

# WORLD HURDLE

The statistics as presented below are thoroughly researched and valid. They are, however, presented to augment and complement the analysis given in the other parts of the guide and we would hope they would be used in that way.

## LADBROKES WORLD HURDLE

### 10 Year Trends 1999-2009 (2001 abandoned)

The figures for all the various statistics are in date order, earliest first from left to right.

#### Contents

Hurdle debut record

Last time out record

Total career starts prior to hurdle debut

Total career starts over hurdles (Prior)

Strike rate over hurdles (Prior)

Class statistics

Age statistics

Days since ran record

Irish race record

Fate of the favourite

SP of favourite

Betting position of the winner

SP of the winner

BHB rating (Where provided)

Profile analysis

# WORLD HURDLE

Hurdle debut record reads:

1 2 5 5 1 1 2 1 1 5

Last time out record reads:

2 2 1 2 2 1 1 2 1 1

100% in the first two last time out.

Total career starts prior to hurdle debut reads (FLAT/NHF):

8 0 7 7 5 12 1 12 12 0

100% of all winners have had twelve or less runs prior to hurdle debut.

Total career starts over hurdles reads (Correlates in line to the above):

16 6 14 16 8 9 10 16 19 15

100% of winners ran less then twenty times over hurdles.

Strike rate over hurdles reads (Correlates in line to the above):

44% 50% 71% 69% 75% 56% 50% 56% 60% 27%

Rounded up to the nearest percent.

Average % = 55.8%

Grade 1 wins prior to Ladbrokes World Hurdle:

0 0 3 4 1 0 1 1 2 0

Graded wins over hurdles prior to Ladbrokes World Hurdle:

1 1 7 9 4 4 2 8 11 2

100% of winners have at least won a graded race.

Age statistics:

8 6 7 8 7 6 6 8 9 6

# WORLD HURDLE

100% of all winners were aged five or six.

Days since ran record reads:

19 18 20 83 32 26 25 110 46 47

Irish record reads:

2 2 1 3 4 3 2 6 3 3

Fate of the favourite reads (asterisk denotes joint position in the market):

2\* 6 1 1\* 2 2 3 F 1 3

SP of the favourite (correlates in line to the above):

2-1 5-2 13-8 9-4 8-11 6-5 4-1 2-1 11-8 10-11

Betting position of the winner (asterisk denotes joint position in the market):

9 3 1 1\* 2 3 4 3 1 3

90% of winners were in the first four in the betting.

SP of the winner (correlates in line to the above):

40-1 11-2 13-8 9-4 9-2 5-1 8-1 5-1 11-8 6-1

BHB rating (where provided):

148 163 - - 168 157 157 163 172 170

Profile analysis:

Based on past statistics the following horses, best fit the profile.

**Big Buck`s**

## POSTFILES

### CORAL ASCOT

- 21<sup>st</sup> NOV 2009

This was a fantastic performance by **Zaynar** as he jumped magnificently on his way to a six length defeat of the highly regarded **Karabak**. He took up the running and kicked on well before the final turn leaving most of his rivals toiling in his wake. How much relevance this will have on the outcome of the Champion Hurdle is another matter altogether; **Red Moloney** was still travelling well as they straightened up, before running out of stamina over the near two and a half mile trip, whilst **Karabak** could never quite get to the exuberant grey and, along with the fourth horse **Katchit**, now heads for the World Hurdle. Nicky Henderson stated in the autumn that he thought **Zaynar** might appreciate further than two miles and it is doubtful that he saw anything in this performance; as good as it undoubtedly was, to alter that view as his exciting grey appeared to be well suited to the extended trip.

### LONG DISTANCE

- 28<sup>th</sup> NOV 2009

The way that **Big Buck's** toyed with his rivals up the home straight made the Long Distance Hurdle appear to be a particularly weak renewal of the race bar the favourite. This, however, is far from the truth as the runner up **Lough Derg** is a 159 rated hurdler and the third home **Duc De Regniere** now runs off a mark of 154. These ratings compare favourably with past renewals of this race involving both **Baracouda** and **Inglis Drever** and add to the belief that in **Big Buck's** we have the best staying hurdler we have witnessed for a long time. He is simply head and shoulders above 159 rated horses like **Lough Derg** and as things stand, particularly because this years batch of staying hurdlers appear to be below the standard of **Punchestowns** and **Kasbah Bliss**, the 2010 World Hurdle Crown is his for the taking.

### LONG WALK

- 29<sup>th</sup> DEC 2009

**Big Buck's** ran out a much more convincing winner of the Grade Two Long Walk Hurdle than had looked likely earlier in the home straight. The heavy ground would not have been in the favour of the runner up **Karabak** who ran with great credit as he stayed on well into second place three and a half lengths behind the pushed out winner. The 164 rated **Diamond Harry** should have been more at home in the conditions and the fact that he was so comprehensively beaten encouraged his connections to change plans and head for the RSA Chase. **Karabak** was promoted to second favourite for the World Hurdle on the strength of this performance and rightly so, particularly because he is likely to improve when racing on better ground. Nonetheless, **Big Buck's** will not be inconvenienced from racing on the good to soft ground that often prevails at **Cheltenham** in March and may even improve for it; he remains clear of his rivals for the World Hurdle. **Fair Along** ran well for a long way on ground that would have been far too testing for his liking; he boasts an excellent record at **Cheltenham** and should improve on this performance given faster conditions.

### FREEDOM

- 1<sup>st</sup> JAN 2010

Although the very small turnout for the Freedom Hurdle was very disappointing, the quality of all three horses was, at least, some compensation and they certainly made for a fascinating and informative contest. The odds on favourite **Mr Thriller** held a prominent position early on before taking up the running from the fifth flight in an attempt to take the sting out of

# WORLD HURDLE

the finish of his two rivals **Katchit** and **Sentry Duty**, both of whom could boast far better two mile form than the David Pipe horse. **Katchit** remained close up until being driven to lead well before the last hurdle; however, sat behind him and covering his surge to the front was the motionless Barry Geraghty on board the outsider of the three **Sentry Duty**. It looked a question of time before the Nicky Henderson horse would go to the front and win the race, and so it proved as the ice cool Geraghty waited until 50 yards from the finish before asking his mount for that extra effort; the response was immediate as **Sentry Duty** quickly put daylight between himself and the toiling **Katchit**.

Apparently Barry Geraghty's immediate response post race was to suggest that **Sentry Duty** would be better off returning to race at two miles. This was clearly not a unanimous opinion amongst connections as he is now being targeted at the World Hurdle for which he has been promoted to third favourite. There is nothing in **Sentry Duty's** profile that suggests he will improve for another step up in trip; however, the fact that he is not good enough to compete with the best over two miles and arguably has too high a rating for handicaps leaves his connections with few alternatives, a comment that could also be applied to **Katchit**.

## CLEEVE

- 30<sup>th</sup> JAN 2010

**Tidal Bay** returned to form in scintillating style as he showed a tremendous burst of speed to quicken right away from **Time For Rupert** and **Katchit** after the last in the Grade Two Cleeve Hurdle. This was yet another **Cheltenham** trial run on testing ground, though this was probably much more in favour of the gallant runner up **Time For Rupert** than the winner, who has previously shown a preference for good going. Howard Johnson's horse was promoted to **10/1** third favourite for the World Hurdle on the back of this performance and with there being little strength in depth in that department, one can understand why. Not for the first time, **Fair Along** failed to get home in the testing conditions, and with his solid record at **Cheltenham** it would be no surprise to see him run above his odds in the World Hurdle given better ground. The runner up **Time For Rupert**, although he has won on good going, is likely to need a repeat of these ground conditions to give him his best chance of finishing in front of **Tidal Bay** in March whilst **Katchit** is another horse that will benefit from racing on a less testing surface.

## THE GUIDE

### BIG BUCK'S

**Big Buck's** is now unbeaten in six contests since returning to race over hurdles last season. This winning sequence includes two Grade One events as well as three successes in Grade Two races. He is the reigning champion having won the 2009 World Hurdle in impressive style from the high class **Punchestowns** with the third horse trailing 17 lengths in their wake. This season he has won two from two and was particularly impressive in his first start on good to soft ground at Newbury in November. He returned to the same course a month later to readily dispose of **Karabak**, his closest rival in the World Hurdle betting. **Big Buck's** hit his customary flat spot in this contest and looked in trouble early on in the home straight before staying on powerfully in the very testing ground to run out an ultimately convincing winner. The first and second home should both be more at home on the better ground that usually prevails at **Cheltenham** in March, although whether or not they will improve pro rata is another matter altogether. According to official ratings he has eight pounds in hand of the second top rated horse in **Karabak** and is a further six pounds clear of the back to form **Tidal Bay**. He acts on ground ranging from good to heavy, has more substance to his form than most odds on **Cheltenham** favourites and clearly has the best chance of winning.

### TIDAL BAY

**Tidal Bay** has now won five and been runner up four times in the nine races he has contested over hurdles and has finished in the first two in 19 out of 23 career starts. He was hobbled in the summer (a procedure involving tying back part of the larynx, so opening the airway more) and depending on which expert we choose to listen to these procedures can improve the condition of the horse in approximately 50% of cases. His impressive win on his latest start in the Cleeve Hurdle run on soft ground at **Cheltenham** over three miles suggests that, in his case, the procedure has been a success; particularly when we consider that he had twice previously struggled to get up the **Cheltenham** hill on testing ground over extended trips. This scintillating performance brings him right into the picture for the World Hurdle; he will be even more suited to racing on a faster surface and on balance, his odds of about **9/1** appear more than fair in a race where there is little strength in depth.

### KARABAK

**Karabak** has finished in the first three in eight of his nine career starts. The way that he stayed on strongly into second place behind **Big Buck's** in the Long Walk Hurdle on his latest start suggests that he has a decent chance of staying the three mile trip of the World Hurdle. That race was run on unsuitably testing going and he will certainly be better for racing on good or good to soft ground although the same can be said for his two main rivals in the betting market. **Karabak** is one of two strong contenders faced with the task of wresting the World Hurdle Crown away from **Big Buck's** and there is enough evidence to suggest he will do himself justice and run a solid race. However, in the event of the race being run on very soft ground he will surely be outstayed by the favourite and may well find himself struggling to hang onto a place against rivals with more proven stamina.

# WORLD HURDLE

## SENTRY DUTY

**Sentry Duty** was briefly elevated to third favourite for the World Hurdle after disposing of **Katchit** and **Mr Thriller** in a three runner contest at **Cheltenham** run on soft going over a trip of two miles and four and a half furlongs. All his previous best form has been shown on better ground over half a mile less and his place in the World Hurdle line up is surely more to do with connections having little choice and nothing to lose rather than any strong belief that the three mile trip will be in his favour. The World Hurdle is likely to be a really gruelling test and any horse with suspect stamina is going to find life very difficult against proven stayers of the quality of **Big Buck's** and, to a lesser extent, **Tidal Bay**.

## KATCHIT

Since being successful in the 2008 Champion Hurdle **Katchit** has failed to win in eight subsequent races. He proved that he retained at least most of his ability by staying on into sixth place in last seasons Champion Hurdle and, indeed, it is his **Cheltenham** form and, in particular his festival form, that offers some hope for his chances in the World Hurdle. His connections had little choice but to step him up in trip as he was clearly no longer a force in the top class two mile races and the way he stayed on behind **Tidal Bay** and **Time For Rupert** at **Cheltenham** over three miles on unsuitably soft ground offered some encouragement for his chances in March. The problem he may have in reversing that form on potentially better ground is that **Tidal Bay** is also highly likely to improve for racing on a faster surface; nonetheless, **Katchit** has already won five races at **Cheltenham** and is a tough competitor who could easily be battling it out for a place, particularly if the World Hurdle is run on a sounder surface than the testing conditions he raced on last time out at the course.

## FAIR ALONG

**Fair Along** has won three times and been placed on five other occasions from eleven starts over hurdles at **Cheltenham**. He has proven his ability to stay three miles and, although he has won in testing conditions, he has always looked more suited to racing on good or good to soft ground. He is still rated 160 over hurdles yet has been dismissed in the betting for the World Hurdle in comparison to horses racing off a lower mark. Although his overall form at the course is very positive, his performances at the last two festivals offer little encouragement for his chances this year. He proved that he retains a lot of his ability with an impressive win on good ground at **Wetherby** on his seasonal debut; unfortunately he appears to have got bogged down in the mud on his subsequent two starts. His previous form at this time of year suggests that he is one to leave well alone, particularly for a race of this standing; on the other hand, there is not a lot of strength in depth in the World Hurdle beyond the first three favourites and **Fair Along** has a chance comparable with most of the rest and therefore, may be of some interest in the market without the favourite closer to the day.

## TIME FOR RUPERT

Unlike several of his rivals in the World Hurdle, **Time For Rupert** is a young progressive horse who, if his last two races are anything to go by, is still improving. According to the official handicapper, he began the season off a mark of 145 and has improved 14 pounds to his current rating of 159. To add further substance to his chances, his last two performances, both run over the same course and distance as the World Hurdle, have each compared favourably with all his rivals bar the first three favourites. He is guaranteed to stay the trip and has winning form on

# WORLD HURDLE

ground ranging from soft to good; consequently, he is a reliable betting proposition and, although he may not have quite the same chance as either **Tidal Bay** or **Karabak**, he is, nevertheless, within touching distance of both and certainly appears to be overpriced at **9/1** in the market without the favourite. An even stronger way of supporting him for the race would be if bookmakers put him up as second favourite in match betting against the doubtful stayer **Sentry Duty**.

**Please bear in mind that many of the horse profiles were prepared well in advance of the conclusions. I decided not to edit them as they represent my thinking at the time of writing.**

## CONCLUSIONS

**Time For Rupert** is a reliable betting proposition and, although he may not have quite the same chance as either **Tidal Bay** or **Karabak**, he is, nevertheless, within touching distance of both, has a good chance of finishing in the first four and certainly appears to be overpriced at **10/1** in the market without the favourite. An even stronger way of supporting him for the race would be if bookmakers put him up as second favourite in match betting against the doubtful stayer **Sentry Duty**.