



ROYAL ASCOT

DAY 4 PREVIEW

FRIDAY 20 JUNE

RACE 1

THE ALBANY
STAKES (GROUP 3)
6F

PRIZE MONEY
£125,000

RACE 2

THE
COMMONWEALTH
CUP (GROUP 1)
6F

PRIZE MONEY
£650,000

RACE 3

THE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH STAKES
(HANDICAP)
1M 3F 211Y

PRIZE MONEY
£110,000

RACE 4

THE CORONATION
STAKES (GROUP 1)
7F 213Y

PRIZE MONEY
£650,000

RACE 5

THE SANDRINGHAM
STAKES (HANDICAP)
1M

PRIZE MONEY
£110,000

RACE 6

THE KING EDWARD
VII STAKES
(GROUP 2)
1M 3F 211Y

PRIZE MONEY
£250,000

RACE 7

THE PALACE OF
HOLYROODHOUSE
STAKES (HANDICAP)
5F

PRIZE MONEY
£110,000

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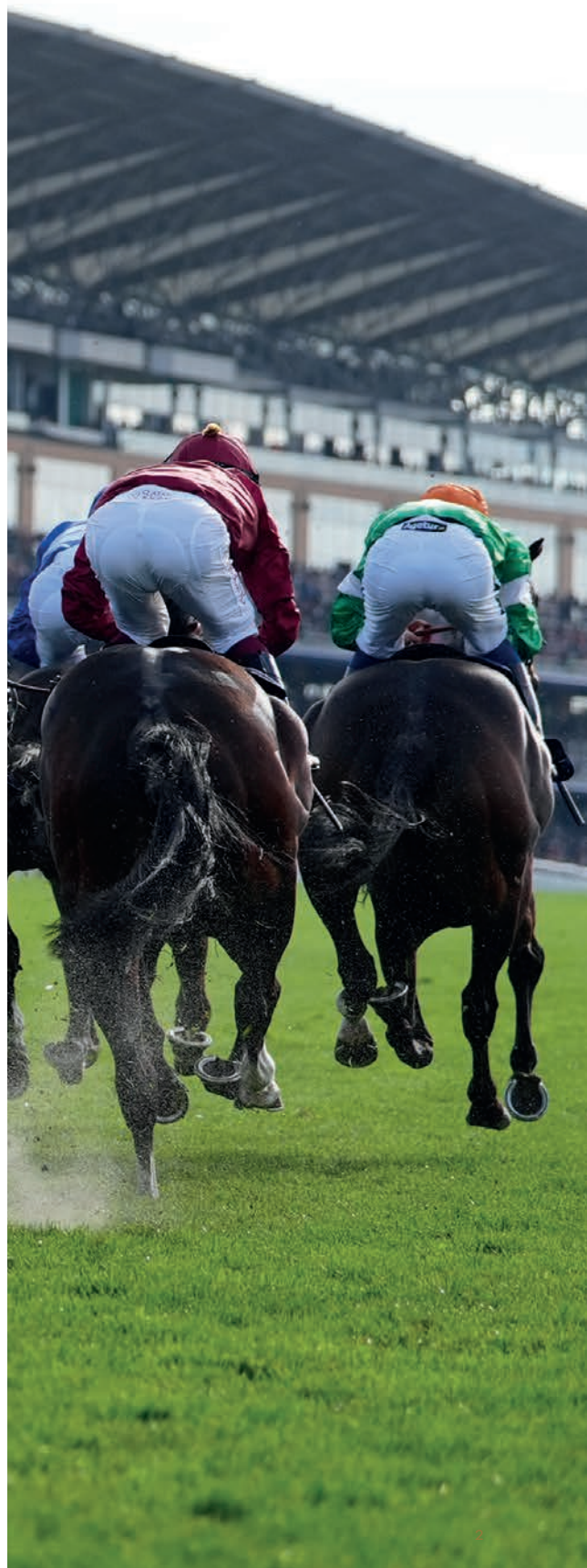
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CORONATION STAKES

RUNNER BY
RUNNER GUIDE

BY JAMES FLAHERTY



The feature contest on day four at Royal Ascot sees the fillies' take centre stage. The Coronation Stakes often brings together the classic winners from the English, Irish and French Guineas earlier in the season. This year's renewal is certainly worse off for the recent defection of Lake Victoria, the impressive Irish Guineas winner, while Desert Flower, the winner of the Newmarket edition, opted for the Oaks instead. We do have the (perhaps slightly controversial) winner of the French equivalent though, who is likely to divide opinion ahead of this interesting Group 1 contest.

CATHEDRAL



A maiden winner as well as Group 3 placed as a juvenile, Cathedral returned to action with a fourth in Listed company at Lingfield. That form has worked out very well, but she was getting weight from her elders that day. She steps up in trip here, although she didn't exactly seem to be crying out for that and the stables other runner seems more fancied.

CERCENE



Cercene has improved with every start this season. Her most recent effort when third in the Irish 2000 Guineas is the pick of those efforts, when I didn't give her much chance of reversing the form with Atsila. If she can improve again, she could certainly be in the frame for the places, but it would be a poor renewal if she doesn't find one or two better ultimately.

CHANTILLY LACE



One would have to say it was a fair effort from her in the 1000 Guineas at Newmarket, having her first run of the season and just her second career start. To go from a Nottingham novice to getting within two-and-a-half lengths of a Classic is a fair step forward and surely there is more to come from Ralph Beckett's filly, who is the choice of Rossa Ryan.

DUTY FIRST



Archie Watson's filly was an impressive winner of the Dubai Duty Free (registered as the Fred Darling) at Newbury over seven furlongs but couldn't back that up in either Guineas. In fairness, her Curragh effort was better than Newmarket when I don't think the track really suited, but it still leaves her with half a length to find on Cercene, and I'm not sure if Duty First is progressing like her. That is before we even mention the others.

EXACTLY



Exactly didn't have a clear run herself in what was a rather messy contest at Parislongchamp last month and she was a close fourth at the death. Zarigana did come from behind her though and another look at that race would make it difficult for O'Brien's filly to reverse the form. I'm not sure she has improved on her juvenile form so far this season.

FALAKEYAH



The New Bay filly was an impressive debut winner at Wolves last November but that was an ordinary contest, and she left that miles behind when winning the Pretty Polly at Newmarket on return. That was authoritative and the third has won a listed race since. I think stepping back to a mile will suit as she showed loads of speed last time and I can see why connections decided to supplement her. It is hard to know how high she could go.

CORONATION STAKES

RUNNER BY RUNNER GUIDE

Continued

FLIGHT



Flight put up a big performance in the Newmarket equivalent, finishing second behind Desert Flower, while possibly slightly disadvantaged by how the race developed. I am wondering if that is the ceiling of her ability though and she was unable to step forward on that at the Curragh, when only sixth. She needs to reproduce her Newmarket form.

JANUARY



Steadily progressive last year as a juvenile before finding Desert Flower too hot to handle at Newmarket in the Fillies' Mile. Her vulnerability when meeting true Group 1 performers was again exposed in the Irish Guineas last time. That was her first run of the season though and many from the yard are improving plenty for the initial outing. She will need to though if she is to give O'Brien a first winner of this race since 2017.

KON TIKI



Followed up her maiden success last December with a promising display at Kempton in a novice event in April. She had Life Is Beautiful behind on that occasion, who subsequently chased home Falakeyah in the Pretty Polly. Kon Tiki franked the form herself at York, taking another step in the right direction. She is another in the completely unexposed bracket, even if she hasn't quite impressed these eyes like some of the others have.

SIMMERING



She disappointed in the Dubai Duty Free at Newbury, but she produced a much better effort in the Guineas when finishing third. It is more like the Newbury effort at the Curragh last time and she is starting to look exposed now. Her best form would give her a chance but she has been inconsistent this season. Perhaps a return to Ascot where she has good form, or the first-time cheekpieces, will spark her into life.

ZARIGANA



The Classic winner sets the standard in here. She has won four of her five starts, although only getting the result in the steward's room last time. She would have been an unlucky loser in my book, as things didn't go her way through the race. That form has its question marks, but this may not be the strongest ever renewal. Whatever beats her will probably win, if there is any filly good enough. The yard won the race in 2019.



VERDICT



Zarigana sets the standard, but I just haven't been blown away by her this season and I feel like the standard set is not beyond reach for some of the less exposed types. As a result, marginal preference is for **FALAKEYAH** for Owen Burrows, a trainer I really like.

I felt her Newmarket success on Guineas weekend had a sprinkling of stardust about it, despite clearly still learning her job. She took that race apart from an early stage and I'm excited about her dropping back in trip to a mile. She was able to comfortably travel at a high cruising speed, and I think over this shorter trip, we will see a more powerful finishing effort.

In fairness, she did well to see it out as well as she did at Newmarket considering how keen she was in the first half of the race. I tend to be drawn to the less exposed "potential" and Falakeyah certainly has that in abundance, while it is hard to knock Zarigana who looks solid. Chantilly Lace might fare best of those at bigger prices.

Falakeyah is the play, even if I wouldn't be chasing her price much further. 5/2 is fair in my opinion though and 9/4 acceptable.

FRIDAY STATS GUIDES

BY PAUL JONES



No one knows more about the crucial trends behind the races at Royal Ascot than Paul Jones, who has compiled comprehensive stats guides for some of Friday's key races.



RACE 1 ALBANY STAKES FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 14:30PM (BST)

Group 3 | Class 1 | 2YO

✓ POSITIVES:

- Won the Group 3 Fillies Sprint Stakes at Naas
- Had just one career start
- Won a maiden or novice last time out
- Drawn high
- Trained by Aidan O'Brien, Richard Hannon or Jack Channon
- Won at Sandown

✗ NEGATIVES:

- Godolphin



RACE 2 COMMONWEALTH CUP FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 15:05PM (BST)

Group 1 | Class 1 | 3YO

✓ POSITIVES:

- Contested the Sandy Lane Stakes
- Dropping down in trip from the 2000 Guineas
- Officially rated 114+ (or 117+ even better)
- Fillies

✗ NEGATIVES:

- More than two runs this season



RACE 4 CORONATION STAKES FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 16:20PM (BST)

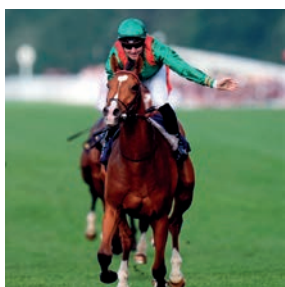
Group 1 | Class 1 | 3YO

✓ POSITIVES:

- The Irish 1000 Guineas winner
- Finished in the first six in the 1000 Guineas
- Trained in France
- The favourite
- Won a Pattern race as a two-year-old
- Drawn in the higher half

✗ NEGATIVES:

- Not run in a Classic
- Likely to start bigger than 6/1
- Beaten in the Irish 1000 Guineas



RACE 6 KING EDWARD VII STAKES FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 17:35PM (BST)

Group 2 | Class 1 | 3YO

✓ POSITIVES:

- The favourite or second-favourite
- Contested a recognised Derby trial
- Yet to win over 1m4f+
- Yet to win a Group race

✗ NEGATIVES:

- Non Aidan O'Brien-trained Irish contenders
- Yet to win this season

FRIDAY DARK HORSES

BY DAVE ORTON



ARIZONA BLAZE | COMMONWEALTH CUP | 15:05



The Commonwealth Cup this year has an appealing look about it for an each-way play and there's good reason to think **ARIZONA BLAZE** could outrun his odds.

At the time of writing this he was available at 25-1, which is just wrong when having a closer inspection of his profile.

He finished third in the Norfolk Stakes at last year's meeting, when sent off at 14-1 and racing solo on the near side for most of the race, and a fast-finishing second at the Breeders' Cup in November also sticks out.

Granted he needs to bounce back from a disappointing effort in the Group 2 Sandy Lane at Haydock latest, but he's vastly experienced and his best form isn't too far off the market principals here.



CERCENE | CORONATION STAKES | 16:20



The defection of ante-post favourite Lake Victoria has given the Coronation Stakes a lopsided look betting-wise, with Zarigana looking painfully short around even money to take the prize back to France.

Third to Lake Victoria in the Irish 1,000 Guineas last month was **CERCENE**, who hit the line well when beaten around four lengths that afternoon and yet was trading at the time of writing around the 25-1 mark.

Despite John G Murphy's filly having just a maiden to her name, she went close in a Group 3 at the Curragh before placing in the Classic there and, if there's any chinks in Zarigana's armour, this consistent performer is capable of causing the upset on ground that will suit.



TIMEFORM TIPS

RACE

1

- 1st **SIGNORA** (14)
2nd **VENTIAN SUN** (17)
3rd **GREEN SENSE** (7)

RACE

2

- 1st **JONQUIL** (8)
2nd **SHADOW OF LIGHT** (9)
3rd **IDES OF MARCH** (7)

RACE

3

- 1st **FRENCH DUKE** (12)
2nd **ALMOSH'HER** (14)
3rd **ETHICAL DIAMOND** (18)

RACE

4

- 1st **ZARIGANA** (11)
2nd **FALAKEYAH** (6)
3rd **EXACTLY** (5)

RACE

5

- 1st **SUPERMODEL** (10)
2nd **ALFAREQA** (25)
3rd **BETTY CLOVER** (2)

RACE

6

- 1st **ZAHRANN** (11)
2nd **PUPPET MASTER** (8)
3rd **AMILOC** (1)

RACE

7

- 1st **REALIGN** (12)
2nd **ADRESTIA** (23)
3rd **BRIGHTON BOY** (26)



Inisherin winning the Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot 2024.



Soprano winning the Sandringham Stakes at Royal Ascot 2024.

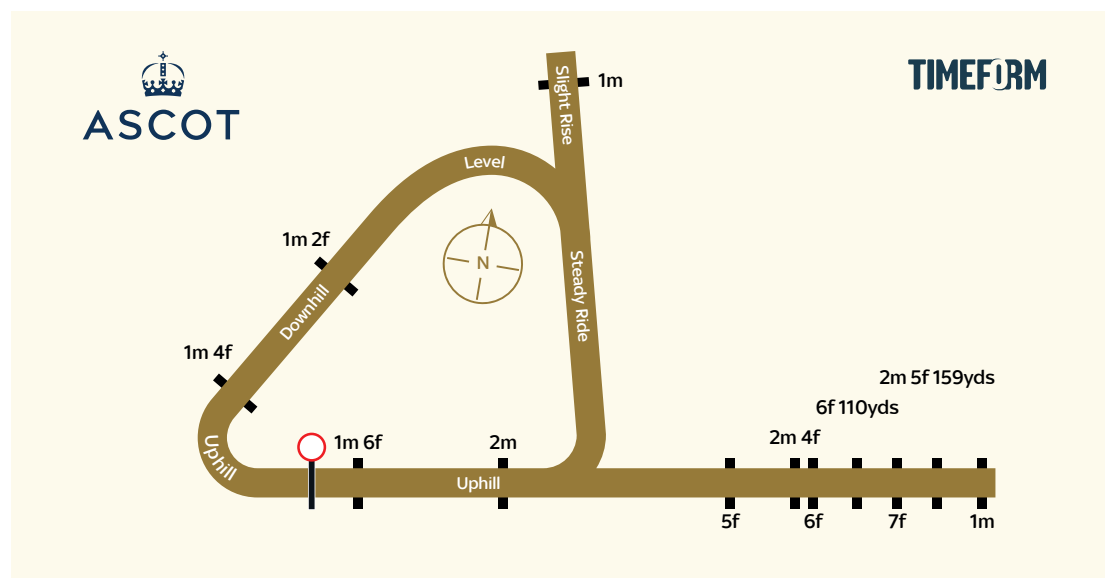


Pilgrim winning the Palace of Holyroodhouse Stakes at Royal Ascot 2024.

GUIDE TO ASCOT

By Classic-winning jockey and Sky Sports Racing presenter **Jason Weaver**

“ Because the run-in on Ascot’s round course is relatively short, positioning - jockeyship in other words - is key. It goes without saying that in steadily-run races you want to be towards the sharp end but, whatever the pace, you can get into trouble trying to come through rivals late on. We’re still learning about the straight course, following the relaying a few years back, but in my view it’s more pace-dependent than draw-dependent. Given the right pace to chase, I reckon you can win from anywhere. ”



The round course is a right-handed, triangular circuit of fourteen furlongs, with a run in of 2½ furlongs. There is a straight mile course and the Old mile course which joins the round course in Swinley Bottom. Despite the downhill run into Swinley Bottom and relatively short run-in from the final turn, Ascot is galloping in character. Since the redevelopment, the turn into the straight has become more sweeping and those ridden prominently can be difficult to peg back. Nowadays, the ground in the straight drains quicker than the rest of the course, meaning going descriptions can vary.

