

JERSEY RACE CLUB

Preview Sunday 20 May fixture

By Bobsbest

Sunday sees the third Jersey meeting of the year and the fourth in the Channel Islands, Guernsey having run their annual fixture on May Day holiday. One must admire the persistence of the Guernsey Race Club, which revived racing in the island a few years ago after a thirteen year break. This year's five race programme drew 20 runners in all with two races having just three starters. Without Alyson's Malzard's six strong raiding party there would have been a match and a walk-over.

A total of 34 runners are due to line up at Les Landes and good sport is ensured on Sunday, but Jersey's grip on racing remains far from strong and the sport is badly in need of the sort of financial backing that has seen the Jersey Rugby Club thrive. Sunday's card is supported by the faithful who keep putting their hands into their pockets out of love of local racing. Their help is hugely appreciated, but one worries for the longer term future of a sport that has been established in the Island since 1789.

Sunday's principal race is one of Jersey's longest established events, the Warwick Vase, and it is sponsored this year by the on-course bookmakers. It's a handicap over a mile and a quarter in which 2011 champion racehorse King Kenny carries top weight. After a couple of disappointing runs Angie Corson's gelding found his form last time when beating First Cat in the Jersey Guineas over a trip some considered too short. It was a run that caused the stewards to enquire about the apparent improvement in form shown on that occasion. That was a conditions race, but now King Kenny has to give First Cat 2lb, although the extra 2 furlongs will suit him better. Sissi Guihen won this last year and gets a useful 16lb from the top weight while stablemate Superduper has been slowly finding her form and ran well in Guernsey. Major Maximus has been running in weaker races, but he gets in this with just 8st 6lb, a weight David Cuthbert hasn't been able to do for some time, so he'll be ridden by the promising Josh Baudains; the combination is sure to go well. Vamos may well be the most frustrating horse in training, but he has plenty of ability and would not be a surprise winner even from 2lb out of the handicap. Beck's Bolero is another 'nearly' horse with a decent race in him; he is on a very attractive mark and will have the benefit of Sophie Doyle in the plate. Of the rest, Palanour and Runaround Rita carry automatic joint topweight as debutants while Red Lago is an interesting newcomer in Des Ahier's colours.

The programme starts with the George & Leonora Sullivan Perpetual Trophy, a maiden hurdle. The late George Sullivan was a strong supporter of local racing over many years and, in addition to being a member of the sport's regulatory authority, he performed many racecourse duties including that of starter and steward. Much of his estate was left in trust for charitable purposes and a substantial sum was given to help build new facilities at Les Landes. It is appropriate that the Race Club continues to recognise his tremendous contribution to the sport in Jersey.

Reach Out represents experience in this event, with a number of placed efforts, but in truth his form at Les Landes has been poor and it would not be a surprise were one of the trio of hurdling debutants to prove better. Landolino has the best flat form although Les Landes did run a decent second over a trip in Guernsey; Lady Petrus in honest, but of modest ability and she will need to improve on anything we've seen so far.

Another great and much missed supporter of Jersey Racing is remembered in the second race, the David Picot Memorial Handicap, over seven furlongs, generously sponsored by the Hemmings family. Another who performed all the tasks asked of him by the Race Club, David was also a keen amateur jockey closely associated with Stephen Arthur's stable. That yard runs Norwegian Reward and Sumbe; the former was well touted before his debut at Les Landes, but ran well below what one might expect of a horse that had run respectably in a Norwegian classic race. Sumbe is a newcomer looking for an owner, so a prominent show from this son of Giant's Causeway wouldn't go unnoticed. Spanish Bounty was decent in the UK, but showed little on his local debut and he has to give 10lb to Fast Freddie, winner of this last year and second to a stablemate of Spanish Bounty in Guernsey. High Voltage showed a glimpse of his old form last month while Pas D'Action has now got a fair handicap mark.

The Channel Islands Racing & Hunt Club Handicap over an extended mile is a low level race for horses rated up to 50. Uniform Ruby is an attractive if sometimes moody mare and she came good for the first time this year in Guernsey on 7th May when ridden by the much underrated Jemma Marshall who gets the leg up again. Rebel Woman ran well enough first time back from a long lay off and improvement is expected. Secret Assassin and Grenane have no secrets from the handicapper while River Du Nord will carry 8lb more than the handicapper reckons she's worth.

The Geoffrey Edwards Memorial Trophy, a handicap over a mile and threequarters has been run for many years in memory of a larger-

than-life figure who enjoyed and supported Jersey racing. Among his better-remembered horses was the eponymous Mr. Geoffrey. There's probably nothing as good as him in this renewal although Lang Shining was regarded as a Group horse when with Sir Michael Stoute; unfortunately the horse's enthusiasm did not match his billing. Still, this is a far cry from the Eclipse Stakes in which he once ran although it may be further than he likes to go. Anfield Road has won on the flat and run well over hurdles this year while Neuilly hit form with a bang last time. Nordic Affair could do with an additional mile and some obstacles, while his old hurdles rival Fine The World seemed to run disappointingly in Guernsey when last of four and beaten a very long way over a shorter trip. She would be a big challenger if showing her jumping form.

Selections

Landolino
Fast Freddie
King Kenny
Uniform Ruby
Neuilly