

NTF Weekend Notes – 8th, 9th & 10th October

Friday

1.00 Chepstow – 2m 1/2f Novice Hurdle | C4 – Good – 9 ran

1st – KNAPPERS HILL

Justified his cramped odds-in comfortable enough fashion although left the impression there is plenty still to work on. All being well the 5yo will be a force this season at the top of the novice hurdling ranks and it's also well worth noting the future form of that G2 Aintree Bumper he won in April at the National Meeting, with the future form of the race currently standing at 9 runs – 7 wins - 1 place (so only one effort in 9 subsequent runs has failed to at least land in the places). Needless to say it's a Graded Bumper that needs to be kept firmly on the radar this season, it was clearly a very hot renewal of the race. With regards to this particular race it is worth noting that the speed figure recorded (Proform Speed figures used for all speed figure comments) by Knappers Hill was a shade below par for the class level but we know he can run to a much higher level based on his Bumper form so I'd be confident enough that he will step on plenty with this first hurdling run under his belt.

1.35 Chepstow – 3m 1/2f Novice Chase | C2 – Good – 4 ran

1st – DOES HE KNOW

A solid chasing debut from the 6yo and this improved his Oct-Nov record to 211121 (4/6 compared to 0/3 all other months). Early days yet of course but he may potential be at his best in the early part of the season. Possible early sign's as well that he doesn't want the ground too testing (4/6 on G/S+ compared to 0/3 on Soft/Heavy) and indeed if you look at him under the following...G/S or quicker | Oct-Nov...you get a form line of... 11112 (4/5, 1p – all 4 career wins)... and he's potentially an interesting sort over the next few weeks, especially if the ground holds up and doesn't get too testing.

2nd - THREEUNDERTHRU FIVE

Beaten at odds-on on chasing debut here but not a massive surprise as he was lowest rated on official ratings and the Nicholls Novice Chasers do generally run below expectation at Chepstow in the Oct-Dec period... P Nicholls Novice chasers at Chepstow in the Oct-Dec period (since 2010)...4/33 | 12% S/R | -21.37 BFLSP - W&P 10/33 | 30% S/R - 58% below expectation. Based on the figures he was posting last season he does have the potential to be the best of these over fences come the end of the season although it is worth noting that he did jump out to his right a few times here and he may potentially be best going right-handed (3/3 on RH tracks compared to 2/5 on LH tracks) so that could possibly hold him back a little.

4th – ASK DILLON

Likely to have needed this run as he is now 0/6 when racing off breaks longer than 45 days and his fitness did show in the closing stages, weakening badly from around 3-out. He should come on for this and I'd be looking at Prime Conditions (PC) for him somewhere around the following...DSLRL 45 or less | C2 & below = 142211 (3/6, 2p – all 3 career wins).

2.45 Chepstow – 2m4f Novice Hurdle | G2 – Good – 7 ran

1st – CAMPROND

This was a serious Speed figure posted by the 5yo, a considerably way above Class Par, and although he's been on the go throughout the summer this effort suggests he's probably better than 'just' a summer type. Indeed it's not the first time he's posted a lofty figure and he looks well worth keeping on the radar going forward from this, albeit large field handicaps may be his hunting ground rather than further G1/G2 Hurdles. The first five home in this all posted a figure above class par and there's a good chance this turns out to be a hot renewal of the Grade 2 prize. Camprond's 3 wins to date have come on Good ground but I suspect he handles most ground based on the figures he's posted on Soft & Good to Soft (Heavy may be too testing for him) and hopefully the handicapper won't be overly harsh on him for his 5L winning margin here.

2nd – LUTTRELL LAD

This 5yo was giving away hurdling experience to his battle-hardened stable-mate (Camprond) and was also trying 2m4f for the first time but he still produced a career best effort and he'll surely be winning more hurdle races this term. He finished 4th in the Aintree Bumper last season, a race we know has been working out exceptionally well, and he still rates as a very promising type for the season ahead.

3rd – UP FOR PAROL

Well-beaten come the line and he may be seen to best effect over 2m trips just now as he is 2 from 2 on his 2 starts at 2m (won by 6.5L each time) and has been well-beaten both times he raced over further (beaten 18L & 22.5L).

4.25 Chepstow – 3m 1/2f Handicap Chase | C4 – Good – 13 ran

6th – BARDEN BELLA

Good chance this one will have needed the outing (first run for 138 days) as most Christian Williams runners do at this stage of the season – C Williams | Sept-Dec | DSLR 90+ = 2/78 | 2.5% S/R | - £62.53 BFLSP – W&P 12/78 | 15% S/R – 64% below exp. Nevertheless the 5yo was beginning to make headway and moving well when getting a little scrappy down the back-straight and I suspect she'll come on plenty for this run (like most of the seasonal debutants for Williams at this stage of the season). She entered chasing quite early (as a 4yo with only 4 hurdle start under her belt) and on

a very lenient mark after finishing well-beaten on all hurdle starts and I suspect she's still got plenty improvement up her sleeve from her current mark of OR 90 (may go down 1 or 2 for this effort). Bit early to be pinpointing Prime Conditions (PC) for her but Christian Williams knows how to get the best out of these types and I suspect she could pick up a couple of low level races this term as she climbs the ratings.

8th – CLONDAW RIGGER

Should come on for this outing (first run for 127 days and is 0/8 off a break of 46+ days) and is well-handicapped at present off OR 92. I have his PC as...OR 103 or less | DSLR 11-45 | Handicap Chases | 3m-3m1.5f = 33973112212 (3/11, 6p – all 3 career wins). Been a while since he won admittedly but he has run into the places recently when getting PC and 2 of his 3 wins have come in November (form of 113P7 in Nov) so could be worth keeping on the radar in the coming weeks.

9th – FROM THE HEART

Parked out rear in this and never put into the contest and this was likely nothing more than a pipe-opener to blow the cobwebs away (he is 0/10 off breaks of 31+ compared to 3/10 of breaks of 30 days or less). He'll come on for this run and he's worth looking out for under the following... Hcp Chases | Oct-Jan | DSLR 30 or less = 41112 (3/5, 1p – all 3 career wins).

Saturday

2.25 Chepstow – 3m 1/2f Handicap Chase | C2 – Good – 13 ran

3rd – COBRA DE MAI

Has been very hit and miss since his last win in April 2019 (mainly miss) but this was a bit more like it, on his second start for his new trainer Caroline Bailey. From a pure win perspective he's much better in single figure fields (he's 0/19, 3p in fields of 10+ compared to 9/22, 3p in fields of 9 or less) so these wouldn't have been PC for him but he is exceptionally well-handicapped at present on his best form and I'd be interested in him if he appeared under the following... Fields of 9 or less | OR 142 or less | DSLR 120 or less = 9/17, 3p – all 9 career wins.

5th – IRISH PROPHECY

A solid enough effort but he's probably a shade high in the handicap at present and given he's now 0/7, 0p at C2 level+ this was probably out with his pay grade as well. A drop in the ratings and a drop in grade would make him interesting and I have PC for him somewhere along the following... C3 & below | OR 135 or less | DSLR 16+ = 127211P42111 (6/12, 3p - all 6 career wins).

6th - FIDUX

Wouldn't have quite been PC here for the 8yo and he could be done with dropping a couple of pounds and facing a smaller field. I've PC for him as...OR 142 or less | G/S or quicker | fields of 10 or less | Listed level & below = 13614211U113411 (8/15, 3p – all 8 career wins).

9th – THE MIGHTY DON

I would have expected a bit better from the 9yo here but ultimately he maybe just isn't up to a race of this value (now 0/11, 0p in races worth 20k+). With that in mind I'd give a little tweak to his PC and now have them as... C2 level & below (race worth less than 20k) | LH tracks | G/S or quicker = 5211712213 (4/10, 4p – all 4 career wins).

11th – REAL STEEL

Surprised he started at single figures for this (although I suspect people were maybe seduced by the first time wind-op) as he really needs to go Right-Handed (now 0/8, 0p on LH tracks compared to 6/13, 1p on RH tracks). Realistically he's done precious little since he moved to Paul Nicholls (from Mullins) but with a wind-op in the bank he maybe be worth giving a chance to under his PC... RH tracks | Soft or quicker | G2 & below = 311111 (5/6 – 5 of 6 career wins). He could well get chunked down a couple pounds for this terrible effort (3rd poor run on the bounce) but if the wind-op has unlocked something and they find a race under PC he could go in at decent odds somewhere.

12th – MISTER MALARKY

Can be a bit of a tricky horse to figure out but he wasn't in his Prime Months here (Nov-Feb) so no surprise to see him finish well-beaten come the line. I have rough PC for him as...fields of 14 or less | Nov-Feb = 6/12, 2p – all 6 career wins...with his Handicap Ceiling possibly around the OR 150 mark (ran here off OR 154).

PU – COURT MASTER

Another I was surprised to see start at a single figure SP as he is a horse with very simple PC and these were not it. His four career wins can be boiled down to the following... C3 or less Hcp Chases | 9 or less runners = 1111 (4/4 - all 4 career wins)... and he clearly didn't have that here.

3.00 Chepstow – 2m4f Novices Chase | Listed – Good – 5 ran

1st – TEA CLIPPER

Always ready to go on his seasonal debut and he's now 3 from 3 on his first run of the season. He's also now 111151 in the Oct-Dec period (compared to 2533 in the Feb-Apr period) and he has, so far, proven at his best in the early part of the season. On the figures this was a serious effort, considerably above class par for the level and a comfortable career best for the horse, giving plenty indication he's one to keep on the right side of in Novice Chases this season.

2nd – FIDELIO VALLIS

Another Nicholls Chepstow Novice chaser to ‘misfire’... P Nicholls Novice chasers at Chepstow in the Oct-Dec period (since 2010)...4/33 | 12% S/R | -21.37 BFLSP - W&P 10/33 | 30% S/R - 58% below expectation...this was, however, a career best effort from the 6yo and a very strong effort on the figures and he deserves plenty credit for the run, he was probably just beaten by a potentially very good novice in Tea Clipper.

3.30 Chepstow – 2m4f Handicap Hurdle | Grade 3 – Good – 17 ran

2nd - DIDTHEYLEAVEUOUTTO

At his best in the Oct-Dec period, with NH form of 4/8, 1p in those months (compared to 0/7, 1p all other months). A little tweak of his conditions could see him back in the winners enclosure and I’d have his PC somewhere along the lines of the following... NH | Listed level & below | tracks with undulations | Oct-Dec = F01111 (4/6 – all 4 NH wins).

4.05 Chepstow – 2m4f Handicap Chase | Class 2 – Good – 9 ran

4th – HURRICANE HARVEY

First run off a wind-op here but he was never fully put into this contest, which was probably on the short side for him anyway, and this looked like a run to just get him used to being able to breathe properly and to blow off some of the summer cobwebs. I have PC for him as...Oct-Jan | Good to Soft or softer = 11112 (4/5, 1p – all 4 career wins). All 4 of his wins have come over 2m4.5f+ trips and with a win on his CV over 3m I suspect we’ll see more from him over longer trips than this.

PU – NOT THAT FUISSE

C2+ races are just too hot for this lad (0/11, 1p at C2 level+) so no real surprise to see him finish PU here and I have PC for him as... Good - Good to Soft | 11 or less runners | C3 level & below = 1212211P1 (5/9, 2p – all 5 NH career wins). He ran here off OR 136 and I don’t think that’s a mark that is beyond him, indeed he may well go down a pound or 2 for this run, which would be a handy bonus, and I wouldn’t be put off him off the back of this effort, he just needs to be placed to better effect.

4.40 Chepstow – 2m 1/2f Bumper | Class 4 – Good – 8 ran

1st - TIMEFORATUNE

This was a determined battling effort from the 5yo, who held off a sustained challenge down the home straight to a horse he was giving 7lbs to. He recorded a figure comfortably above class par for the level (something he has now done on both his bumper starts) and he looks like a horse with a big future ahead of him.

2nd – GREAT HEARTJAC

Looked like he was all set to pass the leader as he cruised alongside him 2f out but he found that one a tough nut to crack and he again failed to open his bumper account (at 4th time of asking). I do, however, think he bumped into a serious horse here in the winner (Timeforatune) and it shouldn't go unnoticed that they were 17L+ ahead of the remainder of the field and he also posted a strong speed figure in defeat, indeed it was the second strong bumper figure of his 4-race career. He maybe just needs hurdles to unlock his potential and I wouldn't yet be put off by his 0/4 career record.

Sunday

1.30 Newton Abbot – 2m5f Intermediate Chase | Class 2 – Good to Soft – 4 ran

1st – BRAVEMANSGAME

A visually impressive performance on chase debut and he was taking on a couple of the top novices from last season but I do feel this performance has been overplayed a touch. For starters he was given an easy enough time out front and was allowed to dictate things at his own pace, with no pressure put on his jumping at any stage. He was also receiving plenty weight from the others and was favoured by the weights here on official figures. The speed figure posted was also a fair bit below par for the level and he didn't need to post a figure anywhere near standard to take this. That's not to say he doesn't or won't turn into a high class chaser and he clearly has plenty potential to be just that (a top class G1 chaser) but I feel people are maybe just getting carried away a little by this debut effort, I suspect FUSIL RAFFLES (2nd) has other targets further down the line and connections probably didn't want or need to be gunning full tilt for this, THE BIG BREAKAWAY (Fell) has proven to be much more comfortable on Soft ground and probably found this ground not to his liking whilst DEFUTURE IS BRIGHT (3rd) is 114-rated handicapper and was seriously out of his depth here (although good placement by connections for the prize money). A pleasing debut effort, yes, a horse with massive potential, yes, but I'd prefer to hang fire with the Kauto Star comparisons until further evidence is acquired.

FELL – THE BIG BREAKAWAY

Plenty evidence in the form book to suggest he doesn't want things as 'fast' as this and he's a much better horse on Soft ground (23PF on G/S compared to 11412 on Soft). A loose set of PC for him would be...Soft or slower | G2 level & below = 2111 (3/4 – all 3 career wins)...albeit he is untested on Heavy so that would be an unknown at present.

2.02 Newton Abbot – 3m 2.5f Handicap Hurdle | Class 2 – Good to Soft – 8 ran

3rd – RAMSES DE TEILLEE

A solid tune up for the season ahead for the 9yo and he added another place to his CV under his PC... G/S or softer | Oct-Feb | 0-5 starts in season | OR below 150 = 3111121121222 (7/13, 6p - all 7

career wins)...and he's still at least placed when facing off with his PC. He's on winnable marks under both codes at present.

FELL – CROSSLEY TENDER

Always needs a run to get himself going (0/11, 1p off a break of 26+ days) but he'll be sharper for this outing and he's worth looking out for under the following... Oct-Jan | 3m+ | DSLR 25 or less = 31311121 (5/8, 3p – all 5 career wins).

3.55 Limerick – 3m Handicap Chase | Irish G1 Handicap – Soft – 15 ran

2nd – A WAVE OF THE SEA

In his Prime NH months now and he is 5/13, 4p in the Sept-Feb months (compared to 0/7, 0p all other months). He's unexposed over 3m trips with this being only his second try at the distance, his first coming last month in the Kerry National where he made his life difficult from the off with a bad mistake at the first. There has been more than enough in these two 3m efforts to suggest he can be a force in the division and he's worth keeping on the radar over the next few months for similar targets.

5th – SPYGLASS HILL

Heavy ground in the Oct-Feb period and on tracks with plenty undulations are probably the place you want to be catching this one (form of 6(of 18)-2-1-1 under such conditions). It's been a few starts since he won but he posted some decent figure along the way and he could be hard to catch on the front end when the mud is flying and it's a demanding track.