

POSTFILE

POST RACE ANALYSIS

BETFAIR CHASE – 22nd Nov 2008

Ollie Magern has now finished well beaten in thirteen of his last fifteen races and needs to be marked down until the Charlie Hall next season. In the Betfair Chase he was surprisingly restrained in the rear, which left **Tamarinbleu** with a free lead. The latter jumped to the front from **Snoopy Loopy** at the first fence and stayed there until being overtaken on the line. The way the race was run meant it was no coincidence that the two horses who led over the first fence also fought out the finish.

The key to the race was the slow early tempo and the two injections of pace **Tamarinbleu** put in - once after the turn away from the winning post with a circuit to go and again round the final bend until the second last fence. By my stopwatch, **Tamarinbleu** covered the distance from the fifth last fence up to the second last obstacle, approximately two seconds faster than the 134 handicapper Possol did in the following race [same course and distance], but then ran over a second slower than the same horse from the second last flight to the winning post. Taking into account the approximate nature of stopwatch timing, this still suggests that **Kauto Star** gave a two and a half mile speedster a healthy start and attempted to make up ground quickly at a point when **Tamarinbleu** was travelling at maximum speed. The fact that the favourite fought back after a mistake three out to join the leader at the final fence strongly suggests he ran an excellent race in disadvantageous circumstances against an opponent enjoying a near perfect trip. If **Kauto Star** had been ridden with more patience he may well have won with something to spare. **Providing he suffers no ill effects from his last fence fall he could still win the King George on Boxing Day with lengths in hand.** However, due to his cramped odds a word of caution is needed. In his last eight runs he has travelled well and won without being asked a question three times and has come under pressure and found less than looked likely in the other five races, four of which have resulted in defeat.

Tamarinbleu is unlikely to benefit from such an advantageous journey through a race very often and it may be unwise to automatically assume he will stay this trip in the future should he be taken on for the lead. Furthermore, his first time out record reads **1 1 2 6 1 2** which is far better than the rest of his form [four wins from twenty runs]. The level of his best form means he is likely to be aimed at Cheltenham and/or Aintree in the spring. It is worth bearing in mind that his career form in March and April reads **0 0 0 2 4 0 P 6 7 3** – hardly inspiring figures.

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Exotic Dancer was particularly inconvenienced by the pace of the race, especially on ground he has struggled on many times in the past. He has now lost fifteen out of eighteen races on ground described as good to soft or faster. His jumping often lacks fluency on this going which was certainly the case here. He was extremely keen due to the slow early pace and struggled to jump at speed when the leader quickened the pace. Apparently he may not go for the King George, but if it came up soft or heavy he would be a big danger to all. **The stand out race for him is the Letheby and Christopher Chase at Cheltenham at the end of January. On testing ground he is highly likely to run to his best.** This scenario may also provide an opportunity to consider backing him for the Gold Cup before the Letheby and Christopher and then laying him after the race.

Snoopy Loopy was under pressure and looked the least likely winner [aside from Ollie Magern] for most of the last circuit. He was another who looked inconvenienced by the sudden injections of pace. On this evidence he looks likely to appreciate a longer trip. Ultimately, he won with a little in hand as he made a mistake at the final fence and also lost momentum when he ran in behind the leader on the run in. He would probably travel better with an end to end gallop, but whether his jumping would stand up to such a test is open to question. We may find out the answer if he runs in the Hennessy on Saturday.

According to the handicapper, he will have ten pounds in hand of his opponents at Newbury. However, as Patterns & Profiles constantly argues, this game is far more complex than pounds per lengths assessments. It is our view that **Snoopy Loopy** has too many negatives to overcome before he can make the shortlist on Saturday. In particular, his jumping will need to improve in a race customarily run at an even fast pace. [Last year was an exception] Furthermore, the last time he returned to action within a few days of a previous race was when finishing third in the Charlie Hall Chase [when he made several mistakes in a fast run race] and, although that was a decent enough performance, it falls a long way short of the level required to win a Hennessy off a mark of 158. If he makes one serious mistake at Newbury he will almost certainly struggle to regain his position.

His profile suggests he is much more likely to pick up prize money in small field conditions events where he will probably continue to be under bet and overpriced despite this win - especially if he disappoints at Newbury. Looking ahead, **Snoopy Loopy has the profile of a horse that could run well in the Cheltenham Gold Cup at a big price.**