

British Champions Day

Saturday 19th October



Racing TVi

British Champions Day - Saturday 19th October

The ninth edition of QIPCO British Champions Day at Ascot on Saturday has attracted another sparkling cast of equine stars.

Britain's richest raceday, which boasts prize-money of well over £4million, has drawn 84 declared runners for its six races.

They feature many of the top sprinters, milers, middle-distance and staying horses in training in Britain, Ireland and beyond.

No fewer than 22 Group 1 winners, with 42 Group 1 wins between them, are set to line up. Here's our guide to the action.

1.35pm (BST) QIPCO British Champions Sprint Stakes (Group 1) (1200m)

Eight Group 1 winners clash in the opening contest, with the last three winners of this race - **Sands Of Mali** (2018), **Librisa Breeze** (2017) and **The Tin Man** (2016) – all back for more.

The Tin Man will be running in the race for the fifth successive year and his trainer, James Fanshawe, said: "He wasn't at his best in it last year when he was probably feeling the effects of his previous run at Haydock but he's fit and fresh heading into it this time. Their coats are going this time of the year and you never quite know, but he seems really well."



"I think that he likes being able to get into a race in his own time, rather than put the gun to his head early. I always thought he wanted better ground but he handles soft ground as well as anybody else and lot of his relations love it."

Advertise, the mount of Frankie Dettori, was winning his third Group 1 race when winning in France last time by a neck from Brando, having earlier won the Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot.

The Key Trends

High-drawn horses have fared notably well in the eight runnings of this race, with **five winners** coming from stalls **10 upwards** and horses drawn **12 and 14** both making the frame regularly.

Cape Byron bounced back to form to win over track and trip last time and his record at the track now reads '**111**'.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

A tricky start to a great day's racing, but **THE TIN MAN** was a bit unlucky when he stumbled coming out of the stalls last time and we know how well he is capable of running in this race. I've got a soft spot for **BRANDO**, one of the Yorkshire challengers, and I can see him running really well at a big price too.

Racing TVi

1-2-3:

1. The Tin Man

2. Brando

3. Advertise

2.10pm (BST) QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup (Group 2) (3100m)

Outstanding stayer **Stradivarius** will face nine rivals when he attempts to retain his QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup crown.

The John Gosden-trained five-year-old scooped last year's renewal and has not lost a race since finishing a close third to Order Of St George in the 2017 running. He extended his winning sequence to 10 when cruising home ahead of Cleonte and Max Dynamite in the Doncaster Cup last month.



Gosden also runs **Royal Line**, who was making it five wins from nine races when landing the Group 3 September Stakes on his latest outing.

An intriguing new rival for Stradivarius is **Kew Gardens**, the fluent 2018 St Leger winner. He was runner-up in the Irish equivalent last time, having previously been second to Defoe in the Investec Coronation Cup. Aidan O'Brien, his trainer, also runs Capri, the 2017 St Leger winner, and South Pacific.

The Key Trends

Older horses have an outstanding record in this race against their juniors, with **12** of the last **17 winners** aged five or older.

An inside draw has proved an asset with five of the eight winners of this contest since the creation of British Champions Day having come out of stalls two, three or four.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

It's almost impossible to see how the winning sequence of **STRADIVARIUS** won't be extended to 11 victories here. The combination of his proven stamina and his mighty turn of foot will continue to make him hard to beat, for as long as he wants to keep going out and doing it. If you're playing the Exacta, take the enormous **WITHHOLD** to chase him home.

Racing TVi

1-2-3:

1. Stradivarius

2. Withhold

3. Kew Gardens

British Champions Day - Saturday 19th October

2.45pm QIPCO British Champions Fillies & Mares Stakes (Group 1) (2300m)

Fresh from a fabulous four-timer on the Dubai Future Champions Day programme last weekend, Ralph Beckett is hoping the lightly-raced **Antonia De Vega** may be able to upstage Classic winners **Anapurna** and **Star Catcher**.



Antonia De Vega's only defeat in three starts last year came when she finished lame in the bet365 Fillies' Mile at Newmarket. This year, she has raced only once, when running out an easy winner at Newbury in June.

"She's had a stop-start year but did a racecourse gallop last week and that went to plan," Beckett said this week. "She's been training well

and hopefully it stays soft because the formbook says that suits her. She's very under-raced and I'm hopeful there is a bit more to come. She goes there nice and fresh."

John Gosden, who could be crowned 2019 champion trainer in Britain if his day goes well, runs **Anapurna**, **Sparkle Roll** and **Star Catcher**. **Anapurna**, a daughter of Frankel, won the Investec Oaks in June and secured another Group 1 prize in France earlier this month.

The Key Trends

This has not been a race for shocks in recent years, with nine of the last **11 winners** returned at odds of **6/1** or shorter.

Aidan O'Brien bids to win this race for the third consecutive season and saddles a total of **four runners**. **Fleeting** has solid Group 1 form in the book and looks a solid win and place bet.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

John Gosden and Aidan O'Brien are battling it out for the trainers' championship this season and both look to have a very strong hand in this line-up. **FLEETING** keeps running well and she should be in the mix again, but she doesn't win very often and I just prefer Dermot Weld's raider **TARNAWA**, who won very well at The Curragh last time.

Racing TV 1-2-3:

1. **Tarnawa**
2. **Fleeting**
3. **Star Catcher**

3.20pm Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (Group 1) (Sponsored By QIPCO) (Straight course) (1600m)

Godolphin trainer Saeed Bin Suroor bids to land a first British Champions Day success since 2013 when he saddles globetrotting five-year-old **Benbatl** here.

A classy performer, **Benbatl** signed off last year when chasing home the legendary Australian mare **Winx** in the Ladbrokes Cox Plate and re-emerged, 11 months later, to comprehensively defeat **King Of Comedy** and **Happy Power** in the Group 2 Shadwell Joel Stakes at Newmarket last month.



His previous exploits include a win at Royal Ascot and Group 1 triumphs in Dubai, German and Australia. With an official rating of 126, he is among the highest-rated horses in the world.

Aidan O'Brien has saddled the QEII winner three times in the past decade – via **Rip Van Winkle** (2009), **Excelebration** (2012) and **Minding** (2016) – and this time he relies on **Magna Grecia**, who landed the QIPCO 2000 Guineas at Newmarket in May before suffering a hamstring injury when fifth in the Irish equivalent three weeks later. He has been absent since.

The Key Trends

French-trained horses have taken this contest twice in the last five years and **The Revenant**, trained by **Francis Graffard**, looks a strong contender **having won eight of his 10 starts**.

Proven top-quality performers win this race, with **15** of the last **17** scorers having **already won at least at Group 2 level**. Eight of those were sent off favourite.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

Some fascinating contenders in this line-up, none more so **MAGNA GRECIA**, who has been missing for most of the season. You have to think that he must have been showing Aidan O'Brien good signs at home for him to bring him back at this late stage of the year, so I'll give him a chance. **CENTURY DREAM** is another one to look at closely at a price as he comes back from a break.

Racing TV 1-2-3:

1. **Magna Grecia**
2. **Century Dream**
3. **The Revenant**

British Champions Day - Saturday 19th October

4.00pm QIPCO Champion Stakes (Group 1) (2000m)

Without the amazing Enable to contend with, could **Magical** take advantage with a deserved first success in one of the biggest races of the season in Europe and the most valuable 2000m contest of its kind?

The winner of the Tattersalls Gold Cup and this race 12 months, Magical has three times in the interim had to settle for finishing second to Enable, but she is a high-quality performer who would be a most worthy winner of this contest. Trainer Aidan O'Brien's son, Donnacha, battling it out for the jockeys' championship title in Ireland, takes the mount.



Frankel won this race in 2012 on the final start of his thrilling career, and for the past two years one of his sons, Cracksman, has been a runaway winner. John Gosden, the trainer of Cracksman, runs **Mehdaayih**, herself a daughter of Frankel, plus Coronet, placed in the past two renewals of the QIPCO British Champions Fillies & Mares

Stakes and the winner of Group 1 races in France on her past two starts.

Deirdre has already provided Japan with a notable victory in Britain this year and will seek to cap her stay on these shores with a famous victory here.

Trained by Mitsuri Hashida, Deirdre is bound to attract much attention having become only the second horse trained in Japan, after Agnes World in the July Cup of 2000, to win a Group 1 race in Britain when beating Mehdaayih in the Qatar Nassau Stakes at Goodwood in August.

The Key Trends

The Champion Stakes is one of the few elite contests never won before by **Magical's trainer Aidan O'Brien**. He also saddles I Can Fly. In contrast, Coronet's trainer and jockey, **John Gosden and Frankie Dettori**, bid to take this for the third year running.

Experience has proved key, with **16** of the last **17 winners** having scored at least eight times previously before victory here.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

The ground could prove key to this contest, with Ascot having already moved the race to the inner course in search of a better surface. If the weather remains dry, that will definitely help **DEIRDRE**, who struggles to act on soft ground. But **MAGICAL** might just have the more adaptability of the pair and she doesn't seem to know how to run a bad race.

Racing TVi

1-2-3:

1. **Magical**
2. **Deirdre**
3. **Coronet**

4.40pm Balmoral Handicap (Sponsored By QIPCO) (Straight course) (1600m)

Impressive Cambridgeshire Handicap winner **Lord North** heads the 20 declared runners for Europe's most valuable 1600m handicap.

He is trained by John Gosden, who also runs **Kick On**, who landed the Group 3 Tattersalls Sovereign Stakes at Salisbury on his latest start.



Kynren, trained by David Barron, gained reward for his consistency when landing the bet365 Challenge Cup at Ascot this month and will be joined in the line-up by stablemate **Clon Coulis**, runner-up in this year's Royal Hunt Cup.

Amedeo Modigliani, one of two Aidan O'Brien-trained runners, was having only his fifth start when a close fourth in a Listed race at Cork this month. The Galileo colt will be running in a handicap for the first time alongside Dunkirk Harbour.

David O'Meara won the 2017 Balmoral with subsequent Group 1 winner Lord Glitters and his squad of three runners include last year's runner-up, **Escobar**.

The Key Trends

Limited evidence to go on with only five previous renewals, but all **five winners** were drawn **10** or lower which could be considered a negative for **Lord North** in stall **20**.

The betting market has tended to get it right, with four of the five winners priced at **8/1** or less, despite the contest's wide-open nature.



Paul Mulrennan's verdict

FLAMING SPEAR is a horse to keep an eye on here. He is a slightly enigmatic character, who can take a fierce hold, but this kind of contest could bring out the best in him and a little bit of ease in the ground isn't a negative. Clon Coulis is drawn on the opposite side of the track but also worth considering.

Racing TVi

1-2-3:

1. **Flaming Spear**
2. **Clon Coulis**
3. **Kynren**