

THE BEST OF THE GALWAY FESTIVAL 2023

The guide will focus on just the major races over the 7-day festival.

The trends assessed are for the last 10 years. Favourites win rates shown in brackets after the race name. For flat races, the draw effects will be summarised by splitting the draw into three – low/middle/high. For more detailed draw analysis visit www.northernracingclub.com and click on the Drawfacts tab then open the Galway file.

MONDAY

6.40 Connacht Hotel (QR) Handicap over 2m 1f (20%): Willie Mullins has won four of the six latest renewals so his four runners this year merit close scrutiny. Today's going is forecast as heavy on the flat course and nothing worse than soft has been seen at this meeting on the first day since 2002 (when my records started) so it will be interesting to see how the course takes a whole week of racing this year! The last ten winners all carried 11st 4lbs or less. In the betting 5/10 winners had odds of 8/1 or shorter with the rest all 16/1 or less. 5yo horses fare well with 5/10 wins with oldest winner since 2013 aged 7yo. *Whisky Sour* won the race in 2017 and is now 2lbs higher in the ratings. Whilst the last two winning jockeys were quite experienced, the previous eight were all able to claim a weight allowance. Drawfacts: Low 30%; Middle 50%; High 20%.

TUESDAY

6.40 Colm Quinn BMW Mile Handicap (20%): A McGuinness has won three of the last four renewals including two wins with *Saltonstall* who holds an entry again this year and is running off a 2lbs higher mark than its last win in 2020. A last run in a premier handicap at The Curragh 30 days earlier is often a good form guide with 4/10 recent winners meeting this criteria. All ten recent winners were aged between 4-6yo. In the betting 5/10 had odds of 9/1 or shorter with the others (apart from a shock 50/1 winner in 2021) having odds of 10/1 to 12/1. Stall 10 has a good record in the last ten years including three wins and two placed runners. Drawfacts: Low 10%; Middle 50%; High 40%.

WEDNESDAY

6.40 Galway Plate Handicap Chase over 2m 6f (20%): *Hewick* seeks a repeat win in the race this year but is now 12lbs higher in the ratings. The last dual winner was *Ansar* in 2004/5. Gordon Elliott has won 3 times since 2016 at odds of 9/1 to 33/1 and has six runners this year. 7yo is the preferred age group with 6 of the last ten winners. 7/10 recent winners were 5th or better on their last run. In the betting 5/10 winners were 9/1 or shorter with 4/10 priced at 10/1 to 16/1. Experienced jockeys have won 8/10 races with just two claiming a weight allowance.

THURSDAY

5.05 Galway Hurdle over 2m (20%): Only three trainers (with runners today) have won the race in the last 10 years with W P Mullins & A J Martin having 4 wins a piece and J P O'Brien having one win. Last year's winner *Tudor City* is seeking a follow up win and runs off the same rating as last year – if successful this time it would be its third win in the race! The downside is that no 11yo has won the race since 2002 (when my records started) so maybe a placed run is a more realistic hope this time. The best age groups are 6-7yo horses. 6/10 recent winners had odds of 7/1 or shorter with others priced between 10/1 & 22/1. Just one of the last ten winners had finished worse than 6th LTO.