

NTF Weekend Notes – 1st, 2nd & 3rd November

Friday

1240 Down Royal – 8k | Maiden Hurdle | 2m6f | Yielding to Soft | 14 ran

1st – FURY ROAD

I thought this was a highly impressive hurdling debut from the 5yo. The way he controlled the race from the front and then killed the others off when the button was pressed 3 out was extremely likeable and he's stepped on a fair bit from his bumper form. Time will tell exactly what he beat here, it may not have been much, but regardless of that this was a very solid opening display over timber. Gordon Elliott has a strong record in Maiden Hurdles at Down Royal with those that start at 2/1 or shorter...18/26 | 69% S/R | +£14.36 LSP – W&P 23/26 | 88% S/R...strengthening further to...10/12 | 83% S/R | +£10.46 LSP – W&P 11/12 | 92% S/R... in the November-December period.

145 Down Royal – Grade 2 | WKD Hurdle | 2m 0.5f | Yielding to Soft | 5 ran

1st – COEUR SUBLIME

A straight-forward task for the Triumph runner-up, who was favoured by the weights here anyway. Worth noting that 6 of the first 8 home in last season's Triumph Hurdle (won by Pentland Hills) have won since and it looks likely to prove to be an above average renewal of the juvenile contest.

255 Down Royal – 8k | Beginners Chase | 2m 3.5f | Soft | 7 ran

1st – SAMCRO

Would have been disappointing had he not won in this manner. He was neat and clean at his fences, which was good to see, and this step back up in trip looked to suit him perfectly. He'll face plenty tougher tasks but it was good to get an early box ticked and get this first outing out of the way in a professional manner.

5th – DORTMUND PARK

Really not sure what they are playing at with this lad. Last season was a bit of a write-off but in truth he just didn't have his ground. Three runs, two on Good and one on Good-Yielding, never going to suit him. Here he had his ground but he was unlikely to be suited by 2m3.5f, and the race was all about Samcro anyway, no way they were going to let anything spoil that party. DP should never have been starting at 5/1 in this. Worry is that all this is starting to sour him...they need to get him on soft/heavy and up in trip quick smart. Worth noting that he's now 0/4, 0p off a 121+ break so good chance he'll have needed the run here anyway, they may well have been sticking him over this

shorter trip just to get some fitness into him. He's still of interest but they need to get him racing on more suitable conditions sooner rather than later (one or both of deeper ground and up in trip).

240 Uttoxeter – Class 3 | Beginners Chase | 2m | Soft | 6 ran

1st – SUMMERVILLE BOY

Wind-op clearly did its job given how well he responded when asked to dig in deep and this should set him up nicely for the season ahead. I suspect he'll be at his best over 2m4f/5f as he did look a little tapped for toe at a couple of stages of this contest.

2nd – FIRST FLOW

Safe to say this was a bit of an erratic chasing debut. In fairness to the horse there's every chance he'll have needed this run as he's now 4524P (0/5) off a break of 46+ days (compared to 111 off breaks of 45 days or less) so he'll come on plenty for this outing. The jumping to the right is a bit of a concern going forward as he's now done that on both his last two starts left-handed (having never done it previously) and he either needs to go right-handed or he's got some kind of issue. If they can keep his handicap mark intact (ran here off OR 140) then he could be interesting in handicaps later in the season.

3rd – WESTERN RYDER

Still not really having him as a chaser. He might be OK in handicaps at some stage, but he'll always remain susceptible to the better horses in Novice/Beginners chases.

4th – CAPTAIN MOIRETTE

Sue Smith yard still a bit in the doldrums (0/30 last 30 days) but this wasn't all that bad an effort. He was held up out the back early doors, but he moved into contention easily enough when asked but faded late on down the home-straight. There will be plenty easier assignments for him than this and novice chases/handicap chases on the north circuit should be comfortably within range for him.

315 Uttoxeter – Class 5 | Handicap Chase | 2m 4.5f | Soft | 9 ran

1st – HEAVENLY PROMISE

Fergal O'Brien's Handicap Chasers are starting to get a decent record over the Uttoxeter fences, particularly under the following conditions... F O'Brien | Uttoxeter Handicap Chases | 2m4f+ | Good/G-S/Soft | fields of 11 or less = 9/26 | 35% S/R | +£46.95 BFLSP – W&P 16/26 | 62% S/R.

155 Wetherby – Class 4 | Novices' Chase | 3m 0.5f | Good to Soft | 5 ran

1st – SAM SPINNER

Definitely beginning to look like a Lil Rockerfeller type over fences to me (going chasing after a relatively long hurdling career, picking up some early season lower level novice chases before finding the better and classier novices too hot to cope with). Stamina is clearly his strong suit so that looks what they need to be exploiting but I'd still be worrying about his jumping technique over the larger obstacles.

3rd – COOLE HALL

A likable effort from the 7yo on his first start for 309 days and only his 2nd start since Feb 2018. There will be easier opportunities than this for him and I don't see him having any problem opening his chase account.

230 Wetherby – Listed | Juvenile Hurdle | 2m | Good to Soft | 9 ran

1st – LANGER DAN

Always worth having a Dan Skelton Non-Handicap Wetherby Hurdler on your side, especially when they start at 6/1 or shorter...17/34 | 50% S/R | +£19.56 BFLSP – W&P 32/34 | 94% S/R. That W&P S/R is phenomenal and only one of the 34 has finished outside of the first three.

305 Wetherby – Listed | Handicap Chase | 2m3.5f | Good to Soft | 8 ran

2nd – HAPPY DIVA

A decent effort considering she needs her first run of the season to blow the cobwebs away (0/7 off a 121+ break). She's worth looking out for under the following prime conditions... 2m4f+ | Good to Soft or softer | Dec – April | Listed & below = 13121122211 (6/11, 5p – all 6 career wins). She can run well enough in November so if other conditions are met I'd possibly stretch the month parameters.

4th – BORN SURVIVOR

He had prime conditions - Listed level & below | NOT Heavy | Field of 15 or less | Not V Undulating tracks | 2m5f or less = 11134211 (5/8, 2p - all 5 career wins) – but his current mark of OR 152 (a career high by 7lbs and 10lbs above his last winning mark) does look beyond him, that's almost certainly what stopped him here.

5th – GO LONG

Still unexposed at 9 with only 4 chase starts on the CV. I thought he was going well enough for long enough in this before maybe not quite getting home (he's now 0/5 over further than 2m0.5f). It may not have totally been the trip as he's also 0/6 at C3 level+ (1213 at C4 level & below) so he simply

may have found the class of race too hot (Listed). A drop in grade and/or trip would make him of interest and he may not need to drop all the way back to C4 or back to 2m0.5f to be winning again.

6th – SPLASH OF GINGE

Always likely to need this as he's now 0/10 off a break of 61+ days. He's well-handicapped at present (back on last winning mark of OR 134) but he's not won for a bit and he is an 11yo going on 12.

Might be of interest if dropping back to a weak-ish Class 2 or even back to Class 3 level and meeting with the following... G/S or softer | G3 or below | 2m7f or shorter | LH | DSLR 45 or less | OR 145 or less = 82P7121641F111 (6/14, 2p – all 6 career wins). He's probably not the horse he was though.

7th CATAMARAN DU SEUIL

Out of his depth here as he's now 0/8, 0p in races worth 17k+. He's also 0/7 off marks of OR 138+ so a bit of leniency from the handicap wouldn't go amiss either. Prime conditions look something along the lines of...race worth less than 17k | OR 135 or less...where he is...1121211 (5/7, 2p – all 5 career wins).

410 Wetherby – Class 4 | Novice Hurdle | 2m4f | Good to Soft | 14 ran

1st – REDFORD ROAD

NTD is another who you want to keep a look out for when sending a non-handicap novice hurdler to Wetherby, especially when they are trading at 5/1 or less...10/16 | 63% S/R | +£20.20 LSP – W&P 12/16 | 75% S/R.

Saturday

1225 Ascot – Class 4 | Novices' Handicap Hurdle | 2m3.5f | Good to Soft | 13 ran

1st – MASON JAR

A select but tidy record from Dr Newland in these types of races at Ascot, with the following worth keeping in mind...Dr Newland | Ascot | C2-C4 Handicap Hurdles | 4yo-8yo = 7/11 | 64% S/R | +£58.75 LSP – W&P 8/11 | 73% S/R.

100 Ascot – Class 3 | Novices' Hurdle | 2m | Good to Soft | 8 ran

1st – ECCO

Another boost to the Triumph Hurdle form with this one, whose won both starts since the Juvenile G1 very comfortably. He also fitted a Paul Nicholls last time out winner angle that I've plugged into the database... P Nicholls LTO winner | Non-Handicap Chase/Hurdle | NOT Heavy

ground | NOT seasonal debut | SP 9/2 or less = 117/226 | 52% S/R | +£64.85 BFLSP – W7P 153/226 | 68% S/R (since 2014)...amazing that angle is running at a 76% S/R in 2019.

135 Ascot – Class 3 | Novices' Limited Handicap Chase | 2m3f | Good to Soft | 10 ran

3rd - EARLOFTHECOTSWOLDS

Not sure how this one is rated 140 albeit he did put in a career best effort here, staying on well after making a couple of scrappy errors as the race heated up. Hard to say exactly where he fits into things but he's a consistent type.

210 Ascot – Listed | Handicap Chase | 2m1f | Good to Soft | 12 ran

6th - SPEREDEK

Surprised he started as low as 9/2 for this as he's now 0/8 in races worth 21k+ and 0/11 in fields of 12+. He's dropping down the weights at present so he's worth looking out for under the following... RH tracks | 10 or less runners | race worth 21k or less to winner = 11111P141 (7/9 – all 7 wins).

320 Ascot – Grade 3 | Handicap Chase | 3m | Good to Soft | 16 ran

1st - VINNDICATION

Step up to 3m and the wind-op look to have put this lad firmly back on scene (not that he'd really dropped off the scene!) and he's now 3 from 3 at Ascot. He's now also 6/6 in the Nov-Jan period and he clearly relishes the winter months. Not convinced he's a G1 player just yet (only 2 defeats have come at G1 level) but he could be up to better than 'just' a handicapper.

4th – ON THE BLIND SIDE

A strange sort of effort. Kept wide for a lot of the race, looked to be dropping out as the race heated up and then stayed on strongly down the straight once the race was over. He may have just needed the run and he is 3 from 3 when returning within 30 days of his last start so this could have been a primer for the Ladbroke Trophy at Newbury next month.

5th – POTTERMAN

His best form to date has come in the summer months and his prime conditions look to be...May-Sept | Good or quicker ground | fields of 9 or less...where he is...211311111 (7/9, 1p – all 7 career wins).

7th – SPRINGTOWN LAKE

At the end of the day he maybe just doesn't stay these trips (now 47P over 3m+ - 3047P over 2m5f+) and his ideal trip may be 2m3.5f – 2m4.5f (21F21125).

9th – ACTING LASS

Potentially a non-stayer at 3m+ (9-9-P) and/or possibly isn't up to G3 level+ (P-9-9). He's disappointed badly on his last three starts but he should go back down in the weights again for this and he could be interesting if they revert back to 2m4f-2m6f trips.

12th – MISTER MALARKY

Not fully convinced he a lover of large fields and I'd have *potential* prime conditions of...Good to Soft or quicker | Field of 12 or less = 11113 (4/5 – all 4 career wins)...although obviously remaining flexible as he's only a 6yo.

140 Ayr – Class 3 | Handicap Chase | 2m5.5f | Soft | 6 ran

1st - JONNIESOFA

Always had plenty of potential, just a shame he's had injuries and yard illness to contend with in the past couple seasons. These were probably prime conditions for him...Soft-Heavy | 9 or less runners...where he is...12112121 (5/8, 2p – all 5 career wins). Obvious worry here is that he'll get hammered in the handicap for this 16L win.

400 Ayr – Class 5 | Bumper | 2m | Soft | 7 ran

1st – LA CHANTEUSE

Stuart Crawford has a decent record in Ayr Bumpers, especially under the following conditions... Ayr | C5/6 Bumpers | 5yo-6yo | Horse with 0 career wins...where he is now...7/20 | 35% S/R | +£21.36 BFLSP – W&P 10/20 | 50% S/R. Th horse has clearly learned a lot from it's previous two bumper starts where it was very keen in the early stages and it settled and travelled much smoother here. You suspect they'll go hurdling with it now. It's worth noting, however, that the Scorpion offspring (this one is sired by him) have the following record on Hurdle debut when starting 5th or bigger in the market...1/246 | 0.5% S/R | -£202.25 BFLSP – W&P 14/246 | 5.5% S/R. Worth bearing in mind if he's not near the head of the betting on hurdle debut.

225 Down Royal – Grade 1 | Ladbrokes Champion Chase | 3m | Soft | 5 ran

1st – ROAD TO RESPECT

This looked like probably his best chance of securing a G1 win this season and he's now 2-1-1-1-1 (4/5, 1p) on seasonal debut and 121211 in the October-November period.

2nd – CLAN DES OBEAUX

Now 1/8 at G1 level and just further backs up my thinking that he's not quite a fully fledged G1 operator. He's also 34242 off a break of 91+ days (racecourse debut excluded) and 1/8 on

Undulating/Very-Undulating tracks so it was a slight surprise he started as 7/4f here. He could still win further G1's but it would need to be under prime conditions, which look to be something along the following... Flat/Slightly Undulating tracks | Good to Soft & softer ground = 21131511 (5/8, 2p – 5 of 6 career wins).

4th – DELTA WORK

Generally a difficult race for a second season chaser to land but even still this was a poor effort. Worth noting that his two chase defeats have come in the two most valuable races he's contested, so he's maybe not quite as good as he looks (for all you wouldn't be giving up on him after one poor effort on seasonal debut).

255 Down Royal – Grade 2 | Daily Mirror Chase | 2m3.5f | Soft | 4 ran

1st – REAL STEEL

Extremely strong form going right-handed (5/8 compared to 0/5 left-handed) and Paul Townend clearly gets on very well with him (ridden him to all 5 of his wins, other jockeys are 0/4, 0p on him). Not sure exactly where he fits into the wider picture, but he does look to have progressed from his novice season based on this effort.

120 Wetherby – Class 3 | Handicap Chase | 2m3.5f | Soft | 9 ran

2nd – WEST TO THE BRIDGE

Clearly some way ahead of his mark and once the penny drops fully he'll surely make a mockery of his 125 mark. He was stepped up in trip here but I wouldn't be surprised if even further were to suit him. He's clearly got plenty ability.

3rd – JUST DON'T ASK

Likely to come on for this effort as he's 0/3 on first run of the season compared to 3/5 on all other starts. He'd maybe prefer a smaller field as well as he's 3/3 in fields of 7 or less.

305 Wetherby – Grade 2 | West Yorkshire Hurdle | 3m 0.5f | Soft | 7 ran

3rd – TWO TAFFS

An eye-catching effort from the 9yo on his first start off a wind-op. It was his first try at 3m+ and I suspect he stayed it well enough, which should open up options for him. He would have wanted better ground as he's 4/11, 7p on Good to soft & quicker (compared to 0/4, 1p on Soft & Heavy) and a lower level (0/4 at Graded level) and he could be interesting in a handicap hurdle, providing the handicapper doesn't overreact for him getting so close to The Worlds End & Unowhatimeanharry (he ran here from OR 138).

4th – BALLYANDY

First try at 3m and he didn't quite seem to stay. He seems stuck in no-mans-land under both codes at present.

340 Wetherby – Grade 2 | Charlie Hall Chase | 3m 0.5f | Soft | 7 ran

1st - BALLYOPTIC

With hindsight he did have prime conditions here... Soft/Heavy | 3m1f or less | Field of 15 or less | Feb-Nov...where he is 1141212111 (7/10, 1p -7 of 8 career wins)...although I didn't really think he had a race like this in him. NTD seems to be considering a tilt at the Betfair Chase with him but surely he's not got that in him, surely not...

2nd – ELEGANT ESCAPE

Some sloppy jumps cost him here but it did improve his prime condition figures to... G2 & below | Oct-Feb = 221211122511 (6/12, 5p - all 6 career wins). He might just prove hard to place this term although something like the Denman Chase or the Cotswold Chase may fall his way, although he may want a proper slog in those races to bring his stamina reserves to the fore.

3rd – ASO

Now 0/3, 0p over 3m+ and quite probably just doesn't stay these trips. Can't have him as a 168-rated horse either, that rating looks seriously inflated.

5th – TOP VILLE BEN

Can't have him as Graded performer. He's now 0/5, 0p at Listed level+ and 0/9, 1p at C2 level+. A bit of relief from the handicapper (ran here off OR 151) wouldn't go amiss and then they could try him in handicaps, where he could be up to taking a Class 2 or 'weak' Grade 3.

PU – LA BAGUE AU ROI

Not 100% convinced the ground is an excuse for her here and this could simply have been a poor effort. I'd be concerned that she'll now struggle out of novice company and being forced to take on the boys (don't think there are many mares chases she could feasibly go for? Unless they want to drop back to Listed level and take in those races). Sometimes when a high-class mare loses form it can be very difficult to get back to that level. That's not necessarily what's happened with her but as I said, I'd have my concerns. The ground was closer to Heavy than the official description of Soft and I doubt they'll risk her on such ground again.

Sunday

145 Huntingdon – Class 3 | Novices' Chase | 2m 4f | Good | 10 ran

4th – EL PRESENTE (*one to follow)

A solid first outing over fences after a lengthy breakoff 541 days, looking comfortable at his fences at the first time of asking. He hit a bit of a flat spot around 3-out but he got a second wind-turning for home and finished off well to grab fourth, without being overly knocked about. Kim Bailey Chasing debutants generally don't hit the mark anyway when starting at an SP of bigger than 7/1 (he was 25/1 here)...4/90 | 4% S/R | -£37.00 LSP...so I wouldn't have been expecting a win from the 6yo here anyway. With all that in mind I think he's one well worth keeping on the radar, with a switch to Handicap company possibly a good idea (OR 124 looks well within range for him) and being out of Presenting a step up in trip to 3m would also be an interesting move, for all I'm very open on what his ideal conditions could be.

220 Huntingdon – Class 4 | Handicap Chase | 2m 0.5f | Good | 10 ran

2nd – ROCK ON ROCKY

A decent effort under not quite ideal conditions and bumping into an in-form, well-handicapped rival. He's been a bit out of form recently, so it was good to see a bit more life from him here and it gives hope there is a win in him somewhere. His prime conditions remain...G/S & softer | 2m 0.5f or less | C3 & below | OR 130 or less | Field of 9 or less | Hcp = 7/17, 3p - all 7 career wins...so a bit more cut underfoot and a slightly smaller field would be ideal for him. He's definitely on a winnable mark at present.

255 Huntingdon – Class 4 | Handicap Chase | 2m 4f | Good | 10 ran

1st – GLOBAL RULER

Possibly just went too hard off the front end in first time blinkers and ran out of steam in the home straight. May well have needed the run as well given it was his seasonal debut. He jumped well in the main though and he should be able to take advantage of his mark before too long, possibly back down at around 2m trips.

330 Huntingdon – Class 4 | Handicap Hurdle | 3m 1.5f | Good | 8 ran

1st – MR LOVE

Skelton does well with his Huntingdon Handicap Hurdlers in Class 4 contests, especially when starting at an SP of 8/1 or less...10/21 | 48% S/R | +£21.90 BFLSP – W&P 14/21 | 67% S/R. It's taken this one 16 starts to break his maiden although it was only his third start for Skelton and now he's got a win into him he could possibly get a couple more into him, especially since he was winning off

such a lowly handicap mark (OR 91). I suspect they'll try and get him out under a penalty before the handicapper can properly hammer him for this 15L win.

1245 Carlisle – Class 4 | Novice Hurdle | 2m 4.5f | Good to Soft | 17 ran

1st – GLENDUFF

The 5yo clearly benefitted from stepping up on trip on hurdle debut here and this was a likeable performance. Nicky Richards has an excellent record at Carlisle in Non-Handicap Hurdles, especially with his Male runners that start at an SP of 10/1 or less... 13/26 | 50% S/R | +£32.39 BFLSP – W&P 16/26 | 62% S/R.

230 Carlisle – Listed | Intermediate Chase | 2m 4.5f | Soft | 4 ran

1st – LOSTINTRANSLATION

A sound round of jumping and he controlled this race as would have been expected, it would have been disappointing should he not have produced an effort like this. Strangely enough, and it probably won't have any bearing on what he does, the winners of this race haven't really gone on to 3m+ Grade 1 glory except Tidal Bay back in 2008. It's produced some serious handicappers and a couple of quality mid-distance graded performers but no real 3m+ G1 players. Good chance he'll change that, of course, but it's something to ponder on anyway.

2nd – COUNT MERIBEL

Obvious worry here is what the handicapper does after he got to within 2.25L of 161-rated Lostintranslation. I'd hope he doesn't do anything as he was getting 6lbs from the Tizzard horse but there is a chance he gets shifted up a few pounds and suddenly a well-handicapped horse becomes less well-handicapped...which is typical bloody poor placement from Twiston-Davies!! These were prime conditions for him... Oct-Nov | NOT G1 or G2 | 2m3.5f-2m5.5f = 211111 (5/6 – all 5 career wins)...so he was always going to run to form and he obviously loves the track (2111 at Carlisle) so I wasn't in the least bit surprised by the effort. I thought he jumped and travelled well throughout the race and there should be a prize in him somewhere this season.

3rd – KILDISART

Always likely to need the run as he's now 534252 off a break of 46+ days (compared to 1119121 off a break of 45 days or less) and he should improve plenty for this outing. He'd be wanting at least 2m5f anyway and probably 3m+ to be at his best and he could be interesting for the Ladbroke Trophy at Newbury, I wouldn't say he's quite at his handicap ceiling yet on OR 156.

340 Carlisle – Class 3 | Handicap Chase | 3m 2.5f | Soft | 7 ran

2nd - BALLYMALIN

Not sure he fully stays these trips as he's now 0/10 over 3m1.5f trips. He's running well at present though and he's still on a mark he should be able to take advantage of, with ideal conditions something along the lines of... C3 & below | Field of 11 or less | 3m1f or less = 1111131321 (7/10, 2p - all 7 career wins).

3rd – LOUGH DERG FARMER

Thought this was a fine effort considering the yard are still in the doldrums and he's not a huge fan of testing ground (0/6 on Soft or Heavy). He dug in really well considering he was off the bridle some way out but the 13L 3rd should ensure another wee drop in the weights, which clearly won't be a bad thing. I'd be loose enough on his prime conditions although he does seem to prefer better ground than this.