

Ryanair Chase

In-Running Guide

2.40pm, Thursday 18th March

Finding the winner?

The Stats

(last 5 renewals with most recent results on right and in bold)

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|-------------------|---|
| Winner's Age | 10, 10, 6, 10, 8 |
| Winner's SP | 9/2, 10/3f, 9/2, 4/1, 6/1 |
| Fate of Favourite | PU, 1 st , 4 th , 5 th , 2nd |
| Winning Distance | 1/2, 1 1/4, nk, 5, 2 |
| Previous run | 2nd , 3 rd , 1 st , 2nd , 6th |

Previous Winners

| Year | Winner | Age | Trainer | Odds |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 2009 | Imperial Commander | 8 | N A Twiston-Davies | 6/1 |
| 2008 | Our Vic | 10 | D Pipe | 4/1 |
| 2007 | Taranis | 6 | P F Nicholls | 9/2 |
| 2005 | Fondmort | 10 | N J Henderson | 10/3JF |
| 2005 | Thisthatandtother | 10 | P F Nicholls | 9/2 |

The Trends

- **Only 1 winner has won its prep race in the race's 5 year history.**

(A pleasing stat for followers of **Barbers Shop**, **Schindlers Hunt** and **Planet Of Sound**)

- **Only 1 horse younger than 8 has won and 3 of the 5 winners have been 10-year-olds.**

(This is a worry for supporters of the likely favourite **Poquelin** who is 7, but it is good news for fans of **Schindlers Hunt** who is the only 10-year-old with a realistic chance)

- **All 5 winners had previously won at Cheltenham.**

(This has to be a concern for those who have backed **Barbers Shop**, **Schindlers Hunt** and **Planet Of Sound**)

- **4 of the 5 winners had run in the Paddy Power Gold Cup earlier that season.**

(A major positive for this year's first and second, **Tranquil Sea** and **Poquelin**)

In-Running Trading Advice

Turn the clock back 12 months and you will recall that it was four fences from home when Voy Por Ustedes, the odds-on favourite, blundered his chance away, and, while this is a relatively new race, it is uncanny how this is almost always the point when things take shape. Imperial Commander, last year's winner, had taken the race by the scruff of the neck at the top of the hill, but it was when Voy Por made that crucial mistake that Paddy Brennan seized his opportunity and kicked 'The Commander' clear. Both Voy Por Ustedes and Schindlers Hunt attacked the leader up the straight, but the Cheltenham fences are unforgiving, and the couple of lengths that Brennan had nicked on Imperial Commander were sufficient to see them home. Therefore, in-running punters should have their finger on the button at the fourth last – ironically, it was also here where Our Vic turned the screw and went clear of the pack the previous year and also where Taranis assumed command in 2007, having been left in front when Crozan crashed out. Similarly, Fondmort had taken up the cudgels four out in the previous two years, readily holding the late challenge of Lacdoudal in 2006 but being nailed close home by Thisthatandtother 12 months earlier.

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

Poquelin

Potential – Back to Lay

Has improved with every run this season to cement his position as the likely favourite for this contest. He can handle soft ground, but ideally prefers a sounder surface so good or good-to-soft would be ideal. Ruby has ridden him in different ways this season, but it is likely that he will stalk the leaders and look to pounce up the run-in. His price is unlikely to get much bigger than his SP so a back-to-lay strategy looks the best trading option. The Paddy Power and Boylesports Gold Cups have been a good trial for this race in the past, but he is taking on quality opposition and there is the possibility he will find one too good.

Tranquil Sea

Potential – Back in-running

Edward O'Grady is Ireland's most successful trainer at the Cheltenham Festival and Tranquil Sea will aim to become the first Irish-trained winner in the race's five-year history. He ran well at Leopardstown last time and although all of his best form this season has been with cut in the ground, his trainer reckons he will be better on a decent surface. Andrew McNamara normally holds him up and makes his move with around a mile to go so there may be some value in backing him in-running. He could potentially get run off his feet coming down the hill, but that would be the time to step in as he should find plenty under pressure.

Barbers Shop

Potential – Back to Lay

The Queen's runner is undoubtedly talented but he hasn't won in over a year and has yet to win at Cheltenham. He has travelled well in his last three races – the King George, Hennessy and Gold Cup – before emptying out. This is his trip and he has finished second in both the Jewsons Novices' Chase and the Paddy Power Gold Cup. The way he travels almost guarantees that he will trade short in-running and it would be no surprise if he was leading jumping the last. However, we've seen before that he's not quite been good enough to hold on here, so look to trade out before it's too late.

Planet Of Sound

Potential – Back in-running

Not the most natural of jumpers – as proved by his crashing fall at Ascot last time – but talented nonetheless. He made a mistake at the first in last year's Arkle and it will be necessary to watch how he jumps the first few obstacles before getting involved. However, he has only fallen once in his career and if he does make a few small mistakes it may be worth backing him at a bigger price. He had only been unplaced once in 14 starts prior to Ascot and if he can stay on his feet there's every chance that he will play a part in the finish.

Schindlers Hunt

Potential – Back to Lay

Dessie Hughes' gutsy 10-year-old really deserves to win one of these big races, but he's only won one of his last 14 starts. He's mightily consistent and as genuine as they come, but he always seems to find one too good and that may be the case again this year. He certainly put it up to Imperial Commander last year and did the same to Voy Por Ustedes at Aintree. It depends on the tactics that Paddy Flood adopts, but if he can creep into the contest there won't be many going past him rounding the home bend. The problem is that he may just find one too good again and you should look to secure a profit before the final fence.

Voy Por Ustedes

Potential – Back in-running

Voy Por is a Cheltenham specialist and has never been out of the first two here in five starts. He loves this time of year and is reverting back to his ideal trip so there are a lot of positives. The negatives, though, are that he hasn't really looked like his former self this campaign and it may just be that racing is catching up with him. However, he normally travels well in his races and as long as he stays clear of jumping mistakes, he should be there or thereabouts. There won't be many finishing to better effect, so it may be worth the risk backing him three out if he's a decent price.