

Tues 16 Mar  
Champion Hurdle Day

Wed 17 Mar  
Champion Chase Day

Thurs 18 Mar  
World Hurdle Day

Fri 19 Mar  
Gold Cup Day

HH Chase  
Fred Winter Juvenile Novices' Hurdle

Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle  
Weatherbys Champion Bumper

Hurdle

RSA Chase

Queen Mother Champion Chase

Coral Cup

## Wednesday 17 March

### NH Chase

Wide open. I can see a big run from Mobaasher. The key to him is decent ground, which it looks like he will get. But take a look at his Festival form, too – third in the Triumph, fourth in the Pertemps Final and seventh in a World Hurdle, and being rated 157 over hurdles - he could just be far too classy for these in what looks a moderate year. He's won two of his four novice chases, and the times he was beaten it was soft, which he hates. He's also won a Class 2 hurdle at Cheltenham to boot. Now I know he's an old monkey that will need dropping in front very close to the line, but old monkeys can win this race!

At a massive price I can pass on a good word for Mouse Morris' Tinakellylad. I had a look at his form, and amongst his chase runs he was second to Sizing Europe on his chase debut, beat Kempes in December, and was only beaten by seven lengths by Uimhiraceathair last time out. I am not that keen on the runners towards the head of the market, except for Synchronised for the O'Neill-McManus combination that have such a good record in the race. And then there's Abbeybraney, who has form with Notre Pere and Barbers Shop from two years, so is more experienced than the raw novices he is taking on.



*Predictions of a big run from Mobaasher*

### Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle



*Rite of Passage is a short price in a hot-looking race*

I hope that Rite Of Passage proves me right and is a superstar, but I am not going to back him at a short price in what is turning into a hot-looking race. All the money has been for Quel Esprit this week (and I heard we can ignore his odds-on defeat last time as his blood was wrong), but any value there was has all gone.

Finians Rainbow strikes me as the best of the Brits on decent ground, although I can see Reve De Sivola battling away. Of the front five in the market I would be least keen on Peddlers Cross who I feel should be running in the Supreme. I have respect for Summit Meeting but the really big prices were snapped up about him a couple of weeks ago. Rite Of Passage for me.

## RSA Chase

Weapon's Amnesty is a tough, hardy horse and I'm hopeful he can finish in the frame. His jumping is a worry, but he tends to warm up during his races. I'm more worried that some of the stable's horses have had mucus in their systems. If he is clear of those problems that have supposedly affected Solwhit and Pittoni (see Champion Hurdle), jumps okay, and the ground is no worse than good-soft, then I think he is just the kind of horse to put up a big run back up to 3m which he needs.

There are too many worries with Long Run for me (age, jumping and jockey) to contemplate backing him at around 5/2. Besides, I prefer Punchestowns of the Henderson runners (which also includes Burton Port who I just don't see as good enough). Other than that, I don't think Diamond Harry likes it up him, or will jump well enough, and if The Nightingale runs it will be against his trainer's wishes, which is enough to put me off.



*Too many worries with Long Run*

## Queen Mother Champion Chase



*At his best Master Minded is in a different league*

Nothing I've seen or heard has dissuaded me from my belief that Master Minded will bolt up as, at his best, he is in a different league to the other runners. Nicholls feels he is back to his best, which is good enough for me, so I will be disappointed if he doesn't win by a bigger margin than last year. Kalahari King for the forecast, as I feel the race will be run to suit him sitting off the pace as Forpadydeplasterer, Big Zeb and Twist Magic fall away one by one by attempting to live with Master Minded. Master Minded will, I imagine, commit from some way out as that is when he is at his best, leaving Kalahari King to run through them.

## Coral Cup

I still feel a mark of 139 could seriously underestimate Quantitativeasing, and he may be the one to improve Nicky Henderson's poor record in the race. His chances have been increased slightly with news that the second-favourite Mourad has had a setback. He didn't win last time out, which is something I like in the Festival handicap hurdles, so I'll doubtless dabble on a couple of those on the day and have the choice of Chicago Grey (trainer was disgusted with his British mark), Beshabar (not certain the ground will be soft enough for him), Lake Legend, Wishful Thinking, Sir Harry Ormesher, Fruity O'Rooney, On Borrowed Wings, City Theatre and Good Old Thyme. Of those, I most like Wishful Thinking for the in-form Hobbs team that had the Imperial Cup 1-2, and can definitely see myself throwing a few quid at him at around 14/1.



*Beshabar prefers softer ground*

## Fred Winter Juvenile Novices' Hurdle



*Sanctuaire impressed on his British debut*

Sanctuaire impressed on his British debut, and meets an awful lot of the key trends and will be the likely Nicholls-Walsh representative. His odds have been cut recently with Capellanus being ruled out on Friday, Olofi heading to the Triumph, and Orzare being ruled out on Saturday. The vibes I am getting from Ditchheat is that he is very strongly fancied indeed, and he could be nearer 7/2 at the off. Given the way the Pipe horses are running I wouldn't be mad keen on Notus De La Tour as near enough favourite if he runs here at all. Other than that, I have time for Barwell Bridge and Gilded Age, but the latter is not sure to get in.

## Weatherbys Champion Bumper

Day Of A Lifetime is the only bumper horse to have wowed me this season. However, my confidence has ebbed away somewhat as the vibes I am getting is that Mullins feels it will not be his year this time around.

Frawley is interesting from a trends and vibes perspective. He was the wrong price at 25/1 last week on his two lengths' second to Elegant Concorde, who is the favourite, and then won on his next start. His trainer is mustard in bumpers and doesn't travel to these shores without very good reason; he had a 1-2 at last season's Grand National meeting in a mares' bumper. The momentum horse is unquestionably Drumbaloo, and I can see why - as he is also the form horse. I also like the fact they have kept Tavern Times back for this race as many winners were put away for this contest having won before Christmas. Just one run would be a negative though as only Willie Mullins has won this race with a horse with such a profile. Hidden Universe is weak in the market as he doesn't look getting his soft ground and is also a four-year-old, and they have only won this race once. Al Ferof looks like the being the only serious British hope.

*Day Of A Lifetime is the only bumper horse to have wowed*