

## JERSEY RACE CLUB

Preview 11 August fixture – Ladies Day

By Bobsbest

There isn't a self-respecting racecourse on the planet that doesn't have a Ladies' Day. Les Landes was fully emancipated long before racecourses in the United Kingdom by licensing women jockeys and then encouraging them to compete on equal terms with the men so, as you might expect, the Jersey course was among the first to designate one day of the sport as Ladies' Day. Today it is possibly the most popular of all fixtures with the Club's caterer, Niche Events, being called upon to serve almost three times as many lunch guests as is usually the case.

Traditionally, racegoers of the feminine gender attend their special day in their finery with particular emphasis on hats. I have to confess the passion for donning headpieces adorned with the plumage of deceased birds is a mystery to me, but then I'll be there to watch the horses and will not be tempted to wager on the outcome of the best dressed lady or the finest hat competitions.

Coutts & Co are sponsors of the principal race, a handicap over an extended mile; this is for horses rated up to 55 and it's appropriate that the lesser lights of our racing firmament should enjoy their moment in the spotlight. Fast Freddie heads the weights, but he is usually more at home over shorter trips and even in that sphere he is not the force of old, yet he is racing off a mark of 49, only 6lb below his 2011 rating. He will struggle to give weight to Lucifer's Shadow who has run really well on his last two starts; second last time to Country Blue over arguably too short a trip, he looks the one to beat. This is Rebel Woman's distance and she won a better race than this last time and earned her 3lb hike in rating. La Verte Rue was last in that contest and remains very disappointing. Jackpot is a maiden after ten attempts, but one assumes Brendan Powell wouldn't travel him to Jersey if he didn't think he had a chance. However, it will be a poor reflection on the local form if she wins. Vamos has earned some of the rude names he's been called, but Lady Petrus tries her heart out whatever the going, distance or opposition and she'll run her usual race.

The programme opens with the Ladbrokes Odds On Reward Card Handicap Hurdle, the longest race in the local calendar at 2.5 miles. It

has cut up badly with just three runners, but it will be intriguing to see the rematch between Landolino and Sir Alex Ferguson's If I Had Him. In the Champion Hurdle the latter won by a neck having looked beaten jumping the last; they were at level weights that day and it would seem the handicapper has been lenient with Landolino as he gets a 6lb pull for that neck, which should be more than enough as long as Tony Proctor doesn't make too much use of him early on. Nordic Affair makes up the field; he was 15 lengths third in that race, so theoretically has a squeak at these weights, but he's very one paced and that is his undoing.

The Ladbrokes Odds On Big Three Coupon Handicap over 7 furlongs sees another Brendan Powell runner in the shape of Aciano, a winner at Kempton. Doncaster and Wolverhampton although you have to go back over a year for his last success. He's sure to be competitive here, but won't have it easy. Pas D'Action is enjoying a purple patch and is running off a mark just 1lb higher than he started the season. First Cat has won twice this term, but can't seem to put two good runs together consecutively, while Spanish Bounty is the class act, but has been a tad disappointing although he won this last year. Mr Opulence didn't run badly when the rank outsider in the Jersey Derby and the shorter trip may suit. Newcomer Lively Little Lady is a maiden and best watched, which leaves Country Blue who came good over 5 furlongs last time, but there's no obvious reason why he won't get this slightly longer trip.

The Ladbrokes Ladies Day Handicap over a mile and a quarter is almost a re-run of the Jersey Derby over a slightly shorter trip and with weight differences. In that race Major Maximus, relishing the softened going, could be called the winner from a long way out eventually beating Landolino and Neuilly by 5 lengths and 10 lengths with Moose Moran never in the hunt. So it's quite hard to understand why the handicapper has seen fit to expect the Moose and the mare Neuilly to give weight to the Derby winner. On form he looks a good thing, but bear in mind he does need to get his toe in and fast ground will be against him; if it's firm he may not run. Becks Bolero is consistent, but may be a shade outclassed (although he took the race last season) as does Athania. Rock Diamond is a newcomer to Brendan Powell's yard, having won a Windsor seller over this trip for Sylvester Kirk; she's no great shakes on form, but only a 3 year old and it's quite possible she will improve for Powell. I nominate Neuilly, still very favourably handicapped, to bustle up Major Maximus.

The Ladbrokes 'The Oddsfather' Handicap over a mile and a half for horses rated no more than 60 closes the programme. It's an extremely tricky affair with River Du Nord, an easy winner last time over two furlongs more, making the return journey. This is a tougher assignment and it will be a feather in Sue Gardner's cap if he does the trick again. I prefer I'm Harry, King Kenny and Sissi Guihen. I'm Harry, from George Baker's yard, beat Becks Bolero here in May and then ran really well at Yarmouth and may be good enough, a remark that also applies to King Kenny who, though beaten a long way in the Derby, will find this much easier. Sissi Guihen would have waltzed this in her pomp, but she's been deeply disappointing; the fact that her connections are persevering is a strong indicator they feel there's still a race in her so don't be surprised to see a big run.

Selections:

Landolino  
Country Blue  
Lucifer's Shadow  
Major Maximus (if absent Neuilly)  
I'm Harry