

February 07

Ballyshan

For those not present, Chepstow last Friday did at least provide grounds for optimism that he could be on the way back. He jumped better than on his 2 previous outings this season, but I think it fair to say that he's not a natural in this department. However, he was staying on well over a trip too short and came out of the race in good shape. He's entered at Newbury this Saturday (0-130 hurdle stepped up to 3m) and if Nigel's happy with him on Friday may well run. I'll keep you informed. (Spoke NT-D Weds am. "Sean" not running - needs more time).

Ace

Ace Of Clubs was in the process of running his best race over hurdles when he had the misfortune to break down lame at Stratford on Saturday. Regrettably I have to inform you that he's strained a tendon quite badly and will be off for at least 12 months. He's comfortable in his box at Naunton but we must face the likelihood that he'll have to miss the whole of next season. Whilst only 5 and with plenty of time ahead of him his absence inevitably depletes over "string" to the extent that it cuts it in half! That's racing, but it's a blow and bad luck on both Ace and Jo who looks after him.

Stable Visit

As is customary we'll organise a pre-Cheltenham gathering on the Naunton gallops to listen in rapt silence to Nigel's words of wisdom and hopefully hear what (not) to back at the Festival. The date I've earmarked is Friday March 2nd and you might like to diary this and also make a note that there's racing at Newbury in the afternoon. Assuming sufficient numbers we could make a day of it but I'll be back in touch on this front.

What To Do?

Three possibilities in the short term, as we cannot commit to a 3rd horse without another 10 members minimum (we're currently running at 34).

- 1) Do nothing & rely on Ballyshan
- 2) Lease a horse from Nigel for the interim. The chances are that the horse would be of limited ability and likely to run in fairly low grade events. I've spoken with Nigel who's quite willing to oblige with the likes of Perky Peaks, Flasher, Darn Him etc, but if we go this route then we have to accept that it's a means to an end in racing's basement.
- 3) Take a punt on a cheap acquisition (say 5,000 Euros), maybe off the flat or a NH bred reasonably straight in condition, who could be got ready for a Spring/Summer campaign.

If you have a strong view on any of this (or indeed any view) please let me have it.

Contacting Me

Many of you will know that I'm not the easiest person to get hold of. For some reason my JFF emails can be slow getting through (some have taken 48 hours) and I also live in a mobile "black hole" which means that I often can't receive calls on the mobile and won't pick up messages until I go out.

Therefore, the safest option is to ring my home number and leave a message on the answerphone if I'm not there, particularly if we have a runner and you want a badge to attend a meeting.

Stable Visit

As you know, the next one is scheduled for Friday March 2nd. Please let me know if you'd like to attend in order that I can gauge numbers for coffee/breakfast and also whether you wish to go on to Newbury for racing in the afternoon. If we have sufficient heading for Berkshire I'll try to obtain a base for the afternoon otherwise we'll just set up camp in one of the bars.

Hoping to see you shortly.

Best regards,

BOB SIMS

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