



Sky Bet Media Release

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## **Angels Breath out to give Henderson another Sky Bet Supreme Trial success at Ascot on Friday**

Sky Bet's "Road To Cheltenham" moves on to Ascot this Friday, December 21, for the £35,000 Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle (1.55pm, 13 entries).

The two-mile G2 contest, the hurdling highlight of the six-race card, boasts a fabulous roll of honour, featuring stars such as Call Equiname, Make A Stand, Monsignor and Yanworth.

Nicky Henderson is the most successful trainer in Ascot's Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle, with five victories since 1994 including Claimantakingforan last year.

The champion jump trainer has two entries this time – the Dai Walters-owned **Angels Breath** (5/4 favourite with Sky Bet), an impressive winner of his only outing in an Irish point-to-point in April, and **Mister Fisher** (10/1), a bumper winner last season and second on his hurdling debut at Newbury in November.

The master of Seven Barrows said of the 5/4 favourite: "Angels Breath came out of Cheltenham last weekend on account of the ground, but he is pretty forward so we would like to run him this weekend.

"He won his only point-to-point impressively and hopefully he has the attributes to do very well over hurdles.

"Angels Breath is a nice-looking son of Shantou and is a horse I think an awful lot of."

Another trainer with a good record in the G2 race is Paul Nicholls, who has taken the honours three times, most recently with Capitaine in 2016.

The Somerset trainer has a couple of 2018 entries - **Grand Sancy** (10/1), a Listed scorer at Haydock last month, and **Danny Kirwan** (10/1), successful in a bumper last season, but second when starting odds-on favourite for his hurdling debut at Kempton Park on November 26.

**Thomas Darby** (Olly Murphy, 4/1) made a good start to his hurdling career when winning at Cheltenham in October and subsequently went down by a head when second over Friday's course and distance to the exciting Didtheyleaveuoutto on November 23.

Another contender on the scoresheet already is **Encore Champs** (Warren Greatrex, 11/2), who captured a bumper at Ffos Las (October 20) and a novices' hurdle at Wetherby (November 28). In the latter contest, he was the impressive three and a quarter length scorer from 103-rated Flat performer Lord Yates.

Greatrex reported: "Encore Champs is very well and a probable runner at this stage rather than a possible.

"I am quite keen to dip his toe in at this sort of level now.

"He is a very good hurdler, his technique is sound, and he is a strong traveller.

"He still managed to win at Wetherby despite doing a lot wrong and he came out of the race really well.

"There's a few spots of rain around through the week and he wouldn't want it getting really bad but I am confident he will handle soft ground."

**Thistle Do Nicely** (Jamie Snowden, 14/1) is set for the step up in class after winning both of his hurdles starts this season.

The four-year-old quickened well to land a maiden hurdle at Wincanton by three and a half lengths on October 19 and followed that up with a 10-length success in a novices' hurdle at Wetherby on November 3.

Snowden revealed today: "Thistle Do Nicely is three from four now in his career, having won a bumper and two hurdle races.

"I thought he won nicely at Wincanton, when he was still pretty green, and improved on that when looking pretty useful in a novice at Wetherby, beating a decent yardstick by 10 lengths.

"I had it my mind to go for a Listed hurdle at Haydock, but he wrapped his shin at Wetherby and had to miss a few days while the cut healed up.

"It was going to be tight getting to Haydock and Friday's race was the only other option and it made sense to wait.

"He is ready to step up in grade now and we will find out how good he is on Friday.

"Softer ground shouldn't be a problem. I was actually a little bit worried about running him at Wincanton because of the [Good to Firm] ground. A little bit of cut should not do him any harm."

Other contenders include **Seddon** (Tom George, 7/1), who was third in the opening race in Sky Bet's Road To Cheltenham series at Cheltenham on November 18, plus **Eclair D'Ainay** (Dan Skelton, 10/1), who made an encouraging British debut when fourth at Newbury on November 30.

Michael Shinnery, Racing PR Manager at Sky Bet, said: "We look all set for a cracking Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle at Ascot.

"Several of the entries look very unexposed and it will be fascinating to see how the races works out.

"This contest has a rich heritage and hopefully this year's renewal will throw up another good winner."

*Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle, Sky Bet odds:*

5/4 Angels Breath

4/1 Thomas Darby

11/2 Encore Champs

7/1 Seddon

10/1 Danny Kirwan, Eclair D'Ainay, Grand Sancy, Mister Fisher

14/1 Thistle Do Nicely

16/1 Champagne Court, Dashed Drasher

20/1 Garbanzo

25/1 Sunday At Augusta

*Each way terms: 1/5 for first 3 places*

### **Going news**

The ground at Ascot this morning was described as **Soft**.

### **Sky Bet "Road To Cheltenham" 2018/19**

Cheltenham, Sunday, November 18 - G2 Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle – **won by Elixir De Nutz**

Ascot, Friday, December 21 - G2 Sky Bet Supreme Trial Novices' Hurdle

Punchestown, Sunday, January 13 - G2 Sky Bet Moscow Flyer Novice

Haydock Park, Saturday, January 19 - G2 Sky Bet Supreme Trial Rossington Main Novices' Hurdle

Musselburgh, Sunday, February 3 - G2 Sky Bet Supreme Scottish Trial Novices' Hurdle

Kempton Park, Saturday, February 23 - G2 Sky Bet Dovecote Novices' Hurdle

Cheltenham, Tuesday, March 12 - G1 Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle

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