

# THE GUIDE

## KEMPTON

### RACING POST CHASE

- 27<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2010

### MADISON DU BERLAIS

He has run 36 times over fences and finished in the first three no less than 22 times; his form has improved dramatically since the application of cheek pieces and the introduction of new tactics. Since he has worn cheek pieces and been ridden more positively he has won three out five chases run on his preferred flat tracks and finished down the field in the 2009 **Cheltenham** Gold Cup; his record at Cheltenham now reads: **3 6 7 3 5 8 4**. His only disappointing performance when wearing cheek pieces occurred in November when he finished well beaten behind **Kauto Star** and **Imperial Commander** at **Haydock** on his seasonal debut. His first time out record now reads: **U 8 4 6 3**.

At the start of this season **Madison Du Berlais** appeared to be just about the best three mile chaser in the country (aside from **Kauto Star**) when racing on flat tracks. Since then he has run three times with mixed results; his seasonal debut disappointment was not too unexpected, whilst his poor run at **Cheltenham** was totally predictable. In his only other race he finished second to **Kauto Star** in the King George Chase, yet is now rated seven pounds lower than his mark at the beginning of the season. Although we have no idea how he will respond to first time blinkers, his current odds of **8/1** are generous enough to encourage a small investment.

### NACARAT

He has won three of his ten chases in Britain and finished place in three others. His latest two successes were gained in scintillating fashion; he had the race won early in the home straight at **Doncaster** in January 2009 and then again in the Racing Post Chase at **Kempton** the following month. We should remember that he got close to a few fences in both races; although this appears to have been forgotten due to the visually impressive nature of the end product each time. Furthermore, he did jump out to the left at **Kempton**, whereas he jumped straight at **Doncaster** and **Aintree** - both left handed tracks.

He is a progressive chaser who ran very well in each of his final three chases of the 2008/09 season. He stays three miles and has looked particularly suited to racing on soft ground and his only below par effort last season came on his seasonal bow at **Exeter** in December 2008. His performance at the same venue first time out this season strongly supports the notion of opposing **Nacarat** when he races on his seasonal debut. He followed this run up by performing badly in the Long Walk Hurdle at **Ascot**; a race where he was well beaten a long way from home before eventually being pulled up. Although there is a minor concern that he slightly favours going left handed the fact that the ground will ride soft at **Kempton** is massively in his favour.

**In Running:** He is currently trading at **4.9** and, unless something goes dramatically wrong early on, we should have plenty of opportunity to lay off on the home turn to create a free bet.

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## KILCREA CASTLE

He has jumped and travelled particularly well in both of his chases this season. On his seasonal debut he proved his stamina over three miles plus with a staying on second to the Noel Meade trained **Casey Jones** at **Punchestown**. In his latest run, his first outing for the Emma Lavelle yard he made smooth headway approaching the home turn but could never quite get to the winner **The Sawyer** who reinforced the value of the form when he won again at **Cheltenham** a few days later.

**Kilcrea Castle** acts on soft ground and stays three miles well and is certainly one to consider in this wide open handicap; however, although he has stronger claims than most, he is another horse who is shorter in the market than he should be, particularly when one considers that he is trading at **5/1** despite having only won once in his last ten attempts over fences.

## RAZOR ROYALE

He ran much better than his finishing position would suggest in his last chase at **Sandown** as he was actually still in contention turning for home despite making a serious error at the middle of the three railway fences. Previously he had very well in three handicap chases at **Cheltenham**. In the first of them he ran away with an amateur rider's event over three miles plus off a mark of 129 and followed this up with an improved effort in the Boylesports Gold Cup when beaten on the run in by the current Ryanair Chase winner **Poquelin** who is now rated 160. **Razor Royale** was in receipt of eleven pounds from the Paul Nicholls horse that day, which reads well in the context of this race. He stays the trip, acts on the ground and will benefit from having Paddy Brennan back on board; although he may not be the most reliable of propositions, the fact that he is trading at **27** in the win market and over **5/1** to be placed on the exchanges, suggests he is one of few horses in the race that could be described as being overpriced.

## FISTRAL BEACH

He had finished second in his five previous races before finally breaking that sequence with a hard fought victory over **Heathcote** on soft going over two miles and five furlongs at **Kempton**. He was able to travel well within himself off the pace that day but with **Nacarat** dictating the pace will face a very different challenge in the Racing Post Chase.

The fact that he had previously been beaten over fences off marks of 120 and 126 is a little concerning considering he is now rated **132**. He comes into this race in form and off bottom weight and is certainly one of the stronger contenders for this race; nonetheless, his price of **4/1** is more to do with the name of his trainer and jockey and, therefore, despite the fact that he has a reasonable chance in an open race, others are preferred.

## THE REST

**Oedipe** is beginning to look very well handicapped and as soon as he runs in a race on goodish ground he will be one for the short list. As things stand, the handicap chase he won at **Aintree** two years ago appears to be as obvious a target race as any. **Private Be** has not won in his last eight attempts and is yet to race over a trip of three miles; whilst **Le Burf** has some good **Kempton** form to his name and could run well at a price. **Something Wells** is yet to prove he stays this trip and **Ollie Magern** could run well for a long way but is best left alone

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until **Wetherby** on his next seasonal debut. **Atouchbetweenacara** will probably be more suited to racing on better ground in the spring and finally, **Piraya** has each way claims, though enthusiasm is tempered by the fact that it took him nine tries before finally getting off the mark in Britain when winning last time out over two and a half miles at **Warwick**.

## CONCLUSIONS

This is a wide open race with quite a few viable contenders and the best advice is to keep stakes to a minimum and save our money for the festival. **Nacarat**, **Fistral Beach** and **Kilcrea Castle** are all too short in the betting market despite all three holding fairly strong claims. Of the three **Nacarat** is probably worth supporting as a back to lay. When a race is as competitive as this the best course of action can often be to have a pop at a couple at slightly bigger odds. Of the rest **Razor Royale** stands out as being overpriced and is worth a small investment at **27.0** in the win market and just over **5/1** for a place on the exchanges. The other horse to consider is **Madison Du Berlais** who has less to forgive than most and is therefore worth a small win bet at **8/1**.

