

An extract taken from Marten Julian's Cheltenham Bulletin Book 2010 where he is discussing Day Two of The Festival and The Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle.

The one I most fancy to beat him is **Peddlers Cross**, bought by Donald McCain for £100,000 at the Cheltenham April Sales after winning his sole start between the flags in Ireland. McCain apparently vowed to buy the son of Oscar after seeing him win that race and his judgement has since been thoroughly vindicated, with a victory in a bumper and twice over hurdles.

Although the trainer was quick to dismiss the horse's latest success in the Rossington Main Hurdle at Haydock – claiming he went into the race not quite knowing what to expect – a strict interpretation of the form makes for impressive reading.

His 16-lengths defeat of 132-rated Scriptwriter, who was in receipt of 4lb, puts the winner on a BHA rating of 152. Taking a line through the 131-rated Radium, who finished a further 10 lengths back in third, the winner comes out on a mark in the high 150s. The fact he won easing down suggests that his official BHA rating of 148 may be on the low side, yet even that mark is still 4lb higher than Finian's Rainbow, who is shorter than him in the betting.

I have felt for some while now that Donald McCain has a special talent on his hands with Peddlers Cross. I suppose one has to have slight concerns that the horse has not yet raced beyond 2m 1f but his style of racing suggests the trip should not prove beyond him and he won a point-to-point over two and a half miles. Of more concern is his relative lack of experience in a field of this size and class, but Peddlers Cross is a smooth-travelling horse and I don't envisage him having any issues with the pace.

My view is that 12'1, especially to a quarter the odds each-way, is good value (just 9'1 on Betfair). Furthermore, in my judgement the figure he achieved when winning at Haydock entitles him to his position near the head of the market. If he were trained by Nicky Henderson or Paul Nicholls he would probably be half the price he is at the moment.



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