

Charlie Swan's Cheltenham Day 4 Preview

13:20 – [Triumph Hurdle](#)

Proactif now looks the class horse in the race. When Narciso Has was still in the field, I found it very difficult to split the pair and spent a fair bit of time weighing them up. With him now out of the picture, Proactif sits alone at the top of the market and looks the one they all have to beat.

The ground shouldn't cause too many problems either. There is some more rain expected, which should keep conditions fair, so everything looks set up nicely for him to go and get the job done.



For an each-way shout, I'd side with Highland Crystal. She receives a valuable seven-pound mares' allowance, which can be crucial in races like this and could make a real difference in the closing stages. Gordon Elliott hasn't had the best of Festivals so far, but he's far too good a trainer to stay quiet for long and this could be a good opportunity for him to turn things around.

Selection: PROACTIF

Each Way: HIGHLAND CRYSTAL

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14:00 – County Hurdle

The County Hurdle looks a very open race this year. The horse I originally fancied unfortunately didn't make the cut, but it has led me towards a couple at slightly bigger prices who could easily spring a surprise.

The first is Bowensonfire, who looks a solid each-way option. He should go off at a decent price and this feels like the type of County Hurdle where something at bigger odds can come through and outrun expectations.



The other one I'd mention each-way is Joyeuse. Nicky Henderson is clearly having a very good Festival and when a yard is in that kind of form it's always worth paying attention. If she runs to her best, she could easily get involved.

Selection: BOWENSONFIRE

Each Way: JOYEUSE

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14:40 – Mares' Chase

I think the market has this one right in the Mares' Chase with Dinoblue at the head of affairs, but the main danger could be Spindleberry, Willie Mullins' second string. She originally held an entry in the Gold Cup but didn't produce her best at the Dublin Racing Festival. I'd be inclined to draw a line through that run though, as something didn't quite look right on the day.

Dinoblue still looks the one to beat. She's the class horse in the race and we know how good she can be in this type of contest. The only slight question mark is her age now and whether a younger mare might emerge to challenge her.



For an each-way option, I'd give July Flower a mention for Henry de Bromhead. She won here at Cheltenham during the November meeting, which is always a positive sign as it shows she handles the track and conditions well. Horses with proven course form at Cheltenham are always worth a second look.

Selection: DINOBLUE

Each Way: JULY FLOWER

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15:20 – [Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle](#)

I'm hoping they've gone for the right race with Doctor Steinberg. I actually would have really fancied him in the Turners, so if he proves he stays this trip, he could be very hard to beat here. It's his first time coming over to Britain, but he looks a very talented horse and I'd expect a big run.



From an each-way perspective, I like The Passing Wife. I think he has a solid chance of hitting the frame. They seem to think quite a lot of him in Gavin Cromwell's yard and the fact they've chosen to supplement him for this race suggests they're expecting a big performance. If he runs to his best, he could easily be right in the mix.

Selection: DOCTOR STEINBERG

Each Way: THE PASSING WIFE

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16:00 – [Gold Cup](#)

This doesn't look the strongest renewal of the Gold Cup and it certainly feels like a race where a few could have a say in the outcome. That said, I'd side with Gaelic Warrior.

Some people are questioning the form of the King George, but they didn't go a particularly strong gallop that day and I think Gaelic Warrior could be ridden differently this time. I'd expect him to be ridden a bit handier and one of his biggest strengths is that he stays very well. The ground turning softer should suit him too, as conditions at Kempton were quite quick on that occasion.



For an each-way option, I'd look at last year's winner Grey Dawning. I'd imagine the plan will be to ride him with a view to getting into the places, and if things fall right for him again he could easily run another big race.

Selection: GAELIC WARRIOR

Each Way: GREY DAWNING

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16:40 – [Hunters' Chase](#)

I like Panda Boy in the Hunters' Chase. He stays very well and comes here in good form after winning his last two hunter chases, which is always a strong indicator in this type of race.

The main danger could be Its On The Line. He tends to run a good race most times but can be a bit of a character. That said, he'll stay on strongly up the hill at Cheltenham and should be there or thereabouts in the closing stages.



Chemical Energy would be my idea of an each-way selection. He's a consistent type and those recent point-to-point wins may just have given him a bit of extra confidence coming into this. If he runs to that level again, he could easily outrun his odds.

Selection: PANDA BOY

Each Way: CHEMICAL ENERGY

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17:20 – [Martin Pipe Hurdle](#)

Finally, the Martin Pipe is always a very tricky betting heat and if you're having a bet, it's definitely the type of race where going each-way makes plenty of sense.

Two at slightly bigger prices that catch my eye are Open Secret and Nurse Susan. Open Secret ran in a Graded race last time out and still looks fairly treated from a handicapping perspective, which could give him a good chance if things fall right.



Nurse Susan is another worth considering. The Skelton team are very good at targeting races like this and there's every chance she could still be well handicapped. At the price, she looks worth a small each-way play.

Selection: OPEN SECRET

Each Way: NURSE SUSAN

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Best of luck!
Charlie