



ROYAL ASCOT



DAY 4 PREVIEW

FRIDAY 19 JUNE

RACE 1

THE ALBANY
STAKES (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 3)
6F

PRIZE MONEY
£125,000

RACE 2

THE
COMMONWEALTH
CUP (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 1)
6F

PRIZE MONEY
£700,000

RACE 3

THE DUKE OF
EDINBURGH STAKES
(CLASS 2 HANDICAP)
(GBBPLUS RACE)
1M 3F 211Y

PRIZE MONEY
£120,000

RACE 4

THE CORONATION
STAKES (CLASS 1)
(GROUP 1)
7F 213Y

PRIZE MONEY
£700,000

RACE 5

THE SANDRINGHAM
STAKES (CLASS 2
FILLIES' HANDICAP)
1M

PRIZE MONEY
£120,000

RACE 6

THE KING EDWARD
VII STAKES
(CLASS 1) (GROUP 2)
1M 3F 211Y

PRIZE MONEY
£250,000

RACE 7

THE PALACE OF
HOLYROODHOUSE
(CLASS 2
HANDICAP)
5F

PRIZE MONEY
£120,000

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KEVIN BLAKE'S TIPS



15:05 | THE COMMONWEALTH CUP

The Commonwealth Cup (15:05) always attracted a huge field of three-year-olds sprinters and this year is no different. The Karl Burke-trained Venetian Sun is a very short price after her impressive win in the Sandy Lane Stakes at Haydock, but she looks too short to me in a race that is deeper than the market suggests.

The one I like at the prices is the Aidan O'Brien-trained **CHARLES DARWIN**. The son of No Nay Never looked a tremendous sprinting prospect when beating the subsequent Group 1 winner Wise Approach in the Norfolk Stakes at this meeting last year, but a setback

ruled him out for the rest of the season after that. He returned to action with a straightforward win at Navan, but seemed to blot his copybook with a poor run in a Group 3 at Naas last time. However, Ryan Moore reported that he hit a ridge and lost his action, after which he was eased down, so it is a run that can be forgiven.

Take out that run and he is likely to have been amongst the leading contenders for this race. First-time blinkers have been applied and he looks overpriced.



Charles Darwin ridden by Ryan Moore on their way to winning the Norfolk Stakes on day three of Royal Ascot 2025

KEVIN BLAKE'S TIPS

Continued

17:00 | THE SANDRINGHAM STAKES

The Sandringham Stakes (17:00) is yet another brutally competitive handicap and I'm siding with the Donnacha O'Brien-trained **GLYFADA**.

The daughter of Camelot has won two of her three starts to date, but what was most notable about her most recent victory in a winner's race at Killarney was how well suited she seemed to be by the drop back to a mile. She is quite a fast-striding filly and the potential was there for her to be suited by it, but she really did seem to relish it. A race like this that promises to offer a lot of pace and cover in front of her promises to really suit her and it wouldn't surprise to see her take a significant jump forward in terms of improvement. She is a fascinating contender.

17:35 | THE KING EDWARD VII STAKES

The King Edward VII Stakes (17:35) brings together some promising three-year-olds with the clear pick of them in my mind being the Aidan O'Brien-trained **CAUSEWAY**.

The son of Wootton Bassett has proven to be relentlessly progressive in his career thus far. His trainer has only asked him to take relative baby steps this season, starting off a win in handicap company over seven furlongs in the Madrid Handicap before progressing to win a Listed race over a mile at the Curragh and then returning to that venue to win the Group 3 Gallinule Stakes last time. At all times he has shown himself to be a slow strider with a lazy demeanour that always had the clear potential to end up over this trip of a mile-and-a-half. He is a very likeable colt and I'm surprised that he isn't the favourite for this race.

KEVIN BLAKE'S BEST BETS

15:05 | THE COMMONWEALTH CUP



CHARLES DARWIN

17:00 | THE SANDRINGHAM STAKES



GLYFADA

17:35 | THE KING EDWARD VII STAKES



CAUSEWAY



THE CORONATION STAKES

HORSE BY HORSE

GUIDE

BY DAVE ORTON



The Coronation Stakes (4:20) is the fillies' chance to shine at Royal Ascot, and although Cercene caused a 33/1 shock 12 months ago, it usually takes a genuine Group 1 performer to come out on top.

Somewhat surprisingly, Aidan O'Brien hasn't won this race since Winter was victorious back in 2017, but the Ballydoyle maestro definitely holds the aces this time around.

Let's take a close look at the contenders for Friday's Group 1 contest...



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

1. BALANTINA (2)



Jockey: Oisín Murphy | **Trainer:** Donnacha O'Brien

Balantina confirmed herself a smart filly when causing a surprise in the Grade 1 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf at Del Mar on her final start as a two-year-old. That was her first success since shedding her maiden tag earlier in the year, although she had gone close in Group company in between and also caught the eye when finishing third at 40/1 behind Venetian Sun in last year's Albany Stakes. This demands another step forward on her seasonal return, but connections won the race with Porta Fortuna in 2024 and Oisín Murphy keeps the ride. One to respect.

2. BLACK CAVIAR GOLD (3)



Jockey: Billy Lee | **Trainer:** Paddy Twomey

Black Caviar Gold signed off her juvenile campaign with back-to-back soft-ground wins, including the Group 3 Park Stakes at the Curragh. She has yet to raise her game in two starts this season, however, and has twice been comfortably held by Precise, most recently in the Irish 1,000 Guineas. A first-time visor replaces cheekpieces, and she's readily opposed.

3. MOON TARGET (8)



Jockey: Luke Morris | **Trainer:** Sir Mark Prescott

Moon Target created a big impression when winning her first two starts and was beaten less than a length by Precise when bidding for a hat-trick in the Group 2 Prestige Stakes at Goodwood. However, she failed to build on that promise in three subsequent outings and hasn't been seen since finishing eighth in the Fillies' Mile last October, while a tricky draw only adds to the uncertainty.

4. PRECISE (5)



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

Last season's champion two-year-old filly missed an intended Breeders' Cup assignment, and Aidan O'Brien later revealed that preparations for her 1000 Guineas return had not gone smoothly. She ran flat behind stablemate True Love at Newmarket and didn't enjoy the best of the draw, but those who kept the faith at the Curragh were richly rewarded after she absolutely bolted up in the Irish equivalent. Quite simply, Precise is a machine. She would not need to improve on that performance to win this and is fully entitled to do exactly that.

THE CORONATION STAKES

HORSE-BY-HORSE GUIDE

Continued

5. ROSE GHAIYYATH (7)



Jockey: Christophe Soumillon | **Trainer:** Richard Hughes

Richard Hughes' filly was arguably a shade unlucky not to finish closer in the Group 2 May Hill Stakes at Doncaster last autumn. Although only 10th in the 1000 Guineas on her return, she wasn't disgraced on ground that may have been quicker than ideal. However, the wheels came off when stepped up to 1m 2f at Goodwood last time, and Rose Ghaiyyath now has questions to answer in a race of this depth.

6. SUKANYA (1)



Jockey: Tom Marquand | **Trainer:** Jack Channon

Sukanya showed a smart turn of foot to land the Group 3 Fred Darling Stakes on her seasonal debut at Newbury, with Touleen back in second. She then raced too freely and failed to see out the extra furlong in the 1000 Guineas next time, and having previously been well held by Precise at Goodwood, it's difficult to see her reversing that form.

7. TIMEFORSHOWCASING (9)



Jockey: Billy Loughnane | **Trainer:** Charlie Johnston

Timeforshowcasing is a likeable filly with a record of five wins from eight starts, having gained a deserved breakthrough at Group level in the German 1000 Guineas last month. However, she was unable to land a blow behind True Love at Newmarket previously and looks up against it back on home soil, although it would be no surprise to see her still involved entering the final furlong. The likely pace angle from her outside stall.

8. TOULEEN (4)



Jockey: Saffie Osborne | **Trainer:** Owen Burrows

Always highly regarded, Touleen won her first two starts in novice company for Owen Burrows last season. She failed to meet market expectations on her next two outings though, including when beaten by Sukanya at Newbury on her reappearance, but there were signs of encouragement when finishing just ahead of Precise in sixth in the 1000 Guineas, despite a poor draw. The best of her may still lie ahead, and having attracted ante-post support, she could have a significant say from a favourable berth under Saffie Osborne.

9. TRUE LOVE (6)



Jockey: Wayne Lordan | **Trainer:** Aidan O'Brien

This imposing filly produced a convincing display to win the 1000 Guineas at Newmarket after making a successful return at Leopardstown. Ryan Moore sided with her again when strongly fancied for the Irish Guineas, but despite once again enjoying the better of the draw, she was firmly put in her place by stablemate Precise. Back at the scene of last year's Queen Mary triumph, True Love clearly commands respect, although there remains a slight doubt about her effectiveness in a strongly-run mile.

DAVE ORTON'S VERDICT



If **PRECISE** reproduces the form of her devastating Irish Guineas success, she ought to justify her position as one of Royal Ascot's 'banker' bets. True Love is expected to chase her home to provide Aidan O'Brien with a one-two, with Balantina making the most appeal of those at bigger odds.

TIMEFORM TIPS

RACE

1

- 1st **SUN GODDESS** (21)
- 2nd **LIBERTANGO** (14)
- 3rd **SILENT BEAUTY** (20)

RACE

2

- 1st **VENETIAN SUN** (21)
- 2nd **ALBERT EINSTEIN** (1)
- 3rd **HAVANA ANNA** (17)

RACE

3

- 1st **HOPEWELL ROCK** (10)
- 2nd **NIGHTIME DANCER** (7)
- 3rd **OPPORTUNITY** (11)

RACE

4

- 1st **PRECISE** (4)
- 2nd **TRUE LOVE** (9)
- 3rd **TOULEEN** (8)

RACE

5

- 1st **SEET** (7)
- 2nd **GLYFADA** (12)
- 3rd **CROWNRIGHT** (28)

RACE

6

- 1st **WATER TO WINE** (6)
- 2nd **CAUSEWAY** (2)
- 3rd **ANCIENT EGYPT** (1)

RACE

7

- 1st **GOLD DIGGER** (18)
- 2nd **MAY ANGEL** (12)
- 3rd **WESTPORT** (14)



Cercene ridden by Gary Carroll (right) coming home to win the Coronation Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025



Time For Sandals ridden by Richard Kingscote (top left) on their way to winning the Commonwealth Cup on day four 2025



Amiloc ridden by Rossa Ryan (left) winning the King Edward VII Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

TOTAL PERFORMANCE DATA TIPS

BY ADAM MILLS

15.05 | THE COMMONWEALTH CUP

VENETIAN SUN



Venetian Sun ridden by Clifford Lee on their way to winning the Albany Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

There are cases to be made for plenty of the runners in the Commonwealth Cup improving for the benefit of running back over 6 furlongs or at a track with a stiff finish, but there is really only one horse with proven form over this trip in 2026 and that is **VENETIAN SUN**.

She won the Albany Stakes over this course and distance last season, finishing strongly with a race best final furlong time of 12.92s and she can easily be forgiven her run in the 1,000 Guineas in May where the mile trip proved to be beyond her. Returned to sprinting in the Sandy Lane Stakes at Haydock last time, she finished her race really well with the best final 2 furlong splits in the field as she pulled away to win by 3 lengths from Division.

Her late speed figure of 36.96 mph was a clear best in the field and was also faster than Night Raider half an hour later in the Temple Stakes. Her stride data from both the Albany Stakes and the Sandy Lane sit within 2.5% of our expected average for a winner of this race and given that she has already ticked the boxes for both course and distance, she seems hard to oppose.

18.10 | THE PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

WESTPORT



Gold Digger was the ante-post favourite for the Palace Of Holyroodhouse (6.10) at the start of the week and she does appear to be one of the better handicapped horses in the field. She was sixth behind Venetian Sun in the Albany Stakes last year and made her return from an absence of 346 days when winning at very short odds at Windsor on 1st June.

She may well be a Group horse in a handicap, but she has started slowly on a couple of occasions, most notably in the Albany last season when her opening furlong time of 14.43s ranked 13th and even at Windsor, she was only 5th over the opening furlong. For that reason, the drop back to 5 furlongs did make her seem slightly vulnerable and I preferred to look for a horse who will be closer to the pace.

With the presence of the US-based runners, there seemed a high probability that there would be a decent early pace and I am hoping that the unbeaten **WESTPORT** can benefit from it. An unbeaten three-year-old has already won a big race this week for these connections, but whilst Westport doesn't have the same profile as his stablemate Bow Echo, he has been steadily climbing his way through the ranks.

His latest win at Hamilton came in a small field, but he dominated the contest and was the fastest horse in the field for the final 4 of the 5 furlong splits. At a peak average of 26.06 ft, he had the longest stride in the field by over a foot and powered away to win with some authority as he recorded a late speed figure of 37.74 mph.

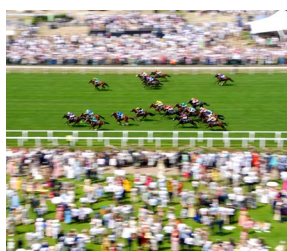
The handicapper has given him a mark of 95 and this is his handicap debut, but having won the Hamilton race under a double penalty, he shapes like a horse who is capable of running at this level. His dam (Lady Livius) won off marks in the 90s and he is a half-brother to both Burnt Sugar and Brown Sugar who reached peak ratings of over 100. Everything would point to George Boughey's charge being capable of further improvement and whilst he remains unbeaten, I want to have him on side.

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 Thursday's key races.



Runners and riders in action during the Commonwealth Cup on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

THE COMMONWEALTH CUP

FRIDAY 19TH JUNE, 15:05

Group 1 | Class 1 | 3YO only

☑ POSITIVES:

Contested the Sandy Lane Stakes
Dropping down in trip from the 2000 Guineas
Officially rated 114 or higher (or 117+ even better)
Fillies

☒ NEGATIVES:

More than two runs this season



Cercene ridden by Gary Carroll (left) on their way to winning the Coronation Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

THE CORONATION STAKES

FRIDAY 19TH JUNE, 16:20

Fillies' Group 1 | Class 1 | 3YO only

☑ POSITIVES:

The Irish 1,000 Guineas winner
Finished in the first six in the 1000 Guineas
Trained in France
The favourite
Won a Pattern race as a two-year-old
Drawn in the higher half

☒ NEGATIVES:

Likely to start bigger than 6/1
Not run in a Classic



Amiloc ridden by Rossa Ryan on their way to winning the King Edward VII Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

THE KING EDWARD VII STAKES

FRIDAY 19TH JUNE, 17:35

Group 2 | Class 1 | 3YO only

☑ POSITIVES:

The favourite or second-favourite
Contested a recognised Derby trial
Yet to win over 1m4f+
Yet to win a Group race
Won twice earlier in the season

☒ NEGATIVES:

Non Aidan O'Brien-trained Irish contenders
Yet to win this season

ROYAL ASCOT

HORSES TO FOLLOW

BY DECLAN RIX



ZOOMING



17:00 | THE SANDRINGHAM STAKES (FILLIES' HANDICAP) (CLASS 2) (3YO) - 8F

One of the toughest handicaps of the week isn't an ideal place to go, especially with fillies involved, but Zooming struck me as an ideal candidate for this race on the back of a lovely seasonal debut effort in the Group 3 The Fred Darling Stakes back in April.

Whether others arrive here better handicapped and fare better with the draw/pace setup we will see, but this fine daughter of Mohaather struck me as the type to improve with time and distance on the back of two-run juvenile season where she competed over 6f and 7f, respectively.

On November 1 at Newmarket, while many were limbering up for the Breeders' Cup action, Zooming broke her maiden in fine style. She only won by a neck, but suggested there was a lot more to come, which is why her stable gave her a crack in a 1000 Guineas trial. Given her weakness in the market, she acquitted herself well, suggesting she'd be even better going a mile.

With that in mind, it came as a huge surprise to see connections drop her to 6f three weeks later, especially on a speed-favouring track like Goodwood. It was maybe a run to possibly shave a pound or two off her official mark of 96, but The Handicapper didn't take the bait.

While the case, I still feel she is fairly treated, in what will be her first run in a handicap and possibly more importantly, a first effort over a mile. She will have little issues carrying a big weight while her team of William Haggas and Tom Marquand are going well.

I just hope the ground doesn't prove too quick for her, but running up hill, she may get away with it once.

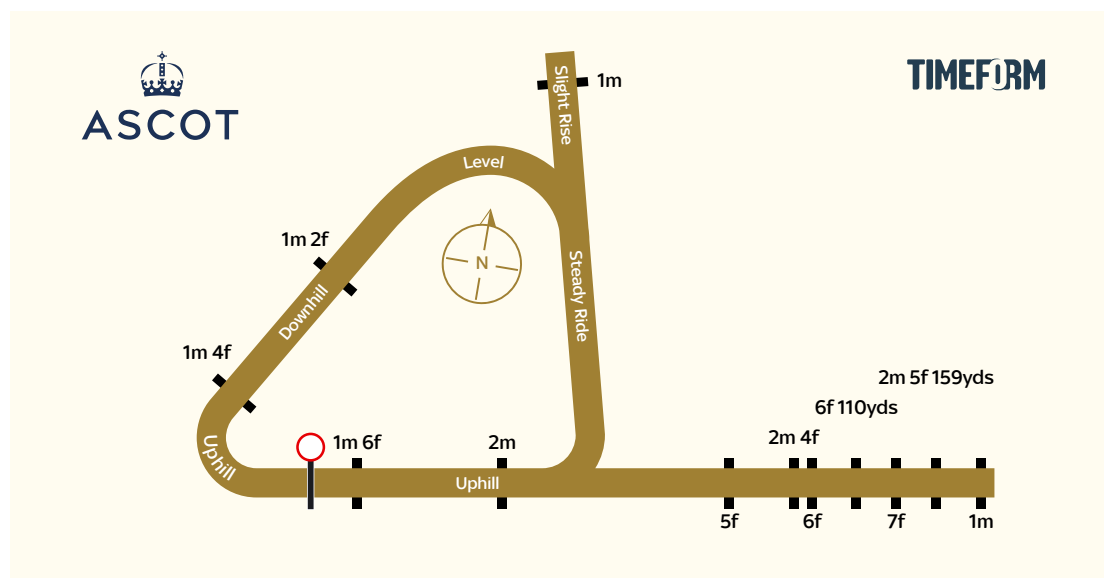


Never Let Go ridden by Kieran Shoemark (centre) coming home to win the Sandringham Stakes on day four of Royal Ascot 2025

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.

