



# ROYAL ASCOT



## DAY 4 PREVIEW

FRIDAY 21 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 CORONATION  
STAKES (GROUP 1),  
7F 213Y

PRIZE MONEY  
£650,000

### RACE 4

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

PRIZE MONEY  
£110,000

### RACE 5

THE SANDRINGHAM  
STAKES (HANDICAP),  
1M (STR)

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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# THE CORONATION STAKES

# RUNNER BY

# RUNNER GUIDE

BY SKY SPORTS RACING PUNDIT TONY KEENAN



Tuesday's St. James's Palace Stakes was rightly built up as one of the races of the meeting as it brought together the winners of the three major European Guineas, and Friday's Coronation Stakes at 3:45 is not far behind; the victorious fillies from Newmarket and Longchamp are there and while Curragh winner Fallen Angel is absent, she has an able proxy in the third from that race, Opera Singer. That trio are not the only ones in the field with a chance as both the placed fillies from the 1,000 Guineas are declared along with a few less exposed sorts that may have more to give.

## CONTENT



Looked well off this class on her first five starts as a juvenile when ridden prominently but keen sort took a big step for being held up final two runs last season, winning the Swordlestown Stud Stakes at the Curragh before shaping better than the bare form when fourth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf, shuffled back early and forced to come from last, beaten only a length and a half. That form ties her in closely with Porta Fortuna though isn't as tactically versatile as that one and keenness again her undoing when finishing midfield on her return in the Pouliches. Plenty of her stablemates have needed their first run this season and improved subsequently, not least at this meeting, and would be no surprise if she stepped up on her French run, though will need a pace to run at and luck in running, neither of which are guaranteed.

## ELMALKA



Was a surprise winner of the 1,000 Guineas at Newmarket at 28/1, coming from a long way back and racing in the right part of the track, but against that has only had three starts and seemed ill-at-ease on the undulations of the Rowley Mile. Looked well-suited by the strong pace last time and could prove best at 10 furlongs in time (out of middle-distance type Nahrain and siblings include the likes of Benbatl) so a good gallop would be a help but this is a smaller field than Newmarket with few obvious front-runners. That Newmarket remains a little untested and a length covered the first five home.

## FOLGARIA



Unbeaten in five starts in Italy last season and continued the winning streak by taking the Fred Darling on her first start for Marco Botti in April, Elmalka behind in third. Was keen on that occasion and even moreso next time in the Pouliches when over-racing so settling her here will be important while the suspicion is that she will prove too fast for this stiff mile, something connections appear aware of as she is entered in the July Cup.

## OPERA SINGER



The Champion Juvenile Filly of Europe last season when given a mark of 118, she improved markedly when upped to a mile as 2023 went on and was an impressive winner of the Marcel Boussac on her final start of the year. Went into the winter as favourite for the 1,000 Guineas but didn't make that race having met with a setback, running third in the Irish 1,000 Guineas on her belated return, Aidan O'Brien saying that she hadn't been away for a bit of work beforehand and strong in his belief that she would improve a lot for the run. History suggests he is likely correct about that and looks a worthy favourite, who could also get left alone in the lead here, though her price reflects her chance and nagging concern that she might have already been running over further if not missing Newmarket.

# THE CORONATION STAKES

## RUNNER BY RUNNER GUIDE

CONTINUED

### PORTA FORTUNA



One of the most consistent fillies around, never out of the three in eight career starts, the last five of them Group 1s, and confirmed she had trained on when a neck second in the 1,000 Guineas. In no way better than the form then, however, and vulnerable to improvers. Missed the Irish 1,000 Guineas due to the soft ground so the surface here should be to her liking but it is a concern that connections were considering the Commonwealth Cup until quite recently, suggesting the stiff mile is a worry.

### RAMATEULLE



Did all her racing up to six furlongs as a two-year-old, her best effort coming when a close second to Vandeeek in the Morny but went some way toward proving her stamina for a mile at Newmarket, sent on early off a strong pace and only caught late on. Oisín Murphy takes over in the saddle now and seems likely to hold onto her longer though whether she wants this more testing mile is open to question, her trainer emphasising her speed repeatedly in a recent stable tour elsewhere on the site.

### ROUHIYA



French-trained fillies have a good record in this race and bids to follow up on an unexpected win in the Pouliches, though that form feels a little suspect, little covering the first four home and the pace steady, Rouhiya herself only fourth fastest over the final 600m. Only started her career last October and has had just four starts so further improvement is possible though do wonder if everything went right for her last time.

### SEE THE FIRE



Bred in the purple, being by Sea The Stars out of Arabian Queen, and made good start to living up to that pedigree last season when making the frame in the May Hill and the Fillies' Mile, perhaps unlucky in the latter when hanging a winning chance away. The form of those two races have not really worked out, however, and she disappointed in the 1,000 Guineas when quite well-fancied, racing in the wrong part of the track but one of the first beaten. Needs to bounce back.

### SKELLET



Made gradual progress in three starts last season, her final run coming when narrowly beaten in the Oh So Sharp by Dance Sequence, perhaps unsuited by making early headway through the field having been slowly away and then caught close home. Missed Newmarket with a setback and returned in Irish 1,000 Guineas where she shaped better than the result when likely needing the run anyway, messed around early in the race and forced back to the near last in a race where front-runners dominated, before making decent late headway without getting knocked about. Has ground to make up on Opera Singer from that run but wasn't as well-positioned and one of the more interesting outsiders.

### VERDICT

Opera Singer is deserving of her position at the front of the betting by dint of her juvenile form and the likelihood of her improving from the Curragh, while there is also a chance she gets an unpressured lead, but at much bigger price, SKELLET could be worth a small play each-way. She shaped like the mile would suit on her final start last season when narrowly beaten by the Oaks runner-up, and it is easy to see promise in her Irish 1,000 Guineas return when looking beyond the bare facts of her eighth-place finish.



# EXPERT TIPS

BY SKY SPORTS RACING PUNDIT JAMES FLAHERTY



## 16.25 | THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH ETHICAL DIAMOND



The only slight negative about **Ethical Diamond** in the Duke of Edinburgh is the price, as I don't like to take a short enough one in an Ascot handicap. However, I do think it is a fair price. He ticks virtually every other box, from a yard who thrive here (or everywhere for that matter) and have already fired in a winner this week.

He caught the eye a couple of times over hurdles through the winter but enjoyed his return to the flat when going down by the narrowest of margins at Leopardstown last month. The winner has since come out and won off an 8lb higher mark, while the third has also won.

If one goes back a little further, the form of his Limerick win looks better than it did at the time too. The two-length second (in receipt of 5lb from Ethical Diamond) is now rated 94 after a good run in Listed company. That suggests the 86-rated O'Brien inmate in fourth perhaps didn't underperform by that much on the day.

Ethical Diamond is also highly likely to improve from Leopardstown for the extra two furlongs and a strongly run race (which this usually is as they get rolling down the hill) can further benefit this strong traveller.

## 17.40 | THE KING EDWARD VII STAKES DIEGO VELAZQUEZ



I think **DIEGO VELAZQUEZ** was worth another chance in the King Edward VII Stakes (17.40). I'm not sure this is the strongest Group 2 ever run, with Space Legend sharing favouritism with the selection as I write, and he was second in a Listed race last time.

Diego Velazquez, in contrast to many of his opposition here, is dropping in class having raced in Group 1's on his last three starts. They have come on soft or heavy ground too and there must be a chance that he is a better horse on better ground. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that his Group 2 win last September on Irish Champions Weekend came on good ground.

There is also every possibility that this will be his trip. He certainly looked like the mile in the French Guineas was too short for him, but it was a perfectly acceptable seasonal return finishing a close fifth. Especially given the yard form at that time. He was probably slightly disappointing last time, but he was only beaten five lengths.

Even a reproduction of his form to date will see him hard to beat, but given there are two potential grounds for improvement, I think he sets a clear standard, with many of his closest challengers coming from his own stable.

# HANDICAP HOTSHOT

BY SKY SPORTS RACING PUNDIT TONY ENNIS



# INDELIBLE



91

**3-Y-O BAY FILLY**  
**TRAINER: R M BECKETT**  
**OWNER: JUDDMONTE**  
**JOCKEY: HECTOR CROUCH**

**SIRE: SHAMARDAL (USA)**  
**DAM: MIDDAY (UK)**  
**DAM'S SIRE: OASIS DREAM (UK)**

**INDELIBLE** has a wonderful pedigree and beat some choicely bred horses in what looked a ridiculously strongly contested novice event at Doncaster on the evening of Oaks Day. She is by Shamardal out of Midday and beat the boys in great style on the Town Moor. I did think she looked a Sandringham-type filly after that and while she hasn't been missed in the market, I do think there is lots more to come from Ralph Beckett's filly. Clearly this will be a tough race to win but if she is drawn on the right side then it will take a good one to beat her with every chance of further improvement to come. She showed a nice turn of foot at Doncaster in a race that I think will throw up plenty of future winners.



# HOLLIE DOYLE

Sky Sports Racing ambassador Hollie Doyle is back at Royal Ascot on Friday with five rides, including Twafeeg in the Group 3 Albany Stakes, and gives her perspective on the Group 1 Commonwealth Cup.



## TWAFEEG | THE ALBANY STAKES | 14:30



Archie Watson and I had a near miss in the Group 2 Coventry Stakes on the opening day of Royal Ascot with the gallant Electrolyte so we're hoping to go one better in the Group 3 Albany Stakes (2.30) on Friday with **TWAFEEG**. She made an eye-catching debut in a good fillies' maiden over 6.5f at Doncaster on 1st June, dominating a decent field to win for Connor Beasley. We've always liked this daughter of Far Above since she arrived at Saxon Gate Stables as a yearling and weren't surprised to see her make such a big impression. A big, unfurnished filly, she is open to so much improvement and should enjoy the stiff 6f in this Group 3. I'm happy enough with my draw in stall 13 and don't think she'll have any issue with the fast ground.

## FOLGARIA | THE CORONATION STAKES | 15:45



**FOLGARIA**, who I won the Fred Darling on in April, surrendered her unbeaten record in the French Guineas but better can be expected in the Group 1 Coronation Stakes (3.45) on Friday. Marco Botti's ex-Italian filly didn't get the race run to suit at Longchamp. The early pace was slow, as it often can be in France, and she got lit up and claustrophobic. I've galloped her in Newmarket since and was pleased with how she worked. She's clearly come out of that race with her constitution intact and can out-run her odds from a decent draw in stall four. It's sure to be a cracking renewal with English Guineas winner **Elmalka** out to follow up Charyn's Queen Anne victory for Roger Varian and **Opera Singer** vying to build on her Irish Guineas third for Aidan O'Brien.

## CUMULONIMBUS | THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH STAKES | 16:25



I'm on another outsider in the Duke Of Edinburgh Stakes (4.25) on Friday when I partner old friend **CUMULONIMBUS** for George Baker. I won on this five-year-old for his previous trainer Charlie Fellowes two seasons ago and it's no surprise to see him progress into a solid middle-distance handicapper. He's probably high enough in the weights off a mark of 97 but he's had wind surgery since his last run in January and wears cheekpieces for the first time, which may give him an edge.

## VIENNOISE | THE SANDRINGHAM STAKES | 17:05



You need an improving filly to win the Listed Sandringham Stakes (5.05) at Ascot on Friday and **VIENNOISE** certainly fits the bill. Archie Watson's daughter of Zoffany won decisively for me at Lingfield in April, breaking her maiden, and doesn't look over-faced off her opening handicap mark of 82. Of course, she must improve again in this grade but the Sandringham has a habit of throwing up surprise results and our filly is no forlorn hope under her light weight.

## BLUE STORM | THE PALACE OF HOLYROOD HOUSE STAKES | 18:15



Gemma Tutty has established herself as one of the most impressive young trainers in the north and has her day out in the sun with **BLUE STORM** in the Palace Of Holyroodhouse Stakes. This improving sprinter gave Yorkshire based Gemma a notable scalp by winning the 3YO Dash at Epsom, beating my subsequent winner Enchanting and proving he has the speed for this demanding 5f dash, so I'm expecting a big run.

# TIMEFORM TIPS

## RACE

# 1

1st **MOUNTAIN BREEZE** (11)

2nd **FAIRY GODMOTHER** (5)

3rd **SIMMERING** (15)

## RACE

# 2

1st **INISHERIN** (4)

2nd **ELITE STATUS** (1)

3rd **JASOUR** (5)

## RACE

# 3

1st **RAMATUELLE** (7)

2nd **OPERA SINGER** (5)

3rd **ELMALKA** (3)

## RACE

# 4

1st **ETHICAL DIAMOND** (16)

2nd **CRYSTAL BLACK** (3)

3rd **DEAKIN** (9)

## RACE

# 5

1st **INDELIBLE** (17)

2nd **FAIR ANGELICA** (9)

3rd **LOU LOU'S GIFT** (30)

## RACE

# 6

1st **SPACE LEGEND** (10)

2nd **THEORY OF TIDES** (12)

3rd **AGENDA** (1)

## RACE

# 7

1st **MUKAAF AH** (15)

2nd **DORNEY LAKE** (21)

3rd **VANTHEMAN** (27)



Givemethebeatboys wins The GAIN Marble Hill Stakes



Elmalka wins the The QIPCO Guineas Festival



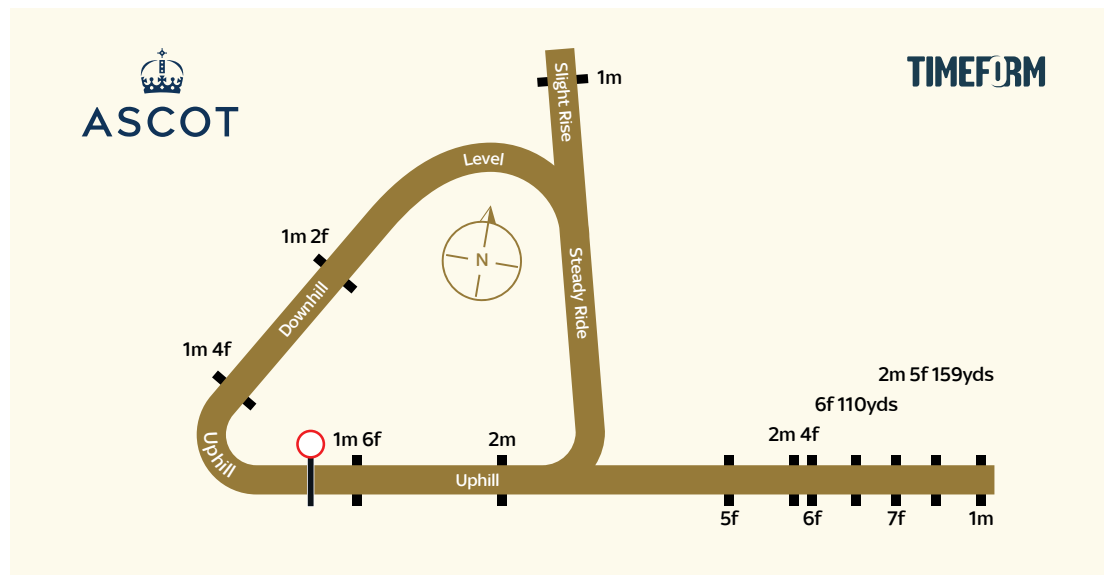
Opera Singer wins the Newtownanner Stud Irish EBF Stakes



# 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 2 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.

