

Seasons Holidays Champion Chase

In-Running Guide

3.20pm, Wednesday 17th March

Finding the winner?

The Stats

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

Winners Age	9, 8, 8, 9, 7, 11, 8, 6, 5, 6
Winners SP	7/2, 7/2, 7/4f, 7/4f, 15/8, 6/4, 16/1, 5/1, 3/1, 4/11f
Fate of Favourite	2 nd , 3 rd , 1 st , 1 st , unseated, 1 st , Fell, Fell, 2 nd , 1st
Winning Distance	1 1/4, Shd, 3, 7, 9, 2, 9, 1 1/2, 19, 7
Previous run	1 st , 3 rd , 1 st , 1 st , 1 st , 1 st , 1 st , UR, 1 st , 1st

Previous Winners

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Trainer</i>	<i>Odds</i>
2009	Master Minded	6	P F Nicholls	4/11F
2008	Master Minded	5	P F Nicholls	3/1
2007	Voy Por Ustedes	6	A King	5/1
2006	Newmill	8	J Murphy	16/1
2005	Moscow Flyer	11	Mrs J Harrington	6/4F
2004	Azertyuiop	7	P Nicholls	15/8
2003	Moscow Flyer	9	Mrs J Harrington	7/4F
2002	Flagship Uberalles	8	P Hobbs	7/4F
2000	Edredon Bleu	8	Miss H Knight	7/2
1999	Call Equiname	9	P F Nicholls	7/2

The Trends

- **Badsworth Boy is the only horse to have won this race 3 times (1983-85).**

*(Possibly a worrying trend for supporters of **Master Minded**)*

- **26 of the last 28 winners have all been single figure prices.**

*(**Master Minded**, **Kalahari King**, **Twist Magic**, **Big Zeb** and possibly **Forpadydeplasterer** look like the only single figure prices this year)*

- **19 of the last 25 winners have been at least placed at the Festival before.**

*(This stat doesn't bode well for **Twist Magic** and **Big Zeb**)*

- **12 of the last 17 winners have won at the Festival previously.**

*(**Master Minded** and **Forpadydeplasterer** are the only two of the leading fancies to have done so)*

In-Running Trading Advice

There have been plenty of dual winners of this prestigious jewel in the crown for two-milers, but only Michael Dickinson's Badsworth Boy managed to win three on the spin, so Master Minded will be attempting to join the elite. Invariably, this championship race provides the ultimate test of pace and power, added to fast, slick jumping, and the electrifying performance of Master Minded in 2008 will live long in the memory. He was only a shadow of his former self 12 months ago, but class will always prevail and he was still able to retain his crown without having to dig too deep. There were several front-runners in the field who threatened to rough him up that day, but the likes of 100-1 shot Marodima and 66-1 has-been Ashley Brook were never going to be good enough to do anything other than give him a 'police escort' until the top of the hill. Petit Robin had the audacity to land a few punches on the champ's jaw at the third last, which merely acted as a wake-up call, and, while not at his imperious best, he was able to shrug off his rival by the next fence and pull clear up the straight for an easy win. There have been plenty of ordinary renewals – the bad-legged Well Chief fell at the second in Voy Por Ustedes' year and both defending champion Newmill and Ashley Brook ran disappointingly – but the manner of Master Minded's success is similar to so many in the past. Newmill (2006) ran them ragged in another average year, while Moscow Flyer (2005) had them all stone cold at the top of the hill (three out) in a year when the champ, on this occasion Azertyuiop, again flopped, losing all chance when

making a bad mistake at the water. So, while there have been a fistful of back-to-back winners, a third win proved a bridge too far for many of them.

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

Master Minded

Potential – Back to Lay

Paul Nicholls' star two miler will be aiming to make history by becoming only the second horse to win this race for three years in a row. He showed all his old zest at Newbury last time and would have won by much more than the 13 length winning margin if he hadn't done a 'Kauto' and ploughed through the last fence. His jumping was otherwise electric and it looks as though he's got over the rib problem that was troubling him at the start of the season. If he is travelling as well as he normally does at the top of the hill, he will trade very short, despite there being three more fences to take. It is a stronger race this year, though, so he will have to be on top form to win as easily as he has the past twice, so trading out to lock in a profit is the safest option.

Kalahari King

Potential – Back in-running

Very unlucky not to win last year's Arkle and showed what a decent animal he is, firstly by demolishing his rivals at Aintree and then producing a scintillating weight-carrying performance on his seasonal reappearance at Doncaster. He is yet to be out of the first two in eight starts over fences, although this will be the first time he has met Master Minded. Graham Lee is one of the best jockeys around and it will be interesting to see if he adopts the usual waiting tactics on Kalahari. He will be anxious not to give Ruby too much rope on Master Minded, but if the jolly is tanking along approaching two out and he's still in with a chance, that would be the time to get the money on. Who knows if Master Minded won't hang up the home straight again and Ferdy Murphy's runner has already shown in the Arkle and Supreme Novices' how he devours the hill.

Twist Magic

Potential – Back to Lay

He has been transformed by a change of training regime this season, winning his last two starts by a combined 27 lengths. The major worry for his supporters is his record at Cheltenham and generally going left-handed (only won twice going this way). In-running punters are advised to keep a close eye on him in the preliminaries as he was very unruly last year and lost his race before the start. One glimmer of light is the way he was travelling when falling two out in the Arkle a few years back and his price will certainly contract if he travels

as well as we know he can. However, I'd definitely want to press the escape button with him before the second last as we don't know if he will: a) get over it and b) last up the hill.

Big Zeb

Potential – Back to Lay

A horse with immense potential, he probably should have beaten Master Minded in the Kerrygold Champion Chase at Punchestown last season, but for a blunder at the final fence. That is the big worry with this fellow, as his jumping sometimes lets him down. He fell in this race last year and has now fallen four times over fences. It's also a worry that he has performed badly on his two trips across the Irish Sea. However, he travels well and if he concentrates there is every chance he will trade fairly short in-running. He's not one you'd trust implicitly though so it would be worth getting out with a few obstacles left.

Forpadydeplasterer

Potential – Back in-running

It's very hard to win a Championship race at the Festival on the back of a setback, especially when the opposition looks red hot. However, he looked like his old self when exercising at Leopardstown after racing and Arkle winners have a decent record in this race. He has been beaten in both his starts this season, but conditions wouldn't have been right then and a fast run 2miles on good-to-soft ground at Cheltenham should be his optimum. There's every chance he will be ridden handily to make it a test of stamina and in-running punters will know how well he's travelling going down the back. He probably won't have the speed to live with Master Minded coming down the hill, but he will stay on and could hit a big price when Tony McCoy starts to get lower in the saddle. That would be the time to step in as he loved the hill last year.