

THE BEST OF THE FESTIVE RACING 2023

There is so much good racing at this time of year that rather than create a festival guide for just one meeting, I have decided to look at the best of what is on offer across the UK & Ireland.

The trends assessed are usually for the last 10 years albeit at this time of year meetings can be lost to the weather! The guide will start on Boxing Day and be updated daily until New Year's Day.

Favourites win rates are calculated over the last 10 years.

DECEMBER 28TH

LEOPARDSTOWN

1.50 – (Gr 1) LEOPARDSTOWN CHRISTMAS HURDLE OVER 3M (Favourites win rate 55%): 6/10 winners last ran at Fairyhouse in the Hattons Grace Hurdle (25 days earlier) finishing 3rd or better there. This is a race usually won by horses aged 5 or 7yo with 9/10 winners in this age group. G Elliott has 4 wins in the last 10 years and W P Mullins has 3 wins. *Home By The Lee* won the race in 2022. When the favourites have not won, the winners odds were 4/1, 7/1, 10/1 & 11/1.

2.25 – (Gr 1) SAVILLS CHASE OVER 3M (Favourites win rate 25%): To all intents this is a 'Gold Cup' trial for Irish trained horses although in the last ten years we have seen a UK trained winner. *A Plus Tard* (2020 winner) & *Conflated* (2022 winner) both seek a 2nd win in the race today. Favourites have a modest strike rate here with no 2nd favourites winning since 2011 albeit all winner's odds were 11/1 or shorter. 7/10 past winners were 1st/2nd on their last run and 8/10 were aged 6 or 8yo. Multiple winners of the race are rare with *Beef Or Salmon* the last to oblige 2002/2004/2005.

LIMERICK

2.05 (Gr 1) 'Faugheen' Novices Chase over 2m 4f (Fav 30%): 8/10 winners had odds of 5/1 or shorter including four favourites and one 2nd favourites. Willie Mullins has five wins since 2013 (two runners this year) whilst Gordon Elliott has won the three of the last five renewals. 7/10 winners also won LTO,