

# NTF Weekend Notes – 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> November + 1<sup>st</sup> December

## Friday

**12.15 Newbury – Class 3 | Maiden Hurdle | 2m 0.5f | Soft | 16 ran**

### **1<sup>st</sup> – SON OF CAMAS**

I think this 4yo could be very exciting. He's now impressed on both starts this season (Bumper win and this maiden hurdle win) and has quickly gone to show his bumper debut at the Punchestown Festival (176L 19<sup>th</sup> of 19!!) was all wrong (although it's showed how highly Henderson rated him to pitch him straight into that contest). You'd be disappointed if he didn't turn into a Graded performer this season.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – KING ROLAND**

Worth keeping on the radar as getting to within a length of Son Of Camas on seasonal debut (when that one had already had a run) will probably prove to be hot form.

### **4<sup>th</sup> – ASK FOR GLORY**

Should come on for the outing (seasonal debut) and may well have finished closer but for being impeded by faller at the last. A word of potential caution, however, it's worth noting that the bumper he won (27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2018) is yet to produce a winner, for all he did win it by 13L. May just have been that he was beating nothing very impressively. In the long term it may mean nothing but just worth keeping an eye on, at the very least.

### **Fell – COCONUT SPLASH**

Would probably have only placed at best had he stayed on his feet, but he was in the process of running a fine race on his second start. I suspect further and fences will be where he ultimately shines.

**12.45 Newbury – Class 3 | Novices' Limited Handicap Chase | 2m 0.5f | Soft | 8 ran**

### **1<sup>st</sup> – FANION DESTRUVAL**

Clearly one with a serious amount up it's sleeve! This was the 4yo's fifth win in six starts (including French form) and Venetia looks like she's got an exciting prospect to go to war with here. Probably needs to tidy jumping up a little (for all he was very good at plenty of them) but that will come with experience.

### **1.50 Newbury – Class 2 | Handicap Chase | 2m 4f | Good to Soft | 12 ran**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> – OLDGRANGEWOOD**

With hindsight he did have prime conditions to attack here... DSLR 75 or less | C2 level & below | Flat-slightly undrained tracks | OR 145 or less = 136111B1314 (6/11, 1p - all 6 career wins)...and he (just) took full advantage. He won this off OR 135 so he could still be competitive if he only gets a 5lb-7lbs rise in the weights.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> - KALASHNIKOV**

A horse I really can't make my mind up about. Heard some people say that this effort suggested he was a Ryanair Chase contender although I wouldn't say finishing second to Oldgrangewood was really Ryanair Chase winning form...again though, just not sure where I sit with him, I'm open, to a certain extent, with him...

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> – GLEN FORSA**

Like Kalashnikov I just don't know where I sit with this one. He went well enough for long enough here to suggest he could possibly land a handicap off this mark (OR 150) but I'd be very surprised if he proved better than handicap level.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> - WENYERREADYFREDIE**

Will have needed this effort as he is now 0/7 off a break of 91+ days (3/6 of shorter breaks). He's maybe a little high in the weights at present but this effort will help him to start going back down a few pounds.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> – EAMON AN CNOIC**

Just not his prime conditions - LH Tracks | 13 or less runners | Race worth 15k or less | DSLR 31+ = 111F11 (5/6 - all 5 career wins) – but this thumping defeat (45L) should see him edge down the weights a couple pounds.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> – SPIRITOTHEGAMES**

Very disappointing effort and simply lost way too much ground at his fences. Breathing up he had over the summer seems to have had a reverse impact on him!

### **2.25 Newbury – Grade 2 | Novices' Chase | 2m 4f | Good to Soft | 6 ran**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> – CHAMP**

Everything that could go wrong for this lad did go wrong (and more!) so the fact he was still able to win going away at the line from a 152 rated rival says plenty about his ability and engine. Ultimately he's surely a 3-miler but it's probably not a bad idea to keep him over 2m4f/5f at the minute so he can learn to jump at speed, a lot of the best 3-milers cut their jumping teeth over the mid-range trips and although it looks scrappy at times it does benefit them when they step up to 3-miles (Lost In

Translation a good recent example – Lord Windermere a good example from a few years back). This one looks like he's going right to the top.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> – BLACK OP**

Lost little in defeat here and he's clearly much happier over fences this season and with a summer wind-op also looking to have aided him. Wonder, however, if he'll just be one that's caught between Handicaps and Graded races, for all it could go either way yet.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> – DEYRANN DE CARJAC**

Travelled into this smoothly and looked a serious danger but ultimately couldn't match the classier horses in this (Champ & Black Op). I suspect he's got a decent handicap in him in the spring though, if Alan King can keep his handicap mark intact prior to that, there's plenty to like about the horse.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> – MONT DES AVALOIRS**

Never put into this with any great gusto, on his first start of the season and his first run since a wind op. He's not really shown anything to suggest he's a graded animal (0/6, Op at Graded level) and I wonder if this was just a run to get him tuned up for a tilt at a handicap somewhere.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> – VISION DES FLOS**

Could just be a case of waiting until Feb-April period with this lad as that seems to be where he is most likely to find the winners enclosure (132160122 in those months – 63U4235235 all other months). He wasn't actually beaten all that far here (9L) and given this was only his 2<sup>nd</sup> chase start he could yet have more to bring to the table in the chasing sphere, albeit most likely as a handicapper than anything else and there is the worry that he's had a bit too many hurdle starts (18) before heading over fences to make a proper impact. He another tricky one to weigh up.

### **3.00 Newbury – Grade 2 | Long Distance Hurdle | 3m 1f | Good to Soft | 5 ran**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> – PAISLEY PARK**

If he stays fit he's going to prove very hard to beat. He's a particularly strong record in Oct-Dec (5 from 5) and over 3m 0.5f+ (4 from 4) and the further into a race he goes the better he looks.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> – THISTLECRACK**

Possibly flattered by his proximity to Paisley Park here and it has to be noted he was getting 6lbs from the winner. As an 11yo going on 12 it's hard to see where he could fit another win onto his CV.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> – THE WORLDS END**

Always likely to get found out against the very best. I'm actually a little surprised they haven't considered a tilt at the Welsh National with this one. He's rated 149 over fences, which probably is below his ceiling, is unexposed after only 5 chase starts and he's 4 from 4 at Chepstow (1 chase – 2

hurdles – 1 bumper). Given he's probably going to prove hard to place the Welsh National looks a chance missed to try and snaffle a large pot.

### **Saturday**

**12.45 Bangor – Class 4 | Handicap Chase | 2m1.5f | Heavy | 9 ran**

**1<sup>st</sup> – ZOLFO**

Jennie Candlish is pulling together some decent stats at Bangor (one of her local tracks), particularly under the following conditions...J Candlish | Bangor Handicap Chases | SP less than 9/1 = 9/19 | 47% S/R | +£33.16 BFLSP – W&P 14/19 | 74% S/R, this one being a qualifier.

**3.35 Bangor – Class 5 | Bumper | 2m0.5f | Heavy | 5 ran**

**1<sup>st</sup> – CHAZZA**

Not a huge amount to go on with the stats but Kim Bailey's Bangor Bumper runners that start at shorter than 8-1 have returned the following...115311 (4/6, 1p), which may be worth keeping an eye on.

**11.50 Fairyhouse – 7.5k | Beginners Chase | 2m5f | Soft | 18 ran**

**1<sup>st</sup> – CAREFULLY SELECTED**

Another Irish track where Mullins has a fine record with in Beginners chases...W Mullins | Fairyhouse Beginners Chases | SP 4-1 or less = 25/47 | 53% S/R | +£17.48 BFLSP – W&P 37/47 | 79% S/R.

**1.00 Fairyhouse – Grade 2 | Handicap Chase | 2m0.5f | Soft | 6 ran**

**4<sup>th</sup> – MINDS EYE**

Not sure he ever looked like really landing a serious blow in this and I'm actually quite surprised he started as 13/8 fav given his record in races worth 25k+ (0/10, 0 places compared to 21211222 (3/8, 5p in races worth less than 20k)). He just isn't up to tackling valuable contests (25k+) but he'd be interesting enough if dropped into less valuable contests.

#### **12.40 Newbury – Grade 2 | Novices' Chase | 2m7.5f | Good to Soft | 3 ran**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> – DANNY WHIZZBANG**

This was impressive, no doubt about it and the 6yo is now 3 from 3 in his career. His two opponents both had chasing experience under their belts, but he relatively easily dismissed them both. He could well make into a graded chaser.

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> - RESERVE TANK**

Never looked remotely happy in this and the writing was on the wall from some way out. Must now be a thinking that he's considerably best going right-handed, where he is 4 from 4 compared to 1/5, 0p on LH tracks. He has obviously won a G1 left-handed but the overarching theme of his form is that he wants to go right-handed.

#### **1.15 Newbury – Class 2 | Handicap Chase | 2m6.5f | Good to Soft | 16 ran**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> – BENNY'S KING**

Now 12111 (4/5, 1p – all 4 career wins) in Nov-Dec and the way he won this it wouldn't surprise me to see him back up the performance next time out. He's in the Welsh National (which on the stamina front is uncharted territory as he's never raced past 2m6.5f) and that was the nominated target for him at the start of the season from Skelton. Interestingly he'll get to run in that with a 4lb penalty and he's sure to go up more than that for this win (meaning he'll be 'well in' for the Welsh National).

#### **1.50 Newbury – Class 2 | Handicap Hurdle | 2m5f | Good to Soft | 16 ran**

##### **8<sup>th</sup> – PETER THE MAYO MAN**

A better run than the bare form suggests, and he did make some headway around 3 out before fading on the good to soft ground. As I've mentioned a couple times, he has very simple prime conditions... Good | C3 level & below = 1111141 (6/7 - all 6 career wins)...and he should be on a decent enough mark at present to take advantage of if presented with those conditions.

#### **2.25 Newbury – Listed | Intermediate Handicap Hurdle | 2m0.5f | Good to Soft | 11 ran**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> - EPATANTE**

Put her Cheltenham Festival disappointment firmly behind her here with an eye-catching display. The early season plan from Henderson was to 'aim her at valuable handicap hurdles' but you have a feeling she may ultimately prove to be better than just a handicapper.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – ELUSIVE BELLE**

I suspect this one is sitting on a very workable mark at present (OR 134) and she should come on for this first outing of the season. The note I made against her name during the summer was as follows... "Well Handicapped for 2019/20 season if staying hurdling. Second behind Reserve Tank at Sandown looks very good now, given that one won its next 3, including 2 G1's and is rated 151".

### **3.00 Newbury – Grade 3 | Handicap Chase | 3m2f | Good to Soft | 24 ran**

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> – ELEGANT ESCAPE**

A mighty effort off OR 160 and he's possibly just best giving weight to 'lesser' horses than trying to mix it with Grade 1 horses. Assuming the handicapper doesn't raise him for this then he could be interesting for the National in the spring (Aintree Grand National), as all he does is stay and stay and if he takes to the fences then the long-run in at Aintree will suit him perfectly. There was plenty talk pre-season of the National being on the agenda and this effort gives plenty indication that does look the ideal plan for him.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> – BEWARE THE BEAR**

Another that potentially has the National in his sights. Worry for him would be the fact he's PP7P on his previous starts over 3m5f+. He might prove a little tricky to place from his mark, I suspect he maybe needs to drop a couple pounds before becoming full competitive again.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> – MISTER MALARKY**

Not a bad effort but I do still feel he maybe just wants a smaller field to fully show his best (0/7 in fields of 14+ - 4/11 in fields of 12 or less).

#### **10<sup>th</sup> – BORICE**

Briefly looked a danger turning for home but ultimately he maybe just doesn't actually stay these 3m+ trips (090 over 3m0.5f+ | | 111 over 2m7.5f or shorter, since moving from France). I'm open on that at present, but the evidence is starting to point that way.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> – DAKLONDIKE**

The ground had probably just dried out too much for him here (0/9, 2p on G/S or quicker). His prime conditions remain... Soft/Heavy | DSLR 50 days or less = 111411 (5/6 - all 5 career wins).

#### **15<sup>th</sup> – OK CORRAL**

Just not convinced he's a Graded animal as he's now 25P0 at graded level compared to 1121211 at Listed level & below. A drop in the weights for this would make him interesting in a lower grade.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> – TWO TAFFS**

Looked a serious danger turning in but he clearly didn't stay here and he's now 730 over 2m7f+ trips. He's got races in him but most likely over shorter trips and down in grade (he's 33470 at Graded

level). Prime Conditions look something along the lines of...Listed level & below | 2m1f – 2m5.5f...where he is 21322111 (4/8, 4p – all 4 career wins). A weak-ish G3 handicap down in trip would also come under consideration but ideally it would be Listed level & below.

#### **PU – ON THE BLIND SIDE**

A disappointing run and never looked happy at any stage. I wonder if the cheek-pieces are not helping him much...P42P wearing CP's compared to 146111 without them.

#### **3.40 Newbury – Class 2 | Handicap Chase | 2m 0.5f | Good to Soft | 14 ran**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> – MAGIC SAINT**

Good to see him back to winning ways and he does strike me as one that could potentially be better than a handicapper in time. Providing he doesn't get too severe a rise in the weights for this (won from OR 147) then he could well pick off another handicap before having a crack at graded company (non-handicap).

##### **5<sup>th</sup> – NO COMMENT (\*one to follow)**

A strange effort and he looked out of things turning for home but he finished with a fair old rattle once his stamina kicked in. Given the fact he's got placed form over 3m+ it's fair to assume he was a little out-paced in the early stages here and this run may simply have been part of a longer-term plan from team McManus. He's still lightly raced over fences (this was only his 6<sup>th</sup> start) and his mark of OR 138 should be a winnable one for him.

#### **PU – WHATSWRONGWITHYOU**

Was running a big race on seasonal debut and first start off a wind-op but lost all chance when sprawling on landing three out. He generally needs his first run back anyway (0/4 off a break of 121+ days compared to 5/10 off breaks of 60 or less) so he'll benefit for this outing and being PU may not be all that bad as he'll obviously escape any rise in the weights. He strikes me as one who would be worth a crack at 2m4f/5f (not run past 2m2f previously) and he's also got very strong form in the Jan-March period (11011137 compared to 28P262 in all other months). He could have something decent in him from around his current mark of OR 142.

#### **2.05 Newcastle – Grade 1 | Fighting Fifth Hurdle | 2m 0.5f | Heavy | 5 ran**

##### **3<sup>rd</sup> – SILVER STREAK**

Probably the best he could have hoped for given the state of the ground (heavy) and he's now 0/7 on Soft or Heavy. He should continue to run well this season although he may not find himself winning until he meets with better ground (G/S or quicker).

### **3.20 Newcastle – Listed | Handicap Chase | 2m 7.5f | Heavy | 9 ran**

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> – TOP VILLE BEN**

A wasted opportunity and, to my eyes, a fine ride that, when push came to shove, turned into a poor ride. Dowson should have used the whip to keep the gelding up to his work as soon as they jumped the last, stamina wasn't an issue and the horse just looked to be idling due to being out on his own too long. Hopefully the handicapper doesn't raise him too much for the run and scupper any future handicap attempts.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> – JONNIESOFA**

Wonder if he just doesn't full stay 3m trips as he's now 4-9-2 over 2m7.5f+ trips. Not totally sold on that notion but could be a potential.

### **Sunday**

### **1.00 Fairyhouse – Grade 1 | Royal Bond Novices' Hurdle | 2m | Yielding to Soft | 9 ran**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> – ENVOI ALLEN**

Everything about this horse screams superstar in the making. His looks, the way he travels, the way he takes his flights, the way he knuckled down after the last to secure the win...he could prove very difficult to beat this season, he looks pretty special.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> – ABACADABRAS**

Lost nothing in defeat here and comes out of the race with plenty credit. His smooth travelling style should see him remain competitive at the top level this season and there must be potential for him to stay longer trips at some stage (2m4f+).

### **1.30 Fairyhouse – Grade 1 | Drinmore Novices' Chase | 2m4f | Soft | 5 ran**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> – FAKIR D'OUDAIRIES**

A lightening round of jumping from the 4yo on the sharp end. He's going to put any novice's jumping under pressure and looks likely to be one of the major forces in the 2m-2m4f divisions.

#### **FELL – SAMCRO**

There's always the sense of him being a 'what if' type of horse and this didn't help matters. For me he's not quite made the transition from jumping hurdles to jumping fences and he was almost hurdling some of these obstacles, which ultimately cost him in the end. Although he only had 8 hurdle starts (below the cut-off where it becomes tricky to make a smooth transition between hurdles & fences at the top level) he did spend two seasons hurdling (1 and a half I suppose) and



that can be another obstacles to making the transition between the two disciplines. His class will always keep him in races and if he gets a clear round he'll be hard to beat, getting a clear round against opposition who put his jumping under pressure, however, will not be easy. He needs to improve his technique, pure and simple. The class and engine still remain but you need more than just that on your side when you're jumping fences.

#### **2.40 Fairyhouse – Grade 1 | Hattons Grace Hurdle | 2m4f | Yielding to Soft | 6 ran**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> – HONEYSUCKLE**

A serious mare and one that could prove extremely hard to beat this season. She's now 6 from 6, has won on various ground and differing trips and now has 2 G1's in the bank. The only query we have is her ability to go left-handed, with all 6 of her starts coming right-handed at present. Nothing to suggest she won't go left-handed of course, it's just, at the minute, an unknown.

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> - BACARDYS**

A fine effort from the 8yo under prime conditions - 2m4f and below | Not Chases = 21111F3131 (6/10, 3p – all 6 career wins) – but he simply had no answer to the impressive Honeysuckle. He could yet have a race or two in him again this season if they can find prime conditions again (and avoid Honeysuckle).

##### **3<sup>rd</sup> – APPLE'S JADE**

Looks like she's reached the end of her tether now and it can be very hard for the very best mares (which she was) to regain the winning thread after it's gone. It be surprised to see her reach the heights she's previous reached after this. If it is to happen I suspect it will come over 3m+ (113 over those trips).