slow to capitalize....

18 of the last 22 winners of the race came out of an established jumps yard....

It isn't easy for any trainer to get a horse fit enough to win a long-distance handicap first-time-up and past results reflect that fact....

.... just **3** of the last 22 winners had been off the track for more than 8 weeks.

Of the horses contesting the race off a break of more than 10-weeks (not including 2020 when multiple horses went into the race off a long break thanks to Covid-19) – just **one** placed....

All but two of the previous 22 winners had raced on the flat at least 7 times previously....

.... **16** had raced no more than 15 times on the turf flat....

Willie Mullins is the man most dangerous when it comes to firing shots at this race. His last 20 runners produced 4 winners and 6 placers....

Nicky Henderson's got a pretty good record too – winning twice and placing 4 times from 24 runners....

A blueprint for finding horses of interest in the Duke of Edinburgh Stakes....

The *Duke of Edinburgh Stakes* is yet another big-field affair – this one run on the Friday of the meeting....

It's a class 2 event for horses aged 3yo+ and rated 0 to 105 over the right-handed 12-furlong trip. They go around two bends....

There have been **6** winning favourites (one of them a joint favourite) over the last 22 years.

.... **4** more winners were sent off either second or third in the betting....

It's a mixed bag of winners at prices across the spectrum....

The average winning SP weighs in at a fraction under **11s**.

.... just **22** of the 62 placers over the period were sent off at **14s** or bigger....

History says this is a tougher race than most when it comes to value seeking....

.... but what's happened before – especially in handicaps – is nothing like a certain guide as to what will unfold in the next edition of a race....

The market is always liable to completely under-estimate horses and it is always worthwhile looking to pinpoint those animals – because they represent value....

Back enough of those kinds of horses and the winners – and the betting profits – will look after themselves over time....

Notable features....

Before you submit this season's runners to scrutiny, be sure to take note of some notable features this race has produced over the last 22 years....

- Just **4** horses have been able to defy official ratings of 100 or more and win this race since 2002. The rest were rated 89 to 99....
- **Fifteen** of the last 22 winners carried a double-figure saddlecloth number to post – suggesting they had secrets from the handicapper....
- Excluding 2020 when Covid-19 saw to it that many more horses than usual turned up at the meeting without a prep run – only **two** horses have overcome a break of 8-weeks or more from the track to win this race. **Eleven** of the other 20 winners had been on the track at some point during the previous 4-weeks....
- **21** of the previous 22 winners were aged 4 or 5. **Fourteen** of that 21 were 4yos.

- **70** horses aged 6 or older had drawn a blank in terms of wins before 7-year-old **Scarlet Dragon** won in 2020 – and **14** have drawn a blank since. At least one of the younger horses – more lightly-raced, less exposed and open to more progression – usually manages to get the better of the older brigade....
- **Hughie Morrison** has only had 11 runners in the race since 2002. Four of them won, another placed, and **Le Don De Vie** placed 4th in 2020. That record must reflect more than just an anomaly. Anything he runs is well-worth the onceover....
- **Sir Michael Stoute's** horses are the other ones that absolutely demand respect and inspection. He's run 16 horses in the races since 2002 – 4 won and another 4 placed. It's safe to say he makes a point of targeting this race and does so effectively....
- Once again, this being a race around the turns, **Ryan Moore** and **William Buick** show up well in the historical record. Moore's 16 race rides produced 5 winners and 2 places. Buick has ridden 2 winners and 2 placers from 12 rides....

Royal Ascot stat angles – the handicaps exclusive to 3yos....

There are five handicaps exclusively for 3yo horses at Royal Ascot....

The *Britannia* (straight mile), the *Sandringham* (straight mile for fillies) and the *King George V Stakes* (12f) – races present on the schedule for some time....

We also have the *Golden Gates* (10f) and the *Palace of Holyroodhouse* (5f) – both added to the roster in 2020 and retained going forward....

The 3yos make big strides of progression at this still relatively early stage of the season – and some trainers have a better track record than others at getting their 3yo's to produce big performances in these prestigious Royal handicaps....

Of course, there's no guarantee that what happened before will happen again – but it's worth noting trainers with form in this niche....

Dormant – but still dangerous....

If you were thinking of specific names, it's odds-on **Sir Michael Stoute** crossed your mind....

And you'd be on the right track. He's got as solid a record in these races as anybody – all things considered. His last 61 qualifiers produced 3 winners....

You might be tempted to add the word 'just' ahead of the '3' – 3 doesn't sound like many wins from 61 runners....

And it isn't. But nobody dominates absolutely in these races. That's the nature of handicaps – they're open and competitive by design. The 3yo events at the Royal meeting are no exception....

What you're looking for are strings consistently up there – more so than the rest. That's the box that Sir Michael ticks....

For the purposes of this study, I count 5th as a place in fields of 20+; 6th in 24+; and 7th in 28+....

Sir Michael's figures (back to 2002) read....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
Sir Michael Stoute	3	20	23	61	4.9	37.7

The win strike-rate amounts to just 4.9%. But when you factor in 20 additional places it all adds up to a total place strike rate of 37.7%....

.... as solid a figure as anybody has any right to expect from any yard in races of this nature at this level....

Admittedly, it's a while since Stoute had a qualifying winner (back in 2008) and he doesn't shoot indiscriminately – he's had just 12 qualifying runners at the last six Royal meetings....

But these things are cyclical. Purple patches are followed by barren periods – and visa-versa....

The bottom line is that the record is there to see. Stoute can prepare the right horse to run a big race. He might be a trifle dormant compared to where he once was – but he could still prove to be very dangerous....

Numbers game....

Nobody trained more 3yo handicap winners at the Royal meeting over the last 22-years than the **Johnston** team....

Father Mark won six and found another 14 placers to boot....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
The Johnston yard	6	16	22	125	4.8	17.6

Son Charlie Johnston has now taken over at the helm – but Johnston Snr isn't out of the picture and Johnston Jnr is on record saying that he sees no reason to change the yard's formula....

.... so we can expect business as usual....

.... and business as usual with the Johnston yard means a good volume of winners – but a volume gleaned from massive rates of participation....

At Royal Ascot the win and place figures were produced from a total representation of 125 horses. As always, it's a numbers game with the Johnstons....

The winners were fancied enough – all sent off at prices ranging from 9/2 to 12s....

.... and whilst some placers hit the frame at SPs of 18s, 20s, 22s, 25s (x2), 33s (x3), 40s & 50s (x2)....

.... the problem is weeding those outliers out of the wider group ahead of the race being run....

There's not much rhyme or reason to it. And – unless you're clairvoyant – you're going to be up against it....

That's not to discount the Johnston team, of course. Just to say that it's never easy to pick the contenders from the clunkers....

Top yards are well represented....

Top yards have more of the top horses – and top yards come to the fore at Royal Ascot year-on-year....

That's certainly the case in Pattern events. But there's an element of the same thing at work in the handicaps too – particularly the 3yo events....

Take the **Gosden** team. The table below highlights their performance in 3yo handicaps at the meeting over the last 22-years....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
The Gosden yard	2	16	18	72	2.7	25.0

They're two wins and 16 additional places from 72 runners – a win strike rate of 2.7% and a total place strike rate of 25%. Nothing to write home about on the face of it....

But what we can conclude is that he's had plenty of representatives good enough to turn out in these races – more than most yards. And he's gone close with a fair number. It's only a matter of time until he goes in again....

William Haggas is a similar case in point. See his figures below....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
William Haggas	2	13	15	50	4.0	30.0

Two winners and 13 placers from 50 qualifiers equates to a 4% win ratio and a 30% total place percentage....

Like the Gosden team, he's had good levels of representation – more than most year-on-year. He's only managed the two wins, but he's gone close with a fair proportion of others....

In other words, he's often at the table with a hand of cards and he's consistently knocking on the door at the business end....

Sooner or later, it's going to fall right for William Haggas again. His qualifying runners are worth noting....

Aiden O'Brien must be considered too....

I think for a long time his primary focus at the Royal meeting were the big G1 races. But that's changed a little over the last few years....

Since the 2015 Royal meeting, O'Brien appears to have turned at least some of his focus onto these 3yo handicap events. The results over that period certainly suggest as much....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
Aiden O'Brien	2	11	13	44	4.5	29.5

He's won 2 and placed with 11 more from just 44 representatives in total. If it's not by design or by dint of a readjustment of focus, then think what O'Brien might achieve if he really went after these races....

44 is not a huge sample of horses, for sure. But it is a sample produced over a period of several years and I'd suggest that the results achieved are more than just a mere quirk of anomaly. I'd expect the trend to harden rather than dissipate....

O'Brien has loads of talented youngsters in his care. They aren't all superstars. Many fall short of genuine G1 class....

But plenty of those horses have the scope to prove effective in prestigious handicaps run for big pots. I'd suggest O'Brien is fully cognizant of that fact – and operating and targeting accordingly....

And if you think all his qualifying runners would have gone off at short prices – think again. His winners went off at **10s** and **22s**. Four of his placers were returned at **14s** (x2), **25s** and **33s**. They were there to be found....

And **Charlie Appleby** is another top name to note....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
Charlie Appleby	2	9	11	40	5.0	27.5

It's worth noting that his last 25 qualifiers produced one of the winners and eight of the placers....

If there's a trainer on a roll in these 3yo handicap races – then it's Charlie Appleby....

Off the radar....

I'm always most interested in off-the-radar options and these 3yo handicap at the Royal meeting throw up an interesting candidate that the market might undervalue....

Ed Dunlop's not had too many qualifiers over the years – but the 3yo handicappers he has chosen to direct to the Royal meeting have performed with great credit....

Trainer	W	P	TP	R	W%	TP%
Ed Dunlop	2	6	8	26	7.6	30.7

Two winners and 8 placers from a representation of 26 runners produce a win rate of 7.6% and a healthy total place strike rate of 30.7%....

The winners were sent off at **11s** and **20s**. The placers included horses returned at **14s** (x2), **16s** and **25s**....

The prices were there for value hunters to latch on to....

The biggest and best parts of Dunlop's figures were produced in years gone by rather than recent times. But the right horses are not subject to timetables. They come when they come – and it's about getting them to produce when they do turn up....

Anything Dunlop puts into one of the 3yo handicaps is well worth the onceover next week. His record testifies to the fact....

Royal Ascot stat angles - splitting the 3yo handicap fields....

There are five handicaps exclusively for 3yo horses at Royal Ascot....

The *Britannia* (straight mile), the *Sandringham* (straight mile for fillies) and the *King George V Stakes* (12f) have been present on the Royal Ascot schedule for some time....

In other words, there's plenty of evidence and data to work with....

In this final section of my report I want to highlight the key pointers in these three races....

Key stats for the Britannia....

Thursday's *Britannia* is run over the same mile trip as Wednesday's *Royal Hunt Cup*....

Favourites have won **4** of the last 22 renewals. **Five** more renewals since 2002 were won by horses in the top-3 of the betting....

But it's a mixed and partially encouraging bag for price-hunting contrarians with another **11** winners scoring at odds ranging from **14s** to **33s**....

.... and **68** of the 88 horses to finish 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th were sent off at **14s** or bigger....

- You generally need experience to win this race – but not too much. **21** of the last 22 winners had raced at least 3 times – with **17** having raced no more than 7 times....
- **20** of the 22 had raced no more than three times that season. Only **2** winners had been off-track 50+ days. **13** had raced within the last 4-weeks....
- 113 horses went to post officially rated 98+ – producing **3** winners and **18** 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th placed finishers. **16** of the other 19 were rated 90 to 97. **17** of the last 22 winners carried 9-01 or less....
- **Jamie Spencer** is an advantage to a horse up the Ascot straight. His last 19 rides in the *Britannia* produced 4 winners and 4 placers. It's a record worth noting – especially as the market doesn't always price-in Spencer's stats....
- **17** of the previous 22 winners had already won races at 7f or a mile....

Field-splitters for the King George....

The *King George V Stakes* is also run on the Thursday of the Royal meeting. It's a class 2 event for horses rated 0 to 105 over the right-handed 12-furlong trip....

Four favourites won over the last 22 years (three were joint-favourites). Another **6** renewals were won by 2nd and 3rd market choices....

The race figures are skewed by Richard Fahey's **Cosmic Sun** – who produced a big shock at **66s** in 2009. Take that renewal out and the average winning SP over the period amounts to a shade over **10s**....

Only **25** of the last 66 placers were sent off at **14s** or bigger. That tells you the market has a better handle on this handicap than others at the meeting....

- **None** of the last 22 winners won off a mark bigger than 95. 53 tried. **18** carried less than 9-00....
- **20** of the 22 winners had raced within the previous 6-weeks. Excepting 2020 (when multiple horses ran without a prep) 62 have attempted to defy a 6-week break or longer – only well-fancied **Linas Selection** managed to win....
- **21** of the previous 22 winners had raced at least 3 times on turf – **19** had run no more than 6 times....
- **14** of the last 22 winners emerged from a double-figure stall. And that's a hardening trend with inmates of double-figure stalls winning **13** of the last 18 renewals....
- The **Johnston** yard has the knack – **5** winners and **6** placers since 2002 – but they fired 64 shots to get there....
- **Sir Michael Stoute's** last 24 runners produced **2** wins and **6** places. **Saeed Bin Suroor's** last 8 runners produced **one** win and **3** places. In 2019, **Aidan O'Brien** saddled the first three home – and he boasts an overall record of **one** win and **5** places from 18 runners....
- **Charlie Appleby** is the top man in recent times though – his 13 runners producing **2** winners and **3** placers....
- **Ryan Moore** rides the round track at Ascot well. And he's been on the premises in this race a few times. His 19 rides produced **one** win and **9** places. **William Buick** is also a force on the round. His race record reads **two** wins and **5** places from 11 rides....

The strongest pointers in the Sandringham....

Friday's *Sandringham Handicap* doesn't possess the gloss of other Royal meeting handicaps – but the C2 event for fillies over the straight mile is a good target for price-hunting contrarian nevertheless....

Eight of the last 22 editions of the race were won by the favourite or a co-favourite. Another **6** were won by horses 2nd or 3rd in the betting....

The market has a better handle on this handicap than others at the meeting. The average winning SP amounts to just a shade under **10s**. If you were going to sit out a handicap at the Royal meeting – this might be the one to choose....

- 2017 was an exception to the rule with an unraced filly taking the honours – the other **21** winners had raced at least three times. Focusing on horses that had raced six times or fewer on turf found **18** of the last 22 winners....
- Excepting 2017's unraced winner and the 2020 winner (multiple horses turned up without a prep run on account of Covid 19), **19** of the other 20 winners had been in a race no more than 6.5 weeks previous....
- With so little form in the book it's difficult to make sense of a horse's rating, and what mark it might ultimately run to. But the official handicapper does a pretty good job of getting them in the right kind of order. The last 44 horses to go to post in this with an official rating of 102 or bigger produced **5** winners and **11** placed horses – with a few of those at nice prices. Weight can be a disadvantage in big handicaps, but with these younger and lightly-raced horses it can pay to assume that the handicapper knows the better ones from the remainder....
- As I said, the 2017 winner was unraced, so there was no sure way of knowing ahead of the race whether it stayed a mile. But in other years a win already scored at 7f or further has represented a good indicator. **17** of the other 21 winners ticked that box....
- **John Gosden** has a good record. So too Ed Dunlop, Sir Michael Stoute and William Haggas. But also consider **Michael Bell** if he has a runner. His last 8 runners produced 2 winners and 2 placers – all four horses ridden by **Jamie Spencer**....
- I've made the point already that **Jamie Spencer** is an advantage to a horse up the Ascot straight. In addition to those results for Michael Bell, he's produced winners for Wesley Ward and Ed Walker and placers for Charlie Hills, Alan Jarvis, and Luca Cumani. In his last 15 race rides he's been out of the frame just 5 times....



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