



Ascot Racecourse Media Release

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Top Notch, Waiting Patiently and Coney Island among magnificent seven for Saturday's Betfair Ascot Chase

Top Notch heads seven runners for an excellent renewal of the £150,000 G1 Betfair Ascot Chase over two miles and five furlongs at Ascot this Saturday, Betfair Ascot Chase Day, February 17.

Top Notch (Nicky Henderson/Daryl Jacob) has won his last two starts in great style, including over the course and distance in the G2 Christy 1965 Chase in November, and tops Betfair's market at 7/4.

Trainer Nicky Henderson has saddled three Betfair Ascot Chase winners, including dual scorer Riverside Theatre, a record only bettered by Martin Pipe who won the race four times.

Waiting Patiently (Ruth Jefferson/Brian Hughes), the 11/4 second favourite, is unbeaten in five starts over fences. He comes into the race on the back of an impressive eight-length success in a Listed chase at Kempton Park on January 13.

Coney Island (Eddie Harty IRE/Barry Geraghty, 3/1) captured the G1 Drinmore Novice Chase at Fairyhouse last season and is bidding to become the second Irish-trained winner of the Betfair Ascot Chase following Sound Man in 1996. The seven-year-old also has winning course and distance form, having made short work of his rivals in a graduation chase on December 23.

Cue Card (Colin Tizzard/Paddy Brennan, 8/1) could become the first three-time winner of the Betfair Ascot Chase. The popular 12-year-old, who landed the spoils in 2013 and 2017, has not raced since finishing second in the G1 Betfair Chase at Haydock Park on November 25.

The great Kauto Star is one of three Paul Nicholls-trained winners on the roll of honour. Frodon (Paul Nicholls, 10/1) represents the trainer this year and looked as good as ever on his latest start when posting a 17-length victory in a G3 handicap chase at Cheltenham on January 27. Bryony Frost keeps the ride.

Likely front-runner Speredek (Nigel Hawke/Sean Bowen, 25/1) has risen 39lb in the handicap over the last 12 months to a rating of 154. He finished second to Un De Sceaux in the G1 Clarence House Chase over two miles and a furlong at Ascot on January 20.

Trainer Nigel Hawke said today: "Speredek is in good form - he always is, to be honest - and is a very straightforward horse to deal with.

"It looks a very good race, but he was not beaten far by one of the best horses in training last time.

"The question mark is obviously the trip, given he has been running over two miles, although he has won over just shy of three miles over hurdles.

"We are a bit limited to where we can go with him because he has to go right-handed, so the decision where to target after his last run was made for us really. If he proves he can go over this sort of distance in this grade, it opens up more doors."

Traffic Fluide (Gary Moore/Joshua Moore, 66/1), who has finished third in three G1 contests, completes the runners.

Betfair spokesman Barry Orr commented today: "It is a quality field of seven for the Betfair Ascot Chase and Top Notch, who has headed the betting since Monday, still leads the way at 7/4.

"Of the market principals, Coney Island has probably been the weakest, but, as with a race with such strength in depth, the betting could change very quickly tomorrow."

Betfair Ascot Chase - Betfair prices:

7/4 Top Notch

11/4 Waiting Patiently

3/1 Coney Island

8/1 Cue Card

10/1 Frodon

25/1 Sperdek

66/1 Traffic Fluide

The going at Ascot was described this morning as Soft, Heavy in places.

This follows six millimetres of rain overnight up to 7.30am.

The remainder of the week looks largely dry, with possible occasional light showers.

ENDS

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