

THE
BETFRED
ST LEGER FESTIVAL
ESTD 1776

BETTING GUIDE

SATURDAY 14 SEPT



RACE 1

Betfred Champagne Stakes (Group 2) 7f

PRIZE MONEY

£150,000

RACE 2

Betfred Portland (Class 2 Heritage Handicap) 5f143y

PRIZE MONEY

£100,000

RACE 3

Betfred Park Stakes (Group 2) 7f

PRIZE MONEY

£140,000

RACE 4

Betfred St Leger Stakes (Group 1 - British Champions Series) 1m6f115y

PRIZE MONEY

£700,000

RACE 5

The PJ Towe Construction Handicap Stakes (Class 2) 1m2f

PRIZE MONEY

£70,000

RACE 6

The British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Stakes (Class 2) 1m

PRIZE MONEY

£50,000

RACE 7

The Cepac 25th Year Anniversary Handicap Stakes (Class 2) 1m

PRIZE MONEY

£70,000

It's time for Britain's oldest and final classic of the season, as this Saturday sees a field of 7 turnout to write their name in racing folklore, with a £700,000 prize pool to boot! There are also 6 other races on the card, including the Group 2 Champagne Stakes and Park Stakes, and the Portland Heritage Handicap, all of which are supported by this year's sponsor Betfred.



HORSE BY HORSE GUIDE TO THE ST LEGER STAKES

BY **JAMIE LYNCH** - Sky Sports Racing and attheraces.com pundit

DEIRA MILE **J:** J WATSON | **T:** OWEN BURROWS



From which perspective do you view his fourth in the Derby? Either he was behind City Of Troy and Los Angeles, which sounds Leger level, or he was just ahead of Sayedaty Sadaty and Dancing Gemini, which sounds more listed level.

His only subsequent start in the August Stakes at Windsor didn't tell us either way as, though 11-10 favourite, you wouldn't judge him too harshly on failing narrowly to catch the front-runner in a tactical race on soft ground, but he was again too gassy for his own good, which is a worry for this longer trip.

GROSVENOR SQUARE **J:** G RYAN | **T:** A P O'BRIEN



His new-found formula of clearing off mid-race has really augmented his ability, maybe flattering him but certainly empowering him and proving a pain for his rivals, taking an older stayer of the calibre of Tower Of London to chase him down in the Curragh Cup, before Grosvenor Square skipped away with the Irish St Leger Trial by 20 – yes, twenty – lengths.

His half-brother Santiago went off favourite for the 2020 St Leger when a close fourth, but he was a hold-up horse, and it's Grosvenor Square's front-running fire which strikes fear into the hearts of rival runners and riders. It's one thing to know what he's going to do but quite another to combat it, for the opposition, akin to putting your hand in the blender, so to speak.

ILLINOIS **J:** W LORDAN | **T:** A P O'BRIEN



Who am I? By Galileo, I was third on my reappearance as a 3-y-o, then second in the Lingfield Derby Trial before going one better in the Queen's Vase, after which I contested the Grand Prix de Paris and Great Voltigeur, which put me in pole position for a date with destiny in the St Leger. Illinois, yes. But it was also the productive pathway for Kew Gardens, the Leger winner of 2018.

Los Angeles would probably be odds-on if he lined up at Doncaster, and his stated swerve for the Irish Champion (and Arc) is in effect a vote of confidence in Illinois who went down by just a neck by him in the Great Voltigeur, albeit receiving 2 lb. Aside from Los Angeles, the only horses to have beaten Illinois over 1 1/2m are Ambiente Friendly and Sosie, who'll both be in Arc-assessing action this weekend. Royal Ascot back in June showed how highly effective Illinois is at the 1 3/4m distance. In short, Illinois is exactly what a Leger winner looks like, even a carbon-copy of one.

JAN BRUEGHEL **J:** S LEVEY | **T:** A P O'BRIEN



The unbeaten horse who has looked beaten in his two Group races, pulling it out of the fire both times, by a scrambling neck, Ryan Moore instrumental in knowing him and knowing what was needed. It's clear that the surface of his talent has been barely irritated let alone scratched, and that the longer trip on Saturday could make a big difference to him, but the fact is that rarely if ever do horses like him win the St Leger, far more the domain of the fully-formed galloper than the fledgling grinder.

He has the tools and the ticket to transform in front of our eyes at Doncaster but if he wins then I'll lose.

SUNWAY **J:** C SOUMILLON | **T:** D MENUISIER



A brother to Sealaway, you wouldn't have Sunway pegged on pedigree as a likely lad for a stamina-sapping St Leger, but his performances say otherwise, successful in a Group 1 over a mile on soft at two and a staying-on second in the Irish Derby, then in the King George he put in the third-fastest final furlong behind Goliath and Bluestocking; and speaking of Goliath, his rider at Ascot, Christophe Soumillon, has been booked for Doncaster by David Menuisier whose faith in Sunway has never wavered.

Illinois was beaten a neck by Los Angeles in the Voltigeur and 2 lengths by Sosie in the Grand Prix de Paris, while Sunway was 3/4 length and 2 1/4 lengths off the same two in the Irish Derby and French Derby respectively, and so it's clear that, on ability, there's very little between Illinois and Sunway, ratified by their ratings, 116 vs 115. You have to take on trust Sunway's stamina, but it's hard to watch his runs and not think he'll relish the trip let alone stay it.

WILD WAVES **J:** D TUDHOPE | **T:** A M BALDING



Andrew Balding has a habit of hitting the board in Classics at big prices, and Berkshire Rocco very nearly won the St Leger as an outsider in 2020, but, bringing a rating of 95 following his fourth in the Melrose, Wild Waves is way out of his pay grade here.



HORSE BY HORSE GUIDE TO THE **ST LEGER STAKES**

BY **JAMIE LYNCH** - Sky Sports Racing and attheraces.com pundit

YOU GOT TO ME J: H CROUCH | T: R M BECKETT



Brushing ran ten times in the season where she went from 70-rated handicapper to the Galtres winner, as well as taking in the fillies' St Leger, the Park Hill. You can see, therefore, where You Got To Me got her directness and durability from, like mother like daughter.

She has grown up and calmed down, adding some finesse to her fire, seen to great effect in winning the Irish Oaks and running better still for second in the Yorkshire version and the miracle of Content. Ralph Beckett successfully supplemented Simple Verse into the St Leger in 2015 and also got second and third with other fillies, Talent and Look Here. You Got To Me's courage-coated class will get her far, and her form is a match for most, factoring in the fillies' allowance, but the heat within her makes for some rational reservations about her compatibility with long distances like the Leger.

JAMIE'S VERDICT

The presence of the Irish Oaks winner and Irish Derby second prevent this year's St Leger from being a pure Ballydoyle benefit, with both the supplemented **You Got To Me** and the stamina-stacked **Sunway** having the form to square up to the Aidan O'Brien squad. It's going to be fun and games if, as is likely, **Grosvenor Square** opens up to put dents in the field and doubts in the mind of all of his rivals, but it's one for all at Ballydoyle and sometimes all for one, and that one this year is **ILLINOIS** who couldn't look much more like a St Leger winner if a designer drew him.





STATS & TRENDS

FOR THE KEY RACES ON SATURDAY

BY PAUL JONES

ST LEGER STAKES



CONTINUOUS – 2023 WINNER

With regards to the market for the world's oldest Classic, first run in 1776, of the five such British races it has been the St Leger that has been by far the most consistent in terms of churning out successful favourites over the last three decades or so, having won 50% of the last 32 runnings.

POSITIVES

- The favourite
- A top-four finish in the Queen's Vase or Great Voltiguer Stakes
- Trained by Aidan O'Brien
- Fillies

NEGATIVES

- By a sire with a stamina index of under 9.4f

PORTLAND HANDICAP



ANNAF – 2023 WINNER

This unusual distance of just over 5½f means that both 5f and 6f form play a part, and horses that have performed well in the Portland before often return to run big races once again.

POSITIVES

- Drawn in the higher half
- Set to carry 8st13lb+ before jockeys' claims
- The favourite
- Ran well in the race before
- Respect Charlie Hills, David Marnane and Kevin Ryan

NEGATIVES

- Drawn in stalls 1-5
- Aged 6+

PARK STAKES



SANDRINE – 2023 WINNER

Not straightforward from a long-term trends perspective, as the Park Stakes was upgraded to Group 2 status in 2004 having also been dropped from 1m to 7f a year earlier.

This was unquestionably formerly a race to support a three or four-year-old, but it has been all change since the elevation to Group 2 standard, with two successful seven-year-olds, four winning six-year-olds and three triumphant five-year-olds in the last 15 years.

POSITIVES

- Likely to start no bigger than 5/1
- Group-race winner earlier in the season
- Ran at the York Ebor Festival
- Trained in Ireland
- Won or gone close in the race before

NEGATIVES

- Likely to start at double-figure odds
- Yet to win at Group level

TIMEFORM TIPS

RACE 1

- 1st **WOLF OF BADENOCH** (6)
- 2nd **CHANCELLOR** (3)
- 3rd **AFTERMATH** (1)

RACE 2

- 1st **COVER UP** (7)
- 2nd **VINTAGE CLARETS** (19)
- 3rd **AMERICAN AFFAIR** (16)

RACE 3

- 1st **LEAD ARTIST** (9)
- 2nd **KINROSS** (2)
- 3rd **LAKE FOREST** (8)

RACE 4

- 1st **SUNWAY** (5)
- 2nd **JAN BRUEGHEL** (4)
- 3rd **ILLINOIS** (3)

RACE 5

- 1st **PARADIAS** (2)
- 2nd **DAYSOFFOURLIVES** (3)
- 3rd **PARLANDO** (11)

RACE 6

- 1st **SCANDINAVIA** (6)
- 2nd **RIDE THE THUNDER** (5)
- 3rd **MASUBI** (2)

RACE 7

- 1st **TREASURE TIME** (9)
- 2nd **NATIVE WARRIOR** (6)
- 3rd **MIRSKY** (5)



PARADIAS (Race 5) *Winning at Goodwood*



KINROSS *Winning the 2022 Park Stakes*



ILLINOIS *Winning at Royal Ascot*

GUIDE TO DONCASTER

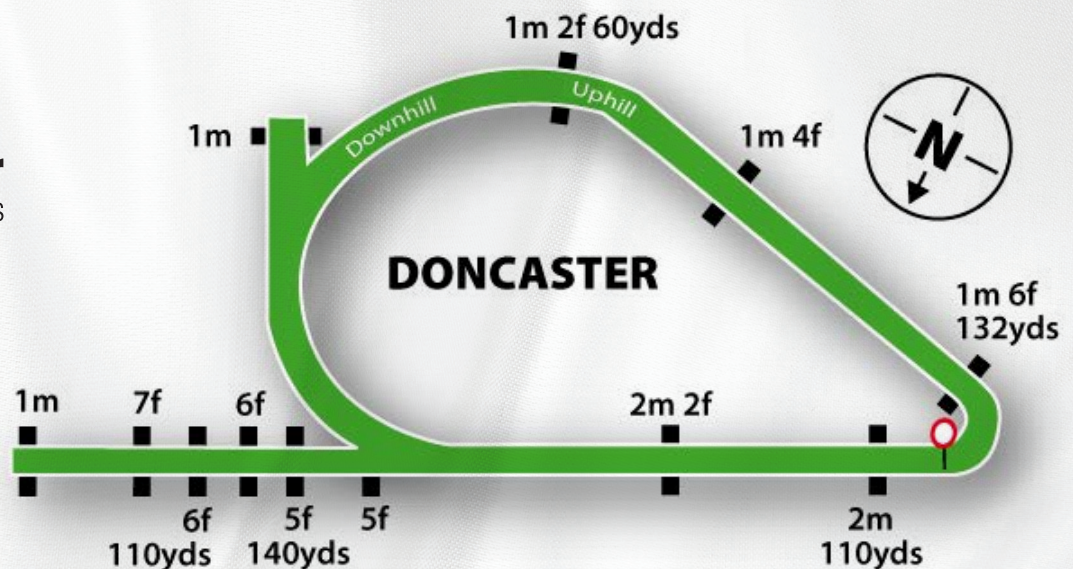
By Classic-winning jockey and Sky Sports Racing presenter Jason Weaver

“There are not many fairer courses than Doncaster, which is a lovely, virtually flat, galloping track. You do climb briefly, up and over Rose Hill, but, for the most part, it’s beautifully smooth to ride, a good, solid test of a horse. There can be one or two hard-luck stories, especially on the round course, when lots of runners are still in contention late on, and that’s where jockeyship comes in. I liked to be on the stands’ side on the straight course, but either side is fine, just as long as you’re not far off a rail.”



TIMEFORM

Left handed, galloping. One of the fairest courses in the country, essentially flat with the exception of a slight uphill gradient about a mile and a quarter from the finish. Races between five furlongs and one mile are run on the straight course, though there is also a round mile start on an off-shoot of the round course. It is a free-draining course, underfoot conditions only occasionally being soft/heavy.



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