



For immediate release

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TurfTrax Qatar Sussex Stakes Preview

Simon Rowlands, form expert and sectional timing specialist and founder of Rowlands Racing & Research Limited, uses data collected by TurfTrax' pioneering suite of products comprising the Sectional Timing and Positioning System (STATS), on-course weather stations, GoingStick, and course maps to provide a unique perspective on some of British racing's most important contests.

Here he applies TurfTrax knowledge to Wednesday's Qatar Sussex Stakes.

There is no doubting the importance of the Qatar-sponsored Sussex Stakes in the grand scheme of international racing. It has regularly served up exceptional winners, including the peerless Frankel in 2011 and 2012 and the scintillating Kingman in 2014, as well as many thrilling spectacles.

The race has tended towards being "small and select" – both Frankel and Kingman had just three rivals for their wins – but this year's contest has 10 declared runners: the biggest field since Proclamation beat 11 rivals in 2005.

Small fields have increased the likelihood of falsely-run races, but this year's contest promises to be a truer battle. The likes of Kodi Bear, So Beloved, Toormore and the favourite Galileo Gold all tend to race prominently. Second-favourite The Gurkha is more of a tracking type.

The existence of TurfTrax sectional times in recent years not only gives us some meaningful points of reference but also helps us to predict what will unfold this time round.

The overall time of a race is determined by several factors, including the abilities of the horses and the pace at which the race is run, but it is also heavily influenced by the speed of the surface. Here, TurfTrax's going-stick readings can assist greatly: archived information http://www.turftrax.co.uk/going_stick_archive.htm exists for all courses, not just for Goodwood.

The current going-stick reading of 8.1 – taken on Tuesday morning at 9am – is similar to that which prevailed on Sussex Day in 2014 and is a bit quicker than was the case 12 months ago.

It is asking a bit much, in the absence of a Frankel, that this year's winner will break the course-and-distance record of 95.61s, especially as there is a small amount added to the distance by rail movement, but he may get close to the 96.29s set by Toronado in this race in 2013.

That 2013 race was the most truly-run in recent years and gives a good indication of how top-class horses run good times by expending their energy efficiently. The average cumulative TurfTrax sectional times of the first three that day were as follows:

After 1f, 14.42s; after 2f, 25.46s; after 3f, 38.66s; after 4f, 50.53s; after 5f, 61.63s; after 6f, 72.70s; after 7f, 84.32s; and overall, 96.51s

None of those individual furlongs is under 11.00s, though a few are close, and sub-11-second sectionals prior to the closing stages tend to be a sign that the horse in question is going too fast.

Sub-11-second sectionals later in the race are more common, though it takes a special horse and/or a steady earlier gallop to achieve them. Frankel ran 10.42s for the penultimate furlong of his 2012 win and Kingman managed a sensational 10.22s at the same stage in 2014 following a pedestrian early pace.

That penultimate furlong is usually the quickest of all, in races in general and not just the Sussex Stakes, but it was the third-last furlong that was Toronado's quickest in that well-run edition in 2013.

We also have some historical TurfTrax sectionals from the protagonists to look back upon. In particular, Galileo Gold showed he could run fast and keep going strongly when winning the QIPCO 2000 Guineas at Newmarket in April, when two of his early sectionals came in at 11.18s.

Ribchester – who reopposes on Wednesday following a fine Royal Ascot win – ran slightly faster than Galileo Gold did mid-race but could not sustain his run in the same fashion and came home third.

Galileo Gold also went onto success at the Royal Meeting, in the St James's Palace Stakes in his case, but in circumstances that must encourage connections of the second and third, The Gurkha and Awtaad, that they have a fair shout of reversing placings.

In a smaller field and with no clear front-runner, Galileo Gold got a tactical advantage in sitting close up, while his main rivals were further back, and was not for catching having led after 2f out. Both The Gurkha and Awtaad ran the last quarter quicker than did Galileo Gold, but the last-named was the one who was triumphant.

Such tactical nuances matter for a lot in races in which the margins are fine. Galileo Gold has shown he can win by racing close to a strong pace and by quickening from just behind a steadier one: The Gurkha, in particular, could benefit if this year's Sussex Stakes is as truly-run as expected.

Either way, the measuring of those fine margins – from which the truth of what happened, and why, may be established – is a job for technology, rather than guesswork. Thankfully, TurfTrax's tracking system will be in operation at Goodwood throughout the week, with the data becoming available at <http://www.turftrax.co.uk/tracking-technologies.html> soon after.

ENDS.

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About TurfTrax:

TurfTrax is a global leader in the design and implementation of innovative data products for the horseracing industry. In recent years the Sectional Timing & Tracking System has been deployed at Ascot (QIPCO British Champions Day), Goodwood, Lingfield Park (All Weather Championship fixtures), Newmarket, Sandown Park, York and also at Aintree/Cheltenham where the TurfTrax data forms an integral part of the Channel 4 Horse Tracker App.

The British Horseracing Authority rules require every racecourse in Great Britain to use the TurfTrax GoingStick. The company also installs and operates Going Mapping and Weather Systems and its international customers include; France Galop, Dubai Racing Club, California Horseracing Board, Churchill Downs Inc., New York Racing Association, Hong Kong Jockey Club, Japan Racing Association, The Australian Turf Club and The Victoria Racing Club.