Cheltenham Festival 2013: St Patrick's Thursday roundup

Friday 15 March, 2013

Betfred Cheltenham Gold Cup looks at a day of upsets on St Patrick's Thursday, as Solwhit wins the World Hurdle.

World Hurdle – Winner: Solwhit (17/2)

If the outcome of yesterday's feature race was always a certainty, on St Patrick's Thursday this was anything but the case. 17/2 chance Solwhit emerged ahead of favourites Oscar Whisky (3/1) and Reve de Sivola (7/2) to snatch victory in the World Hurdle, the first Irish winner in the race since 1995.

The last four years had seen Paul Nicholls-trained Big Buck's dominate this race, but in his injury-enforced absence his stable-mate Celestial Halo (40/1) gave a brave effort to come in second. Smad Place (9/1) was third, leaving the pre-race favourites well back.

Fans will also remember the race for its baffling start, as all the runners remained on the start line for around 25 seconds after the contest officially began, before being led off by Bog Warrior (8/1).

Jewson Novices' Chase – Winner: Benefficient (20/1)

A late switch from the RSA Chase for Dynaste did not yield the expected result, as the 6/4 favourite was beaten at the finish by 20/1 shot Benefficient. Jockey Brian Cooper secured his first ever festival win as Tom Scudamore couldn't get enough out of Dynaste on the home straight.

Changing Times (100/1), ridden by Sam Twiston-Davies, was a surprise third as the day began with a close, competitive race.

Pertemps Final – Winner: Holywell (25/1)

Jonjo O'Neil got in the act at this year's Cheltenham Festival as Holywell (25/1) took victory in the Pertemps Final. He was able to see off a late surge from Captain Sunshine (11/1), who had to begin from the back after throwing off his rider.

AP McCoy's wait for a winner continued as he came fourth on 6/1 second favourite Shutthefrontdoor, while the favourite Sam Winner (4/1) couldn't produce the goods for Paul Nicholls.

Ryanair Chase – Winner: Cue Card (7/2)

Cue Card (7/2) won a highly anticipated battle with 2/1 favourite First Lieutenant to take the Ryanair Chase. First Lieutenant was ridden by Bryan Cooper, after first choice jockey Davy Russell was pulled from the race by medical staff after they discovered symptoms of a punctured lung.

Riverside Theatre (7/1), who won this race in dramatic style last year, failed to trouble the leaders, while two-time victor Albertas Run (14/1) was pulled up by AP McCoy, whose miserable festival continued.

Byrne Group Plate – Winner: Carrickboy 50/1

Carrickboy caused a real surprise as he took the Byrne Group Plate at odds of 50/1. His jockey, Liam Treadwell, was previously best known for riding 100/1 shot Mon Mome to victory in the 2009 Grand National.
However, he declared afterwards that victory at Cheltenham marked the pinnacle of his career, as he handed trainer Venetia Williams a surprise victory.

Fulke Walwyn Challenge Cup – Winner: Same Difference 16/1

Nineteen-year-old Ryan Hatch celebrated a dream Cheltenham Festival win in the Fulke Walwyn Challenge Cup, as Same Difference (16/1) beat 11/2 favourite Super Duty by a short head.

The race, which is open only to amateur jockeys, had to bypass the final fence as vets tended to Byrne Group Plate faller Matuhi, who unfortunately failed to recover from his injuries. Nigel Twiston-Davies now has two wins at this year's festival.

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Cross Country Handicap Chase – Winner: Big Shu 14/1

Big Shu sailed in relatively unchallenged to take the Cross Country Handicap Chase, a race held over from Tuesday when it was postponed due to frost. However, a lot of the attention was on the welfare of jockey JT McNamara, who suffered a serious fall in the previous contest and was taken away by air ambulance not long after the race concluded.

The 2013 Cheltenham Festival concludes tomorrow, with the Cheltenham Gold Cup forming the centrepiece of the final day. It is set to be one of the most closely contested races for years, with bookmakers offering little in the Gold Cup odds to separate Bob's Worth, Sir Des Champs, Silviniaco Conti and Long Run.

Company Contact:

theEword

T. 08000149884
E. contact@theeword.co.uk
W. https://www.theeword.co.uk/

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