

COMMENTS & SELECTIONS - SANDOWN

RACE 2: BET365 ESHER CUP HANDICAP

Hand Of God Rocking Tree Royal Supremacy

HAND OF GOD improved with each start as a juvenile and was last seen getting off the mark in impressive fashion at Newmarket in October. An opening mark of 88 for the son of Churchill should be workable, especially as his pedigree suggests that he will progress further as a three-year-old. Rocking Tree has won both starts since joining George Boughey and may benefit from the application of first-time cheekpieces. Cases can be made for all of the remainder, but Royal Supremacy and Cracking Gold appear to be the pick of them.

NO. HORSE NAME

- 1 CUBAN TIGER Successful at 6f and 1m on the all-weather. Beaten 6l behind Bracken's Laugh at 4-1 when seventh of 8 on his latest outing at Chelmsford City over 1m earlier this month.
- 2 BLUE LEMONS A winner at 7f on soft ground. Finished 5l behind Bracken's Laugh when sixth of 8 at 20-1 on his latest outing at Chelmsford City over 1m earlier this month.
- 3 COGITATE A winner at 7f on good ground. Beaten 5l by Night Raider when second of 7 at 5-2 on his latest outing at Southwell over 7f last month.
- 4 CRACKING GOLD Successful twice at 7f on the all-weather. Beaten a neck by Havanagreattime when second of 6 at 5-6fav on his latest outing at Kempton over 7f last month.
- 5 HAND OF GOD A winner at 9-1 at Newmarket over 1m (good to firm) on his latest outing in October last year, beating Classic Encounter by 2 1/2l. Having his first run for a new stable today, previously with Harry & Roger Charlton.
- 6 ROCKING TREE Successful at 7f and 1m 1f on the all-weather. Won on his latest outing when 10-3fav at Wolverhampton over 1m 1f earlier this month, beating Sennockian by 1 1/2l.
- 7 NELLIE LEYLAX He has won three times from 5f to 7f on soft and heavy ground. Finished 2 1/4l behind Apiarist when fourth of 16 at 13-2 on his latest outing at York over 7f (soft) in October last year.
- 8 ROYAL SUPREMACY Successful at 7f and 1m on good ground and on the all-weather. A winner at 11-2 at Kempton over 1m on his latest outing in October last year, beating Blown Away by 1/2l.

RACE 3: BET365 GORDON RICHARDS STAKES (GROUP 3)

Okeechobee Desert Hero Flying Honours

Desert Hero merits plenty of respect on his return to action having filled third place in the St Leger on his most recent outing. That said, this trip may be on the sharp side for him and

preference is for OKEECHOBEE, who chased home a high-class rival on his return from a 550-day break in a Listed event at Kempton. With the benefit of that outing, Harry Charlton's unexposed gelding could go one place better. Israr and Flying Honours both have the ability to go well but also have some questions to answer, while Checkandchallenge should not be underestimated.

NO. HORSE NAME

- 1 ARTISTIC STAR Successful at 1m and 1m 2f on good to soft and soft ground. Finished 16l behind Continuous when fourth of 5 at 15-2 on his latest outing in the Group 2 Sky Bet Great Voltigeur Stakes at York over 1m 4f (good to firm) in August last year.
- 2 CHECKANDCHALLENGE He has won four times from 7f to 1m 2f on good to soft and heavy ground and on the all-weather. A winner at 6-1 at Newmarket over 1m 2f (heavy) on his latest outing in November last year, beating Pride Of America by a neck.
- 3 DESERT HERO He has won four times from 7f to 1m 4f on ground varying from good to heavy. Third of 9 behind Continuous beaten 3 1/2l at 6-1 on his latest outing in the Group 1 Betfred St Leger Stakes at Doncaster over 1m 6f (soft) in September last year.
- 4 FLYING HONOURS He has won three times from 7f to 1m 2f on good to firm and good ground. Well beaten at 11-2 behind The Foxes when last of 11 on his latest outing in the Group 2 Dante Stakes at York over 1m 2f (good to firm) in May last year.
- 5 ISRAR He has won four times from 1m to 1m 4f on ground varying from good to firm to heavy. Beaten 9l behind Rebel's Romance when 9th of 0 on his latest outing in the Group 3 27th Al Rayyan Meeting - H.H The Amir Sword and Trophy at Doha over 1m 4f (good) in February.
- 6 OKEECHOBEE He has won three times from 1m to 1m 2f on good to soft ground and on the all-weather. Beaten 3l by Dubai Honour when second of 5 at 12-1 on his latest outing at Kempton over 1m 2f earlier this month.
- 7 TASMAN BAY Successful at 1m and 1m 2f on heavy ground and on the all-weather. A winner at 17-2 at Bath over 1m 2f (heavy) on his latest outing earlier this month, beating City Streak by 2 1/4l.

RACE 4: BET365 MILE (GROUP 2)

Poker Face Nostrum Charyn

A progressive sort towards the end of last season with three victories in four starts, including a Group 2 at Longchamp, POKER FACE could be just the type to excel at five. The son of Fastnet Rock has run well here before and is narrowly preferred to Nostrum, who didn't quite hit the heights expected of him in 2023 but is of interest for a master trainer who is an expert with older horses. Charyn impressed on his return at Doncaster but may prefer softer ground, while Flight Plan has ground to find with the selection but was a taking winner at Leopardstown last September.

NO. HORSE NAME

- 1 FLIGHT PLAN Successful at 7f and 1m on good ground and on the all-weather. A winner at 15-2 in the Group 2 Dullingham Park Stakes at Leopardstown over 1m (good) on his latest outing in September last year, beating Buckaroo by 1 1/4l.
- 2 POKER FACE Winner of six races from 1m to 1m 2f on ground varying from good to soft and on the all-weather. Beaten 4l by Brave Emperor when second of 10 on his latest outing in the Group 2 Premio Vittorio Di Capula Stakes - Group 2 at San Siro over 1m (heavy) in November last year.
- 3 CHARYN He has won three times from 6f to 1m on good and soft ground. Won on his latest outing when 2-1fav at Doncaster over 1m (soft) last month, beating Astral Beau by 3 1/2l.
- 4 LORD NORTH Has won ten races from 1m to 1m 2f on ground varying from good to heavy and on the all-weather. Beaten 4 1/2l behind Facteur Cheval when eighth of 16 on his latest outing in the Group 1 Race 7 - Dubai Turf Sponsored By DP World - TURF at Meydan over 1m 1f (good) last month.
- 5 NOSTRUM He has won three times from 7f to 1m on good to firm and good ground. Finished 14l behind Spirit Dancer when last of 6 at 5-6fav on his latest outing in the Group 3 Strensall Stakes at York over 1m 1f (good to firm) in August last year.
- 6 POGO Has won eight races from 7f to 1m on ground varying from good to firm to good to soft. Finished 3 1/2l behind Kelina when fourth of 14 at 80-1 on his latest outing in the Group 1 Qatar Prix de la Foret at ParisLongchamp over 7f (good to soft) in October last year.
- 7 WITCH HUNTER He has won four times from 6f to 7f on good to firm and good to soft ground and on the all-weather. Beaten 17l behind Poker Face at 17-2 when last of 10 on his latest outing in the Group 2 Qatar Prix Daniel Wildenstein at ParisLongchamp over 1m (good to soft) in September last year.

RACE 5: BET365 CLASSIC TRIAL (GROUP 3)

Arabian Crown Macduff War Rooms

Already a best-priced 12/1 for the Derby, ARABIAN CROWN can take this en route, having ended last season with an impressive success over this distance in the Zetland Stakes at Newmarket. Three from four as a two-year-old, the son of Dubawi should have too much for Macduff, who gave every indication he would relish a step up in trip when staying on for fourth in the Royal Lodge. Similar comments may apply to the unexposed War Rooms, while recent Naas second Portland will attempt to provide Aidan O'Brien with just his second victory in this event.

NO. HORSE NAME

- 1 ARABIAN CROWN He has won three times from 7f to 1m 2f on good and soft ground. Won on his latest outing when 10-11fav in the Group 3 Ghaiyyath Zetland Stakes at Newmarket over 1m 2f (soft) in October last year, beating Gasper De Lemos by 6l.

