Universal all set for the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (Sponsored by Betfair)

A thrilling renewal of the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (sponsored by Betfair) is in prospect at Ascot this Saturday, July 27.

The latest confirmations for the £1,065,000 contest, run over a mile and a half, were made yesterday and 10 contenders are currently on course for the midsummer highlight at Ascot, following the news this morning of an injury to St Nicholas Abbey who had been a leading contender.

**Cirrus Des Aigles** (now 13/8 favourite with Betfair) was the world's highest-rated horse at the start of the year and has a fine record at Ascot, having won the 2011 QIPCO Champion Stakes and finishing second to the mighty Frankel in the same race in 2012. Christophe Soumillon will ride the seven-year-old who was disappointing on his reappearance run at Saint-Cloud on June 23 when he could only finish fifth behind another of Saturday's runners **Novellist** (4/1). The Andreas Wohler-trained Novellist won that race by a length and a quarter and has been victorious on his last three starts. Germany's top horse bids to become the country's second winner of the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (Sponsored by Betfair) following Danedream's success last year.

Another notable contender is the **Trading Leather** (9/2) whose Dubai Duty Free Irish Derby victory has propelled him into contention for the Ascot showpiece. The step up to a mile and a half saw the three-year-old son of Teofilo secure a decisive length and three-quarters success.

Owner Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum, successful with Nashwan in 1989, is set to be represented by **Ektihaam** (7/1). On his most recent start, the Roger Varian-trained colt unshipped rider Paul Hanagan after slipping on the turn at Ascot in the Group Two Hardwicke Stakes at the Royal Meeting on June 22.

The Mark Johnston-trained **Universal** (16/1) is a definite runner in the race. He has progressed readily this term, taking the step up from handicap company to Group races in his stride. Following his fourth win of the summer by two and a half lengths in the Group Two Princess of Wales's Stakes at Newmarket, the four-year-old Dubawi colt steps up to Group One company for the first time.
Bruce Raymond, racing manager to Universal’s owner Abdulla Al Mansoori, said: "I spoke to Mark Johnston’s stable on Monday and Universal is in top form. All is good with the horse and Mark is very happy with him.

"The faster the ground on Saturday, the better for him. Faster ground may not suit some of the others in the race, but it will really suit us.

"Obviously, he has got a bit to find on ratings but has made tremendous progress so far this season and is a horse going the right way so it makes sense to have a go with him."

**Hillstar** (13/2), trained by Sir Michael Stoute, was supplemented at a cost of £75,000 and bids to give his trainer a record sixth win in the race. The three-year-old colt was last seen winning Royal Ascot’s Group Two King Edward VII Stakes by a length, defeating the Investec Derby fourth Battle of Marengo.

An interesting contender is **Very Nice Name** (20/1) from Qatar who will be ridden by Olivier Peslier. The four-year-old has not raced since he finished a creditable three and a half lengths second to St Nicholas Abbey in the Dubai Sheema Classic at Meydan on March 30 and looks unexposed.

With St Nicholas Abbey absent because of a career-ending injury, trainer Aidan O’Brien could run **Ernest Hemingway** (16/1), successful in the Group Three Curragh Cup last time out and **Chamonix** (66/1).

Ed Dunlop’s globetrotting superstar **Red Cadeaux** (25/1), who finished ninth last time out at Royal Ascot in the Prince of Wales’s Stakes, completes the entries going forward.

**Going**

The going at Ascot is currently **Good to Firm**.

Clerk of the Course Chris Stickels reported this morning: "We had around two millimetres of rain overnight and more this morning, giving a total of around seven and a half millimetres.

"The going description remains good to firm and there is a chance of more thunderstorms today. It may change as the day goes on but at the moment that is where we are. We will review the situation as regards to watering after we have seen what today brings.

"It is a great shame what happened to St Nicholas Abbey but we still have a great line-up for the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes (Sponsored by Betfair) including the world’s best horse Cirrus Des Aigles."

**Latest Betfair Sportsbook odds:** 13/8 Cirrus Des Aigles; 4/1 Novellist; 9/2 Trading Leather; 13/2 Hillstar; 7/1 Ektihaam; 16/1 Ernest Hemingway; Universal; 20/1 Very Nice Name; 25/1 Red Cadeaux; 66/1 Chamonix
EW Terms: 1/4 Odds | 3 Places

**Timeform Weight-Adjusted Ratings**

142 - CIRRUS DES AIGLES
131 - EKTIHAAM
130 - UNIVERSAL
130 - RED CADEAUX
130 - NOVELLIST
129 - TRADING LEATHER
129 - VERY NICE NAME
125 - HILLSTAR
125 - ERNEST HEMINGWAY
123 - CHAMONIX

Five-day confirmations have also been made for Saturday's £100,000 The Cash Out Multiples Only On Betfair International Handicap over seven furlongs. The consistent Hawkeyethenoo, trained in Scotland by Jim Goldie, tops the weights on 9st 10lb, with the Julie Camacho-trained Diescentric the current favourite at 7/1 with Betfair.

Diescentric has made rapid progress this summer to win his last two starts, both over seven furlongs. His most recent success came at Newcastle with a decisive two and a half length win in a competitive handicap on June 29.

The Roger Varian trained Ashaadd (14/1) is another horse who comes into the race in great form. The son of Dansili has won his last two starts over seven furlongs, looking on the upgrade.

Last year's winner Field of Dream (11/1) runs in this year's renewal as he attempts to defend his crown. Jamie Osborne's contender seems to have hit form at the right time after he stayed on dourly under Adam Kirby at Newmarket's July Course to beat Es Que Love (16/1), who could also head to Ascot on Saturday, by a length in the Bunbury Cup on July 13.

Lightning Cloud (12/1) was co-favourite for this race last year before finishing a disappointing 21st. However, his latest one and a quarter length win over course and distance on June 21 in the Buckingham Palace Handicap was impressive. Additionally, Lightning Cloud has run well in defeat, with a notable display coming when he was seventh, beaten seven and a half lengths, by Saturday's favourite Diescentric at Doncaster on June 1.

Queensberry Rules (11/1) trained by William Haggas, comes into the race as one of the most unexposed in the field, having only run four times and only seeing a racecourse for the first time in April. The three-year-old came third in the Britannia Handicap at Royal Ascot on his latest start, finishing three quarters of a length adrift of the winner Roca Tumu.

Clive Cox could be represented by the progressive four-year-old Dream Tune (14/1), who was a good second behind Lightning Cloud in the Buckingham Palace
Handicap. The son of Oasis Dream has never finished out of the first five over seven furlongs.

English actress and model Elizabeth Hurley will judge the best turned out prize for the Cash Out Multiples Only On Betfair International Handicap and present the trophy to the winning connections.

**Latest Betfair Sportsbook odds:** 7/1 Diescentric; 11/1 Field Of Dream, Queensberry Rules; 12/1 Lightning Cloud, Prince Of Johanne; 14/1 Hawkeyethenoo, Bertiewhittle, Dream Tune,ashaadd; 16/1 Es Que Love, Redvers; 18/1 Santefisio; 20/1 My Freedom, Excellent Guest, Loving Spirit, Famous Poet, Homage, Muharrib, Correspondent; 25/1 Sirius Prospect, Shamaal Nabras, Asatir, Smarty Socks, The Confessor, Boots And Spurs, Galician; 28/1 Capaill Liath; 33/1 Les Troyens, Palace Moon, Brae Hill, Henry The Aviator, Gatepost, Head Of Steam, Trail Blaze, Glen Moss, Poetic Dancer, Compton; 40/1 Pied A Terre, Rebellious Guest, Docofthebay, Graphic, Justonefortheroad, Al Muheer, Georgian Bay, Farlow, Sacrosanctus, Hefner, Hi There, Ducal; 50/1 Askaud, Ocean Tempest, Shamdarley, Common Touch

EW Terms: 1/4 Odds | 5 Places

**THE KING GEORGE VI & QUEEN ELIZABETH STAKES (SPONSORED BY BETFAIR)**

**Group 1, Class 1, £1,065,000 Total Prize Fund.** One mile and four furlongs, 3.50pm, Ascot, Saturday, July 27, 2013. For three-year-olds and upwards. Weights: three-year-old colts and geldings 8st 9lb, fillies 8st 6lb; four-year-old and up colts and geldings 9st 7lb, fillies 9st 4lb; southern hemisphere allowance: 4yo 4lb. Entries made June 11, entries revealed June 12 (29 entries), scratchings' deadline July 9 (14 remained), five-day confirmation & £75,000 supplementary entry stage July 22 (10 confirmations plus one supplementary entry), final declarations July 25. Form figures up to and including the racing of Sunday, July 21.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Horse</th>
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<td>Aidan O'Brien IRE</td>
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<td>RED CADEAUX</td>
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<td>Alban de Mieulle QTR</td>
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<td>41-221</td>
<td>HILLSTAR</td>
<td>3-8-09</td>
<td>Sir Evelyn De Rothschild</td>
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<td>3-8-09</td>
<td>Jackie Bolger</td>
<td>Jim Bolger IRE</td>
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**THE FOLLOWING 5 HORSES HAVE BEEN SCRATCHED:** HUNTER'S LIGHT (IRE), MOUNT ATHOS (IRE), MUKHADRAM, BATTLE OF MARENGO (IRE), MARS (IRE)

11 go forward at five-day stage (10 confirmations plus 1 supplementary entry (Hillstar))
4 Irish-trained
1 French-trained
1 German-trained
CASH OUT MULTIPLES ONLY ON BETFAIR INTERNATIONAL HANDICAP

Class 2, Heritage Handicap, £100,000 Total Prize Fund. Seven furlongs. 3.15pm, Ascot, Saturday, July 27, 2013. For three-year-olds and upwards. Weights: highest weight not less than 9st 10lb; minimum weight 8st. Penalties, after June 29, a winner 3lb; of 2 or more races 5lb. Entries closed, June 25, entries revealed June 26, (89 entries), weights revealed July 3, scratchings deadline July 9 (81 remained) five-day confirmation stage Monday, July 22 (55 remain). Final declaration stage 10.00am, Thursday, July 25. Form figures supplied by Weatherbys and are correct up to and including the racing of Sunday, July 21. May not include some overseas form. The top-weighted horse is rated 108.

Form Animal Age Owner Trainer
02-4465 HAWKEYTHENOO (IRE) 7-9-10 Johnnie Delta Racing Jim Goldie
00(1)-311 DIESECENTRIC (USA) 6-9-08 Axom (XVIII) Julie Camacho
426224 DON’T CALL ME (IRE) 6-9-07 Matt & Lauren Morgan David Nicholls
(0)(3)0040 SANTEFISIO 7-9-06 Weldspec Glasgow Limited Keith Dalgleish
03-3(0)(3)03 DUBAWI SOUND 5-9-04 Pearl Bloodstock Ltd David Brown
2026-(0)00 PIED A TERRE (AUS) 5-9-04 Godolphin Saeed bin Suroor
34(3)-040 SIRIUS PROSPECT (USA) 5-9-04 Miss N Yarrow Dean Ivory
0(5)(6)061 FIELD OF DREAM 6-9-03 (3lb Ex) Ken Gundlach Jamie Osborne
03-3001 LIGHTNING CLOUD (IRE) 5-9-02 Hambleton Racing Ltd XVIII Kevin Ryan
006-0201 PRINCE OF JOHANNE (IRE) 7-9-05 (3lb Ex) David Storey Tom Tate
600205223 ES QUE LOVE (IRE) 4-9-01 Crone Stud Farms Ltd Mark Johnston
400-4(0)10 MY FREEDOM (IRE) 5-9-01 Godolphin Saeed bin Suroor
0-(4)(5)5235 SHAMAAL NIBRAS (USA) 4-9-01 Saeed Altayer Ismail Mohammed
5000-100 EXCELLENT GUEST 6-9-00 John Guest Racing George Margarson
046-2020 BERTIEWHITTLE 5-8-13 Norton Common Farm Racing II&JKB Johnson David Barron
(0)(0)(2)-2206 LES TROYENS 5-8-13 Godolphin Saeed bin Suroor
(0)202301001 GALICIAN 4-8-11 (5lb Ex) Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum Mark Johnston
03(6)-0155 ATASIR (USA) 4-8-11 Godolphin Saeed bin Suroor
00(0)-0151 PALACE MOON 8-8-11 Canisbay Bloodstock William Knight
60-00102 SMARTY SOCKS (IRE) 9-8-11 Direct Racing Partnership David O’Meara
325-4105 REDVERS (IRE) 5-8-11 M J C and E J C Hawkes Ed Vaughan
125-552 DREAM TUNE 4-8-11 Al Asayl Bloodstock Ltd Clive Cox
0-305000 BRAE HILL (IRE) 7-8-10 Dr Marwan Koukash Richard Fahey
(3)02-(2)06 LOVING SPIRIT 5-8-10 Loving Spirit Partnership James Toller
(1)24-(1)2-206 FAMOUS POET (IRE) 4-8-10 Godolphin Saeed bin Suroor
(1)133 QUEENSBERRY RULES (IRE) 3-8-09 Liam Sheridan William Haggas
0/400-00 REBELLIOUS GUEST 4-8-08 John Guest Racing George Margarson
300-331 THE CONFESSOR 6-8-08 Six Too Many Henry Candy
61-4000 JUSTONEFORTHEROAD 7-8-08 The Pontoon Partnership Richard Fahey
65-20110 BOOTS AND SPURS 4-8-08 Colin Bryce Elaine Burke
(1)(1)-40614 CORRESPONDENT 3-8-07 Pollin Good Brian Meehan
(0)40-5161 ASHAADD (IRE) 3-8-07 (3lb Ex) Sheikh Ahmed Al Maktoum Roger Varian
230-(2)-042 GLEN MOSS (IRE) 4-8-06 (3lb Ex) John Grant Charles Hills
(4)(1)-4(0)14 HEAD OF STEAM (USA) 6-8-06 George Materna Amanda Perrett
0-(0)-00010 CAPELLI LAITH (IRE) 5-8-06 T A Rahman Kevin Ryan
215-0436 TRAIL BLAZE (IRE) 4-8-06 Mr & Mrs Julian & Rosie Richer Kevin Ryan
00601-0 SACROSANCTUS 5-8-06 Paul Dixon Scott Dixon
416-0060 COMMON TOUCH (IRE) 5-8-05 Broughton Thermal Insulation Willie Musson
0(6)(5)-(2)06 POETIC DANCER 4-8-05 The Laureates Clive Cox
360-R444 DUCAL 5-8-04 The Icebreakers Mike Murphy
4-60005 COMPTON 4-8-04 The Morley Family Robert Cowell
4-102046 HI THERE (IRE) 4-8-04 Market Avenue Racing Club Ltd Richard Fahey
100-365 HEFNER (IRE) 4-8-03 Clive Washbourn Marco Botti
(0)03-562(1) SHAMDARLEY (IRE) 5-8-02 (3lb Ex) Andrew Tinkler Marco Botti
005-005 FARLOW (IRE) 5-8-02 Red Sky Partnership 1 Richard Fahey
(1)55-(3)406 GEORGIAN BAY (IRE) 3-8-01 P O’Grady Elaine Burke
05310053 AL MUHEER (IRE) 8-8-00 Antigua Cavaliers & Ruth Carr Ruth Carr
(2)(5)0(5)011 ASKAUD (IRE) 5-7-13 (3lb Ex) Paul Dixon Scott Dixon
50-0304 GATEPOST (IRE) 4-7-13 Dr Marwan Koukash Richard Fahey
01-503(3) OCEAN TEMPEST 4-7-13 Bill McLuskey & C Little John Ryan
32(1)-12 HOMAGE (IRE) 3-7-11 Highclere Thoroughbred Racing Dalmeny Jeremy Noseda
60(0)-00(4)3 GRAPHIC (IRE) 4-7-10 The Royal Ascot Racing Club William Haggas
(1)(2)21331 HENRY THE AVIATOR (USA) 3-7-09 (3lb Ex) Crone Stud Farms Ltd Mark Johnston
062000 DOCOFTEBAY (IRE) 9-7-08 Paul Dixon Scott Dixon

55 five-day confirmations

THE FOLLOWING 26 ENTRIES HAVE BEEN SCRATCHED: PEARL FLUTE (IRE), LOCKWOOD, THE CHEKA (IRE), MAJESTIC MYLES (IRE), BELGIAN BILL, SIR PATRICK MOORE (FR), MASTEROFOTHEROLLS (IRE), FURY, BURWAAZ, BURN THE BOATS (IRE), THE GOLD CHEONGSAM (IRE), DR RED EYE, EMILIO LARGO, MEZZOTINT (IRE), GEORGE GURU, GRAMERCY (IRE), OUT DO, NEWSTEAD ABBEY, JACK’S REVENGE (IRE), JAMMY GUEST (IRE), SHEEBEBI (USA), MABAIT, KINGSCROFT (IRE), NOBLE CITIZEN (USA), REGAL DAN (IRE), FLASHLIGHT (IRE)