

The Jersey Race Club's 2013 season got off to a bitterly cold and windy start yesterday afternoon, however despite the weather conditions UK based trainer George Baker probably enjoyed his first raid at the track landing a first and last race double on the afternoon.

His first winner came in the seasons curtain opener The Jacquie Chambers Handicap Hurdle courtesy of pre race favourite If I Had Him who enjoyed a more successful afternoon than his better known owner Sir Alex Ferguson. Despite making a couple of sketchy jumps early in the race jockey Mattie Batchelor took up the running as the field came past the stands with a circuit to go quickly opening up a six length lead after which he never headed by his three rivals going on to pass the post fifteen lengths clear of Fine The World, with the outsider Reach Out a further length back in third. Disappointment of the race was last year's CI Champion hurdler Landolino who brought up the rear, seemingly not enjoying the drying ground.

Having enjoyed a comfortable success in the opener Batchelor went on to complete a quick fire double in the following race The Guy Edwards Memorial Handicap. The Alyson Malzard trained Neuilly was ultra consistent last season never finishing out of the first three, ending the 2012 season in fine style when taking the Race Club's most prestigious handicap "The Clarendon". Despite putting in some fine runs last season's yesterdays performance was probably her best to date as she cruised past the post seemingly with bags in hand to win by eight lengths from stablemate Lang Shining with a further six lengths back in third. Whilst the winner showed eagerness to race and appears to be ahead of the handicapper the same cannot be said with regard to the runner up, who had to be encouraged to race on more than one occasion and having been driven into the lead up the home straight first time round then tried and pull himself up heading out on the second circuit. Lang Shining obviously retains a fair bit of ability but unfortunately this ability does seem to be matched by his enthusiasm and from a punting angle he could be backed with any confidence.

Feature event on the opening card was The Jersey Bookmakers Handicap over seven furlongs, following the success of his stable mate in the opening race UK raider Sutton Sid went off a warm favourite, however jockey Tony Culhane fluffed the start and the three year old was never seen in contention eventually finishing a never nearer sixth. At the business end of the race it was Pas D'action who sprinted clear of the field rounding the home turn and won by five lengths from Toggle with Lucifer's Shadow making a pleasing debut for trainer Christa Gilbert a length back in third. This win completed an opening day double for last season's Champion trainer Malzard. The winner was obviously quietly fancied as having been available at 10/1 he was backed into 13/2, with those having the foresight to predict the first two home in the correct order being rewarded with a winning exacta dividend of £169.50 on the tote.

The interestingly named fourth race The Adorne Double D Cup Handicap saw the Angie Corson stable get their first winner on the board when the lesser fancied of her two contestants Becks Bolero gained a three length success under Josh Baudins from last season's Jersey Derby winner Major Maximus with another newcomer to the Jersey racing scene Sweet Liberta putting in a pleasing effort six lengths back in third. Corson's other runner King Kenny once again put in a dismal effort on the opening day of the season, but having done this in previous years this run should be disregarded and he will almost certainly show better form as the season continues.

Final race on the card was The Channel Island Racing and Hunt Club Handicap which saw the Baker yard complete it's double on the day as I'm Harry raced clear of his field in the home straight seeing jockey

Culhane looking over his shoulder for nonexistent dangers as they saluted the judge seven lengths clear of La Verte Rue with early leader Vamos nine lengths back in third.

Racing continues on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April and it is hoped that by then racegoers will be able to put their thermals away.