

Jersey Race Club

Preview Part II Friday 28 June evening fixture

By Bobsbest.

A programme of five handicaps will make winner finding at least as difficult as ever for Friday's annual evening fixture, which get under way at 6.30.

The main course is The Quilter Handicap over nine furlongs. Quilters have been loyal supporters of local racing and although their race has drawn a field of just six they have been rewarded with what promises to be a closely fought contest. Perhaps most interesting is Lytham, making the long journey from Tony Carroll's Cropthorne, Worcestershire yard. This 12 year old gelding is a winner of 12 of his 78 starts and although of modest ability he has been well placed for 35% in-the-frame career finishes. He runs here off a mark of 54, at which level he ran a fair third at Kempton over a longer trip earlier this month. That form look sound in this context and he will take all the beating. The weights are headed by the ultra consistent Neuilly who, despite being 3 from 5 has only gone up 5lb from the start of the season; perhaps the handicapper has been looking the other way. She is sure to run her race as is Becks Bolero (second in this last year) another who apparently doesn't know how to run a bad race; this may be a shade tougher than last time, but he's still well treated. King Kenny has slid 12lb this term, but possibly needs to drop more and this is on the short side for him. Red Lago is an example of a horse who has regained his confidence; this is a big step up on the low-level affairs he has won and he's gone up 5lb, but such has been the style of those wins that an encore can't be ruled out. All of which leaves the talented, apparently fragile and frustrating Sissi Guihen. She is looking well handicapped now, but is another that probably needs further.

The appetiser is the Highclere Thoroughbred Racing Handicap over 7 furlongs. Perhaps it's fortunate that the sponsor has not brought over a runner as most of their syndicate owned horses compete at a considerably higher level. Still, there is a challenger from the UK in the shape of Tony Carroll's Unlimited. Like Lytham, this is a multi-raced veteran and a multiple winner. He hasn't scored since August 2011, but he's filled the runner up spot 8 times since, including at Wolverhampton over this trip in February. He runs here off 50, fully 9lb below his mark on that occasion. Another newcomer to Jersey is Mr Opulence, having his first run for Tony Le Brocq, having left Jo Hughes. His best Racing Post Rating is 60, off which mark he runs here, but he's a maiden and probably best watched.

Pas D'Action has four frame finishes in a row and two wins, so it's perhaps surprising he's only gone up 3lb this term. It used to be suggested he needs to get his toe in, but has run well on firm ground and should go well again before being reassessed. Fast Freddie is consistent, but doesn't have quite the speed of old whilst the one-eyed First Cat can't seem to put two good runs together, but did win this last year. That brings us to top weight Spanish Bounty, probably over his best trip and 5lb below his opening handicap mark; he was second to First Cat in this last term and is actually worse off, but more consistent.

The Versailles Handicap - pronounced Ver-sails if you happen to come from the Kentucky town of that name - over a mile and a quarter is for horses rated 50 and below. Not terribly competitive in appearance yet any of the five is capable of winning on a good day. As the weights indicate Athania is easily the best of them, but whether she's up to giving away 13lb and more is questionable. Her lowly stablemate Lady Petrus can't get much more help from the handicapper, but she is genuine and tries her limited best, which deserves to be recognised. Vamos is not entirely genuine, but his shrewd trainer usually manages to squeeze a little race out of him each season. Last year's winner Rebel Woman and stablemate Toggle are both consistent and the distance will suit the former more.

The card opens as ever with a hurdle, this time The Old Portelet Inn Handicap sponsored by Randalls and run over an extended two miles. Landolino won pretty much as he liked last time after a couple of pipe-openers yet he runs here off a mark 5lb lower than he finished his Champion Hurdle winning season. Indeed, Nordic Affair (the winner in 2012 with Landolino absent) two and a half lengths behind Landolino earlier this month has actually gone up 3lb for that beating so Joan Le Brocq's star looks positively gilt-edged here. National Monument and Deepika have little chance on the book so Azaria presents as the only possible danger, bar a fall, to the likely long odds-on favourite.

The curtain comes down with the Ravenscroft Handicap over a mile and three quarters. Although perhaps a new name to some, Ravenscroft have been supporters of local racing previously under their old name Cenkos Channel Islands. Moose Moran sprang a surprise earlier this month, but it did not look a fluke and if Joan Le Brocq really has sweetened him up he could easily go in again. However, the trainer also runs Bollin Fergus, very disappointing over a shorter trip last time after easily winning a maiden hurdle. He'd been off for quite some time before that and actually ran off a mark of 65 at the end of 2011. That makes him look thrown-in here

off 29. Garden Party ran a great comeback a fortnight ago and will need to avoid the bounce while Rocquaine, running off 54 at Windsor exactly a year ago, is another looking close to a winning mark now assessed at just 37; she's only 4 and Alyson Malzard will find a race for her.

Selections

Landolino
Spanish Bounty
Lytham
Lady Petrus
Bollin Fergus