

NTF Weekend Notes – 29th September

Saturday

250 – Market Rasen – Class 4 | Handicap Chase | 2m4f | Good | 9 ran

1st – SULA ISLAND

Looks a nifty little filly and one with a decent turn of foot as well. She travelled sweetly here on hurdle debut and had the fav covered as they swung for home and it was hard to not be impressed by this effort. Her sole victory on the flat came on soft ground so there's every reason to believe she'll handle softer ground over hurdles when the rains come, and she could be a decent recruit to the National Hunt game.

2.15 – Market Rasen – Class 2 | Juvenile Hurdle | 2m 1.5f | Good | 9 ran

The first juvenile hurdle of any real note in the season and it can be one worth keeping on the radar going forward, not always producing absolute top-class juveniles (although it can, with Katchit having won it previously) but certainly producing horses that are up to winning more races in the season ahead (Barizan, Royal Irish Hussar, Leoncavallo, Cliffs of Dover, Eragon De Chanay... to name but a few).

1st – JACK REGAN

An impressive victory on hurdle debut and he travelled smoothly throughout and stalked the leaders with menace. It was also pleasing to see him dig deep when asked to battle after the last flight and he's clearly got grit to go with talent. He didn't seem to handle soft on the flat so that's worth bearing in mind going forward but, on this evidence, he looks like he could have a future over timber. It's also worth bearing in mind, however, that his sire – Rock of Gibraltar – has never really produced a proper top-class NH horse yet (none have made it into the 150's and only around 4 have made it into the 140's, from a large sample size).

2nd – CRACKER FACTORY

Was always going to be difficult for him to give away weight to the field but this was still a solid effort and he's now 1112 over timber. He's raced a bit lazy at stages on both his last two starts so an application of headgear would be interesting, to see if that just concentrates his mind a bit better. His jumping was also on the scrappy side here so it's to his credit he was still in there with a serious chance at the last and again the application of headgear may just help him concentrate on the jumping side of things. If he jumps like this and hits his flat spots against the better types then he'll be in trouble so both those aspects need to be fixed before he's able to progress further.

250 – Market Rasen – Class 4 | Handicap Chase | 2m4f | Good | 13 ran

1st – WEST WIZARD

Class 4 contests are the place to catch this lad as he's now 4/12, 6p at C4 level compared to 0/12, 1p at C3 level+. He also tends to run well off lengthy breaks as he's now 122F2 off breaks of 181 days or more.

2nd – ONE FORTY SEVEN

Still a maiden after 10 starts but he didn't do much wrong here on his second chasing start and he'll surely open his account before too long, he'll likely come on for the run as well (first start for 133 days – NTD is only 1/38 in 2018 with his runners coming off breaks of 121+ days).

4th – DALLAS COWBOY

First run for J Wainwright and I thought he jumped and travelled really well on the front-end here and only started to give way 2 out. He's only 1/23 in his career (0/14 over fences) and he's a pretty low-level performer (at his very best!) and Wainwright is 0/110, 4 places in 2018 (so majorly out of form!) but if he can find a low-grade race where he gets an easy lead then it will probably transpire that he's on a winnable mark at present. You'd be wanting decent odds to take the risk on him though!

325 – Market Rasen – Class 3 | Handicap Chase | 2m 6.5f | Good | 13 ran

2nd – JOVIAL JOEY

A decent run from the 7yo who was almost running under prime conditions, prime conditions being...RH track | Handicap Chase | OR 124 & below | Race worth less than 10K to winner...which gives a form line of 1311 (3/4 – all 3 career wins), this was a 16k to the winner race. A small lowering of his sights to a race of lesser value could well see him victorious again, providing the handicapper doesn't shift him up for this effort.

4th – NOT A ROLE MODEL

I'm just not convinced he stays these 2m6f trips as he's now 244 (0/3) over 2m6f-2m6.5f, with both his wins coming over 2m5f. He's also possibly at his best in fields of 11 or less (121246 – 2/6, 2p) compared to fields of 12+ (4654 – 0/4, 0p) which is no surprise given he's one that likes to front-runner (front-runners generally prefer dominating 'smaller' fields). This was only his 6th chase start so I suspect he's still got more to give, and he'll be seen to better effect over slightly shorter trips and probably in slightly smaller fields.

400 – Market Rasen – Class 1 Listed | Handicap Hurdle | 2m 1.5f | Good | 12 ran

1st – CAIUS MARCIUS

The 7yo absolutely mullered the opposition here, which in fairness is a bit hard to work out given he ran in the race last year off the same mark (OR 129) but finished a well-beaten 11 length 8th. This was also the first time in 6 starts he had even placed over 2m1f+ trips. The only real difference here was the fact he was wearing cheek-pieces and he is now 2 from 2 when they've been applied, an addition that does seem to have made a serious difference to his form. On this evidence a return to chasing would be an interesting move as he's still unexposed in that sphere after only 3 starts and he would be able to run from a mark of OR 126, a mark on this evidence should prove no barrier, providing the cheek-pieces continue to do the business.

4th – CAUSE TOUJOURS

Seemed to be given too much to do from off the pace here and although it's highly unlikely he would have won if he'd been ridden closer he would quite possibly have grabbed a place. He was ridden closer to the pace on his last 2 starts (won them both) and although this was a hotter contest I still feel a more forceful ride would have resulted in a closer finishing position. He's still unexposed after only 7 starts (5 hurdle starts) and he's probably worth giving another chance to.

510 – Market Rasen – Class 5 | Bumper | 2m 1.5f | Good | 10 ran

1st - EARLOFTHECOTSWOLDS

Plenty to like about this effort and the 4yo finished this race with a click of the button on the turn for home, taking lengths out of the field in a matter of strides. There seems to be plenty of speed in the pedigree so he's a potential 2 miler of the future (hurdles & fences) and I wouldn't be surprised should he prove up to defying a penalty in the bumper sphere.

2nd – FUBAR

Had a rough journey here, on what was his racecourse debut, but it didn't seem to phase him any and he finished with a strong rattle down the home-straight. There appears to be a bit more stamina in the pedigree than the winner so long-term he may be seen to his best over 2m4f/5f trips but on this evidence he should be able to land a bumper somewhere this season, possibly at somewhere like Ludlow where his trainer Kim Bailey has a 7/14, 4p record in bumpers in recent seasons.

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