

JERSEY RACE CLUB

Diamond Jubilee Races (Monday 4 June) preview

By Bobsbest

Appalling weather may have put the Jersey Race Club under financial pressure, but that won't be allowed to cast a cloud over the party atmosphere at Les Landes on The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Day. The racecourse will be suitably dressed in bunting and emphasis will be on creating a street party ambiance – bring a picnic - with live music and plenty of entertainment for children. Oh! And there will be an exciting programme of races too.

The main event is the Brighter Futures Handicap, over the minimum trip of five and a half furlongs, sponsored by the Ana Leaf Foundation. There hasn't been a really good sprinter in Jersey since Dancing Sioux was champion racehorse of 1998, but this race sees the introduction of Cryptic Choice, a particularly well-bred 3 year old gelding. Formerly trained by Barry and Charlie Hills, he arrived at Stephen Arthur's stable with an official rating of 75, which makes him the highest rated local sprinter by a country mile. He could be anything, but has never raced at less than 7 furlongs, is still a maiden and has to give lumps of weight to his seniors. He may turn out to be the best speed horse we've seen in years, but on this occasion is best watched.

Kersivay won well in Guernsey, but hasn't in the past been able to achieve back-to-back wins, and stablemate Nordic Light is quite capable on his day although that day doesn't come round often; he suffers from bad feet and his trainer is reported as saying he doesn't like firm ground. Annia Galeria won once, with Tony Procter aboard, and seems to need particularly firm handling, but Tony Le Brocq's runners have been in good form and the mare is not without ability. Toggle is 7lb out of the handicap, but has won before carrying more than the handicapper has allotted, which leaves High Voltage, formerly smart, but now 11 years old; he was beaten just a length by Toggle last time and now enjoys a 10lb pull so he must have a shout.

As ever the programme opens with a hurdle, this time the Rowlands Recruitment Handicap over the slightly longer than usual trip of two and a quarter miles. It would be difficult to exaggerate the ease with which Landolino won his maiden hurdle, but that was in a bog against very weak opposition. Afterwards he was spoken of as a potential champion hurdler and we will know more of his prospects after this stiffer test. Lead examiner will be Fine The World who outspeeded Anfield Road over the sticks in April, flopped in

Guernsey then won by no less than 18 lengths on the flat. The handicapper has almost certainly underestimated her and she has the beating of Nordic Affair and Reach Out. Newcomer Monkhair is a winner, but hasn't run since last August.

The Plantagenet Handicap, sponsored by Angie Richardson, sees King Kenny trying to give weight all round over a mile and a half. Formerly a model of consistency, he has been in and out this season, winning the Jersey Guineas over a trip thought short of his best, but failing in the mud last time; it's possible we won't see him at his best again until the Jersey Derby. Lang Shining is getting closer, Neuilly hasn't run a bad race this year, Anfield Road is also in good form and Red Lago was not disgraced on his debut. Garden Party has had his problems, but can run well fresh and will be assisted by Tim Clark who continues to grow in confidence as the winners go in. It's a pin sticker's parade.

The Race Club Supporters Handicap over the extended mile will see Major Maximus going for three in a row. He stepped up in class last time and won easily, but that was in very soft ground so it's difficult to know how to assess the form; he has won on good to firm and may still be on the upgrade. Pas D'Action also won last time and is an improver while Spanish Bounty, Fast Freddie, Superduper and Vamos have all shown good placed form recently. First Cat didn't get the trip in the mud behind Major Maximus last time, but back down in distance is sure to run well.

The last race is a mile and a quarter low level event; titled the Mrs J N Somers Charitable Handicap, it recognises the long-standing and generous support provided by Mrs Somers; she underwrites the cost of providing ambulance and emergency services without which racing could not take place. This field is of modest ability, but that doesn't mean it will be a modest race, indeed it looks very competitive, pitting some relatively unknown quantities like Rebel Woman, River Du Nord and Sumbe against those the handicapper has had more chance to assess. Grey Panel is developing into a most likeable individual and he murdered three of these by ten length and more last time. The going will be different, but he is probably still improving. La Verte Rue is frustrating, Uniform Ruby can be a bit of a madam and Cronkyvoddy is getting on in years.

Selections:

Fine The World

Lang Shining

High Voltage

Major Maximus

Grey Panel