MARTEN'S ANALYSIS FOR TODAY

Saturday 18 February 2023

Hi there,

At Wincanton in the Grade 2 Kingwell Hurdle there is just 1lb between the three main contenders but I'll be disappointed if I Like To Move It does not go very close (3.12).

The six-year-old enjoyed the good ground when defying top weight on his return to action in the competitive Greatwood Hurdle at Cheltenham in November, winning there by five and a half lengths under 12 stone.

He then found the soft ground and step up to 2m 4f against him back there on New Year's Day, finishing behind today's two main rivals First Street and Knappers Hill, but these conditions are much more to his liking and a bold effort will see him lining up for the Champion Hurdle.

We have an intriguing puzzle in the Grade 1 Betfair Chase at Ascot, where Shishkin is 11lb clear of the next best Fakir d'Oudairies but has to put his last two runs behind him (3.35). He has, though, his first crack at 2m 5f and comes here from a wind operation and with a first-time tongue tie.

This is no two-horse race, though, with First Flow running at a track he loves and Millers Bank here following wind surgery for the third time.

Later in the day there has been a strong market move for Gary Moore's Imphal, who should be suited to being back on good ground (4.10). His stable has been among the winners recently.

I should have something to say about Haydock but I don't know if it's me but I find it all rather difficult. I don't want to look for something just for the sake of it, especially on ground which is not as soft as normal for this meeting.

I see nothing for us on the all-weather so I'm sorry that I lack inspiration but suggest I Like To Move It to win as my sole selection of the day.

Bye for now

Marten