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Find the winner of the 2019 Grand National....

(Race to be run Saturday 6th April 2019)

Beat the bookies in the biggest race of all....

There is no bigger race than the *Grand National*. It is impossible to be British and NOT know what the *Grand National* is.

People all over the world are aware of the race. It's the most valuable jumps race in Europe. Last year the prize money handed out to connections of the winner and the horses that finished directly behind him amounted to more than a million pounds.

On **Saturday 6th April** when this year's field goes to post at Aintree, people all over the planet will be tuning in to enjoy the spectacle on television....

The race is unique. A field of 40-horses slug it out over 30 fences and a four-and-a-quarter mile-trip.

The names of the fences resonate like characters out of some old story enjoyed as a child. Bechers, Canal Turn, Valentines Brook, the Chair....

The *Grand National* fences are idiosyncratic. Much-different to ordinary park racecourse fences and instantly recognisable. They have lost some of the terror of yesteryear – but they still present the ultimate test of both horse and jockey. There is no race quite like the *Grand National*.

The horse that wins must possess a bit of everything. A bit of speed, the ability to jump, bravery, the capacity to remain calm under pressure and, at the death, he must possess stamina – and plenty of it.

After jumping massive fences at speed for 4-miles+, the winner must dig deep and find the reserves to get up the straight, past the elbow and over the line with the rest still toiling behind him. If something comes to challenge, he must find the tenacity and the class to see that challenge off – and then do the same with any additional challengers.

It takes a special horse to win a *Grand National*. It takes a hero. It takes a horse possessing all the characteristics and qualities we admire. It takes a horse that can put it all together on the day and put the rest to the sword. It takes what they call a man of a horse. A street-fighter and an athlete rolled into one.

And the British public respond. We take the *Grand National* winners to our hearts. They become part of the sporting fabric. They are never forgotten. They go down in history. And rightfully so.

Red Rum is still probably one of the best-known horses in Britain. If you asked every adult in the country to name a horse, I reckon he'd still make the top-5 list of responses.

It's 40 years since he won the last of his three *Grand Nationals*. He's been dead more than 20-years. But such was the nature and sheer drama of his exploits in the *Grand National*, his legend lives on.

Men, women and children who have no interest or involvement in racing at any other time of the year choose to bet in the *Grand National*. There's something very special about the race.

The newspapers are full of it – giving racing a back-page prominence it often lacks. They provide information on all the runners – making it easy for anybody to select a horse to bet. And they print up pages that make it easy for people to organise a 'sweep' in the office or in the pub.

The *Melbourne Cup* brings Australia to a standstill – midweek. It's not quite that way in Britain with the *Grand National* which is run on a Saturday. But it's the British equivalent of that race. One that is bigger than the rest of the sport. One that is woven into the fibre of what it is to be British.

Critics say the race amounts to a lottery. That there's just so many horses and fences and so much confusion and chaos that anything can win.

Critics say that the nature of the race plays into the hands of the bookmakers. It can't be argued that the bookmakers look at *Grand National* day as a day of profit. And they always set-out to rip the betting public off with terrible prices that ensure they're working to a profit margin that verges on larceny.

But the *Grand National* is no lottery. Far from it. Not everything can win. **And those horses that do tend to win have some very special attributes that you can identify before the race is run.**

I've put this report together to help you identify the horses with those special attributes this time round – before the race is run....

This is the very information that led me to back **Auroras Encore** for the *Grand National* in 2013. He was trading at 80/1 the night before racing. Nobody fancied him. But I tipped the horse to my readers.

I'm sure some of them thought I'd gone mad. It's probably the case that some of them ignored me. But those that followed me had a *Grand National* to remember that year. Between us we took a few grand out of the bookies.

We followed up the next year with **Pineau De Re** – who won having been advised at 25/1. That was another bet found via the very information this report contains.

Hopefully, you can put this information to use and find yourself a big winner in the 2019 *Grand National*. That's the hope and the intention at any rate. Over to you.

Nick

Nick Pullen

[Against the Crowd](#)

March 2019

Choose informed selection over guessing....

Most people are just guessing when they pick out a horse in the *Grand National*.

They might do a bit of pin-sticking. They might go with a horse whose name they like. They might take on-board the opinions of some newspaper journalist or a talking head off the TV. Now and again, they might get lucky.

But, across the long-run, it doesn't pay to rely on luck. Better to rely on the cold hard facts in the historic record....

What has happened before is very often a strong guide to what will happen again. And what has happened in previous *Grand Nationals* – and other races over those famous fences – offers an informative steer on what might happen on the afternoon of Saturday 6th April. It can help highlight horses of most interest as betting propositions....

Here at *Against the Crowd* we've been studying renewals of the *Grand National* run over the last 22 years.

We believe that what happened in those races provide the keys to unlocking the best bets in this season's renewal of the race....

Follow our pointers and angles below – singularly or in combination – and instead of placing your money on a ‘guess’ in this season’s *Grand National*, you’ll be backing a horse with a ‘live’ chance of running a big race, placing and – if it has the bit of good fortune all runners require on the day – winning....

Let’s get down to business with our first key observation. Good luck.

Route 1 - the weight your horse carries....

Four-and-a-quarter-miles is a long way. Especially when you’re jumping over 30 giant fences. The *Grand National* is a race that really saps the stamina of the equine athletes taking part. And it stands to reason that the more weight they must carry from starting tapes to finishing post, the harder their job becomes.

Now, there have been some great weight-carrying performances over the years. **Red Rum**, for example. He carried top-weight of 12-00 to victory in 1974 – when he was defending the title he won the year before.

No horse has managed to win under top weight in the 40-odd years since then. In that time, I have been through primary school, secondary school, university, half a dozen jobs and find myself in my middle-age with some greying hair and fast-failing eyesight.

Winning a *Grand National* under top-weight clearly isn’t easy. It doesn’t often happen. A 40-odd year-old man can get through half a life or more and never see it....

But there have been some notable performances under big weights. Especially in relatively recent times....

Corbiere carried 11-04 when winning for Jenny Pitman in 1983.

But only 4 horses since then have managed to carry more than 11-00 to victory.

Hedgehunter came out on top under a burden of 11-01 in 2005. **Don’t Push It** won carrying 11-05 in 2010. **Neptune Collonges** won under a weight of 11-06 in 2012. **Many Clouds** ran an absolute cracker to win under 11-09 in 2015.

Clearly, horses can run big races under weights bigger than 11-0. But, in recent times, such performances have been few and far between.

In 2018, just two of the first 12 horses home carried 11-00+

In 2017, just two of the first 15 horses home carried 11-00+

In 2016, just one of the first 13 home carried 11-00+.

In 2015, just two of first 10 horses home carried 11-00+ (including **Many Clouds**, the winner).

In 2014, just one of first 10 home carried 11-00+.

In the 2013 renewal, just one of first 10 home carried 11-00+.

The conclusion we can draw is clear: **the percentage play in this year's renewal of the *Grand National* is to focus our betting attention on the horses carrying less than 11-00.**

It isn't that horses carrying more than 11-00 can't run big races. Or that they never will. Far from it.

History shows us that some horses are strong enough and good enough to hump that weight round Aintree and over the big fences.

It's just that horses carrying less than 11-00 have a much better recent record of making it round and getting competitive.

Route 2 - the jockey riding your horse....

The *Grand National* course and its idiosyncratic fences present horses with a unique challenge. There is no other course – and no other jumping challenge – quite like it in British racing. Or anywhere else for that matter.

Some horses love the place. They thrive on the peculiar challenge. Time and again they return to the *Grand National* track and out in quality performances.

A few years ago, there was a horse trained by Peter Bowen called **Always Waining**. He absolutely loved the *Grand National* fences.

Over a 5-year period stretching from 2009 to 2013 he appeared in races run over the *Grand National* fences a total of 8 times.

He appeared in the *Topham Chase* four times – winning on 3 occasions. He appeared in two editions of the *Grand Sefton* – falling once and finishing 6th the next time. He appeared in a *Becher Chase* – finishing 4th. And he got around on the one occasion he stepped up in trip and appeared in a *Grand National*.

With form figures over the fences reading 4F161410, **Always Waining** was clearly something of a course specialist. He took to the place. He took to the fences. Aintree and the *Grand National* course brought out the best in him. That's how it works for some horses.

And that's how it is for some of the jockeys too. Let's not forget that it isn't just the horse that goes around the course and over the fences. The jockey does too. And some of the jockeys – like some of the horses – have demonstrated a liking for or a knack of effectively handling the specific challenge of the *Grand National* fences.

Take **Barry Geraghty**, for example. His last 27 rides in races run over the *Grand National* fences – the *Topham*, the *Becher*, the *Grand Sefton*, the *Foxhunter* and the *Grand National* itself – have produced 4 winners and 6 placed finishers.

That's a place strike-rate of 37% over the most severe fences in racing – a figure that serves to underline Geraghty's mastery of the fences and his ability to get horses to perform over them.

Had you backed all his last 25 rides over the fences £10 each-way you'd now be sitting on a profit of **£595.00**.

Clearly Barry Geraghty is a rider to have onside over the *Grand National* fences. Whatever he rides this year – is worthy of very serious consideration.

Another rider to note is the amateur, **Mr Sam Whaley-Cohen**. He may not be a paid-up member of the professional ranks, but he is certainly a sound-enough horseman to compete on level terms.

Indeed, over the *Grand National* fences you might make the case that he is a good deal better than some of his professional counterparts.

His last 21 rides over the idiosyncratic obstacles produced 5 winners and 5 placed finishes. That's a place strike rate of 47.6%. And four more rides produced 5th and 6th place finishes – in big fields. He's only failed to finish 5 times.

And if you'd backed all Whaley-Cohen's last 21 qualifying runners £10 each-way, you'd now be sitting on a profit of **£792.40**. He's clearly an advantage to both horse and punter over the *Grand National* fences....

You'd expect top-man in the weighing room, **Ruby Walsh**, to make out shortlist. And you'd be correct. His last 27 rides over the fences produced 4 winners and 6 places – with another 3 of his rides making the top 6.

The problem with Ruby Walsh is that he's Ruby Walsh – the best rider in the sport – and punters are very much onto his rides. The bookies never take too many chances. And punters are always keen to back his rides. Consequently, Walsh's rides frequently get backed into short-prices. They are harder to make a decent profit from.

Even so, had you backed all his last 27 rides over the *Grand National* fences £10 each-way, you'd still be sitting on a profit of **£91.00**.

Daryl Jacob is a bit of a dark horse around Aintree. His last 27 rides over the big fences produced 2 winners and 7 additional placed horses.

Had you backed them all to the tune of £10 each-way, you'd now be sitting on profits totalling **£658**. Jacob has record of getting some big-priced runners into the frame. And that's a useful knack to have – and a good knack for punters to latch onto.

To recap, some riders have demonstrated that they may be more at home over the *Grand National* fences than others. Their respective record of achievement suggests their rides in this season's big race should be very much on your radar.

Route 3 - proven genes can deliver value....

There are multiple ways of finding bets in horse races. The key to long-term profit is to find bets at value prices – prices which underestimate a horse's true chances of winning.

To find value you must stand against the crowd – as we do with all our big race bets on the *Against the Crowd* service.

You must do something different when it comes to selecting the horses you bet. If you do the same thing as everybody else, you will inevitably wind up backing the same favourites or short-priced horses that everybody else is backing. And you're going find it hard to make those horses produce a betting profit over the long run.

A lot of punters can't see past a short price. They simply can't bring themselves to back anything but the favourite or the one directly behind it in the betting. To that kind of punter, a short price is a sign of certainty. It wouldn't be a short price if it weren't going to win. Of course, that's nonsense. The market frequently gets it wrong – many more times than it gets it right....

Other punters like backing last time out winners. Or the top-rated horse in the morning newspaper. Or the mount of the top jockey. Or the horse

turned out by the top trainer. Or the horse put up by the *Racing Post's* Pricewise or some other big mainstream tipster.

And there are punters who swear by backing a horse that has course and distance form. There are punters that always back the horses that has travelled furthest to the track. There are punters who back horses that were beaten favourites last time out – taking the view that something must have gone wrong and this time the horse will redeem itself and win back the money his backers lost.

There is no right or wrong way. But in the search for value, some ways are potentially more lucrative than others.

For example, where the *Grand National* is concerned not many people are aware that the progeny of a certain sire have a better overall and collective record in the race than the progeny of other sires.

I've never read about this fact in a newspaper. I've never seen any of the talking heads rambling on about it on television. I've never seen a discussion about this fact on a betting forum.

I discovered this fact through my own research and analysis. And whilst I'm not daft enough to think I'm the only person that is aware of it, I've been around long enough to know that those that do know about it are few – and that the knowledge represents an edge in the marketplace.

No sire has a better record in the *Grand National* than **Old Vic**. And any runner representing his bloodline in this season's edition of the race is worth the once-over.

Comply or Die won the race for him in 2008. **Don't Push It**, under A P McCoy, won it for him in 2010.

In the last seven years, another 5 horses have made the frame for him – **Comply or Die** (2nd in 2009), **Black Apalachi** (2nd in 2010), **Don't Push It** (3rd in 2011), **Sunnyhillboy** (2nd in 2012) and **Vics Canvas** (3rd in 2016). **In Compliance** finished 5th for **Old Vic** in 2012 – a performance that would have merited a place pay out from bookmakers playing out on the 5th place.

In short, **Old Vic** has got a cracking record in the *Grand National*. I'm no breeding expert, but his genes seem to contain something that helps them deliver time and again over the big Liverpool fences....

And, as I say, not too many people are aware of the fact. Not too many people are aware that **Ballyoptic** and **Folsom Blue** (horses sired by **Old Vic** that still have entries in this season's race at the time of writing)

come from a genetic background that has produced multiple quality performance in *Grand National* races run over the last few years....

I think it's something worth knowing?

Route 4 - the Profile of a Grand National winner....

Over the years, a specific type of horse tends to come out on top time and time again in the *Grand National*.

The *Grand National* winners tend to share certain characteristics and credentials....

They have similar qualifications....

They have achieved similar things and met similar yardsticks....

Their careers have been constructed around common themes. Their respective campaigns have similar and consistent features....

They meet the same broad criterion. They tick the same boxes. They measure up similarly to a wider statistical profile....

Conversely, horses that fail to meet the criteria laid down by these long-standing trends tend to fall short.

It is very fair to say that trends will not always point you directly to a winner – at least not on their own. But they will help you split a field into the horses that fit the winning trends most closely and those who match them least.

And that information can help you reach betting decisions....

No horse will meet every trend in every race. But we can take a subjective view and weigh up one thing against another.

We can figure out which trends we think are most important against what else we know.

We might discard some trends. With others, we might forgive a horse for not meeting the criteria – for whatever reason.

I've studied the last **16** renewals of the *Grand National* in forensic detail and there are some strong and reliable signposts that point clearly to the horses with live chances in this season's renewal. Here's what I found:

- **All** the last 16 winners had raced over fences at least 10 times (**13** had contested no more than 24 chases)
- **All** the last 16 winners were officially rated 137+ (**8** of the last 11 winners were rated 148+)
- **All** the last 16 winners had scored their career-best Racing Post rating over fences at 24f+
- **15** had won at least 3 chases (**14** had won no more than 5 times)
- **15** had won a chase at 24f+ (**14** had raced at 24f+ over fences at Graded level)
- **15** had won no more than 3 handicaps during chasing career
- **14** had won a chase in a field of 13 or more runners
- **14** had experience of racing in at least one chase worth £70k+
- **14** had finished in top 5 of last chase contested
- **14** had scored a best Racing Post rating over fences of 150+ (**10** had produced their career-best ever rating in one of their last 2 chase starts)
- **13** had a Dosage CD (Centre of Distribution) figure of 0.11 or lower. You can check out the CD figures for runners in this year's field right [here](#).
- **13** had won a chase worth £30k+
- **13** had won 20%+ of chases contested (**9** of the last 13 winners had won 29%+)
- **13** had already raced over fences at 28f+ (**12** producing an RPR within 8lb of career-best RPR over fences)
- **12** were Irish-bred (note: **3** of the last 9 winners were French-bred horses)
- **12** were aged 9- to 11-years-old
- **12** had scored a best Topspeed rating over fences of 126+
- **9** had run over hurdles at least once during the current season (just **two** had run in more than 5 chases that season)
- **10** of the last 11 winners had contested a Grade level chase that season
- **5** of the last 10 winners carried 11-0 or more to victory
- Only **4** of the last 16 winners had won a chase at a trip short of 18f
- Only **5** had raced at that season's Cheltenham Festival
- Just **one** had been off the track for more than 8 weeks (**12** had been off no more than 5 weeks)
- Just **two** of the last 16 winners had won more than once over fences that term (**8** hadn't won a single race over fences that season)

Personally, I use this checklist of attributes and characteristics as a value-finding tool. I am always most interested in the horses that tick a lot of the right boxes, but which are being over-looked by the wider market.

I'm a contrarian punter. That's the way I play. I've had good days where I've backed big winners at big prices. And I've had plenty of losing days too.

I expect those losing days. Losing days are an inevitable consequence of how I play the game. For me it's a long-term affair. In seeking out value bets I aim to back sufficient winners at sufficiently good prices to get ahead of the game over time....

How you use the information, and how you seek to apply it in the betting markets, is pretty much up to you. We look at it as our job to load the gun with bullets. Where you point it and when you fire is your business....

Over to you. Good luck. And if you use the information we provide in this report to find a winning bet on **Saturday 6th April** – be sure to let us know.

Until next time, be lucky!

Nick

Nick Pullen

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