



ROYAL
ASCOT

ROYAL ASCOT BETTING GUIDE

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WELCOME TO ROYAL ASCOT

by Dave Nevison



I have never been to the Kentucky Derby which must be rectified soon but, as a biased Englishman, I have no hesitation in calling Royal Ascot the best Flat race meeting in the world.

It just wins at every level, from being perhaps our top society occasion to an absolutely frenzied week-long betting event.

If you are lucky enough to be flying over for the week make sure you hire the Morning Dress in the States as prices go through the roof in smart London men's outfitters. And if you are a gentleman, who is bringing over your lady, then you really do need to back a few winners, otherwise this is going to be an expensive week!

This meeting is incredibly competitive and every owner, trainer and jockey dreams of having a winner here. There are some fantastic fairy-tale results but over the week the top names invariably end up on top and for me betting at Royal Ascot is about focussing on two trainers, Aidan O'Brien and John Gosden.

The latter is the only England-based trainer who has been able to keep tabs on the Irish Champion in recent years. Backing both these trainers blindly has been a profitable strategy for the last five years and it is very difficult to see that position changing in 2017.

I really would not worry too much about who rides for them because, even though Ryan Moore for O'Brien and Frankie Dettori and William Buick for Gosden have first picks, there have been plenty of winners ridden by less famous jockeys such is their dominance.

It does look at this stage as though Aidan O'Brien has trained last year's Ascot Gold Cup winner to be at peak for this year's race judging by his recent victory in Ireland. If this horse turns up in the same form as last year they will not see which way Order of St George goes!

O'Brien will have lots of favourites at this meeting and a lot will be well backed despite already appearing to be short odds. It is tempting to start looking elsewhere as other runners lengthen due to the weight of money on the "jolly" (favourite in English racing vernacular).

My advice is don't become a King Canute and try to stop the tide! Go with it! The stable is patronised by some of the biggest gamblers in the world and they do not get things wrong very often. Either go with them or stay out but don't go against them.

It is a few years ago since Wesley Ward started running his incredibly fast, precocious two-year-olds at this meeting and our trainers just haven't caught up with him yet. If word goes around that he has a good one then it will probably win. Our youngsters are just not trained to be that quick this early in the season so I suspect yours will beat ours most times.

I know Americans love The Queen and rather than betting on what colour hat she will be wearing each day, as some of our more addicted gamblers do, I suggest backing her runners that are trained by Sir Michael Stoute.

He didn't get that Sir in front of his name by not having Her Majesty's horses ready for this meeting and I suggest backing anything they have less than 12/1 for a win, place and show. You won't go far wrong!

Hope that helps and good Luck to all. To sum up:

Back Aidan O'Brien and John Gosden at level stakes throughout the meeting

Back horses owned by The Queen and trained by Sir Michael Stoute

Back Order of St George in Ascot Gold Cup

Back Wesley Ward two-year-olds



Dave Nevison is a former full time gambler and now betting expert for UK horse racing channel Racing UK. Dave takes a highly statistical approach to betting.



ROYAL ASCOT RACE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY - JUNE 20, 2017

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Queen Anne Stakes (Group 1)	4+	£600000	One mile
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Coventry Stakes (Group 2)	2	£150000	Six furlongs
3:40pm	2:40pm	10:40am	9:40am	8:40am	7:40am	The King's Stand Stakes (Group 1)	3+	£400000	Five furlongs
4:20pm	3:20pm	11:20am	10:20am	9:20am	8:20am	The St James's Palace Stakes (Group 1)	3 colts	£400000	Old mile
5:00pm	4:00pm	12:00pm	11:00am	10:00am	9:00am	The Ascot Stakes (Handicap)	4+	£80000	2 1/2 miles
5:35pm	4:35pm	12:35pm	11:35am	10:35am	9:35am	The Windsor Castle Stakes (Listed)	2	£80000	Five furlongs

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 21, 2017

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Jersey Stakes (Group 3)	3	£90000	Seven furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Queen Mary Stakes (Group 2)	2 fillies	£110000	Five furlongs
3:40pm	2:40pm	10:40am	9:40am	8:40am	7:40am	The Duke of Cambridge Stakes (Group 2)	4+ F/M	£175000	One mile
4:20pm	3:20pm	11:20am	10:20am	9:20am	8:20am	The Prince of Wales's Stakes (Group 1)	4+	£750000	1 1/4 miles
5:00pm	4:00pm	12:00pm	11:00am	10:00am	9:00am	The Royal Hunt Cup (Heritage Handicap)	3+	£175000	One mile
5:35pm	4:35pm	12:35pm	11:35am	10:35am	9:35am	The Sandringham Stakes (Listed) (Handicap)	3 fillies	£80000	One mile

THURSDAY - JUNE 22, 2017

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Norfolk Stakes (Group 2)	2	£100000	Five furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Hampton Court Stakes (Group 3)	3	£90000	1 1/4 miles
3:40pm	2:40pm	10:40am	9:40am	8:40am	7:40am	The Ribblesdale Stakes (Group 2)	3 fillies	£200000	1 1/2 miles
4:20pm	3:20pm	11:20am	10:20am	9:20am	8:20am	The Gold Cup (Group 1)	4+	£400000	2 1/2 miles
5:00pm	4:00pm	12:00pm	11:00am	10:00am	9:00am	The Britannia Stakes (Heritage Handicap)	3 C/G	£120000	One mile
5:35pm	4:35pm	12:35pm	11:35am	10:35am	9:35am	The King George V Stakes (Handicap)	3	£90000	1 1/2 miles

FRIDAY - JUNE 23, 2017

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Albany Stakes (Group 3)	2 fillies	£80000	Six furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The King Edward VII Stakes (Group 2)	3 C/G	£200000	1 1/2 miles
3:40pm	2:40pm	10:40am	9:40am	8:40am	7:40am	The Commonwealth Cup (Group 1)	3	£400000	Six furlongs
4:20pm	3:20pm	11:20am	10:20am	9:20am	8:20am	The Coronation Stakes (Group 1)	3 fillies	£400000	Old mile
5:00pm	4:00pm	12:00pm	11:00am	10:00am	9:00am	The Queen's Vase (Group 2)	3	£90000	1 3/4 miles
5:35pm	4:35pm	12:35pm	11:35am	10:35am	9:35am	The Duke of Edinburgh Stakes (Handicap)	3+	£80000	1 1/2 miles

SATURDAY - JUNE 24, 2017

Local Time	UTC	EDT	CDT	MDT	PDT	Race	Age	Prize Fund	Distance
2:30pm	1:30pm	9:30am	8:30am	7:30am	6:30am	The Chesham Stakes (Listed)	2	£80000	Seven furlongs
3:05pm	2:05pm	10:05am	9:05am	8:05am	7:05am	The Wolferton Rated Stakes (Listed)	4+	£80000	1 1/4 miles
3:40pm	2:40pm	10:40am	9:40am	8:40am	7:40am	The Hardwicke Stakes (Group 2)	4+	£225000	1 1/2 miles
4:20pm	3:20pm	11:20am	10:20am	9:20am	8:20am	The Diamond Jubilee Stakes (Group 1)	4+	£600000	Six furlongs
5:00pm	4:00pm	12:00pm	11:00am	10:00am	9:00am	The Wokingham Stakes (Heritage Handicap)	3+	£175000	Six furlongs
5:35pm	4:35pm	12:35pm	11:35am	10:35am	9:35am	The Queen Alexandra Stakes (Conditions)	3+	£80000	2 miles, 6 furlongs

C= Colt F= Filly G= Gelding M= Mare

ROYAL ASCOT OVERVIEW

by Alastair Bull

With five days of great racing featuring eight Group 1 races, eight Group 2 races, three Group 3s, four listed, one conditions race, and six rich handicaps, Royal Ascot oozes with quality – and wagering opportunities.

Below is a guide to some of the feature races each day:

DAY ONE Three Group 1 races highlight the first day at Royal Ascot. In the Queen Anne Stakes (G1, 1 mile), Godolphin's 4-year-old colt Ribchester will be a short-priced favorite after his 3 3/4-length victory in the Lockinge Stakes (G1) at Newbury. Lockinge runner-up Lightning Spear and Dubai Turf (G1) fifth-place finisher Mutakayyef are worth a look, as is American Patriot, winner of the Maker's 46 Mile (G1) at Keeneland.

Wesley Ward will aim to get another Royal Ascot victory with Lady Aurelia, as she returns to her pet distance of five furlongs in the King's Stand Stakes (G1). The race of the day, however, could be the St James' Palace Stakes for 3-year-olds over a mile, where Churchill faces a rematch with Barney Roy, who was a little unlucky not to beat him in the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket.

DAY TWO The day's card is highlighted by the Prince of Wales's Stakes (G1, 1 1/4 miles). Much depends on which horses turn up here, as Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) winner Highland Reel and Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) victor Jack Hobbs could also both contest the Hardwicke Stakes (G2) on day five over 1 1/2 miles, which probably suits both horses better. Also well worth watching, is the improving Gordon Richards Stakes (G3) winner Ulysses. American eyes will be on the Queen Mary Stakes (G2), featuring Wesley Ward's Happy Like a Fool.

DAY THREE The highlight is the Ascot Gold Cup (G1, 2 1/2 miles), which is dominated by the Aidan O'Brien-trained Order of St George. He won this race well last year, and had enough class to run third in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1) at the end of 2016. Others with chances at better odds are last year's third-place finisher Sheikhzayedroad and the Vintage Crop Stakes (G3) winner Torcedor. Wesley Ward will seek another 2-year-old triumph when McErin contests the Norfolk Stakes (G2).

DAY FOUR One of the best races of the meeting could be the Commonwealth Cup (G1, 6 furlongs) for 3-year-olds. Aidan O'Brien's unbeaten Scat Daddy colt Caravaggio will be a short-priced favorite, but he faces tough competition from the Godolphin pair of Harry Angel and Blue Point. Wesley Ward's Bound for Nowhere adds some transatlantic interest. The day's other feature is the Coronation Stakes (G1, 1 mile) for 3-year-old fillies, where dual 1,000 Guineas winner Winter is strongly fancied.

DAY FIVE Veteran American trainer Bill Mott ventures to Royal Ascot for the first time with Long on Value, who contests the Diamond Jubilee Stakes (G1, six furlongs) after having finished second in the Al Quoz Sprint (G1). Among those he beat that day was the outstanding English sprinter Limato, who will appreciate firmer footing at Ascot. The day's other feature is the Hardwicke Stakes (G2, 1 1/2 miles), which could feature the aforementioned Highland Reel and Jack Hobbs if their connections choose to avoid the Prince of Wales's Stakes.



Welcome to the Royal Ascot 2017 Trends Guide where we'll be highlighting some of the key profitable statistics, trends and patterns to have emerged from the Royal Meeting in recent times.

The first port of call for many is checking which trainers have proven themselves at this meeting in the past, and a glance at the table below highlights those handlers who have taken a shine to Royal Ascot's winner's enclosure.

TRAINERS

2007-2016

Trainer	W-R	+£P/L	Non-Hcp	Hcp	2yo	3yo	4yo+
A O'Brien	39-217	+30	37-196	2-21	9-50	15-108	15-59
J Gosden	21-158	0	14-108	7-50	4-14	7-85	10-59
Sir M Stoute	20-143	-21	15-90	5-53	--	7-68	13-75
M Johnston	13-200	-98	9-93	4-107	1-52	9-92	3-56
S Bin Suroor	8-137	-63	6-90	2-47	1-18	4-44	3-75
W Ward	7-37	+35	7-37	--	6-30	--	--
H Morrison	5-46	+21	1-15	4-31	--	2-13	3-33
J Osborne	5-33	+27	2-16	3-17	1-10	2-4	2-19
W Haggas	5-94	-48	3-54	2-40	1-15	3-47	1-32
J Bolger	5-34	-15	5-34	--	2-14	3-15	0-5
D Weld	4-25	+14	4-18	0-7	0-3	2-13	2-9
R Fahey	4-105	-14	2-49	2-56	1-30	2-25	1-50
C Cox	4-43	-4	4-23	0-20	1-9	0-11	3-23
E Dunlop	4-52	+9	2-26	2-26	1-7	1-20	2-25
M Bell	4-57	+12	2-26	2-31	1-7	3-32	0-18
M Channon	4-132	-17	2-82	2-50	2-52	1-42	1-36
K Ryan	4-77	-14	2-45	2-32	2-21	0-14	2-42
R Hannon	4-88	-65	3-56	1-32	2-28	1-38	1-22

With 93 Royal Ascot winners between them since 2007, Aidan O'Brien, Sir Michael Stoute, John Gosden and Mark Johnston are four trainers to look out for. However, rather than following all four blind, a closer look is required in order of highlighting where the profits lurk:

AIDAN O'BRIEN

Royal Ascot tally last five years:

2016: 7-26

2015: 5-18

2014: 2-25

2013: 4-26

2012: 2-20

Best races (all-time): Coventry Stakes (8); St James's Palace Stakes (7); Gold Cup (7); Queen's Vase (5); Jersey Stakes (3); Queen Anne Stakes (3); Chesham Stakes (3); Prince of Wales's Stakes (2); Tercentenary (Hampton Court) Stakes (2); Coronation Stakes (2); Hardwicke Stakes (2); Norfolk Stakes (2); Ribblesdale Stakes (2)

Aidan O'Brien's record at this meeting gets better and better, and having recorded a career best haul of seven winners here 12 months ago, punters need to take his runners very seriously, especially as he is

enjoying such a good year in the Classics. The fact O'Brien returned a blind profit overall is also encouraging, and serves notice that there is value to be found via this popular yard – a recent reminder came via his 40/1 winner of the Derby.

O'Brien's profits dipped over distances of 1m2f-1m4f, where he struck at just 7-62 (-32), but his performers over other trips shone at 32-155 (+£63).

Another factor that needs considering with O'Brien's string is their form last time, as those that finished either **first, second or third last time** delivered at 30-140 (+£46) – similarly, those **beaten no more than 4l last time** showed a touch more profit at 33-145 (+£67).

Other sources of profit via O'Brien's runners could be found in the following areas:

Group 2/Group 3/Listed races: 21-122 (+£54)

13/2 to 20/1: 11-90 (+£45)

JOHN GOSDEN

2016: 2-22

2015: 2-18

2014: 4-18

2013: 1-18

2012: 5-19

Best races: Prince of Wales's Stakes (3); Britannia Stakes (3); King Edward VII Stakes (3); Wolferton Stakes (3); Jersey Stakes (2); Windsor Forest (Duke of Cambridge) Stakes (2); Tercentenary (Hampton Court) Stakes (2); Coronation Stakes (2); Chesham Stakes (2); Royal Hunt Cup (2).

John Gosden can be relied upon to have a few winners at Royal Ascot, and while his runners break level from a profit standpoint, concentrating on just his **2yo's and 4yo's** returned a healthy 13-53 (+£55). It's also worth sticking with the yard's in-form runners **beaten no more than 4l last time:** 18-100 (+£39), while **William Buick** continues to be used to good effect at 11-57 (+£32).

Other areas of strength include:

12/1 or shorter: 20-95 (+£42)

Moving up in class: 15-103 (+£14)

Down in trip or same as last time: 18-98 (+£32); those upped in trip were only 1-37 (-£34)

SIR MICHAEL STOUTE

2016: 2-15

2015: 1-17

2014: 4-14

2013: 3-16

2012: 2-7

Best races: Hardwicke Stakes (10); King Edward VII Stakes (7); Duke of Edinburgh Stakes (5); King George V Stakes (4); Coronation Stakes (4); Queen's Vase (4); Windsor Forest (Duke of Cambridge) Stakes (3); Jersey Stakes (3); Ribblesdale Stakes (2); Wolferton Stakes (2); Queen Alexandra Stakes (2); Tercentenary (Hampton Court) Stakes (2)

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A double here 12 months ago kept Sir Michael Stoute's backers happy, where he once again struck in the **Hardwicke Stakes**, making it 10 victories in the race, while adding a seventh victory in the **King Edward VII Stakes**. The Hardwicke also takes place during the second half of the week, where Stoute holds a better record:

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 6-86 (-£54)

Friday and Saturday: 14-57 (+£34)

Other areas of interest include:

1m4f-2m: 14-77 (+£29)

4yo's: 12-52 (+£24)

Dropped in class or same as last time: 9-52 (+£20)

Ran last time at Epsom, Goodwood, Newbury or York: 11-48 (+£30)

MARK JOHNSTON

2016: 0-20

2015: 2-20

2014: 2-19

2013: 0-19

2012: 1-16

Best races: Queen's Vase (7); King George V Stakes (4); Hardwicke Stakes (4); Ascot Gold Cup (3); Chesham Stakes (3); Duke of Edinburgh Stakes (3); King Edward VII Stakes (2); Sandringham Handicap (2).

The law of averages suggests a blank for Mark Johnston last year could see him back in the winner's enclosure this time around, and the biggest clue in nailing one of his winners was to check the market. Since 2007, each of Johnston's 13 winners returned at **14/1 or shorter** (13-81, +£20), compared to those bigger at 0-119.

Outside the big four trainers are further interesting angles, with the American trainer, **Wesley Ward**, becoming a regular at this fixture. Indeed, Ward has sent at least one runner to Royal Ascot in all bar one of the last eight years, for an impressive return of 7-37 (+£35). His runners still offer value too, with his 2015 winner, Undrafted, scoring at 14/1, though as a whole it is his sprinters that take centre stage, especially over the minimum 5f trip (6-21 +£36).

Saeed Bin Suroor's record in the Queen Anne Stakes (7 wins), Ascot Gold Cup (5) and Ribblesdale Stakes (5) is to be noted, but with just one winner from 57 runners during his last four Royal Ascot visits, punters should tread carefully. Two other yards that used to be regulars in the winner's enclosure here but may need treating carefully are James Fanshawe (0-15 since 2012) and Willie Haggas (1-66 since 2011).

Elsewhere, **Hughie Morrison** is still a trainer to look out for in handicaps (4-31 +£15), while the jury remains out regarding Richard Hannon's runners. Despite recording a double in 2014 and 2015, Hannon missed out 12 months ago having sent 27 runners, and with an overall loss of -£65 to level stakes, a watching brief is advised, for now.

Despite missing out with seven runners in 2016, **Willie Mullins** is still of interest having recorded four winners here from 2012-2015, while **Robert Cowell** has a strong recent record via four winners since 2011 (4-14 +£35).

JOCKEYS

2007-2016

Jockey	W-R	+£ P/L	Non-Hcp	Hcp	Round	Straight
R Moore	42-274	-40	30-191	12-83	27-129	15-45
L Dettori	18-223	-78	15-159	3-64	9-100	9-123
W Buick	16-172	-29	11-110	5-62	10-79	6-93
J Spencer	12-174	-27	9-112	3-62	4-73	8-101
J Fanning	6-85	-31	4-40	2-45	6-45	0-40
A Kirby	6-69	+4	4-45	1-24	2-28	4-41
J Doyle	6-98	-15	4-60	2-38	2-42	4-56
P Smullen	6-64	-8	6-44	0-20	4-25	2-39
K Manning	5-34	-16	5-34	--	3-14	2-20
S Drowne	5-32	+149	1-14	4-18	3-10	2-22
T Queally	5-107	-72	4-68	1-39	2-48	3-59
W Lordan	4-35	-9	3-20	1-15	0-4	4-31
R Kingscote	4-54	-7	1-32	3-22	1-12	3-42
O Peslier	4-48	-7	4-39	0-9	2-19	2-29
P Hanagan	4-131	-50	1-76	3-55	2-50	2-81

RYAN MOORE

2016: 6-29

2015: 9-29

2014: 6-29

2013: 3-29

2012: 5-24

Best races (all-time): Hardwicke Stakes (4); Duke of Edinburgh Stakes (3); Queen Alexandra Stakes (3); Tercentenary (Hampton Court) Stakes (2); Queen's Vase (3); Britannia Stakes (2); Wolferton Stakes (2); Chesham Stakes (2); Gold Cup (2); Ribblesdale Stakes (2); Coventry Stakes (2)

With another six winners here 12 months ago, Ryan Moore's tally during the last three Royal Ascots now stands out to 21 winners. Moore's portfolio of winning big races is growing too, with last year seeing a second victory in the Wolferton Stakes, Chesham Stakes, Gold Cup, Ribblesdale Stakes and Coventry Stakes.

Moore will again rely on a strong book of rides courtesy of both **Aidan O'Brien** (13-59 +£3) and **Sir Michael Stoute** (16-89 -£3) supplying quality horses for him to ride. Such quality produces numerous favourites, where Moore delivered for punters at 23-62 (+£18), though his record as a whole on fancied runners at **8/1 or shorter** reads well at 39-159 (+£40).

As for other clues pinpointing Moore's strengths at this meeting, then the following list is worth looking out for:

Round Course: 27-129 (+£13)

Beaten a neck to 5f last time: 18-96 (+£34); those that won offered poor value at 20-112 (-£22)

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FRANKIE DETTORI

2016: 4-23

2015: 3-20

2014: 2-21

2013: 0-20

2012: 2-25

Best races: Queen Anne Stakes (6); Ribblesdale Stakes (6); Ascot Gold Cup (5); Chesham Stakes (4); Sandringham Handicap (4); King Edward VII Stakes (4); Norfolk Stakes (3); Prince of Wales's Stakes (3); Royal Hunt Cup (2); Queen's Vase (2); Queen Mary Stakes (2); St James's Palace Stakes (2)

The one jockey that springs to most people's minds when Ascot gets mentioned is Frankie Dettori, and at the age of 46, the popular Italian is still a force to be reckoned with in Berkshire. Having endured a lean spell by his standards at this meeting from 2011 to 2013, he has now partnered nine winners since.

While Dettori should be respected in most races, it's worth remembering that he rode just one winner away from the major Pattern races at 1-54. He also rode a couple winners for **Wesley Ward** (2-6 +£12) and **Richard Hannon** (2-8 +£8), while those **Dettori rode last time** won here at 12-87 (+£26).

JAMIE SPENCER

2016: 1-16

2015: 1-16

2014: 0-19

2013: 2-26

2012: 0-12

Best races: Albany Stakes (4); Britannia Stakes (3); Coventry Stakes (2); Sandringham Handicap (2)

Jamie Spencer once again demonstrated his ability on the **Straight Course** (8-101 +£24) here last year when partnering his third Britannia Stakes winner. That victory also came for Jamie Osborne, for whom he is 2-4 (+10) – the two losers were also placed – while the Irishman also has a better record with younger 2-3yo horses, especially the **juveniles** at 5-32 (+£65).

WILLIAM BUICK

2016: 2-26

2015: 2-22

2014: 3-26

2013: 1-23

2012: 5-22

Best races: King Edward VII Stakes (2)

William Buick rarely leaves this five-day meeting without a winner, and has now ridden 13 winners during the last five years. The majority of those came for **John Gosden** (11-57 +£32), while his record on runners

with realistic chances at **12/1 or shorter** saw him strike at 15-87 (+£33). He also got a good feel for most of his Ascot winners, with **Buick having ridden them last time out** (14-94 +£35).

Elsewhere, **Joe Fanning's** six winners all came for Mark Johnston, with his preferred distances being 1m4f+ (6-38 +£15).

Adam Kirby enjoyed a memorable treble at last year's meeting here and has now partnered six winners since 2012. His record on older runners aged 4yo+ stands at 4-35 (+£33), with his partnership for Clive Cox is 4-24 (+£15).

James Doyle has also climbed the Ascot ladder in recent years courtesy of six winners since 2013, though **Silvestre De Sousa** enjoyed less luck at 3-83.



Waterloo Bridge with Ryan Moore up wins the Norfolk Stakes at Royal Ascot racecourse - June 18, 2015

STABLE TOUR WITH HARRY HERBERT



Royal Ascot 2016 was a good one for Al Shaqab Racing, with Galileo Gold winning the St James's Palace Stakes on Tuesday and Qemah landing the Coronation Stakes on Friday.

"It was terrific last year," says Al Shaqab's racing manager Harry Herbert. "They are fantastic races. It's so difficult to win any race at Royal Ascot. So to win the St James's Palace Stakes and the Coronation Stakes in the same year was very special."

Royal Ascot is one of the highlights of the year for Herbert, and he is looking forward to next week with lots of optimism.

"Sadly, we don't have Galileo Gold this year," he says, "but we do have Qemah, and we have a few others to look forward to."

Coventry Stakes – Denaar, Headway

Denaar has done nothing wrong in two starts. He was impressive in winning over five furlongs at Chelmsford on his racecourse debut in early May, and he battled on well to win a conditions race on his last start over six furlongs on Al Shaqab Lockinge Stakes day at Newbury.

He proved that day that he was a real battler, and that will stand to him.

We also have Headway in the Coventry Stakes for the Royal Ascot Racing Club. He is a grand horse, he was second at Newbury first time up, and he was impressive in winning at Chester last time.

He needs to improve again to win the Coventry Stakes, but he is progressive physically. He is a horse that I really like, and I think that he can run well. I think he is a horse who could be a lot of fun for the Royal Ascot Racing Club.

Duke of Cambridge Stakes – Qemah

Qemah does have the option of running in the Queen Anne Stakes on Tuesday, but I think that she will run in the Duke of Cambridge Stakes on Wednesday instead.

She was great last year in winning the Coronation Stakes, and she followed up by winning the Group 1 Prix Rothschild at Deauville.

She was beaten on her debut this season at Lingfield, but the cards fell all wrong for her that day. She was too free and fresh, she couldn't get cover and she was out in the centre of the track while the filly that beat her was close to the stands rail.

It might have been better if we had stayed closer to home with her for her debut, but the conditions of the Lingfield race suited her well, and (trainer) Jean-Claude (Rouget) was very happy to travel.

She is in great form now though. It's great that Jean-Claude's horses are back in top form now, and we're hopeful that Qemah can run a big race.

Prince of Wales's Stakes – Mekhtaal

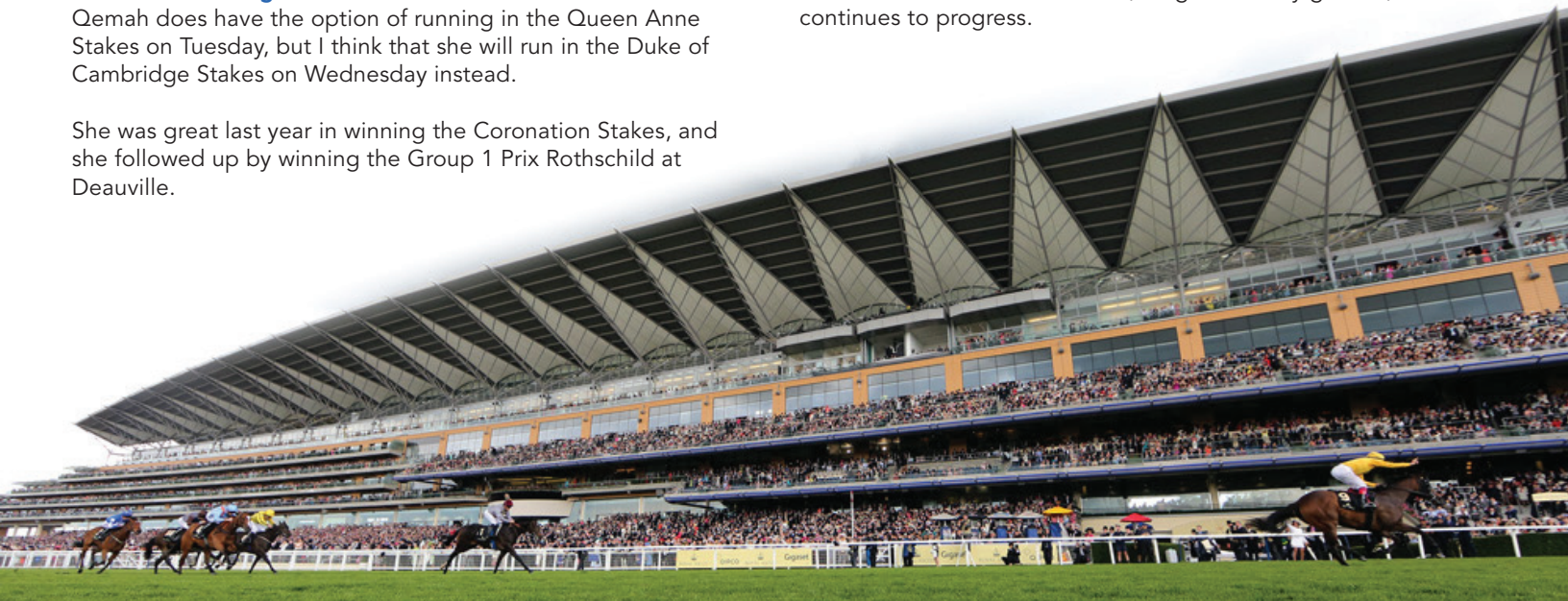
Mekhtaal is a nice horse, he is an improving horse, a son of Sea the Stars.

He lost his way a little last year after winning the Prix Hocquart at Deauville in May impressively, but we have always thought that he was good, and he is back on track this year. He battled on well to win the Prix d'Ispahan at Chantilly last time.

The Prince of Wales's Stakes is obviously a hot race, but Mekhtaal deserves his place in it. He does have the option of running in the Hardwicke Stakes instead, but at the moment we are favouring the Prince of Wales's. He is a really nice horse, and he is an uncomplicated horse who has found his form again this year.

Royal Hunt Cup – El Vip, Castle Harbour

El Vip should have a chance in the Royal Hunt Cup if he gets into the race. He likes to be held up in his races, which can be a positive or a negative on the straight track at Ascot. If you get too far back it can be difficult to make up the ground. But he won well at Newcastle last time, he goes on any ground, and he continues to progress.



We also have Castle Harbour in the Royal Hunt Cup for Bermuda Thoroughbred Racing. He is another really nice horse who has been running solid races when conditions have suited him.

Ribblesdale Stakes – Aljezeera, Hertford Dancer

Aljezeera could run in the Ribblesdale Stakes. She won her maiden over a mile at Doncaster on her only run last year, and she finished third in the listed Oaks trial at Newbury on Al Shaqab Lockinge Stakes day on her only run so far this year. She is a nice filly and she is going the right way.

Hertford Dancer is also set to take her chance in the Ribblesdale. Owned by the 5 Hertford Street Racing Club, she won the Lingfield Oaks Trial last month, and we're going to supplement her for the Ribblesdale. She has earned her place in the race.

She is going to have to improve again to win the Ribblesdale, but she was raised by 23lb by the handicapper after she won the Lingfield Oaks Trial, so there is every chance that she will improve again. She loves her racing; she has a big will to win.

This is the owners' first venture into racehorse ownership – Robin Birley thought that a few of the members might want to get involved. They have just two fillies, Hertford Dancer and Struck By The Moon, who has been injured but who is back in training now. So to have one of their fillies win a listed race and take her chance in the Ribblesdale Stakes at Royal Ascot is fantastic. I hope that she can run a big race for them.

Britannia Handicap – Medahim

We have Medahim for the Britannia Handicap. He was a little unlucky last time in a seven-furlong handicap at Goodwood. He didn't have a clear run and he was only beaten a half a length into second place in the end.

That was just his fourth run, so he should be able to progress from it. The Britannia is a wide open handicap, but he should be competitive.

King George V Stakes – Daawy

Daawy really needs a mile and a half and a strongly-run race, so he is exactly the sort of horse that you want for the King George V Stakes.

He won his maiden at Ripon over a mile and a quarter at the end of April, and he didn't run a bad race last time to finish second over the same distance at Doncaster on soft ground. Back on better ground and stepped up to a mile and a half, he should improve again.

Duke of Edinburgh Stakes – Al Neksh, Shraaoh

We have Shraaoh and Al Neksh as possibles for the Duke of Edinburgh, and one or both of them will run.

They are both similar types, improving four-year-olds, exactly the right types for the Duke of Edinburgh.

Both horses have run just once this season so far. Al Neksh finished second in a good 10-furlong handicap at York, and Shraaoh finished fourth over a mile and a half at Epsom on Derby day. That was his first run since last August, he should improve for it, and either or both horses could run well in a Duke of Edinburgh.

Chesham Stakes – Bustam

Bustam could run in the Chesham Stakes. He ran a highly encouraging race on his racecourse debut at Ayr at the end of May, so it was disappointing that he couldn't build on that next time at Newcastle.

He was just too free that day, and (trainer) John (Quinn) is keen to go again so, all being well with the horse, we might allow him take his chance.

Diamond Jubilee Stakes – Al Jazi

Al Jazi is a really nice filly, she's very fast and she is on track for the Diamond Jubilee Stakes.

She was impressive in winning the Group 3 Oak Tree Stakes at Goodwood over seven furlongs last year on her only run so far in Britain, and she started off this season well by winning a listed race over six at Maisons-Laffitte. That was back in April, and she hasn't run since, but we have had the Diamond Jubilee in mind for her for a little while, and she has been trained for the race since.

She is an improving sprinter, and she could surprise a few people.

Wokingham Handicap – Projection, Raucous

The Wokingham is obviously a very competitive handicap, but both Projection and Raucous have the right profile for the race.

Projection had a minor setback after his seasonal debut at Newmarket, he might have a rushed preparation in order to get him to the Wokingham, but he deserves his place in it. He was only just beaten in a good race at Newmarket on his final run last season, and he is a relatively lightly-raced sprinter who has the potential to progress.

Raucous loves the rough and tumble of these big handicaps. He was third in the Group 3 Bengough Stakes at Ascot last October and, gelded at the end of last season, he is a proper horse now, he is a stronger horse. He won at Chelmsford on his debut this term, and he ran well in a listed race at Windsor last time. The Wokingham is a bit of a lottery, you need everything to fall right for you, but we go there with chances.

TOP HORSES AT ASCOT



CARAVAGGIO

Trainer: Aidan O'Brien **Owner:** Mrs John Magnier, Michael Tabor & Derrick Smith

A Kentucky-bred by Scat Daddy out of the Holy Bull mare Mekko Hokte, Caravaggio is unbeaten in five starts for Aidan O'Brien, and has shown superb acceleration in his races to date. Won the Coventry Stakes (G2) at Royal Ascot last year before an easy victory in the National Stakes (G1) at the Curragh. Easily won the Lacken Stakes (G3) on his 3-year-old debut. Faces a good Godolphin pair in Harry Angel and Blue Point, as well as Wesley Ward's unbeaten colt Bound for Nowhere in the Commonwealth Cup (G1).



CHURCHILL

Trainer: Aidan O'Brien **Owner:** Michael Tabor, Derrick Smith & Mrs John Magnier

The best 2-year-old in Europe last year, Aidan O'Brien's colt is making a statesmanlike march to a similar sophomore ranking. He won the 2000 Guineas (G1) at Newmarket comfortably from Barney Roy, and repeated the dose against Thunder Snow in the Irish 2000 Guineas (G1). The Galileo colt is set for the St James' Palace Stakes, which like the Guineas races is a Group 1 for 3-year-olds over a mile. Barney Roy and Thunder Snow may be back for another go at him.



HIGHLAND REEL

Trainer: Aidan O'Brien **Owner:** Derrick Smith, Mrs John Magnier & Michael Tabor

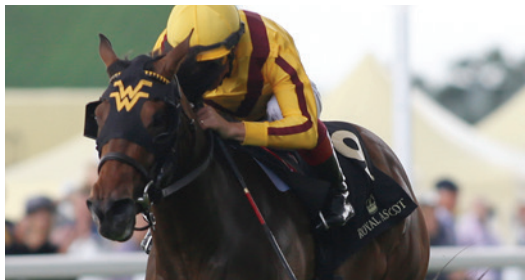
One of the toughest gallopers in the world, especially on firm turf. Has earned more than \$7 million from the Aidan O'Brien stable after racing in seven countries, with victories including the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (G1), Hong Kong Vase (G1), and Breeders' Cup Turf (G1). Returned to top form when winning the Coronation Cup (G1) at Epsom June 2. Nominated for the Prince of Wales's and G2 Hardwicke Stakes (1-1/2 miles); probably best at 1-1/2 miles.



JACK HOBBS

Trainer: John Gosden **Owner:** Godolphin & Partners

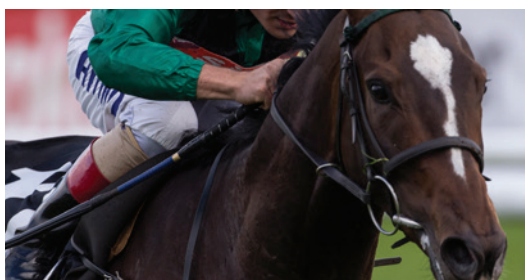
Named after one of England's greatest cricket players, Jack Hobbs has done a good job living up to his name. Winner of the Irish Derby (G1) at three and second in the Epsom version, Jack Hobbs missed most of his 4-year-old season through injury. He returned in style at five, winning the Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) at Meydan. May be best if the turf is not too firm. Nominated for both the Hardwicke and the Prince of Wales's; probably best at the longer trip.



LADY AURELIA

Trainer: Wesley Ward **Owner:** Stonestreet Stables LLC, Bolton, George and Leidel, Peter

Few who saw Lady Aurelia demolish her opponents in the Queen Mary Stakes (G2) at Royal Ascot over five furlongs last year will forget it. Wesley Ward's Scat Daddy filly then stayed in Europe and found things tougher over six furlongs, winning the Prix Morny (G1) more narrowly before being beaten into a third-place finish in the Cheveley Park Stakes (G1). Won the Giant's Causeway Stakes at Keeneland on her 3-year-old debut. Should enjoy five furlongs at Ascot in the King's Stand Stakes (G1).



LIMATO

Trainer: Henry Candy **Owner:** Paul G. Jacobs

Tough and consistent, the 5-year-old gelding Limato has been one of Europe's best sprinters for the past three years. Finished second to Muhaarar in the Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot two years ago, and last year won the July Cup (G1) and the Prix de la Forêt (G1). Didn't fire in the Al Quoz Sprint (G1) in Dubai on his 5-year-old debut on wet ground he disliked. Should be a top chance in the Diamond Jubilee Stakes (G1) if the track is not wet.



MORI

Trainer: Sir Michael Stoute **Owner:** Khaled Abdullah

From the first crop of superstar galloper Frankel out of the outstanding mare Middy, whose six top-level wins included the Breeders' Cup Filly and Mare Turf (G1), Mori has clearly inherited some of the family ability. After finishing fifth on debut in April, Mori won an Ascot maiden before taking out the Height of Fashion Stakes at Goodwood May 25. Should prove highly competitive in the Ribblesdale Stakes (G2) over 1-1/2 miles.



ORDER OF ST. GEORGE

Trainer: Aidan O'Brien **Owner:** M Tabor, D Smith, Mrs J Magnier & Lloyd Williams

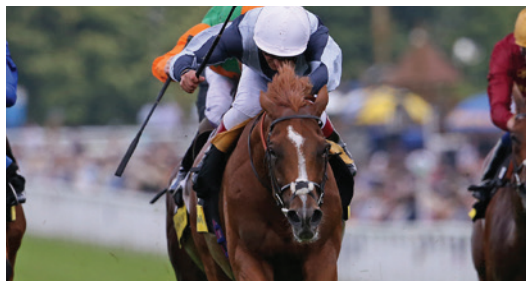
Another Aidan O'Brien-trained son of Galileo, Order of St George has been one of the best European stayers for the past two years. Winner of the Irish St Leger (G1) as a 3-year-old, Order of St George continued on with his form the next year, winning the 2-1/2 mile Ascot Gold Cup (G1). Despite his preference for extreme distances, he had enough class to run third to stablemates Found and Highland Reel in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1). Returned to winning form in the Saval Beg Stakes and will be a short-priced favorite to win back-to-back Ascot Gold Cups.



RIBCHESTER

Trainer: Richard Fahey **Owner:** Godolphin

If American Patriot is going to follow Tepin by winning the Queen Anne Stakes (G1) for the U.S., he'll have to beat the third-highest rated horse in the world. Godolphin's 4-year-old Iffraaj colt Ribchester, one of the better European milers last year, won the Lockinge Stakes (G1) at Newbury by 3-3/4 lengths on his 2017 debut. Only Arrogate and Winx are rated higher than him in the Longines World Thoroughbred Rankings.



ULYSSES

Trainer: Sir Michael Stoute **Owner:** Flaxman Stables Ireland Ltd

Trained by Michael Stoute, this Galileo colt has steadily improved as he has matured. A little disappointing when 12th in the Derby at Epsom last year, he won the Gordon Stakes (G3) at Goodwood before a highly impressive fourth considering his inexperience behind Highland Reel, Flintshire, and Found in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1). Won nicely on his return to racing in the Sir Gordon Richards Stakes (G3) at Sandown April 28, and will be a great chance in the Prince of Wales's Stakes.



WINTER

Trainer: Aidan O'Brien **Owner:** Mrs John Magnier, Michael Tabor & Derrick Smith

A maiden winner in three starts as a juvenile, Winter has improved at three and has been the best filly at a mile in Britain and Ireland so far this season. Beat some of her more favored stablemates with a great turn of foot in the 1000 Guineas (G1) at Newmarket, and was even more impressive when taking out the Irish 1000 Guineas (G1) at The Curragh. Yet another top-class galloper by Galileo to be raced from the Aidan O'Brien stable.

RECORD US RAIDING PARTY

by Rachel Candelora **GBI RACING**

BRITISH AND IRISH RACING

British-based American racing expert Rachel Candelora casts her eye over the American team heading to Royal Ascot.

This year sees a record number of American-trained runners at Royal Ascot as 6 different trainers are set to bring 15 horses to run in 12 different races at the meeting.

Previous success at Royal Ascot has gone to the US on 8 occasions, from just 57 total runners, and with Wesley Ward having trained 7 of these winners his runners are always the first to focus on. The first thing to note is that Frankie Dettori, who holds the record for number of wins at Royal Ascot for a current jockey with 56, has first call on all but one of the Wesley Ward runners at the Royal Meeting.

Ward could have as many as 10 runners at the meeting and his standard bearer is the globe-trotting filly Lady Aurelia, who won the Group 2 Queen Mary Stakes twelve months ago. She comes to Ascot this year to run in the 5F Group 1 King's Stand Stakes (Tuesday), and with British bookmakers she is the favorite.

This daughter of Scat Daddy will potentially be facing the last 2 winners of the King's Stand, Goldream (2015) and Profitable (2016), as well as her former stablemate Acapulco, who has since moved to Aidan O'Brien and has been covered by Galileo.

Given the way Lady Aurelia came back in the Giant's Causeway Stakes, and her works since, she should give the King's Stand field a run for their money.

Wesley Ward is sending two other 3-y-os, Bound for Nowhere and Con Te Partiro. Bound for Nowhere is heading to the Group

1 Commonwealth Cup (Friday) over 6F for 3-y-os. He is a perfect 2 for 2 in his short career and is better known as Lady Aurelia's workmate, but the trainer has said that he gives her a lot to handle in the mornings and that might good enough to put him in the running here.

Con Te Partiro is going for Wednesday's Sandingham Handicap for 3yo fillies over the straight mile. Another daughter of Scat Daddy, she had a good comeback run in the Soaring Softly Stakes at Belmont and should improve for stepping back up to the mile. Frankie Dettori rode her last year to be second in the Juvenile Turf Sprint on the Breeders' Cup undercard and he is set to renew the partnership here. Frankie has won this race a total of 7 times and has won it for the last 2 years.

Mention Wesley Ward here in Britain and immediately the talk turns to 2-y-os – not surprising as 6 of his 7 winners at the Royal Meeting have been in juvenile races.

One filly who has been touted by Ward since before she broke her maiden at Keenland is Fairyland, a daughter of Scat Daddy, who has sired 3 of Ward's 6 Royal Ascot juvenile winners.

The trainer even went so far as to say that "she would be a beast at Royal Ascot," but the main concern is that she was prevented from traveling with her stablemates due to warts on her mouth, but hopefully she will come over to England later and if so she could take all the beating in the Gr 3 Albany Stakes (Friday). Joining her in the lineup could be stablemate Princess Peggy.



Another of the barn's hype horses is Happy Like A Fool, who is the current favorite with British bookmakers for the Group 2 Queen Mary (Wednesday), a race that Ward has won 3 times from only 6 runners, and he's won it the past 2 years with Acapulco and Lady Aurelia. This daughter of Distorted Humor was eye-catching in her Keeneland maiden win and has since been training very well on the turf.

Other juvenile runners include the Irish-bred Elizabeth Darcy, who is heading to the Windsor Castle Stakes (Tuesday) after a 7 3/4-length blowout debut win over 5F on the turf at Indiana Grand. This daughter of Camacho will be Ward's only juvenile with previous experience of racing on turf. She will be bidding to give the trainer his third win in the race and will be joined by stablemate Nootka Sound.

Arawak, a son of Uncle Mo, was due to make his debut on the turf but the race got rained off, so instead he broke his maiden by 7 lengths on the dirt in fine style at Belmont, and worryingly for rivals Ward says that he is "much better on the turf."

This is the one runner that Frankie Dettori does not have the call on, as John Velazquez (who was aboard him on debut) is coming over to ride him in the Group 2 Coventry Stakes on Tuesday. Remember Johnny V rode the barn's first two Royal Ascot winners back in 2009.

McErin has the most experience of the juvenile runners having won his maiden well at Keeneland before running 3rd in the Kentucky Juvenile Stakes at Churchill Downs. He will line up in the Group 2 Norfolk on Thursday, a race that Ward has previously won with No Nay Never. In Newmarket, where the Ward team are based, McErin is the 2-y-o who has physically impressed the work watchers.

Five other US-based trainers are bringing a horse each in an attempt to reap some royal rewards. Trainer Todd Pletcher is bringing American Patriot to contest the opening Group 1 Queen Anne Stakes on Tuesday – the race that the brilliant Tepin won last year. This son of War Front is coming off his best ever success in the Grade 1 Maker's 46 Mile Stakes at Keeneland and has since been training really well on the turf at Belmont.

While Frankie Dettori has been booked, it must be remembered that American Patriot is not coming into this race with the same credentials as Tepin did last year. She had previously taken the Euro's to task in the Breeders' Cup Mile while American Patriot has never faced this sort of competition before. Note that while this race is the opening contest of the Royal Meeting it is traditionally one of the hardest to win.

Tepin's trainer Mark Casse has La Coronel in the Group 1 Coronation Stakes (Friday) over a mile for 3yo fillies. She is arguably one of the best turf fillies in the US with her wins in the Grade 3 Appalachian Stakes at Keeneland and the Grade 3 Edgewood at Churchill Downs. While she will be facing some of the best 3yo fillies in Europe, including possibly the dual Guineas winner Winter, she may be a bit of value at a big price and appears disregarded by British bookmakers.

Hall of Fame trainer Bill Mott is bringing his first ever Royal runner this year with Long On Value, who came the closest an American horse has ever come to winning on the turf on World Cup Night in Dubai when he was a nose 2nd in the Al Quoz Sprint, and he now heads to the Group 1 Diamond Jubilee over 6F on the straight course on Saturday. The US has a good record in this race with a winner and 2 placed horses from just 6 runners - Undrafted won for Wesley Ward in 2015. He should be another American raider that will be overpriced on the day with UK bookmakers.

The final 2 American-trained raiders are coming from barns of Englishmen abroad. Graham Motion is bringing Miss Temple City to Royal Ascot for the third consecutive year and has the option to run her against the boys in the Queen Anne Stakes or stay against fillies and mares in the Group 2 Duke of Cambridge Stakes (Wednesday) a race she was 4th in last year. The worry with her is that she has missed both of her intended comeback runs this year due to soft ground and therefore comes into this race off a 6-month break, but if anyone can get her ready off the break, Graham Motion can. The final American raider is the Simon Callaghan trained 2yo Runaway, who broke his maiden on debut at Santa Anita and is now heading to the Norfolk.



Originally from Colts Neck, New Jersey, Rachel (32) moved to Louisville, Kentucky in 2007 primarily to work at Churchill Downs while obtaining her MBA on the side. She spent six years at the Home of the Kentucky Derby, working within the TSC Elite program, before moving to London, England. She now appears regularly on RacingUK as an international racing expert.



AIDAN O'BRIEN'S BALLYDOYLE BRIGADE

by Kellie Reilly

O'Brien well armed for eighth Royal Ascot training title

According to the antepost betting market, Aidan O'Brien is a virtual certainty to reign as Royal Ascot's champion trainer for the third straight year – and eighth time overall. The Ballydoyle maestro is odds-on with the bookmakers, thanks to a battalion spearheaded by a few clear favorites, and featuring strength in depth.

The first of O'Brien's potential "bankers" to appear is **Churchill**, the odds-on choice to extend his winning streak in Tuesday's St James's Palace (G1) for three-year-old milers. Last year's European champion juvenile has been unassailable since his debut loss, most recently turning a classic double in the 2000 Guineas (G1) at Newmarket and the Irish equivalent at the Curragh. As if Churchill's individual merits weren't enough, O'Brien has also had a stranglehold on this race. He's won more runnings of the St James's Palace (seven) than any other trainer in the postwar era. The biggest danger to Churchill is Godolphin's Barney Roy, who stumbled badly into the Dip at Newmarket yet kept on to finish a brave second.

O'Brien could sweep both of the marquee races for sophomores at a mile, with **Winter** all the rage in Friday's Coronation (G1) for fillies. Like Churchill, she's a dual Guineas winner by supersire Galileo. After a 9-1 upset in Newmarket's 1000 Guineas (G1), Winter wasn't overlooked again, and justified odds-on status emphatically in the Irish 1000 Guineas (G1). O'Brien doesn't have as gaudy a record in the Coronation, however, saddling "only" two winners. The market views Dabych as the alternative, but French 1000 Guineas (G1) heroine Precieuse, recently purchased by Peter Brant, would warrant respect if supplemented.

Although Ballydoyle's older brigade took a couple of hits with the injuries to Minding and Seventh Heaven, the yard is hardly lacking. Defending champion **Order of St George** is favored to repeat in Thursday's Gold Cup (G1), where he's poised to give his

trainer an eighth trophy in the 2 1/2-mile contest. O'Brien ranks as the most successful horseman in the Gold Cup since 1946, his current total boosted by Yeats' incredible four-timer (2006-09). With France's star stayer, Vazirabad, being ruled out, Order of St George's price is contracting further.

In the less extreme distance categories, the grand globetrotter **Highland Reel** looms large in both of his possible targets. The 1 1/2-mile Hardwicke (G2) during Saturday's finale is the more obvious spot for the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) hero who exits a resilient display in the Coronation Cup (G1). The son of Galileo was just denied by The Queen's Dartmouth in the 2016 Hardwicke, and a rematch might well go the other way. But Highland Reel also has the option of Wednesday's Prince of Wales's (G1) over 1 1/4 miles.

O'Brien is no less formidable in the sprint division. Undefeated **Caravaggio** is expected to hand O'Brien his first win in the Commonwealth Cup (G1) for three-year-olds, a recent addition to the calendar now in its third running. The Scat Daddy colt bolted up over this course and six-furlong distance in last June's Coventry (G2). Another Scat Daddy offspring, **Acapulco**, will not line up in the five-furlong King's Stand (G1) as first thought on Tuesday, thanks to a late setback, but she remains possible for Saturday's Diamond Jubilee (G1) over an extra panel. A scintillating winner in the 2015 Queen Mary (G2) for Wesley Ward, she's seeking to go out on a high note – while racing in foal to Galileo. O'Brien, seeking a first win in the King's Stand, pins his hopes entirely on **Washington DC**.

Along with the rest of the Ballydoyle team, the juvenile juggernaut is still being assembled at this writing. Note that Churchill's full sister, **Clemmie**, is prominent in the betting for Saturday's Chesham, a seven-furlong test that older brother won last year. That marked O'Brien's third Chesham victory. Historically speaking, O'Brien's juveniles are most lethal in the Coventry, with eight titles that make him the race's winningest trainer since 1977. Two who may try to add to that total Tuesday are **Declaration of Peace** and **Murillo**. He's had less success in the meeting's other two-year-old stakes, with just two scores in the Norfolk (G2), one apiece in the Windsor Castle and Albany (G3), and none in the Queen Mary. Clemmie has the option of Friday's Albany or the Chesham, as does the exciting debut winner **September**, a daughter of Deep Impact and Peeping Fawn.

In addition to the Coventry, Gold Cup, and St James's Palace, another race that has suited O'Brien well is the Queen's Vase (G2) for sophomore stayers. All five of his wins in this event have come in the past 10 years, so he's bridging the gap on trainer Mark Johnston's tally of seven.

O'Brien is also gaining on Royal Ascot's top active trainer, Sir Michael Stoute, who has a total of 75 wins dating back to 1977. Since O'Brien began his training career in the 1990s, he's already racked up 55 victories at the meeting, and more are surely in the cards here.



AN EARLY LOOK AT THE GROUP 1 RACES

Final declarations for Royal Ascot aren't announced until 48 hours in advance of raceday, so at this writing, the fields are still coming together.

In-depth analysis, handicapping, and wagering strategies – for all five days of the meeting – will be available on [Brisnet.com](#) as well as on the [TwinSpires.com](#) blog.

As an appetizer, here's a betting preview for the eight Group 1 races. The favorites are listed with the consensus odds from the bookmakers, along with an early value pick.

TUESDAY

RACE	FAVORITE	EARLY VALUE
Queen Anne	Ribchester, 4-5	Mutakayyef, 7-1
King's Stand	Lady Aurelia, 3-1	Signs of Blessing, 6-1
St James's Palace	Churchill, 4-6	Rivet, 20-1

WEDNESDAY

RACE	FAVORITE	EARLY VALUE
Prince of Wales's	Jack Hobbs, 5-2	Mekhtaal, 10-1

THURSDAY

RACE	FAVORITE	EARLY VALUE
Gold Cup	Order of St George, 10-11	Simple Verse, 10-1

FRIDAY

RACE	FAVORITE	EARLY VALUE
Commonwealth Cup	Caravaggio, evens	Fas, 16-1
Coronation	Winter, 4-6	Tomyris, 16-1

SATURDAY

RACE	FAVORITE	EARLY VALUE
Diamond Jubilee	Limato, 9-2	Jungle Cat, 20-1



TWINSPIRES GROUP 1 RACES TIPSHEET

by Will Hayler



Like at no other race meeting in the world, true class tends to open doors at Royal Ascot.

On paper, nothing looked right for Tepin last year. Yet once the stalls opened, the unknowns of a straight track, the softest turf she had ever encountered, and a change in medication rules were soon shrugged aside. The remarkable Mark Casse-trained mare scored a notable success in the Queen Anne Stakes, the first of no less than eight Group One contests that each year highlight the five-day British racing bonanza.

This year's renewal of the Queen Anne, the 1600m contest that opens the whole meeting, is set to feature one of the hottest favourites of the whole week in Ribchester.

The winner of the Jersey Stakes here 12 months ago, Ribchester has kept on improving since and already has two Group Ones in the bag. Losing out to the remarkable filly Minding over this track and trip last autumn was no disgrace, but he does have some questions to answer on a quicker surface.

If the rains stay away, **Mutakayyef** could offer some value in opposition. He won a Group Two here last year on quick ground and was beaten less than a length despite a tardy break behind Tepin in the Woodbine Mile subsequently.

Put away for Dubai afterwards, unexpectedly soft ground went against him there and despite a reportedly difficult journey home, trainer William Haggas is sure to have him tuned up for this.

Another horse off the track since Dubai but primed for a big run at Royal Ascot is **Jack Hobbs**. The 2015 Irish Derby winner has endured ups and downs since that big day, but a fast-closing third behind Almanzor in last year's Champion Stakes suggested that champion trainer John Gosden had patched him up and he was impressive at Meydan on his only start so far this year.

Seven times this meeting's leading trainer, Aidan O'Brien heads into the week with a number of good chances and none stronger than dual Guineas winner Churchill in the St James's Palace Stakes. Although the stars aligned perfectly for this colt at Newmarket and those behind fancy their chances of revenge, Churchill has the quality to handle any obstacles thrown in his path.

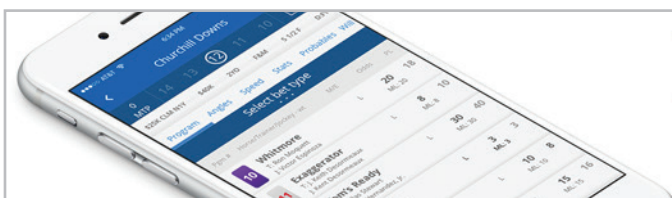
O'Brien also trains likely Commonwealth Cup favourite Caravaggio and has been making all sorts of noises about the colt, a high-class unbeaten juvenile last year and an impressive winner upon his return at Naas last month.

Does he deserve to be so short in the betting though? He was undoubtedly impressive in the Coventry Stakes here 12 months ago, but is still to fully prove himself to be the star his odds suggest he must be. On good ground, Wesley Ward's raider **Bound For Nowhere** has the toe to shake up all of his rivals.

Since first bursting on to the scene at Ascot in 2009, Ward has taken seven prizes home and **Lady Aurelia**, without doubt the most impressive winner 12 months ago, is back for more in the King's Stand Stakes on the opening day. She did not look a one-hit wonder when overcoming a wide trip to score on her return at Keeneland and the memory of last year's success on this track is simply indelible. With weight allowances for her age and sex, it will take a good one to beat her.



Will Hayler is an accomplished turf writer and broadcaster who has followed horse racing since he was nine. Formerly the Chief Horse Racing Correspondent for Press Association Sport, he contributes to GBI among other racing entities and currently serves as Racing Editor at Sportinglife.com.



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STATS GUIDE TO ROYAL ASCOT

ASCOT STAKES (TUESDAY)

Probably the best handicap at the meeting for punters with the last eight winners sent off at no bigger than 12/1. During the last 27 years as many as 19 winners could be located in the first five in the betting including Jennies Jewel (6/1 second-favourite) last year. There had been no successful favourite since Riyadh in 2002 until the well-backed Clondaw Warrior put that right in 2015.

Nine of the last ten winners were trained by stables better known for jumps racing - Charles Byrnes, Jonjo O'Neill, Willie Mullins (twice), Nicky Henderson, David Pipe, Suzy Smith, Paul Webber and Jarlath Fahey - and, over a longer period of time, 12 of the last 15. Pipe has also trained a second and third in recent seasons and his father won this race four times when he held the licence at Nicholashayne. Tony Martin is another trainer better known for his handling of jumpers and he has landed more than his fair share of big handicaps in Britain and this race has been no exception with Barba Papa (2000) and Leg Spinner (2005) taking the spoils and he has had a further two placed runners in the last decade.

There used to be weight, draw and age angles to exploit but not anymore. Horses carrying less than 9st had been responsible for approximately 50% of the total runners between 1996-2008 but only won on three occasions but, in the last half a dozen years, the weights have been so much more compressed that very few horses have run off below 9st, which was the bottom weight last year. Therefore, it should be better to concentrate now on official ratings stats as 11 of the last 15 winners were rated between 83-93 heading into the race.

Even over 2m4f there was a draw angle a few years ago when the race featured high on 30 runners but that edge has been taken away by reducing the maximum field size to 20 so we have lost an 'in' there as there has been no advantage since.

The Ascot Stakes was very much a race in which to concentrate on four and five-year-olds but the last three winners were aged seven, eight and nine and all three were trained in Ireland. Prior to those Irish-trained victories, 15 of the previous 19 winners emerging from that age bracket. Perhaps it might be best to only overlook horses aged 6+ in Britain based on the most recent results?

There are no really strong individual race guides with the Chester Cup faring best with three of the last 16 winners taking part.

Positives:

- Trained by a primarily jumps-based stable
- Officially rated between 83-93
- Trained in Ireland
- Start in the first five in the betting
- Ran in the Chester Cup

Negatives:

- Aged older than five (unless Irish trained)



STATS GUIDE TO ROYAL ASCOT

ROYAL HUNT CUP (WEDNESDAY)

Overall this has been a good race for punters as exactly 50% of the last 24 winners could be found in the first four in the betting including Portage last year. No mean feat given that around 30 runners face the starter. Given those SP stats it is no surprise that 14 of the last 18 winners won or finished second earlier in the campaign.

Four and five-year-olds make up the lion's share of runners (usually around 75%) but given that they have won 27 of the last 31 runnings, they have been over-performing so I am more than happy to overlook any horse aged six and upwards as my first starting point. Four-year-olds realised a 1-2-3-4-5-6 last season.

Previous straight-course form at Ascot has proved to be an important factor in recent times and Portage had won over course and distance the previous season. The Victoria Cup at the May Meeting won this season by Fastnet Tempest from George William has provided an ideal springboard for seven of the last 22 Hunt Cup winners. The Britannia Handicap at the previous season's Royal Ascot also used to be a significant guide but not so much of late though the 2013 Hunt Cup winner, Belgian Bill, had finished placed in the Britannia two years earlier.

Outside of Ascot form, the Lincoln remains of interest with four of the last 15 winners, G M Hopkins being the latest, having contested the season's traditional first big betting race of the season though only one of that successful quartet ran into a place at Doncaster. Two of the last seven winners ran creditably in the Whitsun Cup at Sandown on their previous start.

As far as weight carried is concerned, a u-turn has occurred in the last decade with regards horses saddled with under or over 9st. Going with the 'unders' was a must up until 2008 as just two winners since 1989 carried

more than 9st to victory but seven of the last ten winners carried 9st+, though that is now reflective of the fact more horses have carried over 9st than otherwise in recent years.

Although Sir Michael Stoute and Luca Cumani have won this race in the past, it should also be noted that they have saddled nine losing favourites between them in just the last 15 years. Convey was the latest for Stoute last year. James Fanshawe is a trainer to note on the straight-course races at Royal Ascot and his record in this race passes the closest scrutiny having won it twice and he has had five other runners since the turn of the century also make the frame.

With regards to the draw, what happens earlier in the week is often the best guide with regards to the straight course. It would appear, however, that a draw close to either rail is an advantage as 14 of the last 20 winners were drawn no more than six places away from a rail. Two of the last ten winners were wearing blinkers for the first time.

Positives:

- Has previous quality straight-track Ascot form (notably the Victoria Cup)
- Drawn in the highest or lowest six stalls
- Ran in the Lincoln
- Carrying over 9st
- Respect James Fanshawe
- First four in the market

Negatives:

- Aged 6+
- Not finished first or second this season
- Trained by Sir Michael Stoute or Luca Cumani



STATS GUIDE TO ROYAL ASCOT

BRITANNIA STAKES (THURSDAY)

Featuring approximately 30 three-year-olds, the majority of which are unexposed and from top yards, for my money the Britannia Stakes is the most competitive (though not impossible) three-year-old handicap of the season. That said, despite its highly-competitive edge, it has actually been a very good race for favourites with five of the last 18 obliging. In fact, 19 of the last 26 winners could be found in the first half-dozen in the betting, Limitless being the 13/2 second-favourite last year, so this isn't punter's nightmare that many believe to be the case.

An emerging pattern is that the five of the last six winners won a handicap on their previous start which is in stark contrast to the previous nine runnings when beaten horses on their previous start came out on top. Some punters fall into the trap of backing a flashy, last-time-out maiden winner from a big yard but no horse with such a profile has won since John Gosden's North Song 20 years ago.

The 2015 winner, War Envoy, had previously finished last in the French Derby so he had a most unusual profile for a Britannia winner. Aidan O'Brien's charge was certainly not a trends horse therefore and that included on the weight front too as he carried 9st 6lb. Just four of the last 27 winners had carried over 9st, though that now includes the last two. War Envoy also became just the third winner since 1991 not to finish in the first four places last time out.

It's been a while since he last saddled the winner but still worth noting that going back to and including 1994, with four winners, a second and two thirds from 32 runners, John Gosden knows what it takes to prepare a horse for this race. Significantly, all four of his winners ended their juvenile season without a victory and also failed to break their maiden tag at first time of asking as a three-year-old. James Fanshawe is another name to strongly consider with a winner and three placed horses from his last four runners.

As far as the draw is concerned, like with many major straight-course handicaps, it often pays to look very low or very high as nine of the last 18 winners were drawn no more than five positions off either rail.

Positives:

Won a handicap last time out

First six in the market (the favourite also has a strong record)

Trained by John Gosden or James Fanshawe

Drawn in the lowest or highest five stalls

Negatives:

Unplaced last time out

Last-time-out maiden winner



STATS GUIDE TO ROYAL ASCOT

DUKE OF EDINBURGH STAKES (FRIDAY)

Horses drawn wider in double-figure stalls have won all six runnings since the switch of stall numbers which is total contrast to the Wolferton Handicap over 2f shorter where the bend comes up much quicker and there is less time for jockeys to get organised, so don't be put off arguments suggesting the higher-drawn horses are up against it over this 1m4f trip. In fact last season's 1-2-3 were drawn 19, 13 and 15.

Last-time-out winners hold the call having been responsible for 50% of the last 22 winners which is an excellent return given they supply, on average, around 25% of the total runners. Given the handicap has become much more condensed of late, weight stats have started to become irrelevant in a race where it usually paid to oppose those towards the lower end of the handicap.

It was a 1-2-3-4 for five-year-olds last year but just two horses older than five have been successful in the last 28 years and it is the four-year-olds that hold the edge over five-year-olds in terms of winners. In fact, four-year-olds supplied seven of the first eight places in 2015, the first eight horses home two years ago and six of the first seven in 2013, so the 5yo domination last year came as a surprise.

Arab Spring gave Sir Michael Stoute his sixth winner of this all-aged 1m4f handicap three years ago and he has

also saddled three runners-up from his last 17 runners and the majority view was that his Kings Fete (close-up third) would have won last season but for being squeezed up. Mark Johnston has claimed this prize on three occasions including a 1-2 in 2009 and the 2014 runner-up so his is also a name very much to look out for. John Oxx's two runners have produced a winner and a third, look twice should be bring over a contender.

Up until 2006, the Duke Of Edinburgh Stakes had been a punter's handicap with 14 consecutive winners going the way of a contender from the front six in the betting but it has got tricky lately as four of the last 11 winners have started at 12/1+. However, the last two of the last favourites, Arab Spring and Arab Dawn (joint-favourite), justified that market support and last season's favourite only found one too good. Especially note those hunting up the market leader, notably the second, third and fourth favourites, have won 13 of the last 23 runnings.

Positives:

Last-time-out winners
The second, third and fourth favourites
Four-year-olds
Trained by Sir Michael Stoute, Mark Johnston or John Oxx

Negatives:

Aged six or older



STATS GUIDE TO ROYAL ASCOT

WOKINGHAM HANDICAP (SATURDAY)

The quality of horse required to run in the Wokingham keeps rising (the loss of the Buckingham Palace Stakes being a contributory factor in the last two years) so previous weight and official rating stats are rendered pretty much irrelevant as we are no longer dealing with like for like.

On the age front, stick to four and five-year-olds that have won 16 of the last 18 runnings. A three-year-old has not won since Bel Byou triumphed in 1987 though, in fairness, they only average a couple of runners per renewal, if that. Looking at the older horses, although many sprinters improve as they get older, only Selhurstparkflyer in 1997 has struck for horses aged over six since the race's inception in 1896 so the elder brigade can easily be overlooked.

In-form horses have very much held sway with 17 of the last 20 winners finishing in the first four last time (and one of those that didn't was Laddies Poker Two who was arriving here off a 610-day absence) and it has also proven wise to look to lightly-raced types as far as the current season is concerned with 11 of the last 15 winners running no more than twice earlier in the campaign.

Roger Charlton's record catches the eye having supplied a winner, second and four other top-six finishes in

recent seasons and his Projection will be a leading fancy running in the colours of The Royal Ascot Racing Club but Paul Cole has the best record of current-day trainers in terms of winners saddling the victor in 1977, 1980 and 1987.

No strong race guides but it is worth noting the 6f handicap at Newmarket on 2000 Guineas Day featuring three of the last 16 winners and the 6f handicap at Epsom's Derby Meeting featuring three of the last 18 winners. Two of the last four winners finished second in a sprint handicap at the Dante Meeting at York on their previous start.

In the last 29 years only six winners were drawn in the middle segment in stalls 10-19.

Positives:

Four and five-year-olds
Ran no more than twice earlier in the season
Ran in the 6f sprint handicap at Epsom on Derby Day or 6f sprint handicap at Newmarket on 2000 Guineas Day
Ran well in a sprint handicap at the Dante Meeting
Trained by Roger Charlton or Paul Cole

Negatives:

Aged older than six
Unplaced last time out



ROYAL ASCOT GROUP RACE HISTORIES

by Kellie Reilly

TUESDAY

QUEEN ANNE (G1), 4YO/UP, ONE MILE (STRAIGHT COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Tepin (f)	1st CD Distaff Turf Mile (US)
2015	Solow	1st Prix d'Ispahan
2014	Toronado	Layoff since August
2013	Declaration of War	5th Lockinge
2012	Frankel	1st Lockinge
2011	Canford Cliffs	1st Lockinge
2010	Goldikova (f)	1st Prix d'Ispahan
2009	Paco Boy	4th Lockinge
2008	Haradasun	6th Lockinge
2007	Ramonti	2nd Lockinge

KING'S STAND (G1), 3YO/UP, FIVE FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Profitable	1st Temple
2015	Goldream	7th Temple
2014	Sole Power	1st Palace House
2013	Sole Power	4th Temple
2012	Little Bridge	1st Sprint Cup (HK)
2011	Prohibit	2nd Prix du Gros-Chene
2010	Equiano	2nd Temple
2009	Scenic Blast	1st Newmarket H. (Aus)
2008	Equiano	2nd Prix du Gros-Chene
2007	Miss Andretti (f)	1st Newmarket H. (Aus)

COVENTRY (G2), 2YO, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Caravaggio	1st Marble Hill
2015	Buratino	1st Woodcote
2014	The Wow Signal	1st Ayr maiden
2013	War Command	1st Leopardstown maiden
2012	Dawn Approach	1st Rochestown
2011	Power	1st Marble Hill
2010	Strong Suit	1st Newbury maiden
2009	Canford Cliffs	1st Newbury maiden
2008	Art Connoisseur	1st Newmarket conditions
2007	Henrythenavigator	1st Gowran maiden

ST JAMES'S PALACE (G1), 3YO COLTS, ONE MILE (ROUND COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Galileo Gold	2nd Irish 2000 Guineas
2015	Gleneagles	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2014	Kingman	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2013	Dawn Approach	12th Epsom Derby
2012	Most Improved	14th French Derby
2011	Frankel	1st 2000 Guineas
2010	Canford Cliffs	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2009	Mastercraftsman	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2008	Henrythenavigator	1st Irish 2000 Guineas
2007	Excellent Art	4th French 2000 Guineas

WEDNESDAY

JERSEY (G3), 3YO, SEVEN FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Ribchester	3rd 2000 Guineas
2015	Dutch Connection	7th 2000 Guineas
2014	Mustajeeb	3rd Irish 2000 Guineas
2013	Gale Force Ten	2nd Irish 2000 Guineas
2012	Ishvana (f)	2nd Irish 1000 Guineas
2011	Strong Suit	6th Greenham
2010	Rainfall (f)	2nd Sandy Lane
2009	Ouqba	11th 2000 Guineas
2008	Aqlaam	1st Newbury maiden
2007	Tariq	1st King Charles II

DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE (G2), 4YO/UP, F&M, ONE MILE (STRAIGHT COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Usherette	1st Dahlia
2015	Amazing Maria	3rd Lanwades
2014	Integral	2nd Dahlia
2013	Duntle	1st Amethyst
2012	Joviality	2nd Princess Elizabeth
2011	Lolly for Dolly	2nd Equestrian (=Lanwades)
2010	Strawberrydaiquiri	1st Dahlia
2009	Spacious	3rd Princess Elizabeth
2008	Sabana Perdida	1st Chartwell Fillies'
2007	Nannina	3rd Princess Elizabeth

continued from previous page

QUEEN MARY (G2), 2YO FILLIES, FIVE FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Lady Aurelia	1st Keeneland maiden (US)
2015	Acapulco	3rd Churchill maiden (US)
2014	Anthem Alexander	1st Tipperary maiden
2013	Rizeena	1st National
2012	Ceiling Kitty	1st Marygate
2011	Best Terms	1st Newbury conditions
2010	Maqaasid	1st Sandown maiden
2009	Jealous Again	2nd Kentucky Juvenile (US)
2008	Langs Lash	2nd Marygate
2007	Elletelle	1st Leopardstown maiden

PRINCE OF WALES'S (G1), 4YO/UP, 1 1/4 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	My Dream Boat	5th Prix d'Ispahan
2015	Free Eagle	Layoff since October
2014	The Fugue (f)	11th Dubai Duty Free (UAE)
2013	Al Kazeem	1st Tattersalls Gold Cup
2012	So You Think	1st Tattersalls Gold Cup
2011	Rewilding	1st Dubai Sheema Classic (UAE)
2010	Byword	2nd Prix d'Ispahan
2009	Vision d'Etat	1st Prix Ganay
2008	Duke of Marmalade	1st Tattersalls Gold Cup
2007	Manduro	1st Prix d'Ispahan

THURSDAY

NORFOLK (G2), 2YO, FIVE FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Prince of Lir	1st Brian Yeardley
2015	Waterloo Bridge	1st Tipperary maiden
2014	Baitha Alga	1st Woodcote
2013	No Nay Never	1st Keeneland maiden (US)
2012	Reckless Abandon	1st Doncaster maiden
2011	Bapak Chinta	1st Hamilton maiden
2010	Approve	4th Woodcote
2009	Radiohead	1st Bath novice
2008	South Central	1st Carlisle maiden
2007	Winker Watson	1st Newbury maiden

RIBBLESDALE (G2), 3YO FILLIES, 1 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Even Song	3rd Pretty Polly
2015	Curvy	1st Gallinule
2014	Bracelet	14th 1000 Guineas
2013	Riposte	1st Newmarket maiden
2012	Princess Highway	1st Blue Wind
2011	Banimpire	1st Noblesse
2010	Hibaayeb	3rd Prix Saint-Alary
2009	Flying Cloud	1st Prix Cleopatre
2008	Michita	7th Oaks
2007	Silkwood	1st Sandown handicap

HAMPTON COURT (G3), 3YO, 1 1/4 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Hawkbill	1st Newmarket S.
2015	Time Test	1st London Gold Cup (h'cap)
2014	Cannock Chase	1st London Gold Cup (h'cap)
2013	Remote	1st Doncaster handicap
2012	Energizer	4th German 2000 Guineas
2011	Pisco Sour	9th Derby
2010	Afsare	1st Doncaster conditions
2009	Glass Harmonium	6th Dante
2008	Collection	1st York handicap
2007	Zaham	1st Epsom handicap

GOLD CUP (G1), 4YO/UP, 2 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Order of St George	1st Saval Beg
2015	Trip to Paris	2nd Henry II
2014	Leading Light	1st Vintage Crop
2013	Estimate (f)	1st Sagaro
2012	Colour Vision	1st Sagaro
2011	Fame and Glory	1st Saval Beg
2010	Rite of Passage	3rd Cheltenham hurdle
2009	Yeats	6th Vintage Crop
2008	Yeats	1st Vintage Crop
2007	Yeats	1st Saval Beg

continued from previous page

FRIDAY

ALBANY (G3), 2YO FILLIES, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Brave Anna	1st Curragh maiden
2015	Illuminate	1st Salisbury conditions
2014	Cursory Glance	1st Kempton maiden
2013	Kiyoshi	1st Goodwood maiden
2012	Newfangled	1st Newmarket maiden
2011	Samitar	3rd Newmarket maiden
2010	Memory	1st Goodwood maiden
2009	Habaayib	1st Nottingham maiden
2008	Cuis Ghaire	1st Fillies' Sprint at Naas
2007	Nijoom Dubai	3rd Folkestone maiden

KING EDWARD VII (G2), 3YO COLTS & GELDINGS, 1 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Across the Stars	10th Derby
2015	Balios	2nd Newmarket S.
2014	Eagle Top	4th Leicester handicap
2013	Hillstar	2nd London Gold Cup (h'cap)
2012	Thomas Chippendale	1st Newmarket handicap
2011	Nathaniel	2nd Chester Vase
2010	Monterosso	1st Newmarket handicap
2009	Father Time	2nd Fairway
2008	Campanologist	3rd Lingfield Derby Trial
2007	Boscobel	1st Glasgow

COMMONWEALTH CUP (G1), 3YO, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Quiet Reflection (f)	1st Sandy Lane
2015	Muhaarar	8th French 2000 Guineas

SATURDAY

HARDWICKE (G2), 4YO/UP, 1 1/2 MILES

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Dartmouth	1st Ormonde
2015	Snow Sky	1st Yorkshire Cup
2014	Telescope	2nd Huxley
2013	Thomas Chippendale	2nd Buckhounds
2012	Sea Moon	1st Tapster
2011	Await the Dawn	1st Huxley
2010	Harbinger	1st Ormonde
2009	Bronze Cannon	1st Jockey Club
2008	Macarthur	3rd Coronation Cup
2007	Maraahel	3rd Coronation Cup

CORONATION (G1), 3YO FILLIES, ONE MILE (ROUND COURSE)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Qemah	3rd French 1000 Guineas
2015	Ervedya	1st French 1000 Guineas
2014	Rizeena	7th 1000 Guineas
2013	Sky Lantern	1st 1000 Guineas
2012	Fallen for You	6th Chartwell Fillies'
2011	Immortal Verse	1st Prix de Sandringham
2010	Lillie Langtry	5th Irish 1000 Guineas
2009	Ghanaati	1st 1000 Guineas
2008	Lush Lashes	5th Oaks
2007	Indian Ink	5th 1000 Guineas

QUEEN'S VASE (G2), 3YO, 1 3/4 MILES (PREVIOUSLY 2 MILES)

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Sword Fighter	3rd Naas race
2015	Aloft	Layoff since October
2014	Hartnell	2nd Lingfield Derby Trial
2013	Leading Light	1st Gallinule
2012	Estimate (f)	1st Salisbury maiden
2011	Namibian	3rd Edinburgh Cup (h'cap)
2010	Mikhail Glinka	3rd Ballysax
2009	Holberg	3rd Glasgow
2008	Patkai	1st Haydock handicap
2007	Mahler	11th Derby

DIAMOND JUBILEE (G1), 4YO/UP, SIX FURLONGS

YEAR	WINNER	PRIOR RACE
2016	Twilight Son	5th Duke of York
2015	Undrafted	2nd TwinSpires Turf Sprint (US)
2014	Slade Power	1st Greenlands
2013	Lethal Force	2nd Duke of York
2012	Black Caviar	1st Goodwood (Aus)
2011	Society Rock	2nd Haydock conditions
2010	Starspangledbanner	5th Duke of York
2009	Art Connoisseur	7th European Free H.
2008	Kingsgate Native	10th King's Stand
2007	Soldier's Tale	3rd John of Gaunt

CLASS OF 2017 – TWO-YEAR-OLDS

by David Lawrence  BRITISH AND IRISH RACING

While the Group 1 races at Royal Ascot attract the global headline acts, and the big handicaps offer the spectacle of a modern day cavalry charge, the meeting is also the first time we get to see the superstars of the next generation.

Six races over the five days are staged for two-year-olds and they offer a taster of what might be to come; from star sprinters lining up in the five-furlong events to classic hopefuls contesting the six and seven-furlong Coventry, Albany and Chesham Stakes.

Here, we have taken an early look at the leading two-year-olds that are expected to appear at the meeting, accompanied by ratings compiled by two-year-old expert David Lawrence.

TWO-YEAR-OLD MALES

Leading two-year-old males raced in Britain and Ireland this season (ratings as of 15 June)

NAME (GENDER)	TRAINER (COUNTRY)	RATING
Brother Bear (colt)	J Harrington (Ireland)	99
Frozen Angel (colt)	T Dascombe (GB)	97
De Bruyne Horse (colt)	R Hannon (GB)	95
Havana Grey (colt)	K Burke (GB)	93
Ardenode (gelding)	E O'Neill (France)	92
Declarationofpeace (colt)	A O'Brien (Ireland)	91
It Dont Come Easy (colt)	R Fahey (GB)	91
Unfortunately (colt)	K Burke (GB)	91
Verbal Dexterity (colt)	J Bolger (Ireland)	90
Would Be King (colt)	G Lyons (Ireland)	90
Cardsharp (colt)	M Johnston (GB)	89
Haddaf (colt)	J Tate (GB)	88
Denaar (colt)	R Hannon (GB)	87
Nine Below Zero (colt)	R Beckett (GB)	87
True Blue Moon (colt)	J O'Brien (Ireland)	87
Corinthia Knight (colt)	A Watson (GB)	86
Ghost Serge (colt)	A Watson (GB)	86
Murillo (colt)	A O'Brien (Ireland)	86
Santry (colt)	D Carroll (GB)	86

Punters hoping to profit from betting in Royal Ascot's two-year-old races open to colts and geldings would almost certainly be wise to make a note of any runners representing stables that have already established decent records in the Coventry, Norfolk and Windsor Castle Stakes.

Top of anyone's list when trying to find the winner of the **COVENTRY STAKES**, for instance, surely has to be Aidan O'Brien's yard, which has sent out eight successful candidates

in this 6f Group 2 contest, getting off the mark in 1997 and collecting last season with the potentially-brilliant Caravaggio.

O'Brien has four entries in this term's Coventry, which is due to be staged on Tuesday, 20 June, that quartet being **DECLARATIONOFPEACE** (rated 91), **MURILLO** (86), **SIoux NATION** (85) and **US NAVY FLAG** (85) - and, as must be clear from my mathematics (see list above), the first-named has the most obvious prospects of landing the prize.

Declarationofpeace strolled to victory last time out, cruising away from his rivals in the closing stages to score by six lengths over 5f at Dundalk, which was, interestingly, the course at which Caravaggio broke his duck prior to heading for Royal Ascot a year ago.

O'Brien's hopeful(s) will need to improve in order to score, however, as, according to my ratings, they currently fall short of the standard achieved by the Jessica Harrington-trained **BROTHER BEAR** (99) and Richard Hannon's **DE BRUYNE HORSE** (95).

Brother Bear is unbeaten in two starts, the more recent of his victories being registered by three lengths in a Listed event over the Coventry trip at the Curragh on 27 May. The son of Kodiak was impressive that day, when beating Would Be King (90), and has scope for further progress.

De Bruyne Horse has also notched a couple of successes, following a debut maiden defeat, and his last outing, resulting in a two-length win in Epsom's 6f Woodcote Stakes, was achieved despite his apparent unease on the Surrey venue's unique cambers.

His closest victim that afternoon, Mark Johnston's **CARDSHARP** (89), has since taken Beverley's Brian Yeardley Continental Two Year Old Trophy by 2 1/4 lengths, so the Woodcote form is difficult to knock and Hannon's colt, a handsome son of Showcasing, may still be on the up.

Hannon, whose father won the Coventry twice (with Canford Cliffs in 2009 and Strong Suit in 2010) looks set to be doubly represented as he attempts to uphold his family's tradition. His other colt for the race, **DENAAR** (87), may not have shown quite as much - so far - as De Bruyne Horse, but he is certainly worth a place in the line-up.

The same is true of the Clive Cox-trained **PRINCE OF THE DARK** (85). Cox, a shrewd judge of juveniles, lifted the trophy for the Norfolk Stakes with Reckless Abandon in 2012 and, while Prince Of The Dark cannot be said to be in that one's class just yet, his decisive debut victory at Bath hinted at a great deal more to come.

Other British- and Irish-trained Coventry possibles with plausible claims include Charlie Hills's **NEBO** (81), the Jim Bolger-trained **VERBAL DEXTERITY** (90), impressive on his only start to date, and **TRUE BLUE MOON** (87) from Joseph O'Brien's stable. But they will need to step up markedly on their current form in order to win an event in which my records show the first three regularly earn ratings in three figures.

They may face a stubborn stumbling-block, too, in the shape of **ARAWAK**, trained by US-based Wesley Ward, now a regular visitor to Royal Ascot and serial winner of two-year-old races at the meeting, courtesy of victories by the likes of Jealous Again (2009), No Nay Never (2013), Hootenanny (2014), Acapulco (2015) and Lady Aurelia (2016).

Ward is also targeting the **NORFOLK STAKES** this term and, according to reports from Newmarket, where his challengers are being prepared for the big Berkshire fixture, **McERIN**, his intended runner in the 5f Group 2 on Thursday, 22 June, looks a million dollars.

He could be worth all of that - possibly more - if he comes home in front, but he will not get an easy ride against a 'home' defence that, according to my maths, is presently headed by Tom Dascombe's **FROZEN ANGEL** (97) and the Karl Burke-trained **HAVANA GREY** (93).

Both last ran at Listed level, in Sandown's 5f National Stakes, and, although Frozen Angel could manage no better than second to Havana Grey, he did not have the best of luck in running and, if my figures are an accurate guide, performed below the standard of his previous success over the Norfolk course and distance.

There is probably no more than a length between the pair, both of whom handle quick ground.

Ward's previous victories in the **WINDSOR CASTLE STAKES** - he took the 5f Listed contest in 2009 and 2014 - ought to alert punters to his penchant for taking the prize money back to America and his two possibles this season, the fillies **ELIZABETH DARCY** and **NOOTKA SOUND**, each with a wide-margin victory on their CV, are likely to be primed to the minute if they go to post on Tuesday, 20 June.

Britain and Ireland, meanwhile, have the capacity to muster staunch resistance, thanks to such as **CARDSHARP**, James Tate's National Stakes third **HADDAF** (88), Archie Watson's **CORINTHIA KNIGHT** (86), twice successful before finding Frozen Angel too good at Ascot in May, and **SIoux NATION**, a 6f winner at Cork subsequently bogged down in testing conditions behind Brother Bear.

Royal Ascot's final event in which juvenile colts can participate,

the **CHESHAM STAKES**, run this year on Saturday, 24 June, is restricted to runners by stallions who won over 10f or more, which, given that his yard houses a host of Galileo's progeny, makes it an obvious target for O'Brien snr.

Several of his potential starters this season are fillies - dealt with in the second section of this feature - but it would be no surprise if the once-raced **GUSTAV KLIMT** (72) takes his chance and few racing fans will have forgotten that O'Brien landed last year's Chesham with a Galileo colt named Churchill.

TWO-YEAR-OLD FILLIES

Leading two-year-old fillies raced in Britain and Ireland this season (ratings as of 15 June)

NAME (GENDER)	TRAINER (COUNTRY)	RATING
Alpha Centauri	J Harrington (Ireland)	96
Main Desire	M Bell (GB)	92*
Neola	M Channon (GB)	90
Rebel Assault	M Johnston (GB)	89
Too Familiar	J Murtagh (Ireland)	87
Gasta	J Bolger (Ireland)	85
Heartache	Clive Cox (GB)	85
Mistress Of Venice	J Given (GB)	85
Natural	R Hannon (GB)	84
One Minute	W Haggas (GB)	82
Actress	A O'Brien (Ireland)	81
Out Of The Flames	R Hannon (GB)	81
September	A O'Brien (Ireland)	81
Black Sails	G Lyons (Ireland)	80
Emilia James	M Johnston (GB)	80
Formidable Kitt	T Dascombe (GB)	80
Sirici	J Stack (Ireland)	80
Starlight Mystery	M Johnston (GB)	80

** Ruled out of Royal Ascot due to a training setback*

Given his remarkable (and seemingly ever-growing) list of victories in other events at Royal Ascot, it is perhaps surprising that Aidan O'Brien has found the fixture's Pattern races confined to juvenile fillies - the Group 2 Queen Mary Stakes and the Group 3 Albany Stakes - so difficult to crack.

O'Brien has never won the Queen Mary - honestly! - and his first strike in the Albany, with 16-1 shot Brave Anna - his 2-1 favourite Cuff, ridden by Ryan Moore was fifth - occurred just last season.

That does not mean the Ballydoyle-based trainer's runners should be disregarded, of course, especially now he has broken his two-year-old female duck, but the statistics do suggest other stables deserve to be considered at least the

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equal of the most famous - and extravagantly successful - equine establishment in Ireland.

In the **QUEEN MARY STAKES**, for instance, punters would be unwise not to take a long look at any youngster sent over from America by Wesley Ward, who has already landed the 5f contest three times, with Jealous Again (2009), Acapulco (2015) and the blindingly-fast Lady Aurelia (2016).

His most likely challenger for the event this term - it is due to be staged on Wednesday, 21 June - appears to be **HAPPY LIKE A FOOL**, a typically-precocious Ward-trained juvenile filly, with a powerful frame to match what her handler describes as "great natural speed and a beautiful mind".

She will certainly need to be quick to see off Mick Channon's **NEOLA** (rated 90 on my scale), whose second in York's 5f Listed Marygate Stakes in mid-May earned a figure surpassed only by the injured Main Desire among juvenile fillies based in Britain so far this season.

Neola's present mark is not up to the standard normally registered by Queen Mary winners, however - my records from the last 10 years indicate at least 100 will be required to secure the prize - so Channon's charge will almost certainly need to improve in order to beat Ward's runner(s).

That is entirely possible, obviously, as Neola has raced just three times to date, and she is not the only member of the "European team" to have given notice that she can play a leading role at Royal Ascot.

Johnny Murtagh has a possible, for example, his **TOO FAMILIAR** (87) having scored twice, in two starts, over the minimum trip at Navan and the Curragh. Murtagh is tempted to try her over another furlong, making the Albany Stakes an interesting alternative, but, if she went for the Queen Mary, it would be less-than-clever to dismiss her chance.

Discounting the prospects of Tom Dascombe's **FORMIDABLE KITT** (80) might be equally unwise, as anyone with an interest in Royal Ascot history would be able to vouchsafe. Formidable Kitt's dam, Ceiling Kitty, took the Queen Mary in 2012 and Dascombe's 2017 once-raced challenger won nicely on her debut at Newmarket in April.

Two more of racing's increasingly-influential training talents, Clive Cox and Richard Hannon Jr., both of whom have taken Royal Ascot prizes with two-year-olds in recent seasons, are intent, respectively, on saddling **HEARTACHE** (85) and **OUT OF THE FLAMES** (81), each successful on her most recent start and both undeniably speedy.

Whether they possess the pace necessary to beat Ward's Happy Like A Fool remains to be seen, but neither of their trainers is a mug when it comes to assessing young fillies and both appear to believe a prominent display is on the cards.



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Hannon has a serious contender for the **ALBANY STAKES**, too. Her name is **NATURAL** (84) and, after her striking debut victory at Doncaster early this month, some observers apparently indicated that she should already be favourite for next year's 1000 Guineas.

I have my doubts about that - she is, after all, a daughter of Kodiak - but she did look - how can I put it? - a 'natural' on Town Moor and the first-time-out rating of 84 I awarded her, with the promise of a great deal more to come, was enormously encouraging.

Few renewals of the Albany go ahead without an Aidan O'Brien challenger, despite the belated success referred to above, and, although Ballydoyle plans are invariably tricky to predict, his two most likely starters in 2017 appear to be **ACTRESS** and **SEPTEMBER** (both 81).

September is of particular interest for the future, I think, as she is by Deep Impact out of the multiple Group 1 heroine Peeping Fawn, and is therefore also qualified to tackle the 7f Chesham Stakes. If she goes for the Albany on Friday, 23 June, however, perhaps we should take the hint.

Not allowing for the possibility of another Wesley Ward winner would, of course, be very remiss and it seems America's biggest Royal Ascot fan is considering the Albany for both **FAIRYLAND** and **PRINCESS PEGGY**. I do not compile ratings for US races but I understand each has the commanding physical presence normally associated with their trainer's Berkshire raiders.

However big they prove to be up close, though, I doubt they will dwarf the Jessica Harrington-trained **ALPHA CENTAURI** (96) a genuinely impressive looker who not only heads my current two-year-old fillies' ratings with a mark of 96, but has also demonstrated by collecting twice, including at Listed level on easy ground, that she handles a variety of underfoot conditions.

A daughter of Mastercraftsman, Alpha Centauri is likely to stay at least 7f in time and that is surely also the case with a number of Aidan O'Brien's possible female starters in the **CHESHAM STAKES**, to be run over that trip on Saturday, 24 June.

September has already been mentioned, as she could line up for the furlong shorter Albany Stakes, and another worth noting is **CLEMMIE** (75), a sister to this season's dual 2000 Guineas hero Churchill.

She could manage no better than third on her sole start to date - earning a rating on my scale of just 75 - but that 6f Curragh event was too short for her and connections have made no secret of the fact that they are expecting marked improvement when this daughter of Galileo heads for Royal Ascot.



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