

MATCHBOOK

GRAND NATIONAL 2019 GUIDE

George Smyly runs through each of the 40 Grand National Runners



1. Anibale Fly - Tony Martin

He has valuable course form having finished 4th in last year's race. He has looked as good as ever this year, finishing an excellent 2nd in this year's Gold Cup when staying on strongly behind Al Boum Photo. With top weight to contend with, he'll likely find one to good but has strong place claims. 7/10



2. Valtor - Nicky Henderson

He was bought from France specifically to run in this race and burst onto the scene when winning in impressive fashion on his British debut at Ascot in December. Pulled up on his only other start but he's been freshened up since then. The champion trainer has never won this race. 5/10



3. Tiger Roll - Gordon Elliot

Last year's winner seems to be in even better form than last year judged off his win at Cheltenham. No horse has won back-to-back Grand National since Red Rum in 1974 but if he has a clear round, he is sure to be involved in the finish. 8/10



4. Outlander - Gordon Elliot

Now 11 years old and has looked woefully short of his best lately. It's hard to imagine him bouncing back to the level required. 2/10



5. Don Poli - Gordon Elliot

An anagram of Don Poli is 'I Plod On' which sums him up well. He is due to be sold by his connections on Thursday which tells you all you need to know about his chances. 2/10



6. Go Conquer - Nigel Twiston-Davies

Won his trial race in good style at Doncaster but has taken a hike in the weights as a result. There remains stamina doubts about him, but Twiston-Davies is a Grand National expert having saddled the winner in 1998 and 2002. 5/10



7. Mala Beach - Gordon Elliot

Yet another Gordon Elliot runner who looks set to saddle around a quarter of the field. He appears to be fairly low down the Elliot pecking order and needs soft ground to be seen at his best. 5/10



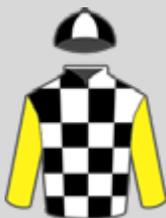
8. Minella Rocco - Jonjo O'Neill

He has looked woefully short of his best since finishing 2nd in the 2017 Cheltenham Gold Cup and was pulled-up having never travelled on his latest prep run at Cheltenham. Will be one of the great training performances to get him to win on Saturday. 4/10



9. Lake View Lad - Nick Alexander

Finished an excellent and staying on 3rd in the Ultima at Cheltenham. He fits the bill as a progressive stayer, who jumps and travels well. He could relish this extended trip and give owner Trevor Hemmings a record 4th win in the race. 8/10



10. Pleasant Company - Willie Mullins

An agonising 2nd in last year's race when just failing to reel in Tiger Roll. He has been given a quiet season in preparation of going one better this year, and if he turns up to Aintree in the form he was in last year, he'll go very close. 9/10



11. Ballyoptic - Nigel Twiston-Davies

A strong stayer who won a Grade 1 at Aintree over hurdles in 2016. He was beaten a nose in last year's Scottish Grand National. His latest run was too bad to be true and if you can ignore that, he's got a better chance than many. 7/10



12. Dounikos - Gordon Elliot

Saw out the trip really well when winning at Punchestown on his latest start but was raised 7lbs in the process. Looks a guaranteed stayer but he's not the most athletic type and doesn't look suited to the Grand National course. 5/10



13. Rathvinden - Willie Mullins

He will likely be Ruby Walsh's choice here which is a huge positive in itself. He jumps and stays really well. He is very lightly raced for an 11 year-old and horses aged 11 have won three of the last six runnings of the race. A huge player. 7/10



14. One For Arthur - Lucinda Russell

Won this race for Scotland two years ago but missed last season due to injury. He has failed to complete in both starts this season and it's hard to see him winning this again. 3/10



15. Rock The Kasbah - Philip Hobbs

Champion jockey, Richard Johnson has never won the race and this will likely be his ride this year. He is a solid, if not spectacular candidate who jumps and stays well. Will it be 21st time lucky for the Champion jockey? 5/10



16. Warriors Tale - Paul Nicholls

This will be champion trainer elect Paul Nicholls only runner in the race. He failed to show much in the race last year and despite likely better ground this year, he looks short of the standard needed to win this. 4/10



17. Regal Encore - Anthony Honeyball

Finished 8th behind One For Arthur in 2017 but this year's renewal looks a much stronger contest. He ran well for a long way before getting tired at Ascot on his latest start and that should put him spot on for this. Place chance at best. 5/10



18. Magic Of Light - Jessica Harrington

A very tough mare who has proven very versatile this season, winning over hurdles and fences. No mare has won the race since 1951 and that is enough to put you off backing her. 3/10



19. A Toi Phil - Gordon Elliot

Yet another runner for Elliot/Gigginstown. He ran a very good race over hurdles at Cheltenham and is a very talented performer on his day. He is untested past three miles but if he stays, he could well be underrated. 7/10



20. Jury Duty - Gordon Elliot

Won the American Grand National before making a pleasing return at Down Royal 2 weeks ago. The form of that run is questionable and others are preferred. 5/10



21. Noble Endeavour - Gordon Elliot

Despite being very lightly raced, he appears exposed off a mark of 150. He enjoyed his spin around the National fences here in December but didn't show a huge amount in the Ultima at Cheltenham on his latest start. 5/10



22. Monbeg Notorious - Gordon Elliot

Yet ANOTHER Elliot runner! Monbeg Notorious stays longer than the mother-in-law and looked a top class staying chaser last season, but he has lost his way this year and others are preferred. 3/10



23. Ramses De Teillee - David Pipe

A very likeable grey who commentators will be hoping isn't involved in the finish. He has thrived this season and has proved that he is worthy of his place in the race. The Pipe family have won this race twice, most recently with Comply Or Die, and it wouldn't be an enormous shock if they were back in the Winners' enclosure again this weekend. 7/10



24. Tea For Two - Jane Williams

It's easy to forget he won a Grade 1 Chase here in 2017 but he has really lost his way since, and unseated Lizzie Kelly in the Cross Country Chase at Cheltenham on his latest start. 3/10



25. Mall Dini - Pat Kelly

From the same connections as beaten Gold Cup favourite Presenting Percy. Unlike him, Mall Dini has at least run over fences this season, albeit without much joy. He is still yet to win a race over fences but Rule The World bucked that particularly trend when winning this in 2016. Doesn't appear crying out for this extended trip but you can't rule him out. 7/10



26. Step Back - Mark Bradstock

A sure fire stayer but his best form has come on right handed tracks and his propensity to jump right really damages his chances. 5/10



27. Ultragold - Colin Tizzard

Dual winner of the Topham Chase run over Grand National fences, he clearly relishes the unique Aintree test. The worry with him is his stamina but he should provide his jockey with a thrilling spin round on Saturday. 4/10



28. Blow By Blow - Gordon Elliot

Hugely inconsistent performer who does stay well but is an awful jumper and has to be a doubt that he'll get round. 2/10



29. Up For Review - Willie Mullins

He was well-backed and travelled like the winner in the Ultima before making a shuddering error three out. He looks unexposed and has plenty of stamina in his pedigree. If he jumps well, he has a huge chance. 8/10



30. Singlefarmpayment - Tom George

Hugely capable but struggles to get his head in front very often. Whether he takes to this unique test is a doubt but if he does, then he has place chances. 3/10



31. Vieux Lion Rouge - David Pipe

This will be his 4th run in the race. He has finished 7th twice and 9th on his other start, failing to see out the trip all three occasions. No reason to think that he'll do any better this year, in what is a stronger renewal. 2/10



32. Valseur Lido - Henry de Bromhead

Finished 8th off 158 in last year's race and his mark has dropped to 146 so will appeal to many given he is a dual Grade 1 winning chaser. Will likely have the services of Rachael Blackmore who could become the first female jockey to ever win the race. 6/10



33. Vintage Clouds - Sue Smith

A wind-op before his excellent 2nd in the Ultima at Cheltenham pushed him to the top of many people's shortlist for this race. Will need some rain to fall this week as soft ground bring out the best in him. 6/10



34. General Principle - Gordon Elliot

Last year's Irish Grand National hero has looked held since. Another who will be praying for rain to fall which, at this stage, doesn't look forecast. 4/10



35. Livelovelaugh - Willie Mullins

Very little in the formbook to suggest he is up to winning this. Weakened out of contention when travelling pretty well at Cheltenham. His best form is also on soft ground. 2/10



36. Walk In The Mill - Robert Walford

He won the Becher Chase here over the Grand National fences in December. His best performances have come with very soft underfoot conditions but he is a likeable sort who should stay. 4/10



37. Folsom Blue - Gordon Elliot

It is 15 years since a 12 year-old won the Grand National and he'll need to start on Friday evening to figure in the finish. He is very slow and isn't a particularly good jumper. 2/10



38. Captain Redbeard - Stuart Coltherd

He unseated his rider at Foinavon in last year's National but has completed twice in the Grand Sefton. He is sure to put in a bold display but shouldn't trouble the principles. 2/1



39. Bless The Wings - Gordon Elliot

Stats are there to be broken but no horse has won the Grand National aged 14. He did manage to finish a brilliant 3rd in the race last year but a repeat of that is improbable. 2/10



40. Joe Farrell - Rebecca Curtis

Last year's Scottish Grand National hero is a proven stayer and looks set to sneak in at the bottom of the handicap. He had a very good prep run at Newbury where he travelled well for most of the race. Not without a prayer. 6/10



41. Just A Par (First Reserve) - James Moffatt

He has got round twice in the Grand National but finished a combined 200 lengths behind the winners. Complete no-hoper. 1/10



42. The Young Master (Second Reserve) - Neil Mullholland

Fell at Bechers in 2017 on his only start in this race and fell on another start over these fences in December 2016 . If he sneaks into the race, his jumping is clearly a concern but proved he retains ability when finishing 3rd at Cheltenham. 3/10

GEORGE'S STRONGEST NATIONAL FANCIES

1

PLESANT COMPANY

2

LAKE VIEW LAD

3

TIGER ROLL

4

UP FOR REVIEW

5

BALLYOPTIC

6

MALL DINI

7

RAMSES DES TEILLEE

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