



# The Handicap Snip

## Skybet First Race Special Handicap (Class2)

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May York

**This 1 mile 2 furlong handicap for four year olds and upwards opens The Dante Meeting on 'The Knavesmire', one of our premier tracks.**

**Twenty runners are scheduled to line up and the going is given as good to firm as this piece is being written up. However, there is a strong possibility of rain on Tuesday and Wednesday and it's more likely the ground will be on the soft side. Some that entered in expectation of quick ground might then withdraw on those grounds.**

**How do you go about solving a race like this? Well, here's one approach that has proven successful over a few years.**

**A good starting point for assessing any race is to understand what type of horse has won the race historically.**

### Age

**The first point noted is that horses older than 6 don't figure much, if at all, and in fact horses aged four have dominated with 8 of the last 10 winners coming from that age group. This means should any suitable 4 year old make it to final consideration for a bet, they should be favoured. Turns out that half the runners are four years old so there'd be a good chance.**

### Trainers

**Trainers tend to target races and certain types of trainer tend to win some races. Looking at the previous winners, it seems that big yards from the southern training centres have dominated. Only Clever Cookie, a literal Group horse in a handicap, has managed to win this for the Northern trainers in recent years. Stoute, Gosden, Cecil, Hannon, Varian and Bin Suroor have supplied the other winners.**

**It might then be worth looking for a 4 year old trained at a powerful yard from Newmarket or Lambourn, or at least paying very close**

**attention to such horses.**

### **Weight and Official Rating**

**Weight and handicap marks are crucial factors in these kind of races and in this race the majority have been Officially rated between 88 and 95. Only First Mohican won off higher and he was a Henry Cecil trained 3/1 favourite. It will take some performance to win off a mark higher than say 96. Weight does not appear to be so much of an issue with winners carrying 8 stone 4lb to 9 stone 7lb**

### **The Market**

**The market has been a good guide because 9 of the last 10 winners have returned an SP of 8/1 or less despite this being a high quality handicap featuring some unexposed horses and often not a whole load of form to go on. The market has been doing a good job of highlighting the winners and should continue.**

### **The Horses**

**Two For Two and Awake My Soul are 9 and 8 years old respectively and would be surprise winners. The 6 year olds Oasis Fantasy and Mythical Madness are too high in the handicap and passed over as are all the others racing off 97 or more.**

**Looking for Southern trained horses, those from Johnston, Fahey, Tate and the jumps yard of Alan King are given a gentle cross next to their name, which leaves these possible candidates:**

**Master Carpenter  
Repercussion  
Qassem  
Lovell  
Al Neksh**

### **Master Carpenter**

**Rod Millmans' 6 year old has not won since The John Smith's Cup over this C&D. He has dropped a long way from those heights. Reunited with winning jockey Phillip Makin he might be capable of a**

**bold show and an each way bet at current odds of 14/1 would be fair enough. He wouldn't mind some good to soft going.**

### **Repercussion**

**Charlie Fellowes has seen 2 of his last 7 runners win and this 4 year old made a pleasing start this season when sixth in a hot Newmarket handicap over a mile, on his first appearance in Britain. He will need to leave that form well behind to win this though.**

### **Qassem**

**Another ex-French 4 year old, this one trained by Hugo Palmer, he's had just 5 starts and is open to any amount of improvement. His seasonal debut was not too promising however and his odds reflect that.**

### **Lovell**

**Not seen since disappointing at Royal Ascot last June, this Charlie Appleby trained 4 year old has had just five starts. He was gelded in August and has not seen the track since. He will need to put behind him whatever has kept him off the track.**

### **Al Neksh**

**Another lightly raced 4 year old, this time representing William Haggas and Al Shaqab racing. He disappointed at Pontefract on his final start in 2016 and needs to pick up from his more promising earlier effort.**

### **Conclusion**

**With wet weather around, a horse likely to want the cut in the ground, with good 3 year old form or C&D form fits the bill. The two horses that stand out are Master Carpenter and Lovell.**

**Master Carpenter has run in the Lincoln and the Spring Cup, which are both significantly stronger races than this, is partnered by his winning jockey, will appreciate the going, course, distance and class drop (based on penalty value). He'll run well.**

**Lovell, from the Appleby yard which is striking at about 1 in 3 for LSP of +£38, is a beautifully bred son of Dubawi. His handicap debut run at Sandown has worked out exceptionally well with those finishing immediately in front and behind both now rated 13lb higher. Lovell will appreciate easy going, may well have improved for gelding and is 8/1 in the market. He could be a plunge for a yard in flying form. He very well could be a 105+ horse running off 93**

**Advised Bets**

**Lovell 3 points win 8/1**

**Master Carpenter 2 points each way 14/1**