



2020 CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL PREVIEW

A comprehensive preview with expert contributions from:

- **Steve Lewis Hamilton & Donn McClean**

Leading professional backer, Steve Lewis Hamilton (SLH) assesses the home challenge whilst top racing writer and presenter, Donn McClean (DMC) analyses the Irish contingent.

- **John Hunt & Richard Hoiles**

John Hunt and Richard Hoiles: BBC and ITV Racing lead commentators provide their insight.

- **Ten year trends**

The telling stats from Paul O'Hara

- **Exclusive horses to follow**

Direct from the Lambourn trainers.

A few highlights from the 2020 Festival preview...

Supreme Novices' Hurdle

Shishkin has been most impressive in his three completed starts to date, notably so when winning the Sidney Banks hurdle at Huntingdon. He has that mixture of speed and stamina that all good horses require and also looks adaptable regarding ground conditions. I think ground on the soft side of good would be perfect for him.

Chantry House was also noted when



jumping well and winning easily at Newbury.
However I do believe that Shishkin is the better horse at present.

RESULT: Shishkin WON 6/1

Champion Hurdle



Epatante on the other hand put up an impressive performance when winning the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton. That performance as it stands is the best in the UK this season and further improvement is also expected. Ground conditions aren't expected to pose a problem and she gets the 5lb mares allowance.

A few of the Irish horses have achieved figures of a similar level to that achieved by Epatante at Kempton and their chances are respected. However I will be surprised if Epatante doesn't go very close.

RESULT: Epatante WON 2/1

Mares' Hurdle



The Mares' Hurdle is some race, Benie Des Dieux versus Honeysuckle. Something is going to have to give. They bet 4/6 Benie, 5/2 Honeysuckle, and that disparity may be greater than it should be, but these two are top class. It should be a fascinating encounter

RESULT: Honeysuckle WON 9/4

RSA Novices' Chase

On form achieved there's little to choose between Champ, Copperhead, Slate House and Black Op. However as far as potential is concerned, Champ and Copperhead stand out.

Champ has high class hurdle form, having finished second in last season's Ballymore Hurdle. On his



latest start Champ was looking sure to win the 'Dipper' at Cheltenham before capsizing two out. Coming here straight from a fall is not ideal, but Champ is a top class horse. This step up to three miles will suit.

Copperhead boasted only moderate hurdles form last season but has taken a massive step forward since being sent chasing. He has improved significantly in each of his four chase starts and there's every chance he can do so again here.

Barring injury, I can see both horses being serious contenders in next year Gold Cup.

RESULT: Champ WON 4/1

Cross Country

Easysland looks like a worthy adversary. David Cottin's horse was impressive in winning the Cross-Country Chase at the December meeting, and he has since won again at Pau.

RESULT: Easysland WON 3/1



Cheltenham Gold Cup



However you look at it; Al Boum Photo has an excellent chance of following up last year's win.

RESULT: Al Boum Photo WON 10/3