



GBI RACING PREVIEW SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3

YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST OF THE RACING ACTION THIS WEEKEND

FROST OUT TO WARM THINGS UP AT WETHERBY

An old-fashioned battle of precision jumping and relentless galloping in front of a roaring Yorkshire crowd, the Bet365 Charlie Hall Chase has been won by some of the sport's greatest steeplechasers, with Wayward Lad, One Man and See More Business all winning the contest among those to win the race twice.

Bryony Frost, 23, bids to break new ground and become the first female rider to land the Grade 2 contest as she partners leading fancy **Black Corton** for top trainer Paul Nicholls.

Black Corton gained many fans throughout a hugely successful novice chase campaign which began in June 2017 and ended with fine efforts in defeat at both the Cheltenham and Aintree Festivals. The diminutive gelding won eight of his 12 starts, including the Grade 1 Kauto Star Novices' Chase, a victory which sees him have to carry a 1.5kg penalty on Saturday. However, unlike many of his rivals, the seven-year-old will have no such worries on quicker ground with Wetherby having somehow missed much of the rain around this week.

Bridget Andrews also has a good-looking mount in the race, as she partners **Virgilio** for Dan Skelton. An ambitious assault upon last season's Grand National failed to come off when he fell at Becher's Brook, but the nine-year-old has bounced back with two victories this summer, most recently when landing the prestigious Summer Cup at Uttoxeter under Andrews' partner, Harry Skelton.

A fantastic supporting card consolidates the feature race of the day with the Grade 2 Bet365 West Yorkshire Hurdle (4800m) attracting an interesting field of seven declared starters.

Last year's runner-up **Wholestone** (pictured right) heads the market but will need to defy a 2.7kg penalty - following his commanding victory in last season's Grade 2 Relkeel Hurdle at Cheltenham - if he is to go one better this time around. He is one of a number of horses this weekend who might ideally prefer some rain to arrive heading into the weekend, but he does hold some useful form on better ground earlier in his career and has a fine record when fresh.



Bryony Frost is on board **Old Guard** for Paul Nicholls in the same contest. Owned, like Black Corton, by infamous British television TV host Jeremy Kyle, Old Guard has proved a fine moneyspinner, picking up a number of decent prizes, and he wasn't beaten far when blowing away the cobwebs in the Tote Silver Trophy at Chepstow last time out.

The Listed OLBG.com Mares' Hurdle (3200m) adds further quality to a good card and Yorkshire trainer Philip Kirby has a strong contender in the shape of last year's runner-up **Lady Buttons**.

Lady Buttons looked sure to strike in this contest 12 months ago when sweeping to the front two out, but having built up a clear advantage, she began to idle close home and was reeled in by the strong-staying La Bague Au Roi. She subsequently mixed hurdles and fences, before proving slightly disappointing when quietly fancied for a Grade 1 at Aintree on her final appearance of the campaign.

This contest is sure to have been on her agenda for a while and it will be a surprise if she is allowed to get to the front as early as last year. She will take some beating.

Also returning to action for the first time this season is another locally-trained contender **Irish Roe**. The winner of four of her first five starts over hurdles for Peter and Lucinda Atkinson, she cost just £2,000 and is one of only two horses in training with the pair. But she has undoubted talent and looks the danger to Lady Buttons.

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NEWMARKET'S SEASON DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Newmarket's final race meeting of 2018 takes place on Saturday afternoon with a seven-race card headlined by a trio of Listed races, including the EBF Montrose Stakes over 1600m for two-year-old fillies.

Dominated by favourites in recent years, the market for this year's renewal will likely be fronted by the Charlie Appleby-trained **Ya Hala**, a 155,000gns daughter of Shamardal. Having shown plenty of battling qualities to win at Nottingham on her debut, she could be a smart prospect for her powerful stable.

The Karl Burke-trained **Mistress of Love** (an even more expensive purchase having been bought for US\$1million) is worthy of respect, but Simon Crisford's **Mannaal** could pose the biggest threat to Ya Hala. The filly won cosily on debut, coincidentally the same maiden last year's winner Hadith had taken prior to winning here, and is sure to have learnt plenty for that impressive introduction.

The Listed Weatherbys James Seymour Stakes (2000m) sees the older horses in action and 2014 winner **Air Pilot** (below left) is back for more after narrowly missing out on a second success in the when finishing second by a neck here 12 months ago. The admirable nine-year-old has proven that age is just a number with Group 2 and Group 3 victories in France earlier this season and comfortably holds the best form in the race.

The Listed Price Bailey Ben Marshall Stakes (1600m) rounds off an entertaining day's racing at HQ where the experienced **Robin of Navan** could be best positioned to take advantage of a drop in grade. Although a relatively infrequent winner, he has some smart form to his name this season, for example when fourth to Addeybb in the Bet365 Mile at Sandown in April.



Air Pilot bids to fly again at Newmarket



Go Conquer will make his debut for a new yard

TWISTON-DAVIES BIDS TO CONQUER ASCOT

At Ascot, Saturday's highlight is the £100,000 Grade 3 Sodexo Gold Cup, a 4800m handicap chase which sees last year's winner, **Go Conquer** (pictured above right), bidding for back-to-back victories in the race. Now in the care of Nigel Twiston-Davies, the nine-year-old has been pointed at this race for some time. Suited by good ground, he seems sure to put up a bold showing in defence of his crown.

As ever, a strong field is in action given the good prize money, with the improving **Adrien Du Pont** taking the eye, along with the race-fit **Too Many Diamonds** for Dan and Harry Skelton.

The Listed Bet With Ascot Handicap Hurdle (3200m) offers high-quality action elsewhere on the card and **Divin Bere** takes the eye as he returns over jumps. He didn't seem to be firing on all cylinders last season, but was given a breathing operation over the summer and seemed full of beans when winning on the Flat at Bath recently. Paul Nicholls had other options for this contest and it is fascinating that he relies upon this horse. Nicky Richards' southern raiders are few and far between and his **Caius Marcus** is another to note.