

The most backed horses going into the 2023 Cheltenham Festival

The 2023 renewal of the Cheltenham Festival is just a matter of days away, with anticipation for the iconic Cotswolds meeting now at its peak in the countdown to the four-day event. The ante-post markets for the Festival's 28 races have been fluctuating since the start of the season and continue to do so even at this very late stage.



Photo by [Jeff Griffith](#) on [Unsplash](#)

So, with that in mind, read on as we take a look at a handful of the horses set to head to the post with the weight of expectation from the punters on their backs due to being some of the most backed runners of the entire Festival.

Galopin Des Champs

With odds of 7/4, Galopin Des Champs might be an incredibly short price for the [Cheltenham Gold Cup](#). But we doubt that is going to stop him being one of the most backed horses of the week as he looks to rubber stamp his credentials as a superstar thoroughbred.

The Willie Mullins-trained seven-year-old has just one blemish on his record, with his infamous fall when miles clear of Bob Olinger in the Turners Novices' Chase still fresh in the minds of many 12 months on.

However, Galopin Des Champs has continued on an upward trajectory since that blunder upon landing at the last – winning three successive Grade 1s, including the Irish Gold Cup. This will be his first trip over 3m2½f, but the additional distance shouldn't be an issue.

Facile Vega

Well beaten as the odds-on favourite for the Ireland Novice Hurdle at the Dublin Racing Festival last month, coming home last of the five finishers and 20 lengths behind victor Il Etait Temps despite being as short as 4/9, Facile Vega is still being heavily backed for the Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle.

There are a couple of reasons why that could be. The first is the fact the bookies are now offering seemingly very generous odds of 9/4 for the six-year-old to return to the winner's enclosure when he was initially set to go off at odds-on. The other is down to the ride from Paul Townend at Leopardstown, which he should have learned from and fixed for this race.

Lossiemouth

Another beaten favourite at the Dublin Racing Festival, Lossiemouth was badly impeded a couple of times in the Spring Juvenile Hurdle before being pushed incredibly hard by Townend to get back into the race and try to pip Gala Marceau to the line – which wasn't to be as the filly finished over two lengths behind her stablemate.

The jockey was heavily criticised by Mullins for his ride atop the four-year-old as well, with questions asked if the manner in which he tried to recover would leave a mark on Lossiemouth. Regardless, she remained the favourite for the Triumph Hurdle and should fare better with a clear run. Her stablemate Blood Destiny has started receiving a bit of backing, however, and is joint-favourite with some bookies.

Shishkin

A horse nobody would have expected to see on this list until a couple of weeks ago, Shishkin returned to his fantastic best with a dominant win by 16 lengths over Paul Nicholls' Pic D'Orhy in the Ascot Chase in mid-February.

The Nicky Henderson-trained horse hadn't looked himself in recent outings, pulling up in the Queen Mother Champion Chase last year – which was later found to be because of a rare bone condition – before finishing a distant third at Sandown on his reappearance.

A wind operation and a step up in trip to 2m4f seems to have worked wonders for the former Arkle winner and Shishkin has now been backed into odds-on for the Ryanair Chase on the penultimate day of the Festival.