

Jersey Race Club

Preview 22 April fixture

By Bobsbest

Jersey Race Club President Christopher Edwards had been heard to say his term of office had been blessed with almost uninterrupted sunshine on race days. Well, all good runs come to an end and those who braved the elements on Easter Monday were reminded just how wet one can get at Les Landes. The President will fervently be hoping the sun will begin to shine on racegoers again on Sunday for the second fixture of the year, featuring the Goodwood Jersey Guineas.

The main event, a conditions race over an extended mile, marks the twinning of Les Landes with the Goodwood Horserace Club, and has attracted a competitive field of seven. If it was a handicap King Kenny would be giving weight all round, but the trip is probably a bit sharp for him and he ran poorly first time up. There's not much on UK ratings between the one-eyed First Cat and Spanish Bounty, but whereas the former ran really well in defeat a fortnight ago, the latter was withdrawn on a vet's certificate and may have suffered an interrupted preparation. Norwegian Reward is something of a mystery having had just a couple of runs at Ovrevoll, the second of which was fifth in the Norsk 2000 Guineas. Beck's Bolero is an improver, but on all known form he and Superduper – last year's winner – have plenty to find. Pas D'Action gets the maiden's allowance, but he is best watched until he earns a handicap mark. First Cat is taken to score a first win at Les Landes.

The Tim Vaughan Racing Handicap Hurdle sees the reappearance over obstacles of the reigning CI Champion hurdler, Anfield Road. He won convincingly on the flat at Easter and, clearly in good form, should have little difficulty giving 19lb and more to his rivals. Reach Out ran badly on his debut and the handicapper wasted no time in dropping him 5lb, but he'll need to improve much more than that. Fine The World would have won comfortably last time, but capsized at the last leaving Nordic Affair to collect; they meet on the same terms.

The Alan King Racing Handicap will be run over the minimum trip and as it's for horses rated up to 60 the leading sprinter, Fast Freddie, can't run. So, it's a battle between the old stagers and a couple of younger contenders. Kersivay – last year's winner - and Annia Galeria seem likely to outspeed their elders all of which have question marks against them. Annia Galeria was very slowly away

on her seasonal debut, but she ran on well in what was a better race than this and she can win for Tim Clark who rode a cool race on Grey Panel to score for Tony Le Brocq's small year at Easter.

The Medici PR Handicap, run over a mile and a half, sees the welcome return of Garden Party who missed much of last season; he can go well fresh and if sufficiently forward he could run a big race. Athania took a big step forward beating Sissi Guihen and Lang Shining over a two furlong shorter trip last time; she was entitled to the 3lb rise in her handicap mark and seems sure to run well again. Neuilly and Les Landes both ran well behind Anfield Road, Les Landes having come from an impossible position to snatch third. Laura Pike takes the ride again and further improvement is expected.

The card winds up with the George Baker Racing Handicap over nine furlongs for horses rated up to 55. As is so often the case the getting out stakes poses the toughest puzzle on the programme. Grey Panel just got the better of Grenane and Major Maximus in a thriller at Easter, owing much of the win to his jockey's enterprising tactics, but he ran on really well and won't go down without a fight. Major Maximus may have just needed the race and will strip fitter this time. La Verte Rue was a decent third in a better race than this last time – Lady Petrus was last of six – while Jamie Goldstein is an eye-catching booking for Vamos, who has yet to achieve all he has promised.

One name missing from the card is Koka Fast. His devoted owner, Joan Lowery, quietly announced the retirement of her hero at the Easter Monday meeting. Koka has been a favourite of many racegoers down the years and has won in every season with Alyson Malzard except the first. His roll of honour includes the 2009 CI Champion Hurdle and the 2010 Jersey Derby and in all he won seventeen times. It would have been more, but sadly he forfeited the 2008 Clarendon – the season's top handicap – through no fault of his own when his jockey failed to weigh in. As Miss Lowery said, "He owes us nothing and has earned an honourable retirement".

Selections:

Anfield Road

Annia Galeria

First Cat

Les Landes

Major Maximus