



GBI RACING PREVIEW ECLIPSE STAKES, SANDOWN

YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST OF THE RACING ACTION IN THE UK AND IRELAND

ELITE FIELD OF EIGHT FOR THE CORAL-ECLIPSE

Since its inception, the Coral-Eclipse Stakes, staged over 2000m at Sandown Park on the outskirts of South London, has attracted both the very best horses and some fantastic finishes. A first opportunity to compare the current Classic crop of three-year-olds with older generations, the likes of Reference Point, Motivator, Workforce and Authorized all came here on the back of clear-cut victories in the Derby only to find themselves unable to dominate in the same way. In contrast, more recently, the likes of Golden Horn and Sea The Stars have both followed up Epsom victories and confirmed themselves true champions.

What can we expect from the 2018 renewal on Saturday? The depth among the older horses may be lacking, but the race still offers an opportunity for questions to be answered as Derby winner Masar bids to confirm superiority over Roaring Lion, the latter lining up just seven days after a laboured effort when third in the Irish Derby. Aidan O'Brien has performed magic in similar circumstances in the past. But can he bring the shine back to the 2000 Guineas winner after two underwhelming defeats?



MASAR
Trainer **Charlie Appleby**
Form: **36-0131**

Silenced doubts as to possible stamina limitations when running away with the Investec Derby, staying on strongly having looked held on merit when finishing third previously behind Saxon Warrior in the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket.

Trainer Appleby believes his colt is simply on a rapid upward curve and if seeing is believing, then Masar is going to take some beating, especially given that it is hard to believe that the

drop back to this 2000m trip is going to hinder him, given the manner of his victory over 1600m in the Craven.

But plenty of Epsom winners have come up short here and although some of his defeats have been excusable, he lacks the same aura of invincibility of the likes of Golden Horn and Sea The Stars.

SAXON WARRIOR
Trainer **Aidan O'Brien**
Form **111-143**

ROARING LION
Trainer **John Gosden**
Form **12-3513**

Undoubtedly high class at two and looked destined to end up as an elite performer when running away with the 2000 Guineas at Newmarket, only for the graph to take a turn in the opposite direction twice since.

Track, lack of stamina and lack of experience were all mooted as extenuating circumstances when failing to quicken from a promising-looking position in the Investec Derby, but his latest third in the Irish version was possibly harder to forgive given that he appeared to be in just the right place in a slowly-run affair.

It's not easy to know what to make of the decision to send him back in action again just seven days later, but Aidan O'Brien has landed some big pots in similar circumstances and time may tell that returning to this 2000m trip proves the making of him.

Could politely be described as a bit of a character, as less politely as a talented rogue, having hung markedly to the left under pressure twice in big races, but there's no doubting either his considerable talent or the esteem in which he is held by his masterful trainer.

The US-bred son of Kitten's Joy has ground to make up on Masar on both his 2000 Guineas and Derby form, but looked to be going strongly at Epsom only for his stamina to fail in the final stages.

Reports suggest that his homework in Newmarket since has been of the very highest order and expectation is certainly mounting as to his prospects, despite formlines suggesting he has something to do against both of his main market rivals. Jockey Oisín Murphy bids for a first British Group One victory.



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NARELLA MAKES APPEAL ON BRITISH BOW

Formerly trained in Germany by Markus Klug, **Narella** hasn't been seen in action since finishing last of seven in a Group One in France back in the autumn. But the vibes from Newmarket suggest that the daughter of **Reliable Man** is ready to make a big impression on her first start for Roger Varian in the Coral Distaff, one of the supporting events on the Eclipse Stakes card at Sandown on Saturday.

Previously she had won both of her two starts in her native Germany in impressive fashion, but they came on a sound surface and the much softer conditions may have been against her for final start. She takes a dramatic drop in class here into Listed company and takes the eye, especially given that new connections have seen fit to enter her for a Group One in Ireland in a couple of months' time.

The Coral Charge over the minimum 1000m trip gets proceedings underway at Sandown and many will think that this looks at the mercy of **Muthmir** who got back to winning ways at Haydock last time. However, **Judicial** was luckless in running in behind the favourite in that contest and confirmed his wellbeing in a lesser grade at Beverley since. He is a big player in this line-up, along with **Different League**, a Royal Ascot winner last year and not beaten all that far back at the same meeting behind **Blue Point** last time out. The stiff finish at Sandown should suit her as she bids to get back on the winning track for Aidan O'Brien.



Muthmir triumphs at Haydock on his latest run



Roger Varian, trainer of the ex-German Narella

GOSDEN BIDDING FOR PRECIOUS EIGHTH SUCCESS

It's a 400-mile cross-country round trip from Newmarket to Haydock, but a journey top trainer John Gosden has made with great success in the past, He will be bidding to land tomorrow's Saturday's Bet365 Lancashire Oaks (2400m) for a record eighth time when he saddles the rapidly-improving **Precious Ramotswe**.

The lightly-raced four-year-old daughter of Nathaniel has only seen the racecourse five times in her life, but has tasted success on four of those occasions with her only defeat coming on desperately soft ground in France last November. Characteristically, she has been brought along slowly this campaign, starting back with a win at Brighton and following that with a gutsy performance when taking a Group Three at York last time.

Gosden is a master at bringing on these slow developing fillies and she looks just the type to keep on improving, but neighbour Luca Cumani whose Bedford Lodge yard is based a literal stone's throw up the Bury Road may have the main danger in **God Given**, a gutsy Group Three winner over track and trip last time out.

One of the big betting races of the weekend is the following race on the card, the historic Old Borough Cup, in which much of the talk this week has concerned the Roger Charlton-trained **Atty Persse**.

The four-year-old son of Frankel, a Royal Ascot winner in the Godolphin silks in 2017, hasn't been seen in public since disappointing behind **Cracksman** at York last summer, but could be dangerously well-handicapped having been gelded while away from the track. The clear-cut success of **Withhold** in last weekend's Northumberland Plate confirmed Charlton's mastery at being able to bring one back from a break.