



ROYAL ASCOT

DAY 2 PREVIEW

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE

RACE 1

THE QUEEN MARY
STAKES (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 2)
5F

PRIZE MONEY
£175,000

RACE 2

THE QUEEN'S
VASE (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 2)
1M 6F 34Y

PRIZE MONEY
£265,000

RACE 3

THE DUKE
OF CAMBRIDGE
STAKES (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 2)
7F 213Y

PRIZE MONEY
£250,000

RACE 4

THE PRINCE OF
WALES'S STAKES
(CLASS 1) (GROUP 1)
1M 1F 212Y

PRIZE MONEY
£1,000,000

RACE 5

THE ROYAL
HUNT CUP (CLASS
2) (HERITAGE
HANDICAP)
1M

PRIZE MONEY
£175,000

RACE 6

THE KENSINGTON
PALACE STAKES
(CLASS 2 FILLIES'
HANDICAP)
1M

PRIZE MONEY
£120,000

RACE 7

THE WINDSOR
CASTLE STAKES
(CLASS 1) (LISTED
RACE)
6F

PRIZE MONEY
£125,000

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KEVIN BLAKE'S TIPS



14:30 | THE QUEEN MARY STAKES

The second day will be kicked off in rapid style with the Queen Mary Stakes (14:30) showcasing the best of fast two-year-old fillies in Europe. The one I like is the Aidan O'Brien-trained **VICTORIOUS** and I'm surprised she isn't a shorter price than she is.

Unlike her main market rivals, she has the benefit of two runs having made a winning debut at Naas prior to returning to that track to win a Group 3 last time. She showed signs of inexperience on both occasions, but will have learned on the job. The drop in trip isn't particularly concerning as she has shown the ability to maintain a high stride frequency throughout her two races to date. True Love made a similar drop from six furlongs to win

this race last year and Victorious looks to be an excellent candidate to do the same.

It is always hard to know what way the draw is going to play on the straight track at Ascot, so I tend to focus on where the quality and pace is. In this case, four of the top five in the market at the time of writing are drawn in between stalls five and 10, so that makes me comfortable with Victorious being drawn in stall five. To be honest, after she was declared with Ryan Moore in the saddle, I was expecting her to shorten into clear favouritism, but that hasn't happened yet. I suspect it will in the fullness of time, so take the available odds while they are still there.



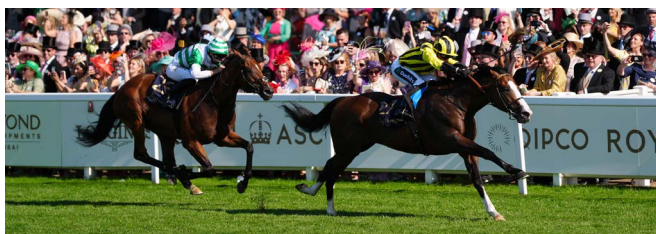
Runners and riders in action during the Kensington Palace Stakes on day two of Royal Ascot 2025

KEVIN BLAKE'S TIPS

Continued

17:00 | THE ROYAL HUNT CUP

The Royal Hunt Cup (17:00) is always one of the most difficult and competitive handicaps of the entire year. Finding the winner of it is right up in the same air as finding the winner of the Grand National in terms of merit, so don't expect it to be easy!



My Cloud ridden by Silvestre De Sousa on their way to winning the Royal Hunt Cup on day two of Royal Ascot 2025

The one I like in the race is the Hamad Al Jehani-trained **ARCHIVIST**. The four-year-old was formerly trained by William Haggas who made no secret of the regard he held him in. He finished his campaign for him by just getting run out of it in the closing stages of the John Smith's Cup at York, suggesting that a slightly shorter trip might well suit him best.

He subsequently changed hands and joined Hamad Al Jehani's team and was gelded. He made run-to-run improvement in valuable handicaps at Meydan, relishing the drop to a mile when winning on his most recent start in March. He has most likely been trained for this race since and this stiff mile is sure to play to his strengths. He looks set to run a very big race at a big price.

17:35 | THE KENSINGTON PALACE STAKES

The Kensington Palace Stakes (17:35) is another fiercely-competitive handicap, this one being confined to fillies and mares that are four-year-olds or older. Runners that are lightly raced appeal as having the edge and the one that jumps off the page is the William Haggas-trained **ALOBAYYAH**.

The four-year-old looked a stakes filly in the making when impressing on her debut at Yarmouth in October 2024, but she has clearly had an issue or two since then as she was confined to just two slightly disappointing runs last year. However, she very much got back on track on her seasonal return in a valuable fillies' handicap over this

course and distance last month. Dropped in last in what was a steadily-run race, she made very eye-catching headway to finish a never-nearer third. It really was the perfect run with a view to this race and with her trainer being one of the very best placers of his horses in the game, I'd bet pounds-to-pennies this race has been her target for quite some time.

While the market very much saw the promise of her comeback run, there is a chance that she is very well-in here and her price might be made to look big after we see it play out on the track.

KEVIN BLAKE'S BEST BETS

14:30 | THE QUEEN MARY STAKES



VICTORIOUS

17:00 | THE ROYAL HUNT CUP



ARCHIVIST

17:35 | THE KENSINGTON PALACE STAKES



ALOBAYYAH

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES

HORSE BY HORSE

GUIDE

BY JAMES FLAHERTY



This year's **Prince Of Wales's Stakes (4:20)** is a high-quality one, with the top-rated **OMBUDSMAN** (128) - last year's winner - just setting the standard on official ratings ahead of Arc winner **DARYZ** (127). **MINNIE HAUK**, a close second in the latter contest, is only a further pound behind those two when considering her 3lb sex allowance, while **ALMAQAM** (122) ensures that there is further depth to the contest.

Tactics will be fascinating here, as a couple of these have shown their best form over a mile and a half. I don't expect them to be waiting around, with both Ballydoyle and Godolphin seemingly employing horses to make the pace. That should make for a great spectacle and a true result, with the cream rising to the top - hopefully.

1. ALMAQAM (1)



Jockey: Kieran Shoemark | Trainer: Ed Walker

Ed Walker's five-year-old produced arguably a career-best effort last time in the Tattersalls Gold Cup at the Curragh, breaking his duck at the top level in the process. That form has been franked by the second Bay City Roller, although admittedly in very different conditions at Epsom in the Coronation Cup. That suggests he is an improved animal this year, and he doesn't have that much to find with Ombudsman on Champions Day form, who he beat earlier last season with the benefit of a run and in receipt of 3lb.

2. DANCING GEMINI (3)



Jockey: Rossa Ryan | Trainer: Roger Teal

Dancing Gemini hasn't managed to win a Group 1, with his Lockinge second just over a year ago the closest he has come. He has raced at a mile since his run in the Eclipse in July 2024, although he has often shaped to these eyes like he might appreciate a step up in distance. His record at Ascot is quite poor from four attempts, and he has plenty to find on form too.

3. DARYZ (2)



Jockey: Mickael Barzalona | Trainer: Francis-Henri Graffard

Last year's Arc winner on his sole start at a mile and a half, Daryz has done most of his racing around this trip. He has largely been successful too, with the only reversals being a narrow defeat at ParisLongchamp prior to the Arc and last season in the International at York. That run is a slight concern, though, as it was his only run on these shores, and it was the quickest ground he has faced thus far.

4. DEVIL'S ADVOCATE (4)



Jockey: Robert Havlin | Trainer: John & Thady Gosden

The stablemate and owner-mate of Ombudsman, Devil's Advocate ensured there was a strong pace in the Champion Stakes here in October and will likely have a similar role here. It will be interesting how hard he goes, though, given the fact that many of these would prefer a stiffer test.

5. MISSISSIPPI RIVER (7)



Jockey: Wayne Lordan | Trainer: Aidan O'Brien

Like Godolphin, Ballydoyle are taking no chances regarding the pace set-up in this race, and Mississippi River has been entrusted with that responsibility. Minnie Hauk will want a real test at this trip on the forecast ground, and he will be the sacrificial lamb in ensuring the pace doesn't relent at any point. Given his form is largely over a mile, I wonder how long he will sustain it.

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES

HORSE-BY-HORSE GUIDE

Continued

6. OMBUDSMAN (8)



Jockey: William Buick | **Trainer:** John & Thady Gosden

Patience has certainly paid off with Ombudsman, who wasn't set huge tasks in his three-year-old campaign. He really announced himself by winning this race last year and then followed it up with another huge performance in the International at York. A narrow reversal at Sandown in the Eclipse was sandwiched in between, and he was no match for Calandagan here on Champions Day when possibly slightly below his best. Those two wins (on quick ground) set the standard here, though, even if it is marginal.

7. MINNIE HAUK (5)



Jockey: Ryan Moore | **Trainer:** Aidan O'Brien

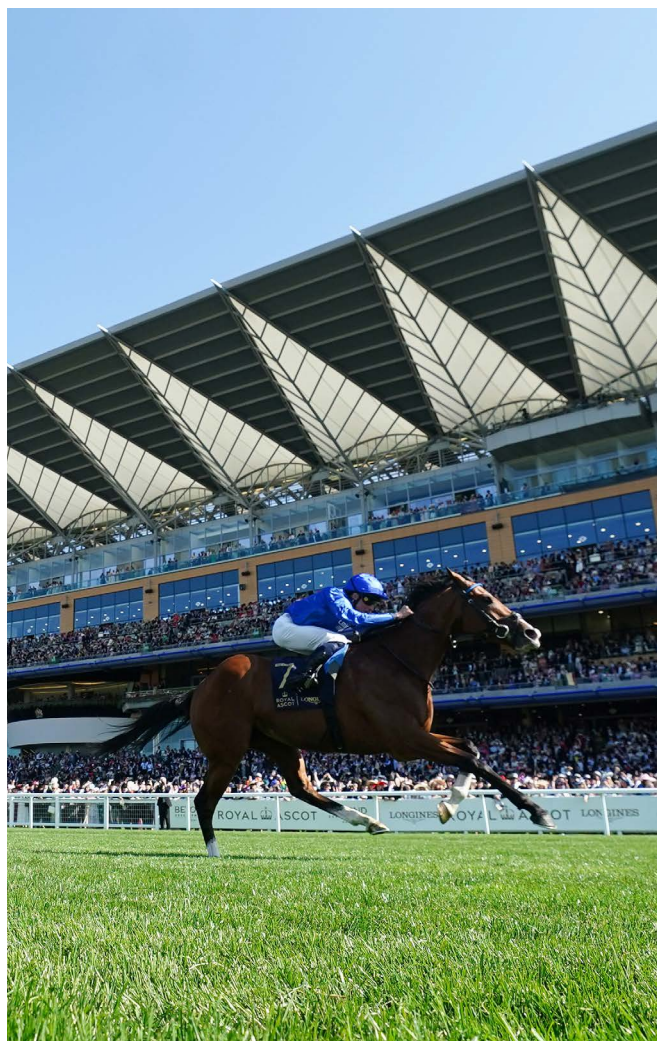
Another that has largely been campaigned over further, connections' confidence in her over this trip must be noted. Minnie Hauk clearly wasn't at her best last time at the Curragh, but I think one can put a line through that as the lack of pace clearly hindered her. The set up here should be more suitable, and I would expect her to leave that effort well behind, even if I still have reservations whether she can beat the very best over this distance.

8. SEE THE FIRE (6)



Jockey: Oisin Murphy | **Trainer:** Andrew Balding

While her best efforts have probably come at York, See The Fire has built a steady portfolio of work over the last year or so. She wasn't disgraced behind Ombudsman in this race last season or at York in the International, but it is hard to see her reversing those form lines at the same time. She will be relying on the main contenders faltering here, but she should run her race once again.



JAMES FLAHERTY'S VERDICT



Given the forecast conditions and the likelihood of ground on the quicker side of good (in places at least), I can't oppose **OMBUDSMAN**. At his best, which tends to be under those conditions, he is a top-class animal, and the fact that he has produced that over this course and distance means he ticks all boxes. Of course he isn't a huge price, but I still think there is a little juice in it, as I feel he wins this race more often than not under these conditions. Any change in conditions would make it a different race entirely, and a far more difficult one to call, but he is the standout for me.

TIMEFORM TIPS

RACE

1

- 1st **WILD BLOSSOM** (27)
- 2nd **VICTORIOUS** (26)
- 3rd **SEÑORITA BONITA** (22)

RACE

2

- 1st **ASAKIR** (1)
- 2nd **LIMESTONE** (4)
- 3rd **GALIYAN** (3)

RACE

3

- 1st **BLUE BOLT** (3)
- 2nd **FRIENDLY SOUL** (10)
- 3rd **CATHEDRAL** (6)

RACE

4

- 1st **OMBUDSMAN** (6)
- 2nd **DARYZ** (3)
- 3rd **ALMAQAM** (1)

RACE

5

- 1st **ARCHIVIST** (6)
- 2nd **LA BOTTE** (16)
- 3rd **INDALO** (27)

RACE

6

- 1st **RHAPSODY** (9)
- 2nd **ALOBAYYAH** (10)
- 3rd **RUMBA NUMBA** (16)

RACE

7

- 1st **SERGEI DIAGHILEV** (17)
- 2nd **CONTROLLA** (20)
- 3rd **RULER'S CONTROL** (15)



Ombudsman ridden by William Buick on their way to winning the Prince Of Wales's Stakes on day two of Royal Ascot 2025



Crimson Advocate ridden by James McDonald on their way to winning the Duke Of Cambridge Stakes on day two of Royal Ascot 2025



True Love ridden by Ryan Moore (right) on their way to winning the Queen Mary Stakes on day two of Royal Ascot 2025

TOTAL PERFORMANCE DATA TIPS

BY ADAM MILLS

SENORITA BONITA



I would have preferred to see **SENORITA BONITA** running over 6 furlongs, but I was so impressed with the manner of her Nottingham victory that I think she is worth backing, even at this trip in the Queen Mary Stakes (2:30).

I wrote a review of the Nottingham race for TPD and my initial thoughts were that she found a way to win despite everything going wrong on the day. Drawn towards the far side of the course in stall 3, she was one of the slowest horses into stride, taking 5.6s to reach 30 mph and recording a time of 14.92s for the opening furlong (ranked 7th of 10).

Oisin Murphy rode her that day and had to try and settle her, eventually moving in behind the early pace setters in search of cover. With 2 furlongs to run, she was still 6th and with the two horses directly in front of her rolling around, she seemed likely to be an unlucky loser as she struggled to find racing room. However, once switched around runners, she picked up readily inside the final furlong, closing a gap of 0.38s on the runner-up (Fast Track) who had the benefit of previous experience and an untroubled passage through the race on her side.

Both her late speed and run-out speed figures were the fastest in the race and the latter was more than 7% faster than the runner-up. The pair were over 3 lengths clear of the rest when crossing the line and they ran the fastest 2-year-old times of the year so far at Nottingham.

She should (hopefully) have learned a lot from that debut run and whilst this may not be an easy watch if she is slow to leave the stalls but the way she finished at Nottingham would suggest she had plenty left and so the stiff finish at Ascot should suit.

ALOBAYYAH



I think that the key piece of form for the Kensington Palace Stakes (5:35) comes from the Peroni Nastro Azzurro 0.0% British EBF Fillies' Handicap run over this course and distance at the start of May. The winning time of 1:40.07 was 0.71 faster than the TPD Expected time figure for the course and distance in those conditions and the pair to concentrate on are the winner Radiant Beauty and the third-placed **ALOBAYYAH**.

Radiant Beauty made all under James Doyle, which was her 3rd win in 5 starts since she joined James Owen last year. She sets a fair standard and having run a good time, the fact that she made all and still won by over 2 lengths would suggest that a 6lb rise in the weights is very fair. Ryan Moore is booked and she is clearly going to be well found in the market. I'd also expected the lightly raced Alobayyah to be well supported in the market, but I think there is a decent case for the form being reversed.

Radiant Beauty had the benefit of race fitness on her side having made her return at Kempton towards the end of March, whereas Alobayyah was having her first start for over 200 days. With only 4 starts in 2 years, she has clearly not been the easiest to train, but having been last at halfway, I thought she made superb progress to finish a never-nearer 3rd after switching towards the stands' side rail.

Alobayyah was the fastest horse on the clock for each of the last 4 furlongs and covered the final half-a-mile in a time that was a second quicker than Radiant Beauty. Her late speed figure of 37.9 mph was a race best figure and ranks in the top 10 late speed figures recorded over the mile at Ascot in the last 3 seasons. She's been raised just 1 lb by the handicapper and so gets a 5 lb swing, as well as the benefit of the run to help her reverse the form with Radiant Beauty.

Her dam was a Group 3 winner over a mile for Clive Cox and if she can be kept sound, there is every reason to think that Alobayyah could be the proverbial "Group horse in a handicap".

ROYAL ASCOT

HORSES TO FOLLOW

BY DECLAN RIX



GALIYAN



15:05 | THE QUEEN'S VASE

(GROUP 2) (3YO) - 1M6F 34Y

Unraced as a juvenile, Galiyan looks like a horse who will quickly make up for lost time this year, if his recent Chester May Festival success is anything to go by.

Far too green to do himself justice on debut at Newmarket back in April over an inadequate 10f, the son of Galiway took a huge jump forward next time out to win by a going away 2-lengths on The Roodee. This day, he beat the front-running and in-form Joulany, a full-brother to Al Aasy, well, while suggesting there could be more to come.

While it was good to see Andrew Badling's inmate sharper into stride under Oisin Murphy, there still appeared to be distinct signs of greenness throughout, Murphy intermittently slapping his mount down the neck. Once straightened up and balanced however, Galiyan stayed on strongly, looking better the further he went, posting a solid time in the process.

He looks a talented colt in the making; exciting, because after just two career starts, you've got to think there is more to come.

OMBUDSMAN



16:20 | THE PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES

(GROUP 1) (4YO+) - 1M1F 212Y

In another blockbuster clash of the week, Ombudsman can make a home tie count against last year's Arc de Triomphe winner and French raider Daryz. The five-year-old is another who can defend his crown at this year's Royal meeting, having exploded to world prominence in this race 12 months ago.

Despite an awful trip in the straight, the son of Night Of Thunder was extracted from an uncompromising position by William Buick to win by 2 lengths, his troubled passage masking his true superiority over the field.

That was the first time the Godolphin-owned colt breached the 125+ barrier in his career, but it wouldn't be the last, thanks to top-class successes in the Juddmonte International Stakes, Dubai Turf and the Brigadier Gerard Stakes, the latter "only a Group 3", but done under a Group 1 penalty against a rapid improver in Gethin.

John & Thady Gosden's inmate at this moment in time looks the most natural 10f horse of the two market leaders and can make that count.

This will be the biggest test of Daryz's 10f career on the back of two visually impressive wins in the Prix Ganay (10.5f) and Prix Aga Khan (9.5f), but beating the likes of proper 12f French horses Aventure, Arrow Eagle, Leffard and Sosie in what appeared to be tactical races is a world away from facing a natural 10f performer in Ombudsman.

It's also somewhat of a concern for Daryz backers that the least convincing performance in his career came in Britain on his travels in last season's Juddmonte, won by Ombudsman, albeit in a messy race. No doubt he is a better horse mentally, physically and in his numbers, but I fancy the home horse to come out on top in a fantastic clash.

RACE STATS GUIDE

BY PAUL JONES



No one knows more about the crucial trends behind the races at Royal Ascot than Paul Jones, who has compiled comprehensive stats guides for some of Wednesday's key races.



THE QUEEN MARY STAKES

WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE, 14:30PM

Fillies' Group 2 | Class 1 | 2YO only

POSITIVES:

- Trained in America (notably by Wesley Ward)
- Trained by Karl Burke or Richard Hannon
- Drawn in double-figures
- Ran well in the Marygate Stakes
- The favourite

NEGATIVES:

- Beaten last time out
- Not sired by a stallion with a Sire Index of between 6f-8f



THE QUEEN'S VASE

WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE, 15:05PM

Group 2 | Class 1 | 3YO only

POSITIVES:

- Unraced at two
- A low draw
- Trained by Aidan O'Brien or Charlie Johnston
- Owned by Godolphin
- Won this season

NEGATIVES:

- Outside the front three in the betting



THE PRINCE OF WALES'S STAKES

WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE, 16:20PM

Group 1 | Class 1 | 4YO plus

POSITIVES:

- Trained by John & Thady Gosden
- Last-time-out winners
- Contested last season's renewal

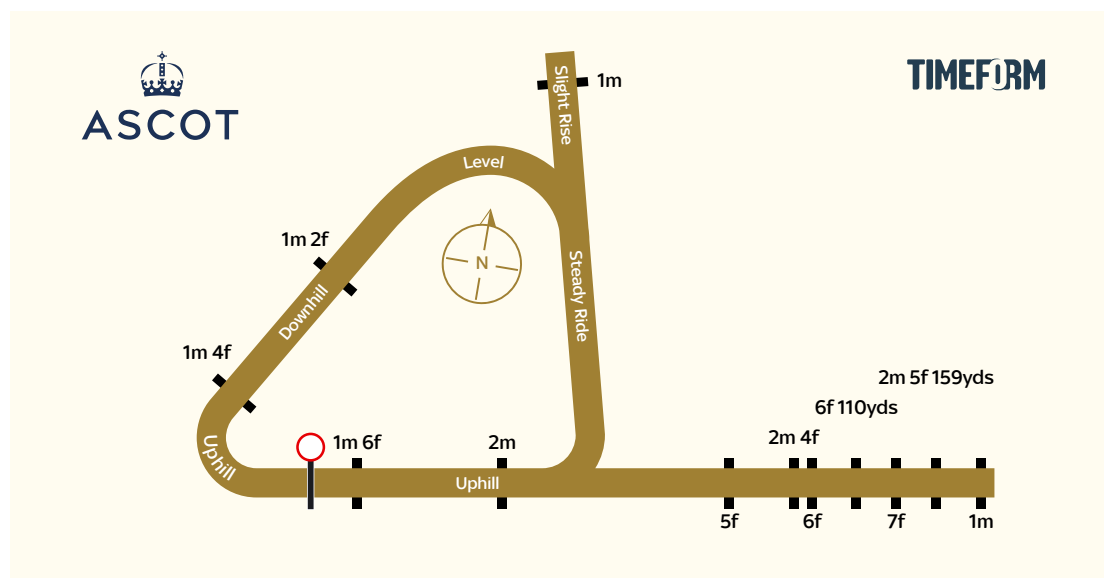
NEGATIVES:

- Aged six or older
- Finished unplaced last time out
- Likely to start bigger than 8/1
- Odds-on favourites have a poor record

GUIDE TO ASCOT

By Classic-winning jockey and Sky Sports Racing presenter **Jason Weaver**

“ Because the run-in on Ascot’s round course is relatively short, positioning - jockeyship in other words - is key. It goes without saying that in steadily-run races you want to be towards the sharp end but, whatever the pace, you can get into trouble trying to come through rivals late on. We’re still learning about the straight course, following the relaying a few years back, but in my view it’s more pace-dependent than draw-dependent. Given the right pace to chase, I reckon you can win from anywhere. ”



The round course is a right-handed, triangular circuit of fourteen furlongs, with a run in of 2½ furlongs. There is a straight mile course and the Old mile course which joins the round course in Swinley Bottom. Despite the downhill run into Swinley Bottom and relatively short run-in from the final turn, Ascot is galloping in character. Since the redevelopment, the turn into the straight has become more sweeping and those ridden prominently can be difficult to peg back. Nowadays, the ground in the straight drains quicker than the rest of the course, meaning going descriptions can vary.

