

Bolger's charge looks the part

Sports betting



BY PETER McNAMARA

HORSE RACING

HIS sire, New Approach, landed the race in 2008 for the Jim Bolger-Kevin Manning trainer-jockey combination and Dawn Approach can equal the achievement by winning the Investec Derby at Epsom on Saturday afternoon.

Granted, Dawn Approach is the short-priced 11-10 favourite generally – as short as 4-5 with William Hill in fact – but the Godolphin-owned colt deserves his place at the head of the market. Some commentators, and with good reason to a point, have voiced concerns about a lack of class and stamina in his pedigree that could impact on his chances of following up on the 2,000 Guineas success at Newmarket – Dawn Approach's dam Hymn of the Dawn ran five times and never won – but the individual class of the horse itself might be enough to ensure Manning can land a telling blow inside the final furlong.

Aidan O'Brien-trained runners dominated the trials' series for this race and Irish 2,000 Guineas winner Magician appears to be a worthy adversary. O'Brien's horse is 4-1 with totesport.com, BETFRED and Paddy Power 'with a run' while being a best-available 6-1 with sportingbet.com in the regular 'fixed odds' market for those willing to take a chance. However, another O'Brien hopeful, Battle of Marengo – 4-1 with Boyles 6-1 (sportingbet.com) – is expected to challenge.

Yet, from the form presented so far it just seems Bolger's colt is a way clear of the rest.

Interestingly, there was money on



Carrigtwohill's Ronan Power and Bride Rovers' Wayne Fitzgerald at the SHC launch.

Picture: Jim Coughlan

the exchanges on Wednesday morning and afternoon for both O'Brien's Ruler of the World and Bolger's Trading Leather.

The former is no greater now than Stan James' 12-1 while the latter's odds range from 25-1 (Boyles) to 66-1 (generally) in the 'fixed odds' market.

RECOMMENDATION

Dawn Approach to win Investec Derby, 3pts 11-10 general.

● All prices in this column are subject to change.

Sars are shortest odds of weekend

GAA

THE Cork County SHC begins this weekend with bet365 and Paddy Power the first firms to price up the eight matches scheduled for Saturday and Sunday.

Bet365's 8-13 Blackrock will have its attractors while Killeagh are 13-8 with Power to earn victory. The prospect of a draw in Middleton is 19-2 with the former firm.

Power, meanwhile, installed Na Piarasaigh as the marginal 10-11 favourites for their clash with Erin's Own at Páirc Uí Rinn.

The Irish firm are laying Erin's Own at evens and the draw at 9-1.

Power also have Sarsfields at 1-8 to account for Ballinhassig, 6-1 with bet365, at the same venue. The draw is 14-1 with both firms.

Furthermore, Glen Rovers are 1-2 with the two bookmaking giants to send St Finbarr's, 9-5 with bet365 who also lay 19-2 the draw, down the back-door route.

Ballymartle are evens with bet365 and Power while Newtownshandrum can be backed at evens with the former and the draw is 9-1 with the latter for their collision in Kilworth.

Bishopstown and Courcey Rovers are set to meet at Riverstick and last year's finalists are rated 4-7 by Power.

Courceys are 9-5 with bet365 with the draw a 19-2 poke.

Finally, Middleton, however, are just 1-4 with the two outlets to progress to round four by beating 100-30 (bet365) shot Douglas in Carrigtwohill. The draw is 11-1 (both firms).

LAST WEEK

AS was highlighted by all the Evening Echo sports tipsters last Friday, the Uefa Champions League final at Wembley was never going to be as cut and dried as quotes of 4-1 about Borussia Dortmund winning in regulation time excessively suggested.

Unfortunately, our 3.5pts outlay on

the game was lost as the Robert Lewandowski (Dortmund) anytime goalscorer (2pts 15-8 Paddy Power), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern) man of the match (1pt 12-1 Coral (11-1 Paddy Power)) and Philip Lahm (Bayern) man of the match (0.5pt 33-1 Coral) bets did not yield a return.

Cobh are likely ones to advance

SOCCER

DESPITE conceding home advantage, Cobh Ramblers are the only Leaside outfit of four involved in Ford FAI Cup second round action this weekend expected to progress to the next phase by the bookmakers.

Coral rate Airtricity League First Division side Ramblers as an 8-11 shot to skip past the challenge of St Patrick's CY (3-1 Coral) at Frank Cooke Park Saturday afternoon though the former are evens with Boyles to advance in regulation time while the draw is a top industry price of 12-5 generally.

Boyles' 4-1 is the best-available quote on offer about College Corinthians winning away to Tolka Rovers tonight, the latter 4-6 generally to prevail in the 90-plus minutes betting and the draw can be punted on at 12-5 generally as well.

Bandon are also playing tonight away to Shelbourne though are considered the second-least likely Cork side to be in the hat for the next round after this weekend. Bandon, according to Power, are an 11-1 chance in the match betting, Shels no better than 1-6 (Boyles) while the draw is 6-1 generally.

Elsewhere, even though Coral lay 12-1, Boyles and Power pitch Blarney United at 20-1 to defeat Airtricity League Premier Division title-chasers Derry City, 1-10 (Boyles), in the competition. Power and Coral make the draw 7-1.

In terms of the Leaside sides in the competition, Cork City have been installed by the layers as the 12-1 fifth-favourites (Boyles, Ladbrokes) while Ramblers can be supported at Power's and Ladbrokes' odds of 80-1.

In relation to the teams from Cork outside of the Airtricity League hierarchy, Ford FAI Intermediate Cup champions Avondale United are 125-1 with Boyles, Blarney 400-1 generally, Corinthians are available at 400-1 (Boyles) as well while Bandon are the tournament outsiders being laid at 500-1 by Ladbrokes but are 250-1 with Power.

No snickers now, longshot is ready for a marathon effort

MANY, many, many many, many, many, (several) years ago I took part in a road race on a lovely summer evening.

I did all the limbering-up business, clutching the back of my ankle to my ass while leaning on a railing and so on.

I did that stretch where you try to touch your toes and get down low enough to sniff your crotch.

I looked the part if you ignored the black socks and runners.

The starting gun was fired and I blazed off. It was only five miles and the Ballycotton sea air filled my lungs. While I hadn't officially prepared for the distance, I recalled running when I was a teenager and, bar the odd stitch, those memories were vaguely pleasant.

As I glided along with the sleek of limb

having completed the first 400 metres in what was possibly a personal best, my body seemed to be my buddy. Go Rob! it seemed to yell.

What happened next was my darkest hour. If my hand had tapped me on the shoulder and I'd given myself the finger, it would have been a better reaction than the betrayal my slightly tubby frame was about to commit.

My right foot went to sleep. Barely a one-twentieth of the race gone (my brain was still willing to make such calculations at this early stage of the race) and one of my major limbs was knocking off for the night.

My reaction was swift and I began to transfer most of my technique to my left leg, just stopping short of hopping.



THE LONGSHOT

Crisis averted. Or so I thought. Two minutes later my lungs were a furnace. Acceleration was no longer part of the gameplan. Wheezing became my comfort zone.

The greatest mystery of my brief existence is how in the next four and a half miles everyone in the race didn't pass me out. It certainly seemed like they did and this was something that greatly con-

cerned me as my goal in the race was now simple: Don't come last.

At the three-mile mark, I hit the wall. Well, less hit the wall, more leaned up against one for a while to recapture oxygen.

During the last mile, when almost everyone else who hadn't already done so, overtook me, I did manage to pass out somebody, a minor victory I congratulated myself on until she overtook me again.

I saved my legendary kick for the last two and a half yards and at least half of those clapping at the finishing line appeared not to be doing so ironically. My face may have been redder than that of a nun who had sworn in front of the Pope, but a sense of grim accomplish-

ment surged through my body as I collapsed over the line.

Walking towards the car I could have been mistaken for trying to pull off an impression of Kevin Spacey before we realise he is Kaiser Soze in *The Usual Suspects*, my foot dragging behind me like an insolent pup.

I mention the above because I am pencilled in to complete 16.5 miles (!) of the marathon on Monday, then hand over the baton to my colleague Ronan Bagnall. We are raising funds for Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, a charity based in Mallow which you'll feel great about if you were to support with a fiver.

Recommendation: Take the Lions to beat the Barbarians by 21-25 points with William Hill at 15/2.