

2019

A-Z TRAINER COMMENTS



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## ABACADABRAS

He'll run in the Champion Bumper. I'm not saying he would have beaten Envoi Allen at Leopardstown last time, but he was coming at him when he ducked through the rail. It was just one of those things, it was almost certainly just greenness that led to him doing it. It was probably the first time he ever got a proper belt of a stick and he just ducked in away from it.

## ADJALI

He looked the same as Paul's horse Quel Destin when they were first and second at Chepstow and that would have to give him a squeak in the JCB Triumph Hurdle.

He is bang on course for the Triumph. I don't know what happened with him last time - that wasn't him - but that was a good piece of work this morning. Countister couldn't get to him and she has been working well of late

08/03/2019 - I would have a pound on him at that (16/1)! No, I wouldn't because I think Sir Eric is one of the bankers of the meeting and therefore it is a place bet if you like. I think he is a good price if you go back to the finale at Chepstow, where there was nothing between him and Quel Destin. We were second, but I would certainly be happy taking him on again. He then didn't run so well at Cheltenham, but since then I have been very, very happy with him. He went to Kempton and worked very well, his work since then has been good. He is sharp, he is well. There is no doubt he deserves to have a go.

## AL BOUM PHOTO

I don't think we've seen the best of him yet. We're looking at the Gold Cup, although he's also in the Ryanair. Stamina shouldn't be an issue if he goes for the Gold Cup.

## ALLAHO

He did very well to win a Grade 3 over three miles at Clonmel last week. It was only his second run over hurdles and he won decisively, beating mostly more experienced rivals. I'm leaning towards the Albert Bartlett rather than the Ballymore.

## ALLETRIX

Ran well the other day but made a mistake at the third last. She stayed on great and will appreciate the hill. She goes on anything and I think she'll have a chance of a place

## ALLEZ DANCE

She had plenty of experience in France, although her form there regressed after a good start. She had her first run for us at Punchestown today and won nicely. She clearly has ability and I'll discuss things with her owners to see if we'll enter her for the mares' novice.

## ALTIOR

All is good and everything has gone good so far. He hasn't put a foot wrong and we have adopted a different strategy this year. He was fit and well and then had a nice break and coming back fresh and hopefully we can go on after Cheltenham. He looks super and will work on Tuesday morning and then have a couple of schools as he enjoys it. We are back into the Sprinter Sacre situation and I can tell you how horrible it was then – I suppose we are getting back to the same factor where anything but a really good performance won't do. It will be disappointing if it goes wrong, but you are prepared for the fact that it has to go wrong one day and you can't go on forever. Altior is a very good horse and he has been picking up his Grade 1s and 2s but he hasn't been meeting a great deal of opposition. He has to do what you have to do and it will happen one day but I hope it's not in the Champion Chase as that is what you build your season around. Pat Pugh and I did discuss the King George and if everything went right this year we would probably branch out and try something completely different and then would probably get him beaten! He is not quite the showman that Sprinter Sacre was, but he is a really good looking horse. Altior is a machine and just gets on with it and has tremendous pace. He has a lot of gears and if he was a Flat horse he would be a very good miler and quarter/mile and half horse and a Group horse but I can assure we are not going to do that!

08/03/2019 - You have to say he has probably got the best chance of anybody, but he has still got to do it. He has been very good every time so far. We think he is in very good shape and Nico says he feels great. He has schooled, he has worked, he has done everything. We have had a slightly different strategy this year - we have had three runs and then given him a bit of a break after the Clarence House. We never intended to run him again, so he hasn't really been messed up. It has all gone well - we just have to pray for everything to go well for another week.

## ANDY DUFRESNE

He won't run at Cheltenham. He's been given an entry for Naas on Sunday and I have to talk to his owners before making a decision on that, but I'd say he's unlikely to run there either. He's a very smart horse.

## ANGELS BREATH

He is in the Dovecote this weekend and I would ideally have liked to take him for a normal novice with plenty of runners so he can learn more. You always get a furious pace in the Supreme and a big field and all he's done so far is run in a six-runner race and jumped four hurdles. He will go over two miles in the Supreme.

08/03/2019 - I think everything has gone well, I know he got beaten at Kempton, but that actually didn't worry me. I thought more of him the next morning than I did the morning before. I was very pleased with it and his work has been great since, so it's all systems go.

## ARAMON

He's done very well this season and is a Grade 1 winner. He ran a cracking race when second to Klassical Dream in another Grade 1 last time. He's surprised me a bit by how well he's done and fully deserves a tilt at the Supreme.

## A PLUS TARD

He seems in really good form. He has been given a rating of 144 in England, so he'll run in the Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase. I came away a small bit disappointed when he was beaten at Punchestown in receipt of all the allowances last time, but looking back on it, he just seemed to get gone for pace around a tight track. I like how strongly he hit the line and you'd think the stiffer test at Cheltenham would suit him

## APPLE'S JADE

She came out of Leopardstown in very good form. I was nervous about her dropping back to two miles against top-class geldings there, but she'd showed how good she is. She has gone from strength to strength this season. I could try and tell you why she has improved, but I'd only be guessing. I'm not too worried about why it has happened, I'm just delighted that it's happened! She'll have two more bits of work between now and Cheltenham and it's all systems go for the Champion Hurdle. If we can get her there in the same form that she's been in for her last three starts, I think she'll run a big race. Looking back on last year at Cheltenham, the whole world knows what was wrong in that she was in season both there and at Punchestown. We are monitoring her cycle very closely this year and will be doing all we can to try and ensure that she won't come into season on those big days this time. I'd also say that we probably made a mistake by not running her in between Christmas and Cheltenham last year. She seems to thrive on racing and having the extra run in between will stand to her. I don't think she has to make the running. She was taken on in the Hatton's Grace and I'd say that might have been her best performance all season. If something else wants to jump out and go quicker than her at Cheltenham, I'd say that might even suit her even better.

## APPLE'S SHAKIRA

She's had nothing seriously wrong and finding races for her has been difficult. She's good, but she is lazy and at home she doesn't show you a lot, but apparently Apple's Jade doesn't either so let's hope she has got her sister's genes all the way down the line.

## BACARDYS

We're reverting to hurdles and he'll take his chance in the Stayers' Hurdle. He ran in it last year and was staying on and looked like he'd have finished in the first three before falling at the last.

## BALKO DES FLOS

He's in the Ryanair and the Gold Cup. We aren't sure just yet which one he'll run in. I was disappointed with him last time, but the ground was just too firm for him. He just about got away with it when he ran well in the John Durkan, but this just hasn't been a season for him with the ground being so firm. I'd be hopeful he can bounce back to himself on a softer surface

## BALLYWARD

The National Hunt Chase is the only race he's entered for, and he is our only entry for that race. While you never know whether they'll stay four miles, he was a good winner of a three mile Grade 3 novice at Naas on only his second start over fences.

## BAND OF OUTLAWS

We have a couple of options for him at Cheltenham, but hopefully he gets a fair weight for the Fred Winter as I don't think he'd be up to competing in a Grade 1. If the handicapper was hard on him, we would also have the option of waiting for Aintree with him. He looks a speed horse based on what we've seen so far, which isn't a surprise given that a stiff mile was probably his best trip on the Flat. He has only raced in steadily-run races over hurdles so far and that emphasis on speed has suited him. It will be a different story if he goes to Cheltenham and he'll have to prove him stamina in those circumstances.

## BATTLEOVERDOYEN

The plan is to go for the Ballymore Novices' Hurdle. He maybe lacks a bit of experience having only had two runs over hurdles, but I think the race will suit him. I decided not to run him at the Dublin Racing Festival as he was after having three runs in six weeks and I just thought it might be a lot to ask to go again at Leopardstown. He is great form and I couldn't be happier with him.

## BELLSHILL

Cheltenham hasn't been lucky for him but he's now become the sort of horse we thought he would be. Everything has come together and I think he's improved since his Irish Gold Cup win. He jumps particularly well and has plenty of stamina.

## BENIE DES DIEUX

Going back to try to win the Grade 1 mares' hurdle for the second year in a row has always been the plan. We didn't get a run into her because of the dry ground, and when we had to give her the flu jab last week it ruled out giving her a run. She's very well.

## BEWARE THE BEAR

He is very good. I have to say he got into a great rhythm at Cheltenham on New Year's Day. He does like to dictate and that made it easier that day, as there wasn't a big field. That's actually why we didn't even put him in the Grand National, because I don't think it is a race that would suit him - although all he does on a racecourse is say, "I jump and I gallop and I do it quite well," you'd think he was a National horse. I think the place would un-do him. The trouble with the Ultima is that there are going to be a lot of runners, but if he can find himself a pocket where he can travel through the race he is in good shape.

## BIRCHDALE

He could be one of a strong team in the Ballymore. He is good and he did well to win at Cheltenham the other day as he was very green. I hope he has learnt enough but he should have done. He could go two miles five or three.

08/03/2019 - You will never be confident, and you will never be sure your right (to run in the Albert Bartlett). I certainly could have gone to the Ballymore, but Champ is JP's as well so there is little point. We do also have Dickie Diver in there and Downtown Getaway. Dickie Diver is JP's as well as Birchdale. It is very possible that those two will take each other on, but if Champ is going to be the one in the Ballymore, we can afford to move Birchdale up. He is not a slow horse and I am not sure it is right, but it is the way we are going to go.

## BLACKBOW

He had a little setback but is back fine again. He could potentially run in the Grade 1 bumper at the Punchestown Festival and go novice hurdling next season.

## BLEU BERRY

He won the Coral Cup last year and the plan was to send him over fences this season. That didn't happen because of the ground so we ran him in the Galmoy Hurdle last month. He's in the Stayers' Hurdle but could run in a handicap instead.

## BLUE SARI

He shows very little at home, certainly nothing like the speed he displayed when running away from his rival on his debut at Gowran last month. It's a pity the horse who ran second to him got brought down when travelling well at Naas as we'd have got a line on the form. Not many four-year-olds win the Champion Bumper but we think he's mature enough for the job.

## BRAIN POWER

He was very good in the International at Cheltenham and that's the way to ride him. He was always travelling and good ground helps him. I was never intending to run him again before Champion Hurdle and he is in great form and I would like to go to a Racecourse to gallop him. He's in very good form and is probably forgotten - I know he won an International that wasn't a great contest but it was one of the better British ones.

## BUVEUR D'AIR

I don't think he was at his best on the day (in the Champion Hurdle) as he lived in a box next door to We Have A Dream and on the Monday that horse was screaming and had a temperature and they lived nose to nose. We took We Have A Dream out of the barn at 6.00am and he hadn't touched his food and he had a temperature. Buveur D'Air is as tough as teak but he didn't get over Cheltenham at all last year and I would have come back to Aintree which he did the year before and it should have been a piece of cake for him. He wasn't impressive in the Champion Hurdle and it took him apart. Normally you can run him the next week but he hadn't recovered in four weeks to go anywhere near Aintree. Nor had Rather Be who was in the next box so you can take that they had something the same as We Have A Dream. Two miles on fast ground around Kempton we got caught out a little bit and Nico got a lovely run round in his slipstream and Verdana Blue does have a serious turn of foot. Buveur D'Air is in great form and Sandown was great and on we go. You have to keep on working him. He really didn't take Cheltenham at all well last year and he won it by a certain amount of ability and quite a lot of guts as well. He has beaten them all before and was not at his best. He has to be better than last year if he is going to be a Triple Champion Hurdler and it's a better race than last year but he had a nice run around Sandown which is good and he worked well on Saturday. I still think he is the one to beat if all goes well between now and then.

08/03/2019 - Unfortunately he got beaten at Kempton on Boxing Day by our own horse, Verdana Blue, who will run again. It will be good to soft, but if it gets much softer then Verdana Blue may well not run. Buveur D'air will love it if it gets any softer but at least we know it will not get quick, which would not suit. He followed up very nicely at Sandown and the second horse came out and won the National Spirit hurdle the other day. Barry rode him on Saturday and was delighted with him. He feels the horse is in the right shape at the right time.

It's a better race this year. There is no doubt the two main dangers are the Irish fillies Laurina and Apple's Jade. I think Brain Power wouldn't be far away from the best of the rest in England. Seven pounds is plenty to give away, they will be tough to beat.

## CAREFULLY SELECTED

I'm disappointed that I didn't declare him to run at Punchestown today. If I'd known the rain that arrived was going to come, he might well have run. At this stage, I don't think he'll make it to Cheltenham. His owner loves the Punchestown Festival and I'd say that will be his target.

## CHAMP

He will go over two miles five in the Ballymore. He has been very good and he has plenty of experience.

08/03/2019 - Is Champ a Champ? I don't know, we will only find out on Wednesday. He has done nothing wrong. We actually started his season in May last year and he got some good experience, had a break and then came back. He was very impressive at Newbury the first time and then came out and won the Challow there, which was a Grade One, and I was going to give him another run but there doesn't seem to be a lot of need for it. He is fit and well. We are going to the Ballymore with Champ. He has got bags of toe, he is not slow.

## CHAMPAGNE CLASSIC

Nothing is set in concrete yet, but the National Hunt Chase is the race I'd have in mind for him. He maybe didn't jump as well on what was firmer ground the other day as he did on his first start over fences. Jack felt the ground was just tight enough for him and he didn't jump as well off it. Thankfully he has come out of it well and softer ground at Cheltenham would be a help to him.

## CHAMPAGNE PLATINUM

He could be another for the Ballymore but he could also go three miles. You are trying to spread them around. The novice hurdlers are particularly good.

## CHRIS'S DREAM

I was delighted with his win at Navan last time. The change to more patient tactics really seemed to suit him and his jumping was brilliant. He's entered in the JLT and RSA but he isn't certain to travel to Cheltenham. There is a three mile novice chase at Aintree (The Mildmay) that we think will suit him and could potentially wait for that

## CILAOS EMERY

Cilaos Emery schooled around Navan the other day, but he pulled a muscle there which is why he wasn't ridden this morning. We'll have to see what he's like in the next seven days and if he isn't back right by then, we'll have to draw stumps for Cheltenham. That would be disappointing, but there you are.

## CLAN DES OBEAUX

One of the favorites for the Gold Cup, and he's had a great season so far, he looks great.

Ran very well in the Betfair Chase. Every prep has gone to plan, he's progressive.

The King George he won with his ears pricked, then he absolutely dominated a pure Group 1 horse in Terrefort in the Betfair Denman Chase, he quickened all the way to the line. He's come out of that race really well.

From the day he won his first 3-year-old hurdle, we thought he was going to become a proper chaser.

He was still learning about the job, but now we're wanting to be. He's done the talking himself, and we're looking forward to running him in the Gold Cup.

For a prep race, nothing could have gone better, he was super the other day.

We don't know what he'll end up being rated or where he'll end up, but fingers crossed, he'll run a big race.

King George winners, win the Gold Cup, he's just a good horse isn't he?

## COEUR SUBLIME

He scoped wrong after running at Gowran Park on Saturday, so it'll be touch and go whether he gets to Cheltenham or not. He's a good horse. In slightly different circumstances, he would have been three from three going into Gowran Park. We'll see how he is in the next 10 days.

## COMMANDER OF FLEET

I thought he was good when winning the Grade 1 novice hurdle at the Dublin Racing Festival. He was a bit green in front and should come on from it. I think stepping up to three miles for the Albert Bartlett will suit him. He actually ran well in the Royal Bond over two miles, but the trip was just too short for him. The one negative with him is that he might just lack a bit of experience for a race like the Albert Bartlett, so we might just take him away for a school over hurdles before we go there. He will hopefully be a sharper horse at Cheltenham than he was at Leopardstown.

## CONEY ISLAND

He went well and got around in one piece, which is the main thing. He just schooled five down the back. All went well. We're very happy and we move on now and try to get him there next week. I'm happy with him and fingers crossed. I just want a clear run with him

## CRACKING SMART

He's in the Stayers' Hurdle but we'll see what weight he gets for the Coral Cup before deciding on his target

## CUBOMANIA

He's been quite consistent and is a four-time winner over fences. The Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase is the plan if he gets in

## CUNEO

He is in the Pertemps Final and the plan is to run in it. He won a qualifier at Leopardstown's Christmas meeting and ran well in another one back there at the Dublin Racing Festival. They went steady the last day and the ground was quick enough for him, so a stronger gallop and softer ground would be a help to him at Cheltenham

## CYRNAME

He's not going to the Festival, unless we supplement him for the Gold Cup.

He's needed time to grow into his frame, he's where we want him to be, he's an enormous improver.

He was so impressive at Ascot in the handicap, and then he won the Grade 1 at Ascot last week.

He won 17 lengths very easily, he came back and ate up, you wouldn't know he'd raced.

Obviously, he's got a huge engine.

He'll be trained next year for the King George and the Gold Cup, but that's a long long way off.

He's a little like Kauto Star, he can go a gallop and he takes some catching, it'll take a good one to beat him.

## CYRUS DARIUS

He had ulcers which explained why he ran disappointingly at Cheltenham last time. He seems to be fine now and we could run him this weekend just to see where we are with him. He is a very good horse who has very good previous form. We will have a go at some of the big festivals with him just in case we can get him right again so the Coral Cup or County Hurdle are possible.

## DALLAS DES PICTONS

The Martin Pipe is the plan for him. It's a race I always really try to win and he'll be one of five or six runners in it for me. He has a mark of 141 in England and that will get him in lovely.

## DAPHNE DU CLOS

Daphne Du Clos pleased me too there. She goes into the race as a maiden over hurdles but if she's going to lose her maiden tag at this stage she'd be better off doing it in a race of this nature [Mares' Novices' hurdle]

08/03/2019 - I think she is getting there. I thought she was a very good filly a couple of years ago, she might just want two and a half miles. She will run because at least if she doesn't win, it will leave her a maiden for the whole of next season and she will be even better.

## DAYBREAK BOY

He will run in the Martin Pipe. I thought he improved for the longer trip last time and might have some more improvement in him over that sort of distance

## DEFI BLEU

He was disappointing at Leopardstown last time but his previous form was quite good and he's an intended runner in the Albert Bartlett

## DELTA WORK

I pulled him out of his intended target at the Dublin Racing Festival. I was just fearful that the ground would be too firm for him. Davy felt it was quick enough for him at Christmas and it seemed firmer at the Dublin Racing Festival. He has three runs over fences under him, so he doesn't lack for experience. He won at the Cheltenham Festival last year and looks a very solid horse for the RSA Chase.

## DICKIE DIVER

He could also go for the Ballymore but he's another with an entry in the Albert Bartlett. I would have like to run him in a three-mile novice but we were unable too.

08/03/2019 - He will love the three miles, as long as there is cut in the ground.

## DINONS

He's five from seven over hurdles and has twice won over three miles. He'll probably take his chance in the Albert Bartlett

## DISCORDANTLY

Rated 138 though he hasn't won he's been 3rd twice and second once he would most likely go for the Martin Pipe where he could be a lively contender

## DOWNTOWN GETAWAY

I want to run him in either the Ballymore or the Albert Bartlett and he was due to run last Sunday but we were unable too. I am trying to find a three-mile novice hurdle which is what I want and so does Dickie Diver but there is not one this week and I did ask for one.

08/03/2019 - He won at Ascot the last time. He didn't jump as well as I thought he should have, but he has schooled this morning and he is in good form. He won't be far behind them - he might be far in front of them as well!

## DUC DES GENIEVRES

You couldn't fault his performance at Gowran on Saturday, when he made all for an easy win. He'll be dropping back in trip in the Arkle but they usually go a good clip and that will suit him.

## EARLY DOORS

He's entered in the Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle as well as the Coral Cup and the plan is to run in one of them. He ran well to finish third in the Martin Pipe last year and is in good shape, so hopefully he will acquit himself well there, though others will probably look more progressive than him.

## EASY GAME

He's done well, winning four of his six starts over hurdles, three of them over two and a half miles. The Ballymore looks the obvious race.

## ÉCLAIR DE BEAUFEU

He ran well at Leopardstown last time and will run in one of the handicap hurdles

## ELEGANT ESCAPE

Elegant Escape has won a Welsh National, finished second in a Ladbrokes Trophy and chased home Frodon at Cheltenham this season”, commented Tizzard.

He has done everything right, is a young, improving horse and off a rating of 162, he doesn't have to find much to figure in the Gold Cup. When he was second to Frodon the last day, the winner did pick up again in the closing stages, but significantly, we had got caught five or six lengths behind him at the top of the hill and then had to make up those lengths turning in, before his effort just petered out late on.

My immediate thoughts after that was that the Welsh National might have taken a bit more out of him that we first thought. He has had six weeks off since and he looked very good on the gallops this week.

Elegant Escape is a younger horse and he is still improving with every start. His last run was his highest-rated performance. He is a big, strong horse who is doing it at the moment.

## ELFILE

She won on her hurdling debut and first start for us at Punchestown last month. The runner-up has won since and the plan is to go for the mares' novice.

## ELIXIR DE NUTZ

Elixir De Nutz is in good form. He was absolutely brilliant in a gallop at Wincanton last Monday. We could have another little away day, but we might leave him be as he looks very fit. His form stands up to anybody else's in the Supreme Novices' Hurdle. He pulls quite hard and goes well from the front, so we will be making the running on him. We took him, Kilbricken Storm, Native River and Master Debonair to Wincanton, and the jockey couldn't hold on to Elixir Du Nutz, he went about 5 clear

## ELUSIVE BELLE

She was fantastically impressive the first time and then was just far too keen at Sandown the second time, but hopefully we have ironed that out.

## EMBITTERED

I don't think he'll run in the Champion Bumper.

## EMILY MOON

She's very exciting the only things is with only had a couple of runs over hurdles. Her time was good at Naas, she jumps well and enjoys bowling along. Every drop of rain would suit her very well

## ENVOI ALLEN

The plan is to run him in the Champion Bumper. He might not have blown everyone away at the Dublin Racing Festival, but I thought he did as much as he had to do on the day. He'd

prefer more of a test than that inside track at Leopardstown on good ground. He's a horse for the future really. He was bought as a three-mile chaser in the making and that's what he'll be, so to be doing what he's doing in bumpers is amazing really. His owners Mr and Mrs Thompson are keen to have runners at the Cheltenham Festival, so that's where he goes.

## EPATANTE

She really needs a run and should be out this week. The Dawn Run Mares' Novices' Hurdle would be a possibility.

08/03/2019 - I say nap, but I am nervous enough about some of our own! I think she is a good mare. Epatante, she has done everything right. We have purposefully kept her out of the limelight, out of the smarter races, purely to avoid getting a penalty. This is a Grade two, so the winners of decent races do have to give away weight.

## ESPOIR D'ALLEN

We're getting close, and tensions are building, but thankfully everything has gone good so far. He had a racecourse gallop after Navan on Saturday, and that went well.

He's kept improving. He doesn't show us that much at home, but he keeps winning - and that's a very important thing.

It is a huge step, but I think he's quite entitled to go there - and hopefully he can perform on the day.

It's looking like a very good Champion Hurdle - Buveur D'Air, Apple's Jade and Laurina are all top-class horses," Cromwell added.

I think he (Espoir D'Allen) stays well, and the hill should play to his benefit - I don't think the track is going to be a problem.

It's fantastic to have a runner in Cheltenham, especially in one of the championship races. It's very exciting times for myself and everyone in the yard.

## FAKIR D'OUDAIRIES

1) He has entries in some of the novice races and obviously the decision will be made at the last minute I would say. JP [McManus], me and Frank [Berry] will make the decision, he looked very good at Cheltenham the last day and he'd have a good chance wherever he ends up.

It would make sense to split them up, we have Gardens Of Babylon there as well, and Sir Erec doesn't have entries in the novice races whereas Fakir does, so the logical thing would be for him to go for one of the novice races and Sir Erec to go to the Triumph.

The horses have to get there in one piece, so horses are going to fall by the wayside.

I actually have no problem in running horses against each other. Some people try and split horses up and if one finished second to another one they'd be frustrated, by I absolutely have no trouble with finishing second, third, fourth, I don't care as long as one of them is in front.

I have no problem taking on any horse in any race, if you're not in you can't win. I don't think there's been too many horses below 16/1 and 20/1 that have tried to actually do it, so as far as legitimate contenders as four-year-olds I don't think there's been many, I think Binocular nearly did it and I think there was another one as well [Hors La Loi III - Won].

I'm up for giving it a shot, but plenty can happen between now and then and before a final decision is made.

2) He has the option of going for either the Triumph Hurdle or the Supreme Novices' Hurdle and the decision won't be made until as late as possible. He has always looked a nice horse, but he did surprise us with quite how well he won at Cheltenham. It would be a big ask for him to go for the Supreme, but at the same time I wouldn't be too worried about him in terms of experience or maturity, as he is a good forward type that already had plenty of miles on the clock in France when he arrived here. Whichever race he ends up going for, rain would be a help to his chance.

## FARCLAS

He won the Triumph last year but has been disappointing so far this season. We'll see what the handicapper does and he could end up in the Coral Cup

## FAUGHEEN

He's back in good form following his heavy fall at Leopardstown at Christmas, when he was closing on Apple's Jade when falling at the second last. It's hard to know what might have happened but Ruby [Walsh] said he hadn't asked any questions. He was very sore for a few days afterwards but we're happy with him now and he goes for the Stayers' Hurdle.

## FELIX DESJY

The plan is to run him in the Supreme Novices' Hurdle. I think we were just riding him wrong earlier in the season. We were dropping him in thinking he had a bit of speed, but he's just a relentless galloper and being more forward seems to suit him better. He's a two-mile chaser in the making.

## FINE BRUNELLO

We'll see what weight he gets in the Fred Winter tomorrow, but the plan is to run him in that all being well. He ran well at Cheltenham last time, so we'll give him a go and will see how he runs. He's a big horse that should make a lovely chaser in time.

## FOOTPAD

He's had an interrupted season due to twice suffering an overreach. We've left the hind shoes off him since he last ran at Christmas and he schooled very well after racing at Navan on Sunday. He was more like the Footpad we saw last season, when he was unbeaten. We'll delay a decision about which race – the Champion Chase or Ryanair – he'll run in. He should have no problem with the longer trip if we decide on the Ryanair.

## FOX NORTON

Fox Norton is slipping under the radar a little bit. I thought he ran a lovely race at Ascot in the Ascot Chase. He jumped a bit flat and sometimes he has a little bit of back trouble, so he had to have a little bit of medication in his pelvis.

I think the Ryanair Chase is the plan at the moment. It all hinges around Altior and if Altior lines up in the Champion Chase, then we might go for the Ryanair, but we will keep the door open for the time being. It was his second run back and he was much calmer last time. He was only beaten a couple of lengths by Waiting Patiently which is good form. I think he is more of a two and a half-miler and ground-wise, he is probably better off on softer ground.

## FUSIL RAFFLES

He hasn't run yet but will probably run in the Adonis and then we will decide whether he goes for the JCB Triumph Hurdle.

## FRENCH MADE

She won well on her hurdling debut at Clonmel last month and will take her chance in either the mares' novice or Triumph.

## FRIEND OR FOE

He's one of the favourites for the Fred Winter, a race that we've done well in over the years.

He joined us in September, but has some nice experience from France, went to Taunton over christmas and won really nicely, made all the running.

We purposely haven't run him since, it's pointless getting his mark higher and higher. That's the only reason he hasn't run again. We're very very hopeful of a good run in the Fred Winter.

## FRODON

He's improved and improved, won the Old Roan first time out, changed tactics and then won the Caspian Gold Cup off top weight. We haven't run purposely in January to keep him fresh.

He's in the Ryanair, and he's in the Gold Cup, we'll make a plan depending who's going to run in which race. I'm not worried about the trip in the Gold Cup, we'll keep our options open and decide next week.

We don't want to run in the Gold Cup for the sake of it, if we think we can win the Ryanair.

## GALVIN

He's had a good season, winning all of his three starts over hurdles and will probably take his chance in the Ballymore

## GARDENS OF BABYLON

He entered in both the Triumph Hurdle as well as the Fred Winter and a decision hasn't been made on which race he'll go for yet. He's likely to be given plenty of weight in the Fred Winter. He ran very well when second to Sir Erec at Leopardstown last time despite his jumping being a bit sketchy in places on the day. Based on that last run, he'd be well entitled to run in the Triumph, so we'll wait and see until closer to the time.

## GETAWAY TRUMP

Another one with really decent form, second behind Champ at Newbury, having won 2 novice hurdles before that. 4th in the Betfair hurdle the other day, but that didn't really go to plan for him. Stayed on for fourth, but really wants 2 and a half miles.

My dilemma is not knowing what to run him in now. I could run him in the Ballymore, but the Coral Cup looks appealing just on ratings. I suspect we'll run him in the Coral Cup.

## GIVE ME A COPPER

He's in the Ultima Handicap Chase, actually at the moment he's favourite. He's a very talented horse, he's fragile but talented for a young horse.

Missed the best part of 18 months, but came back at Kempton the other day, and ran a really good race for fourth. He got a little bit tired after the second, he hadn't been anywhere else for a gallop, but i purposely left it to that race before the Ultima and then on to the Grand National. Not a great deal of experience, but he's a solid jumper. I am very hopeful of a very big run from him on the opening day.

## GLENLOE

He has missed a bit of work recently and I think we'll struggle to get him to Cheltenham.

## GOT TRUMPED

His mark is quite high and he would love it with more dig in the ground

## GRAND SANCY

He's a real tough one, runs in the Supreme Novices' on the first day, he's had a great season.

He was beaten in the Tolworth by Elixir de Nutz, and we took him down to Wincanton the other day, and actually won, against Sceau Royal. He's really tough for a novice, he's come out of the race, he's every bit as good as Noland and Al Ferof who've won the race for before. He's tough, he jumps and he keeps on galloping, he's done nothing but improve.

He's in the form of his life at the moment, and he'll go chasing next year.

## HARDLINE

I thought he ran very well at the Dublin Racing Festival. He landed on top of a fence going away from the stands and was very slow at the next. Jack just hunted him around after that

and he made a lot of headway between the last two fences before running out of steam. I'm thinking about coming back in trip with him for the Arkle Challenge Trophy. His form over two miles is very good. He beat Us And Them very well at Navan and he has since chased home Le Richebourg twice. I'm not saying we could beat Le Richebourg, but we might just have a go at it. Softer ground would help my fella and probably wouldn't suit Le Richebourg.

## HONEYSUCKLE

She seems in great form. At the minute I'd say she is 85% likely to run in the Mares' Novices' hurdle, but it just isn't set in stone just yet (connections also own SINORIA). She has other entries in the Ballymore and Martin Pipe. She was bought last year after winning a point-to-point at Dromahane and she has been great for us this season. I thought she was particularly good at Fairyhouse last time. They went a real good gallop and she was very strong at the line

## IMPACT FACTOR

He's not certain to run at Cheltenham. He's 4lbs heavier over there than here. IF he was to go he wants soft ground but he is a good jumper

## INVITATION ONLY

He could go for the Gold Cup, although he's also in the Ryanair. Whichever race he goes for he'll need to step up on his Thyestes Chase-winning form.

## IVANOVICH GORBATOV

We have him entered up in a few of the handicaps and the County Hurdle is probably his most likely target, but no decision has been made yet. He has won at the meeting before and has run well back there since, so hopefully he can be competitive. He has obviously been disappointing since his Triumph Hurdle win, but he ran better at the Dublin Racing Festival last time and hopefully can follow up that with another big run. The quicker the ground, the better he'll be.

## JANIKA

I think it is the right place to come back to (following his second at Cheltenham on trials day). All we have done is shove him up the weights the whole way through. You could say we haven't played a very clever game if this is what we were after, but we have been trying to win races. He has only had two runs and he has finished a good second both times, so you would be hopeful. These handicaps are very difficult to win, but I think it is the right place to be.

## JETT

He's is an interesting horse, he's talented but again he's run some good races without winning anything. He likes some good ground but was outpaced last time out however 2m4 wouldn't be a problem for him

## JETZ

He may run in the JLT, he's had a good year he keeps being placed but is better left handed than right handed. He stays well

## KEMBOY

He was very good when he won the Savills Chase at Christmas and we made the decision after Leopardstown to keep him fresh and go straight for the Gold Cup. He's a much improved horse this season and I've no worries about the trip – I think the further he goes the better he'll be. He's shown he's adaptable in terms of ground.

## KILBRICKEN STORM

Kilbricken Storm is a bit of a forgotten horse. He was very good with Elixir De Nutz, Master Debonair and Native River at Wincanton last week. He finished right upsides them and was brilliant. We started off this season going novice chasing and he was alright at Ffos Las first time up, but at Newbury he ran no sort of race and he had to have six weeks off after that race.

Since we've started back, he has been very straightforward and he runs in the Stayers' Hurdle too. He won the Albert Bartlett quite easily last year and I've been very happy with him. He was the one I took out of my Wincanton gallop and came out of that fresh as a button – he's in lovely form. I'm not too worried about him not having a run over hurdles this season as he's had two runs and a racecourse gallop, so we just have to hold our nerve a bit.

## KLASSICAL DREAM

He's a really nice progressive type and we're going to have a headache trying to decide whether to run in the Supreme or Ballymore. Both his wins have been over two miles but we think he'll definitely stay further. He's a very good jumper and has lots of experience, having run five times over hurdles in France.

## KONITHO

He's entered in the Fred Winter, but at this stage it doesn't look like he will be running.

## LASKADINE

I was very disappointed with Laskadine at Haydock and JP (McManus) will win it (Triumph Hurdle) but I don't have it.

## LAURINA

We rate her very highly and were very pleased with her win at Punchestown today. She had a good blow after, which was understandable as we had to give her an easy week after getting the flu jab. The tight inside track at Punchestown wasn't ideal and Ruby said she'll be a lot happier on a more galloping track. She jumped a bit big at times but when she was asked to go about her business she was a lot sharper. She's a lot more mature and relaxed than last

season, when you'd need a bodyguard to go with you into her box. The Champion Hurdle is the plan.

## LE PREZIEN

He won last years Grand Annual.

He's a pound higher than when he won last year, he ran at Sandown the other day on soft ground, and he doesn't want it too soft. He's a funny horse, he comes good in the spring. He's probably handicapped right on his limit. He's just got to sharpen his jumping up a little bit. He's off 151 as opposed to 150 rating indicates he's got a chance again, and if we can put in a good round of jumping, he's not without a chance obviously.

## LETHAL STEPS

He'll go for the Fred Winter. He has got some good experience under him now, so he could be the type to find some improvement and run well in a Fred Winter.

## LIL ROCKERFELLER

He will go back up to three miles now for the Stayers' Hurdle, because I don't think he is quick enough for the Coral Cup. He was great after his run at Fontwell, and he looks a picture.

Paisley Park is the horse we have to beat, but we ran quite a nice race behind him in the Cleeve. He is possibly a bit overlooked, because he has got good course form there.

## LIMINI

She hasn't fired this season but seems in good form and has performed well at the Festival in the past, winning the mares' novice in 2016 and finishing third in the Grade 1 mares' race two years ago.

## LOUGH DERG SPIRIT

You know you have got to be between 140-145 (to get into the Close Brothers). Unfortunately, one just got too high and that's the penalty you pay. You have got to try and win to get in and then if you win too well you go out the top again. He is in good shape. You have just got to get them off the right weight. It will be a five pound weight range so it is not who is well handicapped it is just who can get in.

I wouldn't say he is far away (from Rather Be, second in the race last year). He would like some decent ground and I think he is in good form.

## LOSTINTRANSLATION

He's one of the favourites and I keep looking over at him thinking I should have had him in the RSA, but he's been so good over two and a half miles it's fine. He was second to Defi Du Seuil in the Scilly Isles last time, which is lovely form. He's got form around Cheltenham and I'm sure they'll go a pace and he can jump off handy. He's a big strong horse and whatever he

does this season hopefully we can have him as a Gold Cup horse next year - I think that's what he is. He's more stamina than speed, which is what Defi Du Seuil had on us. That won't happen at Cheltenham because there'll be other horses in the race and the pace will be twice as much, so hopefully our stamina will kick in.

## LUST FOR GLORY

She has won two. She was beaten one day on very heavy ground by Posh Trish, but I think that was only the ground. I would fancy us beating her on good ground. I like her a lot, she will be lovely over fences next year.

## MAGIC OF LIGHT

She's rated 151 in England but could be competitive off that mark

## MAGIC SAINT

This is a really nice 5-year-old, he's won at Wincanton 10 days ago in a 2 mile handicap chase.

A 4 time winner in France over hurdles and fences, so he's experienced. Took his time to adjust to things, ran a little keen on debut for us, then went to Ascot and we gave him a little bit more time. Then he absolutely dotted up at Wincanton, travelled well and he's improving.

We've trained him for the Grand Annual, we think he'll go really well, and we really like him

## MALONE ROAD

I've decided that I'm not going to try to get him back this season. I'll let him off and have him back in early for next season. He's a really exciting two-mile chaser in the making and is one to really look forward to.

## MASTER DEBONAIR

He is well-bred and goes for the Weatherbys Champion Bumper (Wednesday, March 13). He has won two of his three bumpers and did it well at Cheltenham last time. He was very good in a gallop at Wincanton. He won't need to do any more work now.

He has won on autumn ground at Cheltenham, but spring ground will be fine. He is not a big horse and has form in the bag – whether it is good enough is anyone's guess. Hopefully, we will aim for the Supreme Novices' Hurdle with him next year – he is a good horse

## MELON

He's been disappointing this season, exactly why is difficult to say. We might try something new, maybe tactics or using headgear. His performance in the Champion Hurdle last year, when he ran Buveur D'Air close, was his best performance. There has been no evidence of that sort of form this season but we're very happy with him and live in hope.

## MENGLI KHAN

I am thinking about stepping him up in trip. I've been a bit disappointed with him. He hasn't been having a cut at his fences and ex-Flat horses can sometimes be like that. We'll all chat about it closer to the time, but my thought at the minute is to run him in the JLT Novices' Chase.

## METICULOUS

There's a fair chance he'll run in the Champion Bumper. I thought he ran very well behind Envoi Allen at the Dublin Racing Festival. He should have learned from the experience he got there and Barry O'Neill was very happy with him on the day. We're looking forward to him and getting decent ground again would be a help to him.

## MIDNIGHT RUN

I don't think he'll go to Cheltenham. We are likely to aim him at the Punchestown Festival instead.

## MIGHT BITE

We have done lot of things and he re-cauterised his palate. Two years ago, he was hobdayed and when you do that you have to re-cauterise the palate. The hobday is perfectly alright but you can't do it again anyway, but the soft palate part very often needs to be done again. You can see if one part of the larynx isn't working properly you can hear a noise rather like Altior did last year. We scoped him, and you can see there's a margin that isn't working. There was no real reason for doing it, but it just tightens things up and that has been done since Kempton. We have freshened him up and changed a few things and Nico rode him on Saturday and thought he was in terrific form. He went around there last year in soft ground in the winter and there was a fresh strip all the way round in the Gold Cup which hadn't been used since the previous April and Native River and he went around on that the whole way together and they never came off until you jumped the last. The run-in was the wettest part of the track and when you jump the last you then come across Tuesday and Wednesday's hurdle track, Tuesday and Wednesday's Chase course, Thursday's hurdle and chase course and all three hurdle races you have had on Gold Cup day. To me he jumped the last fence and they had been on remarkably good ground all the way and then you have two strides after that and you go bang. When he landed in front after the second-last you thought he was going to go away like he does. Maybe he just got tired, but he did hit that patch of ground having travelled so well all the way. I might have made the mistake of not running him since the King George, but I have done it again as I had no option but to stop and start again this time. He is entitled to be 20-1 on what he's done this season, but he doesn't know that and I don't care. We have just got to get him there the best we can, and I was thrilled with what I saw on Saturday – he was very good. I have to be hopeful he can come back – it has been disappointing, but he's been good twice round Kempton and you get some odd results in that Haydock race – the formbook doesn't follow that race for the rest of the season. Kempton was disappointing, but he has lacked his rhythm and his jumping hasn't been with the fluidity that it normally is. That is what we are hoping is going to come back and it's definitely not a mental thing that has held him back.

08/03/2019 - We don't know if we have got him back to his best but we are hopeful that we are near it. Kempton was disappointing - he never got into his rhythm and his flow. We have done a few things - nothing drastic; we have tinkered with cauterizing his pallet, we have medicated for some ulcers, little bits and pieces. We have got him in good shape. He went to Newbury on Sunday morning - he jumped ten fences he looked in good form. He needs to bowl and Nico wants to let him bowl. Maybe three and a quarter miles is too much, maybe he wants a shorter trip. We are going to go down this route, although we did even think he ought to drop into the Ryanair. He is giving us the right signs that he is enjoying himself again and, if that's the case, he has got a very good chance. It's an open race, you have got your old mates in there your Thistlecracks and Native River. You have got the Irish coming in their numbers - Presenting Percy and all of them. I think it is a very open Gold Cup. He's entitled to be there and he is entitled to be in the shake-up.

Undoubtedly the better ground will suit, he loves really good ground. To be fair they had a really nice strip of unused ground for the Gold Cup last year. He was on ground that hadn't been used for a year, so I can't really blame the ground entirely for what happened, except the ground after the last fence was horrible. You jump the last and then go into a quagmire. He landed upsides and then all of a sudden he is two lengths down and I think that was purely because he was striding along and then his feet were leaden because he couldn't get out of it. We are hoping it will be better ground. At least we come in this time with less pressure.

## MIN

It will be a late decision between taking on Altior in the Champion Chase or running in the Ryanair. Altior beat him by seven lengths in the Champion Chase last year but you should never be afraid of one horse. He's won two Grade 1s this season and all is good.

## MINDS EYE

He has a good few entries and is likely to travel. I'll discuss it with the lads closer to the time, but I think the Grand Annual might suit him. He ran well in a valuable handicap chase at the Dublin Racing Festival and was just feeling the ground a bit there. He doesn't want bottomless ground by any means, but he'll always appreciate an ease in it

## MINELLA INDO

If he gets into the Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle I'd like to run him in it. He is very laid back at home and probably coddled us before his first run back this season as he needed the run more than we thought he would. He ran much better in a Grade 3 novice hurdle at Clonmell after that having had to do all the donkey work. Hopefully he can step up again at Cheltenham. He's a half brother to Benatar who I gather is very headstrong, but this fella is the complete opposite, he's lazy! He's a real chaser in the making

## MISTER FISHER

I'm pretty sure he is a two-miler and, like Angels Breath, he will go over two miles in the Supreme.

08/03/2019 - He was good at Haydock and he has been very good. He has been working very well and I never really needed another run with him. He had already got the experience and he is in good shape.

## MISTER MALARKY

He has been a revelation over fences and is rated 148 so he is good enough to run in any of the big novice chases at Cheltenham, including the RSA Insurance Novices' Chase (Wednesday, March 13). The ground was quite quick at Ascot the last day when he won, so hopefully the ground will be softer at Cheltenham. He jumps very well and is a thorough stayer. The owners are interested in the RSA. He is also in the National Hunt Chase (Tuesday, March 12) over four miles, but at the Cheltenham Festival, all of the leading Irish amateurs usually have rides for the big Irish trainers, so finding the right jockey for the amateur race is definitely something that comes into play. We had exactly the same conversation when Native River ran in the four-miler and Mister Malarky is similar in that he is a horse who stays very well. The four-miler people say is an easier race than the RSA, but I don't think it is as some very good horses have run in it and have then been damn good three-milers the year after. It might come down in the end to whether we can get a top professional on Mister Malarky and if we can't then the RSA could be where he ends up

## MOLINEAUX

I was disappointed he got beat at Exeter last time, but he will be entered for two races at Newbury this weekend as he probably won't get into the handicap races at Cheltenham off his current mark of 131. We don't want to leave him until Cheltenham and he doesn't get in. It probably wouldn't hurt him to have another run quickly too and on better ground, you can usually do it. The idea is if he wins at Newbury and comes out the race fine, he would have a penalty which would make sure we get into Cheltenham.

## MONALEE

He has got better with each run this season and I thought it was a fine effort to give away 7lbs to a horse that was third in the Gold Cup last year to win the Red Mills Chase. He's entered in the Ryanair and Gold Cup and we haven't made a decision yet, If the ground was on the soft side it would make it an easy decision to go for the Ryanair, but it gets tricky if the ground is quicker. We've been in this exact same position with this horse in each of the last two years and have ended up going for the longer race both time and hitting the crossbar, so maybe I need to go for the mid-range race this time! I watched the RSA again only last night and I really don't think stamina was a problem for him. It's a very tough decision and we'll leave it as late as we can. I don't think he has to lead and if something wanted to lead him at a strong pace, I'd say it would suit him to chase that pace

## MORMON

He's entered in the Pertemps Final but it looks like he might struggle to get in. I'd like to run him in it. Rachel didn't think he every really got into a rhythm around the inside track at Punchestown last time and Cheltenham would suit him better

## MORTAL

We were disappointed with his last run and we didn't really find anything to excuse him it. He is entered in the JLT, the RSA and National Hunt Chase. We are happy with him at home, but there is unlikely to be a decision made on his target until late on as Gigginstown have plenty of ammo in the novice chase division.

## MY SISTER SARAH

She's a smart sort and is two from three over hurdles. The plan is to run her in the mares' novice.

## NATIVE RIVER

Native River is in good form. He got beat by a good horse at Haydock on his first start of the season and going into the King George, we were concerned about his performance at the track in the Kauto Star Novices' Chase [G1, 3m, finished third, 2015] where he was always looking to go out left-handed and he did exactly the same in the King George.

Five fences from the finish in the King George, you thought he was going to be pulled up, but then he stayed on really strongly and, if the race had been another couple of furlongs, he could have been right up with them at the finishing line.

The Gold Cup is a longer race at three miles and two furlongs and the King George is run 56 seconds faster than the Gold Cup, so that obviously brings Native River, with his stamina, right back into it. Most of his wins have come on left-handed tracks, but you cannot necessarily say that he doesn't act as well right-handed.

He was alright at Wincanton in a recent racecourse gallop. I'm not going to say he was very good as he has never won a gallop on our uphill gallop at home in his life. He is just a stamina-laden horse and he looks fit. Looking at him this morning, he looks fine and we probably won't go for another away day with him.

We'll probably school him on Thursday in the indoor school just for a bit of practice and then we will hold our nerve with him and hope Cheltenham put on plenty of water this week and then it rains, so we have nice heavy ground!

We don't want Cheltenham being quick ground – we want to have it on the slow side. Last year, we only had one run with him before the Gold Cup which he won well. He was right on his game in the Gold Cup last term. We've got two runs into him this year, he's had a racecourse gallop and you can guarantee that Richard Johnson (regular jockey) will want to get out in front and make a pace of it which worked for us last year. It would be nice to have some company for him up front this time around as the more pace, the better. Native River is a thorough stayer.

Presenting Percy [ante-post favourite for the Bulmers Cheltenham Gold Cup] is obviously a very good horse and connections have their reasons for only running him once. He is a very good horse and has been favourite all winter. I think there are at least half a dozen horses with a chance of winning the Gold Cup this year and it is a very open renewal as there is no Kauto Star, Denman or Best Mate in there. I think it will come down to stamina because three miles and two furlongs round Cheltenham, nothing is left to chance and it is a stamina race.

Native River is not a slow horse and has won over two miles before. Heavier ground will slow some of the other horses in the race, but obviously not our lad. Ironically, we used to think Native River didn't necessarily like heavy ground earlier on in his career because he does have a beautiful, low action, but we know that softer ground will play to his strengths more than quicker ground. If Native River is on song, which he should be, he has got as good a chance as he had last year.

Winning one Gold Cup is hard, to win two in a row, you need to be very good. It is a championship race and not many horses win back-to-back championship races. You need to be right on the day, but I'm happy with Native River coming into the race. We have not run the legs off him this winter and he should have plenty of petrol left for a spring campaign.

## NOTMANYLEFT

He's in Pertemps Final and Coral Cup, I'm not certain which he runs in but I'm leaning towards the Coral Cup. Won well at Huntingdon and he's a good handicapper with plenty of experience

## OK CORRAL

He will go for the four-miler but I must admit at Warwick he didn't look like he was desperate for it but if you ask Derek O'Connor I think I know what he will tell you. I am sure he will get four miles and he will go for the National Hunt Chase. He was here for three years before I could get a run into him and he wasn't sound for more than five minutes but he kept coming back and then he kept going lame. At least touch wood, he has got through it and for the past two seasons we have been able to keep going. He looked very good at Warwick and he had the best man at Warwick and that was why Derek rode him there as we had a plan.

08/03/2019 - You're not confident if it was four miles on the flat, let alone over fences. His jumping has been good, he was very good at Warwick. He just gave you the fear at Warwick that he doesn't scream four miles at you. He did earlier on in life, he looked all over a four miler, but he looks so sharp and well at the moment you say "does he need it?". He will get it, but you could easily bring him into the RSA. Derek O'Connor rode him at Warwick and he put on an excellent show, so we are looking forward to it.

## ON THE BLIND SIDE

He missed his run last weekend and I need to get a run into him. I was pleased with at Kempton but he needs another run but I am not going to send him three and quarter miles in Chepstow ground. That is not a good idea two and a half weeks before Cheltenham.

08/03/2019 - He took a bit of time to warm up the first time out at Cheltenham and even a little bit again at Kempton, but the further he went the further he got into a rhythm and he rolled away. He went to Newbury the other day and jumped some fences. Again, he was a bit cold to start with - you would like to have a choke button - but he was very good in the end. I would have loved the extra run. We have had to do it a different way, like we have with Santini, but he is good. We might just pop some cheekpieces on, to help him in the early part of the race. He is not a second string, he has got a good chance. He is very capable.

## O O SEVEN

I am very pleased with him. We are actually going to put some blinkers on him for the race and I do think they are going to help him - cheekpieces did - and he is in good form. He schooled very well in them (blinkers) the other day.

## ORNUA

The plan is to run him in the Arkle. After he finished second to Dynamite Dollars at Sandown in December we decided to put him away and train him for the Arkle. His form has been working out well since. We were a bit worried about the ground at Sandown and I think a sounder surface will suit him

## PALOMA BLUE

He's really well. We are having a debate at the minute as to whether to run him in the Arkle or the JLT. IF the ground was on the soft side it would be an easy enough decision to go for the Arkle, but on better ground there I definitely a big discussion to be had. It was a pity we couldn't run him in the Irish Arkle at the Dublin Racing Festival as that would have helped us along in deciding what to do with him trip wise, but we couldn't run him on that ground (Too quick). He has done plenty of jumping since his last run and has been away for racecourse schools on a few occasions. His jumping over hurdles wasn't great at the start of last season but he armed into it as he gained experience, so I'm hoping he'll do the same over fences

## PENHILL

It was always the plan to head back to the Stayers' Hurdle without a run. You have to check him out on a daily basis to see if everything's okay but he's coming along nicely and we're happy with him so far, but he has a few more serious bits of work to do. Hopefully all will go well and he'll be ready to defend his crown.

## PENTLAND HILLS

He has had a slightly different preparation in that he has only had one hurdle race in his life, but he was incredibly professional. He has done plenty of flat racing. He wasn't very highly rated on the flat - I think he is rated something like 40 pounds below Sir Eric on flat form, so that gives us quite a lot to find. He loved his first race over hurdles, he jumped like an old hand and travelled like a good horse. He won very easily and the second wasn't a mug. He probably hasn't done enough to say he has got a chance in this, but he belongs to a big syndicate and it's a great opportunity for them to go and have a runner. I saw him work this morning and he is in good form. He is almost certainly going to run anyway.

## PETIT MOUCHOIR

I thought he ran well enough in the Irish Champion Hurdle last time, though I had hoped he would run a little bit better. Apple's Jade was brilliant on the day and made a lot of good horses look ordinary. We have him entered in both the Champion Hurdle and the Stayers' Hurdle. The obvious option would be to go for the Champion Hurdle given he has run well in the race before, but I'm thinking he might have a better winning chance in the Stayers' Hurdle. I'm sure he'll stay further, I'm just not sure how much further. He has never been a

fast horse at home. We might just take a punt on him and run in it if the O'Leary's are happy to try it

## PIC D'ORHY

He's an interesting juvenile, who's in the Triumph Hurdle, Pic D'Orhy. A horse with the future in mind, won 3 times at Autil in the autumn. We took him to Wincanton for a gallop the other day, and we were really happy with what we saw.

I either go straight to the Triumph Hurdle or skip that and go to Aintree with him. He's got a lot of ability, and could end up in the Triumph

He'll only go to Cheltenham if there's softer ground, if it's fast spring ground we'll probably wait for Aintree.

## POKER PARTY

He's entered in the Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase but I'm pretty sure he won't run as it is just coming a bit quick after his last run. There is a valuable novice handicap chase at the Punchestown Festival and we might aim him for that

## POSH TRISH

She's an interesting one. She's going for the Mares Novices' Hurdle on the Thursday, very good mare.

One of our highest rated novice hurdlers. She's a bit more experienced, won a bumper at Cheltenham, 4 times over hurdles.

She's tough, she gallops, it's nice to have a good mare to run. She'll be a great chaser in time.

We've kept her really fresh, and we think she's got a great chance. We're hopeful of a big run.

## PRAVALAGUNA

For a mare who was lucky to survive a horrible fall at Auteuil in the summer of 2017, I've been delighted to see her come back and win two chases so decisively this season. We'll decide between the JLT and Arkle.

## PYM

He might well run in the Martin Pipe. We haven't quite made our mind up, as we have got a stack of them in there. Style De Garde will probably run in it, Pym might run in it.

## QUEL DESTIN

Prolific winner, who is second favourite for the Triumph behind Sir Erec, shortest of the British winners. He's won his last six, got beat at Cheltenham when inexperienced, but hasn't been beaten since. I was surprised how well he won at Haydock, he's improved since then. He's a proper tough 4-year-old.

Jumps well, and keeps on galloping. They're going to be tough to go past this lad, he's a proper jumping horse who's done very well and keeps getting better.

Probably a bigger price than he should be, we're looking forward to running him.

## REAL STEEL

I have declared him to run in a rated chase at Thurles tomorrow, as he has to have a third run over fences to qualify for the novices' handicap chase at Cheltenham. If he wins, he'll probably be rated too high to get into that and will probably end up in the JLT Novices' Chase instead, so we'll see what happens tomorrow.

## RELEGATE

She came from a long way behind to win the bumper at the festival last year. She was disappointing and got going only late on when she ran in a Grade 1 novice hurdle at Leopardstown last time, when the ground might have been too quick for her. The Albert Bartlett is the plan.

## RHINESTONE

He has a few entries, but at the moment he looks most likely to run in the Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle. He ran great at the Dublin Racing Festival last time and he'll probably be taking on Commander Of Fleet again in the Albert Bartlett. I think the longer trip will suit him and hopefully he can take another step forward.

## RIVER WYLDE

He could go for the Ryanair but the Brown Advisory & Merribelle Stable Handicap is more likely. He tripped over the last at Haydock when he would have won and could be a forgotten horse.

08/03/2019 - On Betfair Chase day - when it was well documented that they built some rather hairy brick walls - he was winning the intermediate chase nicely and had a horrible fall at the last. He was pretty wounded, and he has done very, very well to get back to where we are. He had a racecourse gallop and his work is good. The fall certainly hasn't affected him schooling, he has been very sharp. He is not a horse I would be mad about in a big field, I think Nico and I are both concerned about that because he hasn't got a lot of experience. If everything went right I think he has got a great chance, but the race has got to go good for him.

## ROCKPOINT

He could be a little bit underestimated going into the Albert Bartlett but he's clearly got quite a few pounds to find on the form he's shown so far. He has course winning form which is a plus and I think he'll stay well. He has the option of the EBF Final at Sandown the Saturday before Cheltenham and if it comes up soft then he might go that route over two and a half miles

## RUSSIAN HAWK

He got beat at Ascot the other day, but is a fantastic looking horse and he will be exciting to go chasing with next year. I would maybe run him in the Albert Bartlett, but the owners would like to run him at Sandown Park on the Saturday before Cheltenham. He wants a stamina test, so he would want it softer than good ground. If it came up soft or heavy at Sandown then we would go there, but if it came up good ground, then we might wait and head to Cheltenham where he might run into a place in the Albert Bartlett. He is on the improve, and is a lovely, big horse.

## SAINT CALVADOS

He had a gallop at Newbury racecourse yesterday. He did it all on the bridle, had a day out and enjoyed himself, it's all systems go for the Champion Chase. The ground should be fine. It will probably look like a mixture of good to soft and soft. It should be ideal.

## SAMCRO

The issue we found with him after his last run was a deep-seated lung infection. On the scope, you could see there was a little bit of dirt in him, but it wasn't until we did a lung wash that we found the extent of the problem. We gave him two easy weeks and a course of antibiotics after that. He looks good now, but until you go and give them a couple of good bits of work, you don't really know where you are with them. Cheltenham is coming up fast enough for him and how he is in the next 10 days will decide whether he goes there or not. If he was to go, it would probably be the Stayers' Hurdle, but nothing is set in concrete yet. If he doesn't make it there, Aintree and Punchestown are obvious alternatives, but we could just take the shoes off him and leave him off for the summer too.

## SANCTA SIMONA

She's two from three over hurdles, with her only defeat coming in a Grade 1 when second to Aramon at Leopardstown. She's being aimed at the mares' novice.

## SANTINI

Santini was going to run in the Reynoldstown and I thought he was very good at Kempton and if you had to take one horse out of the Feltham you would take him. They are all going to meet again in the RSA and Cheltenham will suit him better than Kempton. It doesn't mean he is going to beat them and I really would have loved to run him last weekend. He really needed it but we will do plenty of schooling work and ideally it would be nice if we could go for a Racecourse gallop and school him over half a dozen fences but there we go.

08/03/2019 - Santini has done nothing wrong in his two races. He got beaten at Kempton, but I think the second and third would be the two you take out the race. He won well at Newbury the first time and it has always been the objective. I would have loved to have run him in the Reynoldstown Novices' Chase but he got caught up in the flu vaccinations so he had to miss it, which was very frustrating. That would concern me a bit, but hopefully we have made up for it in other ways and he is ready to go.

## SHADY OPERATOR

He is entered in the novices' handicap chase, but he probably won't be guaranteed to get into it. We'll wait and see how he comes out in the weights. We were a bit disappointed with his last run at Naas, but he doesn't have many miles on the clock and can hopefully bounce back.

## SHARJAH

He's had a very good season, winning the Galway Hurdle, Morgiana and Ryanair Hurdle. He's improved out of all recognition and fully deserves a tilt at the Champion Hurdle.

## SHATTERED LOVE

She'll run in the Gold Cup. She ran very well in the John Durkan, but she disappointed at Leopardstown last time and came home with sore shins. When you look at her, you can see how it would happen, as she's very big. We took a chance and didn't get away with it, but we gave her time to come right after that and she's back going well. She has a few more bits of work to come through, but all being well she'll go for the Gold Cup. She has been there and done it at the Cheltenham Festival and if she turns up in the same form that she did in the John Durkan, I think she has an each-way chance.

## SINORIA

She is owned by the same man as honeysuckle, Kenny Alexander, and I think we'll keep them apart. The Ballymore could be the race for her, but she's also entered in the Martin Pipe. She's a half-sister to Minella Rocco and I think she'll stay well. She did well to overcome the drop back to two miles last time

## SIRE DU BERLAIS

The plan is to go for the Pertemps Network Final with him. He ran well in the qualifier at Leopardstown and that is the plan for him.

## SIR EREC

All is well with him and he will run in the Triumph Hurdle. He took a big step in the right direction when winning the Spring Juvenile Hurdle. He jumped very well, better than he did on his first start over hurdles. He made the running last time, but you'd be more than happy to see him get a good lead off something else. What should be a stronger test of stamina in the Triumph will suit him and he wouldn't mind any ease in the ground either. He's still a full horse, but he's very straightforward and has a great attitude, so being a colt is no hindrance to him. He's one you'd have to be excited about.

## SIZING NETWORK

He's entered in the cross-country race, he's had a back operation and he needed he recent race. He's there to have fun but if the ground is good that would suit however, I'm not sure if he gets this trip

## SLATE HOUSE

He needs a good run and he might end up running at Aintree rather than Cheltenham. He broke a bone on the back of his knee towards the back-end of last season and spent two months in his stable, so that is why he has been a bit slower to get going this term and it takes them a while to get back to where they were. If he did go to Cheltenham, he is in both the Arkle and JLT, but I think we will run at Newbury on Saturday and then see where we are.

## SLOWMOTION

There's a good chance she'll run in the Mares' Hurdle. I thought she ran well behind Laurina at Punchestown last week. She travelled with a bit more enthusiasm that day than she had been in recent starts over fences. That run entitles her to take her chance and hopefully she can sneak into the frame.

## SOLOMN GRUNDY

He is likely to go for the Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase. He's been running well in handicap chases all season, but his best run was probably his first one over two and half miles. While he ran quite well over three and a half miles last I'll be happy to step him back in tip for this race

## STAR MAX

We'd like to run him in the Fred Winter, but he wouldn't be sure to get in. He has improved with each start over hurdles and showed a good attitude to win at Gowran Park last time. A big-field handicap should suit him and he'd have a sneaky chance if he got in.

## SUB LIEUTENANT

He finished second in the Ryanair two years ago and will go for it again. He's been in a bit in and out this season but his last run at Thurles was very good. There better the ground the better he'll run

## SUPASUNDAE

Appears to be in good form. He'll go to the Curragh for a breeze as he's quite a stuffy horse. At this moment with the ground I'd be leaning towards the stayers' hurdle

## TERREFORT

We don't know yet but the Ryanair would be a possibility. He had a right good blow at Ascot on Saturday and I was very impressed with Clan Des Obeaux as he didn't half put us in our place. The Gold Cup is probably not the right race for him and he could come into the Ryanair.

08/03/2019 - He did everything last year; he was good at two and a half miles, he was good at three miles, he was second at Cheltenham, he won a Grade One at Sandown, so he is versatile. Clan Des Obeaux beat him fair and square at Ascot and to me that was Clan Des Obeaux's best performance. I thought we had a chance of beating him that day, but we got

brushed aside. Two and a half miles is a good trip for him and I think the Ryanair is the right race - Daryl is quite keen on his chances.

## THEINVAL

Has been placed in it before (the Johnny Henderson Grand Annual). He probably prefers a little bit extra, but he loves the place and is a standing dish there.

## THERMISTOCLES

He'll go for the Pertemps Network Final Handicap Hurdle if he gets into it. We've been aiming him at it since he qualified for it and he seems to be in good shape. He isn't overly exposed and ran well last time, so we'll see how he goes.

## THE STORYTELLER

He has a few entries, but the plan at the minute is to run in the Ryanair Chase. I'd say he'd need a lot of things to go his way for him to win it, but the type of horse he is and the way he'll be ridden, he could sneak into the frame. The tactical nature of the race didn't really suit him in the Irish Gold Cup. An end-to-end gallop in the Ryanair would suit him better.

## THE VERY MAN

We will skip Cheltenham this year and will probably aim him for the Punchestown Festival. He is entered at Naas on Sunday, but we'll wait and see on that.

## THISTLECRACK

Thistlecrack is a cracking horse. He was an excellent hurdler and has won a Stayers' Hurdle at The Festival. He ran well in the King George and got close to Clan Des Obeaux. I think he has as much of a chance as anything else in the race. Thistlecrack has proved that he is good around Cheltenham, he is just a good horse. He is 11 years old, but he has been lightly-raced in recent seasons.

I think Thistlecrack is probably a better horse going left-handed, but keeping him sound has always been the biggest issue and we didn't race him till he was seven.

He is fine at the moment and won't do too much more, except for maybe having a school on Wednesday. We thought coming off the bend with Thistlecrack at Kempton Park that we were going to win as the only horse who was travelling well with him was Clan Des Obeaux, the rest were beat. We probably didn't need to kick on as quick as we did at Kempton if we had the race again, but that won't happen in the Gold Cup. He is in good form.

## TIGER ROLL

I couldn't believe how well he won at Navan on Sunday. In my mind, it looked a nice spot to give him a pipe opener for Cheltenham and I thought he'd finish last or second last! That was the first time we've had blinkers on him for a while and it's fair to say they worked. He travelled brilliantly. I'd imagine we'll leave them on for Cheltenham. To win at three Cheltenham Festivals and a Grand National, it just shows the sort of horse he is. He might not

be the best horse I've ever trained, but he's definitely one of the most likeable. Watching a horse like him would put a smile on your face.

## TIGER TAP TAP

He ran Sir Erec close on his hurdling debut over Christmas before disappointing behind the same horse in a Grade 1 back at Leopardstown this month. I might have been too easy on him between those races but he's a smart sort and will take his chance in the Triumph.

## TOP NOTCH

He will go Ryanair but he's not quite a Grade 1 horse. It was a pity he couldn't go to Ascot as that's where he was supposed to be but having said that Cyrname was mightily impressive and I don't think Top Notch would have beaten him but we were going to run at Ascot. He will now go straight for the Ryanair. He is a lovely horse and everybody loves him but I am the first to admit he's just probably 5lb short of being a Grade 1 horse. He is in good form and we ran him in the Long Walk as a prep and he got the three miles and went and did it really well at Kempton. He would have to be on the shortlist of horses we are looking forward to.

08/03/2019 - We have got a strong team of horses and it is just a case of deploying your team in the right places. We went back to the Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot, which was Top Notch's preparatory race for the season, as he had been held up early on with a reaction to his EHV vaccination. He seems in good shape now and I am the first to admit that he is not quite a Grade One horse over fences. He would be third or fourth in the Ryanair because you know he will run his race and try his socks off. I do think when he is jumping fences he has got to put a lot of energy into jumping and you use up a lot of energy when you have to try as hard as he does.

## TOPOFTHEGAME

He's almost certain to run in the RSA, but he does have an entry JLT.

This is probably the tallest horse you'll see in training, he's huge. He's got lots of ability, won a point to point, good novice hurdler last season he won a £100,000 handicap at Sandown over hurdles and then he got beat a head in the Coral Cup at the Festival.

Went chasing this year, bit of a disaster on his first run this year. Basically the flag went down at the start, and he got spooked and panicked, and gave them all about 25-30 lengths, having said that, he did jump brilliantly and did manage to finish in second behind Defi Du Seuil, which does look like top class form, considering he gave them all them lengths at the start.

Then he went to Kempton over christmas in the Kauo Star Novices' Chase, and he finished second behind La Bague Au Roi, who won a grade 1 the other day, which again, is really good form. Actually, that day he did look like the winner when Harry sent him.

Hopefully we'll go on to Aintree with him afterwards, he's a high class chaser in the making.

## TORNADO FLYER

He had a setback a couple of weeks ago and while he is back sound, Cheltenham will come too soon for him.

## TOWER BRIDGE

Depending on what the handicapper does, he could potentially run in the novices' handicap chase. His last run was his first decent effort over fences and hopefully he can build on that, as his first couple of runs over fences were disappointing.

## UCELLO CONTI

Barry O'Neill was very happy with him at Navan. He said he was only doing as much as he had to and that he was toying with them. Cheltenham will be a step up for him, but he has a lot of experience in competitive handicaps and the race should suit him well.

## ULTRAGOLD

We have had a brainwave with him that we are going to run in the Glenfarclas Cross Country (Wednesday, March 13). It seemed a good prep race for Tiger Roll last year before the Grand National and that is our thinking with him. We have run him at Cheltenham for the last two or three years and he's done quite well, but it has always been a good prep for him before Aintree. He is in the Ultima and tomorrow we'll put him in the Cross Country as I think he has got a better chance of winning that race. We will take him up to Cheltenham to school over the Cross Country fences in the next couple of weeks to school, then Ultragold will head to the Grand National.

## UN DE SCEAUX

He's been a wonderful servant for his owners and has twice won at the festival. He hasn't had his ground this season – at this stage of his career he appreciates plenty of ease – but seems to be coming right. The work he did on Tuesday was the best he's done all season. The Ryanair, which he won two years ago, is the plan.

## URADEL

He has been entered in a couple of handicap hurdles at Cheltenham and is in good form. We'll pick a target for him closer to the time after we see the weights.

## US AND THEM

He has a couple of entries, but he looks very likely to go for the Arkle Challenge Trophy. He has been doing nothing wrong over fences and would have two Grade 1s in the bag if it wasn't for Le Richebourg! He's a very good novice and is more than entitled to take his chance and run well.

## VERDANA BLUE

She was going to run in a Fast Track Qualifier at Kempton which would have qualified for a £200,000 race but she had to miss that as a result of the flu vaccination situation and she will go straight to Cheltenham. She is fine and has a very good turn of foot but ground is essential for her. It will be good to soft on Champion Hurdle Day and she wouldn't want it any worse than that.

## VIEUX MORVAN

He has a couple of entries at Cheltenham, but I'd say he's more likely to wait for either the Grand National or the Irish Grand National.

## VISION DES FLOS

Vision Des Flos won the National Spirit nicely at Fontwell yesterday. He is a lovely horse and if he had not unseated his rider on his first chase start earlier this season, then I think we would have gone chasing for the rest of the year. As it was, we decided to revert back to hurdling as he was only a five-year-old at the time and we have run him in all the big two and two and a half-mile hurdles. Yesterday was his easiest race this term and he travelled supremely well throughout. I'm sure the Champion Hurdle will be run at a frantic pace and he travels well enough to run in those two-mile races, so we wouldn't be afraid to go for the Champion Hurdle with him.

There are probably at least five horses higher rated than him in the race, but we will make a decision nearer the time. He is also entered in the Coral Cup, so it is something we don't need to decide today.

## VISION D'HONNEUR

He'll go for the Supreme Novices' Hurdle. I was disappointed he was beaten at Leopardstown and then he won well at Punchestown. The ground was a bit too quick for him at Leopardstown last time. Jack felt he wasn't letting himself down on it or jumping off it as well as he can. He's a horse that I could see stepping up in trip down the road.

## VOIX DU REVE

He's won two chases and was none the worse for his fall at Leopardstown last time. The advice from our jockeys is to step him up in trip so he's more likely to go for the JLT than the Arkle.

## VYTA DU ROC

We took him there yesterday (to see Cross Country fences at Cheltenham). It was entertaining, he was good. He's in the Kim Muir, but we thought we would have a look at this. Daryl rode him yesterday and he enjoyed it. There is a lot of novelty about this race and I think that is the sort of thing this horse would enjoy. We will have a go!

## WALK TO FREEDOM

He's has various injuries and has come back better than ever this season. He'll have a great chance in the Pertemps Final

## WE HAVE A DREAM

That's the plan now (the County Hurdle). We were going to go Champion Hurdle but then you have to say that he is not going to win that. Second season four-year olds, they always have a difficult time. He is going to have a lot of weight in the County. He won that Morebattle Hurdle at Kelso the other day - a race that we have used a lot to try and help some of these horses get their confidence back - and I have reason to hope. Daryl was saying this morning that's the best he has been and so I hope he is right.

## WEST APPROACH

We've had a go twice at Paisley Park and I've been pleased with both of his runs. West Approach will run in the Stayers' Hurdle and we will sit on the tail of Paisley Park this time around. He has plenty of pace for a three-miler and if we could cover him up a bit then he would have a good chance in the Stayers'.

## WESTERN RYDER

All being well he will head to the County Hurdle. He was found to have very bad ulcers after Haydock, where I fancied him to go close, and I'm pretty adamant he didn't run his race.

He has been kept fresh for the County Hurdle. I think the fast-run two miles on the New Course will suit him and we know he has good form at Cheltenham and hopefully we can get him back on track.

There will probably be something carrying more weight than him, but the weights are so compressed now he will not be giving lots of weight away.

## WHATSWRONGWITHYOU

Quite aptly named, he has had one or two issues in life. The last week before qualifications, if you like, he had to have his third run and he had to go up the weights. I got the right race because we won at Fontwell and it was a good performance. I wanted to go up five pounds to get in, he did it too well and went up ten pounds. I think the handicapper knew exactly what I was trying to do and gave him an almighty thump. Having said that, he is in. He loves soft ground so if it wants to get wet that day, at least I have something that will like the ground. Theinval will hate it if it gets soft, but there you go. I have got one for all weathers.

## WHISPERINTHEBREEZE

He doesn't get into the handicaps (Kim Muir or Close Brothers) as he's rated 146. He'll run in the 4 mile race and the better the ground the better he'll like it