



Ascot & Betfair Media Release

for immediate release, Monday, February 10, 2020

Cyrname is "bang on" for the Betfair Ascot Chase

Cyrname is "bang where we want him to be," said his trainer Paul Nicholls ahead of the eight-year-old's run in the Betfair Ascot Chase on Saturday, for which he is 8/15 favourite with Betfair to repeat his 2019 success in the G1 2m 5f race.

"Ascot is a track he loves," said Nicholls. "He takes a little bit of time to come to himself between races, but he schooled this morning under Harry [Cobden] and jumped nicely. He had a little away-day last week, and worked very well on Saturday morning. He's bang fresh and well."

Cyrname, a French-bred son of Nickname owned by Sam de la Hey, was very impressive when beating Altior by two and a quarter lengths to win the G2 Christy 1965 Chase - over the same distance as the Betfair Ascot Chase - at Ascot in November. He then finished second to his stablemate Clan Des Obeaux in the G1 King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day, his first attempt at three miles.

"Obviously in hindsight the Kempton race came a bit quick after Ascot," observed Nicholls. "If we were to go to the King George again, I probably wouldn't use the Ascot race as a preparation. He is so good fresh that I might even go there first time out. Ascot left a bit of a mark on him, and Clan Des Obeaux was obviously on fire that day at Kempton. Cyrname still ran well to finish second, though.

"He has taken a while to come to himself after that, but he's not a big, heavy, strong horse like Denman - he's more of a fragile, Kauto Star-like horse and you've just got to mind him a fraction."

Looking ahead, Nicholls said: "I would say if he runs on Saturday then he won't go to Cheltenham, because it's too close for him."

"We will more likely think of another plan, Aintree or Punchestown or something like that. He's a horse who you need to take each race at a time with and not really make a forward plan, but if he runs on Saturday I would say there's virtually no chance of him going to Cheltenham."

Nicholls added that Cyname has grown up and settled so much that he will run in a snaffle bit for the first time at Ascot, having previously run in a stronger Dexter ring-bit.

"He used to be a tearaway at home and all you could do was go up the hill [Nicholls' famously steep gallop] with him as you couldn't stop him. But he's relaxed now, and you can train him normally and do anything with him," he said.

"But everyone thinks he's a speed horse - he's not, he's a relentless galloper, a stayer, and he'll get three miles easily."



"**Frodon** has been left in the Betfair Ascot Chase at the moment; he won't run against Cyrname but if anything happened, God forbid, to Cyrname this week, then I've got an able substitute in him. I'm not going to run them against each other though - he is in as a precaution, and if he doesn't run on Saturday he will go straight to the Ryanair Chase or the Gold Cup at Cheltenham, almost certainly the Ryanair Chase."

Betfair Ascot Chase, Betfair odds: 8/15 Cyrname; 11/4 Riders On the Storm; 6/1 Frodon; 10/1 Janika; 14/1 Saint Calvados, Top Notch; 66/1 Traffic Fluide

Nicholls also discussed some of his other runners at Ascot on Saturday.

"**Danny Whizzbang** will run in the G2 Sodexo Reynoldstown Novices' Chase," he said. "He won a G2 novices' chase on his debut over fences at Newbury, then was third at Kempton in the G1 Kauto Star Feltham Novices' Chase [behind Slate House] - he was travelling ok but got into trouble when Mastertommytucker fell in front of him, and he was a bit on the back foot. Ascot on soft ground will suit him much better because he's a real stayer. He's in two races at Cheltenham, the G1 RSA Novices' Chase and the G2 National Hunt Chase, but whether we go or not depends on what happens on Saturday; he's very much one for the future."

"**Black Corton** runs in the Keltbray Swinley Chase, a limited handicap chase over three miles. Ascot is a track he loves and he ran an absolute blinder there last time [he finished fourth on 21 December]. He's a tough, consistent horse who always runs his race and soft ground doesn't worry him. I don't know whether Bryony [Frost, his regular partner] will be able to ride him as there are three meetings and she will probably have to go somewhere else, but it doesn't matter - Harry [Cobden] can ride him."

Nicholls also talked proudly of **Pic D'Orhy**, who won the £155,000 Betfair Hurdle at Newbury on Saturday at odds of 33/1.

"He's only a five-year-old but he looks fantastic, and what a smashing chasing type of horse he'll be for the future. Would I consider supplementing him for the Champion Hurdle? I probably wish I had put him in now, but hindsight is a wonderful thing."

"I haven't discussed it with Johnny [de la Hey, in whose wife's colours Pic D'Orhy runs] and we haven't made any plans, but he will probably have one or two more runs this season because we are looking forward to the day he goes chasing. I have always really liked him - the other day is the first time we have really had him right. He's a hugely exciting horse for the future. I am not in a hurry with him."

Betfair Ascot Chase - Facts & Figures

The Betfair Ascot Chase was first run in 1995. It was initially staged on Wednesday, before moving to its current Saturday slot in 1999. The 2005 & 2006 runnings took place at Lingfield Park, while Ascot was undergoing redevelopment.

There have been four dual winners - Tiutchev (2001, 2003), Monet's Garden (2007, 2010), Riverside Theatre (2011, 2012) & Cue Card (2013, 2017).

Martin Pipe and Paul Nicholls are the most successful trainers with four successes each. Pipe triumphed with Tresor de Mai (2002), Tiutchev (2003), It Takes Time (2005) & Our Vic (2006), while Nicholls scored with Rockforce (2000), Kauto Star (2008), Silviniaco Conti (2016) and Cynname (2019).

Barry Geraghty is the most successful jockey, with three victories - Monet's Garden (2010) and Riverside Theatre (2011, 2012).

It is a good race for favourites, with 16 of the 25 market leaders (64 per cent) having been successful.

The biggest shock was provided by 14/1 shot It Takes Time (2005).

Eight-year-olds are the most successful age group, accounting for 10 winners. The youngest winner was six-year-old Strong Promise in 1998, while the oldest was Monet's Garden, who was a 12-year-old for his second success in 2010.

There has been one Irish-trained winner - Sound Man (1996).

Paul Nicholls

Background Information

Manor Farm Stables, Ditcheat, Shepton Mallet, Somerset

Synopsis - 11-time champion Jump trainer in Britain (2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16, 2018/19).

He became the first British handler to accrue more than £4 million of prize money in a season in 2007/08.

He saddled his 3,000th winner at Taunton on February 19, 2019.

He has sent out 45 winners at the Cheltenham Festival, the third-highest total ever, including four victories in the feature Cheltenham Gold Cup, and gained 127 Grade One successes in all.

Neptune Collonges provided Nicholls with a first Grand National victory in 2012.

Betfair Ascot Chase winners (4): Rockforce (2000), Kauto Star (2008), Silviniaco Conti (2016) and Cyname (2019).

For more information about racing at Ascot, please contact Nick Smith, Director of Racing and Communications - 07771 791449 Nick.Smith@ascot.co.uk

For more information about Betfair, please contact Barry Orr, Betfair PR Manager UK & Ireland, on M: +353 (0)86 0246086 or E: barry.orr@betfair.com