

RSA Steeple Chase

In-Running Guide

2.40pm, Wednesday 17th March

Finding the winner?

The Stats

(last 10 renewals with most recent results on right and in bold)

Winner's Age	7, 7, 7, 7, 8, 7, 5, 7, 7, 7
Winner's SP	16/1, 9/2, 33/1, 15/2, 25/1, 5/1, 14/1, 6/5f, 4/1f, 9/4f
Fate of Favourite	Fell, 4 th , 5 th , 5 th , 3 rd , 2 nd , PU, 1 st , 1 st , 1st
Winning Distance	Dist, 1 ¼, 2, 1 ¾, 1 ¼, 3, 6, 10, 4 ½, 16
Previous run	1 st , 2 nd , 2 nd , 1 st , 2 nd , 2 nd , 1 st , 1 st , 1 st , 1st

Previous Winners

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Trainer</i>	<i>Odds</i>
2009	Cooldine	7	W Mullins	9/4F
2008	Albertas Run	7	Jonjo O'Neill	4/1F
2007	Denman	7	P F Nicholls	6/5F
2006	Star De Mohaison	5	P F Nicholls	14/1
2005	Trabolgan	7	N Henderson	5/1
2004	Rule Supreme	8	W Mullins	25/1
2003	One Knight	7	P Hobbs	15/2
2002	Hussard Collonges	7	P Beaumont	33/1
2000	Lord Noelie	7	Miss H Knight	9/2
1999	Looks Like Trouble	7	N Chance	16/1

The Trends

- **Only one 5-year-old has won since 1950.**

*(A worrying trend for supporters of **Long Run**)*

- **8 of the last 10 winners were aged 7.**

*(Huge positive for supporters of **Punchestowns, Diamond Harry, Weird Al and Weapon's Amnesty**)*

- **Willie Mullins has trained the winner of the race three times, but he is the only Irish trainer to win the race since 1985.**

*(Bad news for fans of **Weapon's Amnesty**, but potentially very good news for followers of **Uimhiraceathair**)*

In-Running Trading Advice

Surprisingly, for a race which has been dubbed by many trainers as “a killer” for up-and-coming young horses, the stats don't support that theory. In recent years it has thrown up a Gold Cup winner in Denman, Grand National victor in Comply or Die and Hennessy hero in Trabolgan, not to mention Star de Mohaison and Albertas Run, who went on to be placed in a Gold Cup and King George VI Chase respectively. However, there is no denying that you need an equine George Foreman rather than the artistry of a Muhammed Ali, one who will scrap it out from start-to-finish, because the last five winners have all been up with the pace throughout. No-one will forget how Denman and Aces Four had the chasing pack waving the white flag before they started out on their final lap, and it was a similar story last year when the front-running Carruthers set a blistering pace, so fierce, in fact, that both the well-fancied What A Friend and Gone To Lunch had cried enough a mile from home. Cooldine, the eventual winner, was never far away and began to eat into Carruthers' lead heading out on to the final circuit, with Ruby Walsh content to wait until the second last before pulling the trigger. Granted, in recent years the likes of Roll Along, Snowy Morning, According to John, Darkness, Cornish Rebel and 66-1 shot Horner Woods came from a mile back to reward supporters of the place market, but expect the men to be sorted from the boys early on in the race. The advice is to steer clear of the faint-hearted and concentrate on those who like to mix it from the first bell.

Here's a look at some of the leading contenders and some trading advice if you are looking to get involved in-running....

Punchestowns

Potential - Back to Lay

This race has gone to the favourite in the last three runnings and this fellow has always been a deeply classy individual. He may well have run in this race last year had he not been so good over hurdles, but he was very unfortunate to run into the magnificent Big Buck's. He barely touched a twig on his debut over fences at Newbury, but he did very well to survive a terrible blunder at Sandown last time. Barry Geraghty was brilliant that day, nursing him back into the race and the horse would have learned an awful lot from that mistake. He is the most likely winner and I'd be surprised if he's not trading very short turning for home. However, he has been reeled in the last two times he's run at Cheltenham and there is a chance that could happen again, so lay him at a short price to ensure a guaranteed profit.

Long Run

Potential - Back to Lay

Nicky Henderson has made no secret of how highly he rates this five-year-old and has gone as far as saying that he and Punchestowns are the best chasers he has ever trained. That is some statement from a trainer who has won 34 races at the Festival. Long Run put up an incredible performance in the Feltham at Christmas and the form has been franked over the past few months. He has shown that he has the stamina for 3 miles and the gears for 2, so there doesn't appear to be many chinks in his armoury. However, five-year-olds don't have a good record in the race, he has clouted some fences in both his starts over here and there has to be a doubt whether Sam Waley-Cohen has the tactical nous to take on the likes of Barry Geraghty and Ruby Walsh. This horse has an unbelievable engine and travels beautifully, but you don't want horses taking liberties with these fences and it would be no surprise if he got rid of his amateur jockey at some point.

Diamond Harry

Potential - Back to Lay

He looked a superstar in the making when bolting up over the brush hurdles at Haydock on his reappearance, but he was put in his place by Big Buck's in the Long Walk Hurdle, putting paid to his trainer's World Hurdle aspirations. He looked decent on his chase debut at Haydock again, but his jumping wasn't particularly fluent when making it two from two at Newbury last time. Timmy Murphy doesn't think he has that much scope for the chasing game, but he has shown his liking for Cheltenham in the past and he should be better suited by a larger field. He generally travels very well in his races and if he does brush up on his jumping, he will trade short during the latter stages. I'm not sure if he truly loves the Cheltenham hill, though, so I would press the escape button rounding the home turn.

Weird Al

Potential - Back in-running

Far more of a traditional RSA type, unlike the flashier recent winners like Cooldine and Denman, he is three from three over fences and crucially has won twice at Cheltenham. He was held up on his seasonal reappearance, but he seems fairly adaptable when it comes to tactics. Paddy Brennan will not want him to be too far off the pace, but he will also be aware that both his mount's wins here have been over 2 ½ miles, so conserving stamina will be on his mind. The fact that Weird Al comes from a smaller stable means his price, both pre-race and in-running, is likely to be bigger than it should be, as the majority of eyes will be on the Henderson duo. It may be that he sneaks slowly into it from the top of the hill which would be the time to back him at what will hopefully be an inflated price.

Weapon's Amnesty

Potential - Back in-running

Last year's Albert Bartlett winner lacks the gears of Punchestowns and Long Run but similar to his stablemate, Solwhit, he is a gutsy so-and-so and will relish the stern uphill finish. He got chinned by Pandorama over Christmas and the trip was too short for him last time, so all is not lost, despite winning only one of his five races this season. It has to be a bonus that the two times he has come over to England he has won both races and he would be ideally suited to good-to-soft ground. His jumping is definitely not faultless, but they always go a decent clip in this race which will be a massive help. Davy Russell was working away for most of the contest when he won at Newcastle in November, before his class pulled him away from his rivals. There is little doubt that he will trade a lot bigger in-running than his starting price and having already shown his liking for the track, he looks the ideal 'back in-running' contender.

The Nightingale

Potential – Back to Lay

It has not been decided yet if Paul Nicholls will run this fellow, or wait for Aintree, but if he does, he will be following a similar path to the stable's Star De Mohaison, who won this in 2006. He has won his two chases with the minimum of fuss and jumped superbly at Kempton recently, although there would have to be a question mark about the step up in trip. Whoever takes the ride will have to decide whether to race up in the van or drop him out the back to preserve stamina, but I'd have thought it would be the former. He is a very strong traveler so there is every chance he will trade shorter in running and a back to lay strategy looks sensible.