

Saturday 31st January

# SANDOWN



12.20

VIRGIN BET SUPPORTS SAFE GAMBLING 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICES' HURDLE (3) 1m7f216y (3220 Metres)

RACE 1 **(2) SINCHI ROCA | (5) IONIAN | (4) GRAND TETON**

12.55

VIRGIN BET DAILY EXTRA PLACES NOVICES' HANDICAP HURDLE (3) 2m3f178y (3980 Metres)

RACE 2 **(6) BOLLIN THOU | (1) PRECIOUS METAL | (3) CALME OLYMPIEN**

1.25

VIRGIN BET A GOOD BET NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHASE (3) 2½m15y (4040 Metres)

RACE 3 **(5) RISK DE PLUIE | (3) SOLDIEROFTHESTORM | (1) EL GRANJERO**

2.02

VIRGIN BET EVERY SATURDAY MONEY BACK HANDICAP CHASE (2) 1m7f99y (3110 Metres)

RACE 4 **(2) GUNSIGHT RIDGE | (9) DR T J ECKLEBURG | (5) ESCAPEANDEVADE**

2.40

VIRGIN BET SCILLY ISLES NOVICES' CHASE (Grade 1) (1) 2½m15y (4040 Metres)

RACE 5 **(1) KITZBUHEL | (4) KALA CONTI | (3) SIXMILEBRIDGE**

3.10

VIRGIN BET HEROES HANDICAP HURDLE (PREMIER HANDICAP) (1) 2m7f103y (4720 Metres)

RACE 6 **(4) HENRI THE SECOND | (6) HARTINGTON | (3) TITAN DISCOVERY**

3.42

VIRGIN BET MASTERS HANDICAP CHASE (2) 3m42y (4870 Metres)

RACE 7 **(1) MR VANGO | (5) FORTUNATE MAN | (3) PIC ROC**

## KEY TO SYMBOLS



**Top Rated:** The horse with the best chance based solely on past form, specially tailored to a 0-100 scale.



**Horses For Courses:** A suitable track for the horse, compared to its lifetime record on similar courses as defined by Timeform's course data.



**Jockey Uplift:** The engaged rider has a notably higher Timeform Jockey Ranking than those who've ridden the horse on its most recent starts



**Trainer Form:** A hot trainer to follow, based on Timeform ratings-related measurements looking at the recent performance of runners.

**12.20****VIRGIN BET SUPPORTS SAFE GAMBLING 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICES' HURDLE (3) 4yo+ £15,000 1m7f216y (3220 Metres)**

RACE 1

**GBI RACING**Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Weak**

**1 CRACKERJACQUE (57)** (C, D) **95**  
510-15 6 11-6 | 72.6kg t



Anthony Honeyball

**Sam Twiston-Davies**

A fairly useful bumper winner who probably didn't need to match that form to make a successful hurdling debut at Fontwell (17.7f) in November. Struggled in Grade 2 company at Sandown since but this is more suitable.

**2 SINCHI ROCA (IRE) (16)** (D) **100**  
12-291 6 11-6 | 72.6kg ★



Syd Hosie

**Charlie Deutsch**

£70,000 after winning sole outing in points. Fairly useful winner in bumpers and took well to hurdling when making a successful start in 12-runner Wincanton maiden 16 days ago. Open to improvement.

**3 THE CISTERCIAN (IRE) (20)** (D, BF) **99**  
U6313U 6 11-6 | 72.6kg



Stuart Edmunds

**Charlie Hammond**

Left his Irish form behind to make a winning start for Stuart Edmunds in 2m Leicester maiden hurdle on heavy in December. Backed that up when third under a penalty at Haydock but was running below form when unseating his rider last at Fontwell latest. Needs to bounce back.

**4 GRAND TETON (IRE)** **99**  
5 11-0 | 69.9kg



Nicky Henderson

**James Bowen**

€100,000 3-y-o, Walk In The Park gelding. Half-brother to 3 winners, including useful hurdler/chaser Roaring Bull and fairly useful hurdle winner/useful chaser Latitude. Very interesting newcomer for top stable but Ionian seemingly the stable's first string on jockey bookings.

**5 IONIAN (IRE) (36)** **92**  
6 5 11-0 | 69.9kg h



Nicky Henderson

**Nico de Boinville**

Unplaced on sole start in Irish point but he was a short-priced favourite on that occasion and shaped better than the distance beaten suggests (raced too freely) when sixth of 11 in a Kempton novice (2m) on Rules debut last month. Should benefit from a first-time hood and will surely improve.

**6 WISPIT TWOB (IRE) (69)** **84**  
F2 4 10-2 | 64.4kg



Martin Keighley

**Harry Atkins (7lb/3kg)**

Built on the promise she seemed set to show on debut when second of 12 in juvenile hurdle (100/1) at Cork (17.3f, soft) 69 days ago. Subsequently sold out of Denis Hogan's stable for £26,000.

6 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**5-2** Sinchi Roca, **3-1** Ionian, **7-2** Grand Teton, **6-1** The Cistercian, **8-1** Crackerjacque, **22-1** Wispit Twob

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

SINCHI ROCA made a smooth transition to hurdling when accounting for a well-backed favourite at Wincanton 16 days ago and looks up to defying a penalty. Nicky Henderson saddles a couple of interesting runners in Ionian and Grand Teton. The former shaped better than the distance beaten suggests on his Rules debut at Kempton and has scope for plenty of improvement if the first-time hood has a positive effect, while the latter is bred to make a useful jumper and needs a close look in the betting.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. SINCHI ROCA 2. IONIAN 3. GRAND TETON**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>Diamonds For Luck</b> 6-11-8	8-11f	Olly Murphy	Harry Cobden	4
2024	<b>Peking Opera</b> 4-10-4	13-8jf	Gary Moore	Niall Houlihan	7
2023	<b>Chasing Fire</b> 6-11-12	4-6f	Olly Murphy	Aidan Coleman	6
2022	<b>Shallwehaveonemore</b> 5-11-0	4-9f	Gary Moore	Joshua Moore	7

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race

**12.55****VIRGIN BET DAILY EXTRA PLACES NOVICES' HANDICAP HURDLE (3) 4yo+ (Rated 0-125) £15,000 2m3f178y (3980 Metres)**

RACE 2

Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Weak**

**1** **PRECIOUS METAL (FR) (49)** **97**  
217-221 5 12-0 | 76.2kg



Henrietta C Knight

**Gavin Sheehan**

Listed bumper win at Cheltenham last winter and has made a promising start to his hurdle career this time round, finishing runner-up on first 2 attempts before winning 2m Lingfield maiden in December. Up in trip for handicap debut. Almost certainly capable of better again.

**2** **TENNESSEE TANGO (IRE) (35)** **100**  
182-633 6 11-12 | 75.3kg



Joe Tizzard

**Non Runner**

Bumper winner last season. Fair form when placed in 2m novice hurdles at Exeter (soft) and Chepstow (good to firm) in December. Open to improvement now handicapping. NON RUNNER.

**3** **CALME OLYMPIEN (FR) (107) (D)** **97**  
44723-1 7 11-10 | 74.4kg



Tim Vaughan

**James Bowen**

Fairly useful ex-French hurdler who got off the mark on his yard debut in 3-runner novice hurdle at Ffos Las (2½m, good) in October. Off since ahead of this switch to handicaps.

**4** **ZAINY CHAMP (IRE) (36)** **99**  
3/42P-P1P 7 11-2 | 70.8kg



Jeremy Scott

**Lorcan Williams**

Comfortable winner of 18.5f Exeter handicap in December but has pulled up in his 3 other handicap starts so comes with risks. Fitted with a first-time tongue tie.

**5** **HOT GODDESS (IRE) (23)** **98**  
73/534-35 6 11-1 | 70.3kg



Martin Keighley

**Harry Atkins (71b/3kg)**

Returned from 10 months off with a good third of 7 in novice hurdle at Lingfield (2m, good) in December. Respectable fifth on 2½m Ffos Las handicap debut since but that underlines she needs more from her mark.

**6** **BOLLIN THOU (12) (D)** **96**  
889-P4111 8 10-13 | 69.4kg



Nick Scholfield

**Harry Cobden**

Continues to go the right way in handicaps for current yard, having little trouble completing the hat-trick when landing the odds at Lingfield (19.5f, soft) 12 days ago. Another 13 lb higher now but it may not stop him.

6 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**11-8** Bollin Thou, **3-1** Precious Metal, **5-1** Calme Olympien, **10-1** Hot Goddess, **12-1** Zainy Champ

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

Even a further 13 lb rise may not prevent the thriving BOLLIN THOU from completing a 4-timer. Precious Metal looks capable of better now moving into handicap company for the first time and may give Nick Scholfield's charge most to do.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. BOLLIN THOU 2. PRECIOUS METAL 3. CALME OLYMPIEN**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>Sole Solution</b> 7-11-11	3-1f	Venetia Williams	Charlie Deutsch	8
2024	<b>Jingko Blue</b> 5-12-0	16-5f	Nicky Henderson	James Bowen	10
2023	<b>Twin Power</b> 6-11-0	9-2	Paul Nicholls	A. P. Heskin	6
2022	<b>Peejaybee</b> 6-11-10	3-1f	Richard Spencer	James Bowen	7

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race









**1.25**

RACE 3

**VIRGIN BET A GOOD BET NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHASE (3) 5yo+ (Rated 0-125) £20,000 2½m15y (4040 Metres)**Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Weak**

<b>1</b>	<b>EL GRANJERO (IRE) (22)</b> (D, BF)	s	<b>97</b>
	652224-42 7 11-10   74.4kg		
	Clive Boulton-Brooks	<b>Richard Patrick</b>	
	Reliable sort who sole start in Irish points and has improved as a chaser, runner-up in two of his 3 starts over fences to date, latterly when jumping better in a 3m novice chase at Exeter. Likely testing conditions should offset this drop back in trip and he can give a good account again.		
<b>2</b>	<b>MON CHAMPION (FR)</b> (7lb/3kg ex) (5)		<b>96</b>
	222U-6261 6 11-5   72.1kg		
	Paul Nicholls	<b>Jay Tidball (5lb/2kg)</b>	
	Fairly useful French hurdles winner. Back to something like his best returned to more testing conditions, edging ahead on line to land a 5-runner 2m chase at Hereford (soft) on Monday. Not yet fully exposed for top yard and merits respect stepping back up in trip.		
<b>3</b>	<b>SOLDIEROFTHESTORM (IRE) (19)</b> (D)		<b>99</b>
	3/3884-012 8 11-3   71.2kg		
	Jonjo & A.J. O'Neill	<b>Jonjo O'Neill Jr.</b>	
	Lengthy gelding who landed a gamble when winning a 14-runner handicap hurdle on return at Catterick last month. Advanced his form first time up over fences when clear second at Hereford (20.9f, soft) last time (suited by the way the race developed) and there should be better to come.		
<b>4</b>	<b>NORN IRON (IRE) (30)</b> (BF)	t	<b>96</b>
	22421-23 8 11-1   70.3kg		
	Harry Derham	<b>Harry Cobden</b>	
	Finished ahead of a pair of next-time-out winners when second on chase debut at Warwick (soft) but undone by his jumping faced with sharper test a Windsor (16.2f, good) on New Year's Day. Tongue strap on first time and may be seen to better effect over 2½m under these conditions.		
<b>5</b>	<b>RISK DE PLUIE (FR) (22)</b>	t	 <b>100</b>
	54/322-263 7 11-0   69.9kg		
	Ben Clarke	<b>Sam Twiston-Davies</b>	
	Winning pointer/hurdler who has shaped well under positive tactics and maintained his run of good form when ridden with more restraint to finish third at Exeter (17.5f, soft) last time. Track/step back up in trip will play to his strengths and he could make a bold bid if allowed his head.		
<b>6</b>	<b>LYLIAN (FR) (65)</b>		<b>96</b>
	3/366-1234 5 10-11   68.5kg		
	Gary & Josh Moore	<b>Freddie Mitchell (3lb/1kg)</b>	
	Bright start to his chase career in France last summer (changed hands for €95,000) but has shaped with little promise on either start for new yard (who also saddle Rip Wheeler). Handicapper has been quick to relent but remains to be seen if he fares any better back on an easier surface.		
<b>7</b>	<b>RIP WHEELER (IRE) (36)</b> (D, BF)	b	<b>96</b>
	66442-11P 6 10-5   65.8kg		
	Gary & Josh Moore	<b>Caolin Quinn</b>	
	Winning pointer from a family Moore stable knows well. Progressive over hurdles and continued in a similar vein when making it 2-2 over fences at Lingfield (2½m) in November. Some mitigation for disappointing hat-trick bid the following month and could get back on track in first-time blinkers.		

7 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**7-2** El Granjero, **4-1** Norn Iron, **5-1** Risk De Pluie, **11-2** Soldierofthestorm, **13-2** Rip Wheeler, **8-1** Mon Champion, **16-1** Lylian

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

Having not been seen to best effect at Exeter last time, RISK DE PLUIE will be suited by this longer trip/track and he's capable of making a bold bid. Soldierofthestorm bettered his hurdles form at the first attempt over fences and should have more to offer, while the admirably consistent El Granjero is entitled to be in the mix in a tight handicap.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. RISK DE PLUIE 2. SOLDIEROFTHESTORM 3. EL GRANJERO**

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race

**2.02****VIRGIN BET EVERY SATURDAY MONEY BACK HANDICAP CHASE (2) 5yo+ £50,000 1m7f99y (3110 Metres)**

RACE 4

Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Very Strong**

**1 HADDEX DES OBEAUX (FR) (35) 97**  
F3/P4 9 12-0 | 76.2kg



Donald McCain

**Theo Gillard**

Progressive over fences in 2022/23 for Gary Moore and absent for almost 2 years prior to a no-show on debut for new yard (pulled up) in a Cheltenham Grade 2 in November. Subsequent fourth in a Wetherby handicap was better but it was still some way below his best.

**2 GUNSIGHT RIDGE (49) (CD) s+t 99**  
31/FP14-44 11 11-11 | 74.8kg



Olly Murphy

**Gavin Sheehan**

Third in 2022 renewal of this and went two places better when landing last year's running off this mark. Overall Sandown form figures read 1321 and while he hasn't been at his best so far this season, it would be no surprise at all to see him bounce back with a big run.

**3 MARTATOR (FR) (49) (C) s 97**  
37608-529 9 11-9 | 73.9kg



Venetia Williams

**Charlie Deutsch**

Form tailed off after back-to-back Ascot handicap victories last November. Returned to form when runner-up back at that Berkshire venue on penultimate start but, solid though that effort was, it's bookmarked by two rather underwhelming performances.

**4 JAX JUNIOR (43) 99**  
113P1-214 7 11-8 | 73.5kg



Lucy Wadham

**Tom Cannon**

Winner of 3 of his 5 hurdles starts following a wind op last term and has undergone another since his latest fourth in a Grade 2 novice chase at Ascot (reportedly bled). Looked promising when scoring on second chase start at Kempton in November and merits respect on handicap bow in this sphere.

**5 ESCAPEANDEVADE (IRE) (14) s ★ 100**  
2622-2212 10 11-2 | 70.8kg



Harry Derham

**Harry Cobden**

Generally below par for James Ewart last term but mark eased as a result and firmly back on track for new yard this season, scoring at Haydock last month and runner-up on each of his additional 3 starts for Harry Derham. Rock-solid candidate who looks sure to give another good account.

**6 CLASSIC MAESTRO (IRE) (14) (D) s ✓ 97**  
113413-U6 8 10-13 | 69.4kg



Jennie Candlish

**Luke Scott (3lb/1kg)**

Fine strike rate over hurdles (5-10) and notched second success in this sphere when making all in a small-field Leicester handicap last February. However, he didn't get very far on his reappearance and then finished well adrift of Escapeandevade when sixth of 10 at Haydock a fortnight ago.

**7 KOTMASK (FR) (28) (CD) b ✓ 98**  
1602-5552 8 10-12 | 68.9kg



Gary &amp; Josh Moore

**Caolin Quinn**

Jumping sometimes lets him down but he's clearly got an engine, as he again demonstrated when landing a competitive Ascot handicap off 1 lb higher last term. Chased home a progressive novice in first-time blinkers (retained) over C&D last time and definite chance granted an assured round of jumping.

**8 DENEMETHY (IRE) (22) (D) t 97**  
413222-42 8 10-6 | 66.2kg



Fergal O'Brien

**J. Hogan**

Scored over fences at Market Rasen on Boxing Day 2024 and has largely performed with credit since, albeit without really progressing. Will need to better anything that he's previously achieved under Rules in order to emerge on top here.

**9 DR T J ECKLEBURG (IRE) (13) (D) s 97**  
15-068763 8 10-3 | 64.9kg



Evan Williams

**Conor Ring**

Won twice last term and was beaten just ½-length by Gunsight Ridge in this race 12 months ago (meets that rival on 4 lb better terms this time round). Below par initially this season but more like it when third with cheekpieces enlisted (retained) at Windsor recently and he's one to consider.

**10 RATH GAUL HILL (IRE) (33) (D) s+t 97**  
P211/16-83 8 10-2 | 64.4kg



Samuel Drinkwater

**Sam Twiston-Davies**

Completed hat-trick when making a belated winning return at Newbury last February. Well held back from another break there in November and while he stepped up on that when third of 6 in first-time cheekpieces (on again here) at the same course next time, others look stronger on this occasion.

**11 HYPOTENUS (14) (BF) 96**  
3334-2713 7 10-2(10-1) | 64.4kg (64.0kg)



Joe Tickle

**Taylor Fisher**

Reliable sort who gained a deserved breakthrough success over fences in 5-runner handicap chase at Taunton earlier this month. Had the run of the race that day, though, and wasn't able to repeat the dose when taken on for the lead (as will likely happen here, too) at the same track 2 weeks ago.

11 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**4-1** Jax Junior, **9-2** Escapeandevade, **13-2** Gunsight Ridge, **7-1** Kotmask, **15-2** Dr T J Eckleburg, **14-1** Rath Gaul Hill, **16-1** Martator, **18-1** Denemethy, **22-1** Classic Maestro, **25-1** Haddex Des Obeaux, **28-1** Hypotenus

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

The idiom 'horses for courses' often rings true at Sandown and GUNSIGHT RIDGE, who made it two wins from four starts at this course (placed on other two occasions) when seeing off Dr T J Eckleburg in this race last season, is taken to enhance his good record round here. He has far lower mileage than most 11-y-os and is back down to the same mark as 12 months ago. Dr T J Eckleburg could again prove dangerous and is feared most ahead of the rock-solid Escapeandevade and novice Jax Junior.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. GUNSIGHT RIDGE 2. DR T J ECKLEBURG 3. ESCAPEANDEVADE**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>Gunsight Ridge</b>	10-11-6	11-1	Olly Murphy	Gavin Sheehan	6
2024	<b>Harper's Brook</b>	8-11-6	4-1	Ben Pauling	Ben Jones	5
2023	<b>Third Time Lucki</b>	8-11-11	5-1	Dan Skelton	Kielan Woods	8
2022	<b>Dolos</b>	9-11-8	10-1	Paul Nicholls	Harry Cobden	8
2021	<b>Moonlighter</b>	8-10-12	13-2	Nick Williams	David Bass	7

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race

**2.40****VIRGIN BET SCILLY ISLES NOVICES' CHASE (Grade 1) (1)**  
**5yo+ £100,000 2½m15y (4040 Metres)**

RACE 5

Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Weak**

**1 KITZBUHEL (FR) (36) 97**  
12/1153-11 6 11-7 | 73.0kg



W. P. Mullins, Ireland

**Harry Cobden**

Smart over hurdles and already looks a better chaser than a hurdler, taking the step up in class in his stride when making all in Kauto Star (Grade 1) at Kempton on Boxing Day, his jumping making it very hard for anything else to get a look-in. That style of running can be a big asset around here.

**2 MIAMI MAGIC (IRE) (30) 89**  
11227-331 7 11-7 | 73.0kg



Stuart Edmunds

**Charlie Hammond**

Useful over hurdles last season (runner-up in the Formby) and showed that level at the third attempt over fences this term when winning 5-runner Cheltenham novice on New Year's Day, suited by return to this trip. Significant improvement required in this company, however.

**3 SIXMILEBRIDGE (IRE) (50) (C, D) 96**  
0/2111d9-11 7 11-7 | 73.0kg



Fergal O'Brien

**Kielan Woods**

Front runner who looked a smart recruit to chasing when winning Ayr maiden and Cheltenham novice (both 3-runner fields) this season. Well worth a shot at this level but does face serious competition for the lead.

**4 KALA CONTI (FR) (55) 100**  
5/12270-11 6 11-0 | 69.9kg



Gordon Elliott, Ireland

**James Bowen**

Useful over hurdles and made it 2 from 2 over fences in the manner of a smart chaser in Grade 2 mares novice at Cork 55 days ago, beating the reappearing Kargese by 16 lengths. Sure to make a bold bid for the hat-trick.

4 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

10-11 Kitzbuhel, 9-4 Kala Conti, 6-1 Sixmilebridge, 20-1 Miami Magic

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

KITZBUHEL impressed with his jumping when making all in the Kauto Star at Kempton over Christmas and should prove hard to pass around here with the drop back in trip unlikely to be an issue. Kala Conti is the obvious threat having won both her starts over fences this season, including a Grade 2 mares novice at Cork by a wide margin.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

1. KITZBUHEL 2. KALA CONTI 3. SIXMILEBRIDGE

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>Handstands</b> 6-11-7	10-3	Ben Pauling	Ben Jones	4
2024	<b>Nickle Back</b> 8-11-7	10-1	Sarah Humphrey	James Best	5
2023	<b>Gerri Colombe</b> 7-11-7	10-11f	Gordon Elliott	Jordan Colin Gainford	5
2022	<b>L'Homme Presse</b> 7-11-4	8-13f	Venetia Williams	Charlie Deutsch	5
2021	<b>Sporting John</b> 6-11-4	14-1	Philip Hobbs	Richard Johnson	7

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race

**3.10****VIRGIN BET HEROES HANDICAP HURDLE (PREMIER HANDICAP) (1) 4yo+ £100,000 2m7f103y (4720 Metres)**

RACE 6

**GBI RACING**Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Strong**

**1 SANTOS BLUE (35)** **97**  
101/521-56 **9** 12-0 | 76.2kg



Olly Murphy

**Ben Sutton (5lb/2kg)**

Likeable type who bagged 3m handicap hurdle at Newbury in February on his final run for Dan Skelton. Ran respectably both starts for new yard this term but others look better treated.

**2 RED DIRT ROAD (IRE) (322)** (CD) **98**  
2/511P- **9** 11-12 | 75.3kg



Jonjo &amp; A.J. O'Neill

**Jonjo O'Neill Jr.**

Winner of 4 of his 9 hurdles starts but shaped as if possibly amiss when pulling up at Uttoxeter in March and hasn't been seen since. Returns 6 lb above last winning mark and is entitled to need this.

**3 TITAN DISCOVERY (50)** (C, D) **97**  
2126/71-01 **8** 11-6 | 72.6kg



Robbie Llewellyn

**Liam Harrison**

Lightly raced for his age and proved better than ever when winning 10-runner handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (24f, good to soft) 50 days ago, always holding on. 5 lb higher now but looks sure to go well again.

**4 HENRI THE SECOND (FR) (28)** (CD) **99**  
4/4120-32 **9** 11-4 | 71.7kg



Paul Nicholls

**Harry Cobden**

Goes well here and returned to form when close second of 10 in handicap hurdle at this course (19.8f, good to soft) 28 days ago. Just 1 lb higher now and he looks a major player.

**5 ROARING CONQUEST (IRE) (48)** **99**  
4139-13 **7** 11-3 | 71.2kg



Olly Murphy

**Gavin Sheehan**

Irish point winner who showed fairly-useful form as novice last season and made a successful return on handicap debut at Windsor (24f) in November. Backed that up with creditable third of 6 in handicap hurdle at Carlisle (25f, soft) last month and is likely to give another good account here.

**6 HARTINGTON (IRE) (30)** **97**  
3/5122-120 **7** 11-1 | 70.3kg



Joe Tizzard

**Jack Tudor**

Made winning return at Carlisle in November and improved again, upped in trip, when narrowly denied in Betfair Stayers' handicap at Haydock (24.3f) later that month. Likely undone by lesser stamina test at Windsor latest and better expected here.

**7 GABBYS CROSS (IRE) (28)** **91**  
220/82-043 **11** 10-12 | 68.9kg



Nick Scholfield

**James Bowen**

Back to somewhere near recent best, on second start for new yard, when third of 9 in handicap chase at this course (24.2f, good, 11/1) 28 days ago, finishing well. 4 lb lower, back over the smaller obstacles, and must enter calculations.

**8 MINELLA MISSILE (IRE) (13)** **98**  
PP00-0455 **8** 10-8 | 67.1kg



Evan Williams

**Isabel Williams**

Impressive winner of 2m5f Grade 2 Hyde at Cheltenham as novice in 2023. Had issues since but he's headed back in the right direction in recent starts, latest when creditable fifth of 15 in handicap hurdle (16/1) at Windsor (24f, soft) 13 days ago. Can't be ruled out.

**9 PARTY VIBES (IRE) (49)** **97**  
31P314-31 **8** 10-6 | 66.2kg



Henry Daly

**Sam Twiston-Davies**

Posted encouraging third in this sphere on Bangor reappearance before returning to fences to win a competitive mares' handicap at Cheltenham (20.5f) in December. 3 lb lower, back over timber, and merits consideration.

**10 SPIKE JONES (13)** (D) **100**  
5/136-23F7 **9** 10-3 | 64.9kg



Samuel Drinkwater

**Benjamin Macey (5lb/2kg)**

Three-time hurdle winner who returned in fine heart this term, narrowly denied on reappearance at Lingfield before finishing close third in a steadily-run handicap at Cheltenham. Latest Windsor effort was somewhat disappointing but he does remain on a workable mark.

**11 SOLE SOLUTION (IRE) (9)** (C) **91**  
6211-355 **8** 10-2 | 64.4kg



Venetia Williams

**Ned Fox (5lb/2kg)**

Dual winner over hurdles last term, including over shorter trip at this course.

Arrives on back of below-par effort at Huntingdon, however, and yard continues to go through a quiet spell. Cheekpieces on for first time.

11 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**3-1** Henri The Second, **11-2** Hartington, **7-1** Roaring Conquest, **9-1** Titan Discovery, **12-1** Red Dirt Road, **12-1** Party Vibes, **16-1** Santos Blue, **16-1** Gabbys Cross, **20-1** Minella Missile, **22-1** Spike Jones, **25-1** Sole Solution

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

HENRI THE SECOND boasts a fine record over hurdles here, only narrowly failing to record a third victory earlier this month. With the step back up in trip very much in his favour, he makes plenty of appeal. Hartington and Titan Discovery have both performed well in similar events this term and rate the principal dangers.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. HENRI THE SECOND 2. HARTINGTON 3. TITAN DISCOVERY**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>Red Dirt Road</b>	8-11-2	13-2	Jonjo & A.J. O'Neill	Jonjo O'Neill Jr.	13
2024	<b>Saint Davy</b>	7-11-1	4-1	Jonjo O'Neill	Jonjo O'Neill Jr.	14
2023	<b>Green Book</b>	6-11-4	6-1	Venetia Williams	Charlie Deutsch	14
2022	<b>Green Book</b>	5-10-6	6-1	Venetia Williams	Charlie Deutsch	17

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race

**3.42****VIRGIN BET MASTERS HANDICAP CHASE (2) 5yo+ £50,000  
3m42y (4870 Metres)**

RACE 7

Going: **Hurdle: Heavy-Soft in places; Chase: Soft-Heavy in places**

Right handed, galloping. Regarded as the one of the best jumping tests for chasers in the country, thanks chiefly to the seven fences in the back straight, the last three of which are situated close together, though fallers in the home straight are very rare and, in actual fact, the course has long since been one of the lowest in Britain and Ireland in terms of the proportion of casualties. Hurdles course usually more testing than chase one during winter months, with gruelling conditions often the order of the day. Front runners more favoured on the chase track, where it can regularly prove hard to make up ground when conditions place the emphasis on speed.

Pace Information: **Weak**

**1 MR VANGO (IRE) (56)** (C, D, BF) s+t **97**  
313P/111-2 **10** 12-0 | 76.2kg



Sara Bradstock

**Jack Tudor**

Thrived last season, landing the London National at this course, Peter Marsh at Haydock and Midlands Grand National. Ran at least as well when beaten only a short head in the Becher at Aintree (25.8f, soft) on return and can make another bold bid with conditions to suit.

**2 NASSALAM (FR) (76)** b **93**  
11P0/PP-PP **9** 11-4 | 71.7kg



Gary &amp; Josh Moore

**Caolin Quinn**

Smart chaser at best, recording a wide-margin success in Welsh Grand National (heavy) in 2023. Has struggled since, though, pulled up on 5 of his last 6 starts. Back down to last winning mark but a wind op needs to help spark a return to form.

**3 PIC ROC (IRE) (42)** (BF) s **99**  
20P6-U159 **8** 10-7 | 66.7kg



Ben Pauling

**Ben Jones**

Finally opened chase account at Huntingdon in November and better than the result in premier handicaps both starts since, making a bad mistake 4 out when down the field in Silver Cup at Ascot (23.8f, good to soft) 6 weeks ago. Can make his presence felt.

**4 BLACKJACK MAGIC (28)** (D) t **95**  
145F/PPP-5 **11** 10-3 | 64.9kg



Anthony Honeyball

**Sam Twiston-Davies**

Winner of the Badger Beers at Wincanton in 2023/24, but pulled up 3 consecutive starts from May 2024. However, after 11 months off he took a step back in the right direction when fifth of 9 in veterans' event at this C&D (good) 28 days ago. Task is now to build on latest effort.

**5 FORTUNATE MAN (IRE) (36)** s+t **100**  
1/721234-1 **7** 10-2(10-1) | 64.4kg (64.0kg)



Jonjo &amp; A.J. O'Neill

**Harry Cobden**

Took his form up a level sent chasing in 2024/25, including success in an Aintree handicap (25f, soft) on Boxing Day. After 10 months off (cheekpieces reapplied), won the same Aintree race (good) for the second year running last time and he's not taken lightly.

**6 HUNTER LEGEND (FR) (23)** **96**  
1151-6833 **9** 10-2(9-13) | 64.4kg (63.0kg)



Venetia Williams

**Miss Lucy Turner (5lb/2kg)**

Five-time winner over fences who soon bounced back from a lesser effort when third of 6 at Ludlow in December. However, he couldn't build on that effort when filling the same position at Ffos Las (23.8f, heavy) 23 days ago. More needed from out of the weights.

6 DECLARED RUNNERS

**BETTING FORECAST:**

**13-8** Mr Vango, **11-4** Fortunate Man, **9-2** Pic Roc, **11-1** Hunter Legend, **11-1** Nassalam, **16-1** Blackjack Magic

**TIMEFORM VIEW:**

MR VANGO proved better than ever last season, winning all 3 starts, and picked up where he left off when just denied in the Becher at Aintree in December. He is taken to add to his tally, though Fortunate Man got back on the up when making a successful return and is respected, with Pic Roc also in the mix.

**TIMEFORM 1-2-3:**

**1. MR VANGO 2. FORTUNATE MAN 3. PIC ROC**

**WINNERS IN PREVIOUS YEARS:**

2025	<b>O'Connell</b> 9-10-11	7-4f	Joel Parkinson & Sue Smith	Gavin Sheehan	9
2024	<b>Java Point</b> 9-11-1	10-1	Henry Oliver	Jonathan Burke	8
2023	<b>Castle Robin</b> 8-11-5	10-1	Charlie Longsdon	Paul O'Brien	12
2022	<b>Le Milos</b> 7-11-6	12-1	Tim Vaughan	Alan Johns	8
2021	<b>Deise Aba</b> 8-11-7	17-2	Philip Hobbs	Richard Johnson	7

**SMART STATS:**

No Smart Stats available for this race