

The 2012 Jersey Race Club season got off to a damp start at Les Landes yesterday afternoon in front of a fair sized crowd of hardy enthusiasts who witnessed trainer Stephen Arthur take the honours with an opening day treble.

First winner for Arthur came in the season's curtain raiser "**The Les Fontaines Happy Easter Handicap Hurdle**". Prior to the race it looked as if odds on favourite only had to jump round in order to see off her three rivals, however as the field turned for home favourite backers soon new their fate as first Nordic Affair and then Fine The World went past the market leader who had led for most of the race. Fine The World then opened up what appeared to be a race winning lead between the last two hurdles but stumbled after jumping the final hurdle and gave his pilot a taste of the Les Landes turf, leaving jockey Jamie Goldstein on Nordic Affair to coast home. Thankfully both horse and jockey Tim Clark were soon on their feet following Fine The World's dramatic exit from the race.

Whilst the Arthur yard could consider themselves fortuitous to win the opener, the style of Anfield Road's win in the second race "**The Goose Handicap**" was emphatic as jockey Amir Quinn pushed out the seven year old to finish six lengths clear of favourite Neuilly with Les Landes a further five lengths back in third. The winner who won the CI Champion Hurdle last season could well be a horse to follow as he now seems accustomed to the tight left hand track and still looks well handicapped as he was winning off a mark of 58 which is twelve pound lower than his rating at the beginning of last season.

Arthur's third and jockey Goldstein's second wins of the afternoon came in the fourth race "**The Harmony Farm Handicap**" when Athania held off the challenges of Sissi Guihen and Becks Bolero by three lengths and a neck. Disappointment of the race was top weight King Kenny who was never in contention and finished a tailed off fifth, his trainer Angie Corson stated that the gelding appeared not to act on the rain softened ground when invited to explain her charge's lack lustre performance by the stewards. Those who chose to back the winner on the tote were rewarded with odds of 12/1 which was double the bookmaker's odds.

The Arthur yard so nearly landed the afternoon's feature event "**The Randells Supporting The Jersey Race Club Public Bar Handicap**" with Les Landes newcomer First Cat, however jockey Amir Quinn seemed to get caught napping as the eventual winner quickened on the final turn and despite making rapid headway in the final furlong Fast Freddie ridden by Mathew Lawson held off First Cat's challenge by a diminishing two lengths with La Verte Rue a further length back in third.

Those who were brave enough to stay for the final race of the afternoon were treated to the closest finish of the day when jockey Tim Clark and trainer Tony Le Brocq gained some compensation following Fine The worlds final hurdle spill in the opener, when Grey Panel held off both Grenane and Major Maximus by a neck and half a length in a driving finish in "**The Old Portelet Inn Spring Handicap**". Clark poached the lead as the field turned for home keeping tight around the final bend whilst the remainder of the field made for the stands rail and whilst his mount eventually finished up the centre of the track the ground saved on the final turn proved to be a race winning manoeuvre.

Race Club officials and racegoers will be hoping for better weather conditions at the next meeting which is on Sunday 22nd April.