

Clare proving to be real handful



PETER McNAMARA

SPORTS BETTING

BOYLES and William Hill have made Cork outsiders for their trip to Omagh on Sunday in the Allianz NFL Division 1 as the Leesiders seek a second win of the campaign against Tyrone.

The duo has installed Cork at 6-4 to win in the north for the second weekend in a row.

Furthermore, Boyles are willingly offering bettors 11-10 Cork +1, in other words, to essentially avoid defeat.

However, Tyrone are 8-11 virtually across the bookmaking board to win for the fourth time in the section.

Mickey Harte's men are 11-10 to win by two or more points, too which is extremely difficult to argue against factoring in their current form in contrast to Cork's, a side building gradually this year.

Interestingly, however, Tyrone are 7-4 with bet365 and Paddy Power to be in front at the end of both halves, odds that are likely to contract between now and the throw-in as it is probable that more money will be placed on the hosts for victory.

Power's 7-2 Cork/Cork double result price makes little appeal in the knowledge that this task will be one of the toughest the Leesiders face in 2013.

Unfortunately, Tyrone, as the layers suggest, are the more likely winners of this particular

Cork's Paul Kerrigan challenges Down's Paul McComiskey in last weekend's NFL game in Newry.

Picture: Paul Mohan / SPORTSFILE



meeting between the teams but there are other more enticing punting options throughout the various GAA divisions.

For instance, in the Allianz NFL Division 4, Clare have begun to motor quite well and should justify slight favouritism at home to Tipp Saturday afternoon.

Mick O'Dwyer's side defeated

Leitrim and Offaly in the last two weeks and can build on their recent form with another win.

Meanwhile, Cork are 4-6 favourites with Power and Ladbrokes to account for Waterford in the Allianz NHL Division 1A.

Recommendation: Clare (footballers) 1pt 5-6 general.

● THERE were no weekend punting recommendations made last weekend and so our record of five winners from 11 selections thus far in 2013 remains intact.

However, hopefully today's selection will further enhance the record for bettors.

For up-to-the-minute sports betting news and discussion contact me on Twitter @petermcnem07

City favourites to take points from opener in Thomond Park

CORK CITY won just three of their 15 away matches in the Airtricity League

Premier Division last term but are odds-against favourites to get the 2013 campaign off to a winning start on Sunday evening at Thomond Park.

Tommy Dunne's unit are 25-1 generally to win the Airtricity League Premier Division title.

Understandably, Shamrock Rovers are the market leaders to finish top of the pile – the Tallaght outfit are 11-10 with 188BET.com however can also be supported at Paddy Power's 13-8.

Defending champions Sligo Rovers are 23-10 second favourites with Boyles, while the two Rovers are 9-4 joint-favourites to win the Setanta Cup with City 4-1 with bwin.com.

However, City have obviously impressed the layers enough in the pre-season tournament to suggest the Leesiders are no greater than Power's 13-8 to earn maximum points from their divisional opener against Limerick FC despite the latter side being as short as Stan James' 12-1 to win the league, though Powers offer 22-1. City scored 15 times on the road last season and it will be interesting to see if the additions Dunne has made will increase their scoring output on their travels in the top tier in the months ahead.

Daryl Kavanagh and Denis Behan have been put forward by the bookmakers as the most likely players to open the scoring on Sunday – both are 11-2, Kavanagh with Boyles and Powers and Behan with Ladbrokes.

AIRTRICITY LEAGUE

Bet365 rate Limerick as a 2-1 shot to win in front of what will be a relatively expectant home crowd while the draw is 11-5 with bet365, BETFRED, sportingbet.co and BetVictor.

The City/City double result is widely available at 7-2, Limerick/Limerick is 4-1

with Stan James, draw/City can be punted on at BLUESQ's and

888sport.com's 11-2, draw/Limerick is also 11-2 with bet365, BetVictor and

William Hill, City/Limerick is 40-1 with sportingbet.com

and BetVictor while the reverse, Limerick/City, is 40-1 with sportingbet.com.

Boyles', BetVictor and Stan James' 19-5 about the game being level at

half-time and full-time would be worth a small outlay given that these

league openers tend to be quite cagey affairs at times however it is advised

punters keep their money in their pockets until there is sufficient form-lines to go

by after four to five weeks of games in the section.

Elsewhere in the division, Bohemians are the even-money favourites to

overcome UCD, Shelbourne, at Boyles' 7-5, are expected by the

odds-compilers to edge a tough encounter against

Bray Wanderers, Sligo are 5-4 (BLUESQ, 888sport.com) to beat

Derry City, Rovers are the shortest-priced favourites

on the coupon at sportingbet.com's 4-6 however the Dubliners are 4-7 generally, as they face Dundalk while St Patrick's Athletic are 11-10 against Drogheda United.

Finding winner at Festival harder than matching socks

LIKE plenty of other people (I hope) I keep all my unmatched socks in a drawer and every so often empty it in the hope that a pair has been fortuitously reunited.

Often I wonder if I should fill the same drawer with loose large change instead, so when I visit it every few months it contains something with intrinsic value, something garments containing 70% cotton tend to lack.

This won't solve the problem with the missing socks of course, but someone gave me a bit of advice recently to deal with that. It was to wash all my socks in a pillowcase, thus reducing the chances of their disappearance.

This is something I considered doing until I looked at my bed, atop which lay three pillows, each within a case bearing a different design and colour.

What do missing socks and pillowcases have to do with anything?

Well, I keep those foot gloves in the forlorn hope that some day there will be the meagre reward of perhaps matching the odd one or two.

This compares aptly with my mostly futile relationship with racehorse accumulators. I will occasionally back them, with no great confidence. The bet is placed on the horse the same way the sock is placed in the drawer: rather carelessly and without much expectation of future reward.

So you'd think I'd do the sensible thing and give Cheltenham no more than a lingering sidelong glance this year.

There is an argument that the festival has got a bit too big for its hooves in recent editions, especially since the extra day was added nine years ago.



Robert O'Shea

THE LONGSHOT

For example, can a horse winning only one race at Cheltenham claim to be a champion, when another could win all the trials, be placed at Prestbury Park, and be rated behind it?

Cheltenham winners are often like heavyweight boxers these days, their year defined by one race: it says something when a top-class flat horse can run more than a national hunt one during a season.

But Cheltenham's Cheltenham as

they say, so let the hype begin...

Some pointers for the first day:

No horse has regained (rather than retained) a Champion Hurdle for 38 years and plenty of good ones have tried, including 13 since 1990 — most recently Binocular in 2011. That's a measure of the task facing 2-1 favourite Hurricane Fly (who won that year), who is also bidding to become only the third winner aged nine or older in the last 30 years. The Paddy Power offer to pay out on losers if he wins doesn't seem so generous in that light.

Last time out winners have accounted for 24 of the last 29 Hurdle winners, which is a negative for the likes of Grandouet, Cinders And Ashes and Countrywide Flame.

Elsewhere, the market has been a good guide to the Arkle Trophy with no

winner being sent off bigger than 9-1, while nine of 10 had finished in the first two on all completed chase starts — reason not to look beyond the front two in the betting, Simonsig and Overtun.

Irish horses have held a monopoly in the Cross Country Chase, winning the first seven renewals, but this was broken by the British-trained Balthazar King 12 months ago. Don't bet against the race reverting to type this year.

Recommendations for first day at Cheltenham: Dodging Bullets, Simonsig, Opening Batsman, Rock on Ruby, Uncle Junior, Quevega, White Star Line. A 200,000-1 accumulator, so maybe a 20 cent superheinz would make better sense. Don't put your shirt on it, but if they're all wide of the mark, I'll put a sock in it about Cheltenham from next Wednesday on.