

JERSEY RACE CLUB

Preview 16 June fixture

By Bobsbest

Sunday is Fathers' Day, a fact acknowledged in the title of one of the races, but as all the horses competing on what looks an interesting card are either mares or geldings there is absolutely no possibility of any of the participants ever being in a position to enjoy the appellation "father". Be that as it may, it's hard to think of a better way for human offspring to show their appreciation of dad than to treat him to an afternoon at Les Landes.

The Happy Fathers' Day Handicap is the second race on the programme run over the classic trip of a mile and a half, the distance of the Jersey Derby and later the Clarendon, two of the most important races in the local calendar, and this race often provides pointers to the outcome of those events. It was won last year by Neuilly, already a three times winner this season as apparently the handicapper has failed to take her measure. She's still not over burdened here in receipt of 8lb from top weight Sweet Liberta. Indeed, Neuilly is only 3lb worse off with last year's runner up Anfield Road, but whereas the former has continued on her multiple winning way, the latter hasn't won since April 2012. Major Maximus is thoroughly likeable, but ran uncharacteristically badly last time behind Neuilly and Anfield Road; perhaps there was something amiss. Bollin Fergus, 2lb out of the handicap here, was an impressive winner of a maiden hurdle last month will have the assistance of Amy Baker in the saddle; his long suit is stamina and none will finish more strongly. Sissi Guihen is increasingly frustrating despite being cut some slack by the handicapper and she's sure to pop up one of these days, probably when least expected. The rest have some questions to answer.

That race is a fine curtain raiser to the principal event, the Jersey RDA Sprint. It is named for that really worthwhile charity Riding For The Disabled and sponsored by the Ana Leaf Foundation. It's a handicap over the minimum trip, but this is a division that is not strong at present and the six runners include three 9 year olds and a 12 year old. The youngest competitor is the 7 year old Kersivay who took the minor honours in the corresponding race in 2012 behind Toggle. On that occasion Toggle won from 9lb out of the handicap and this year he's 13lb wrong, but he has been running well (the extended mile stretched him last time) and can't be left out of calculations. Fast Freddie is not quite as fast as he was a comment that applies to the once smart High Voltage. Nordic Light

is an impossible looking 20lb out of the handicap, which leaves Spanish Bounty at the other end of the handicap the likely winner.

The programme opens with the George and Leonora Perpetual Hurdle, sponsored by the Sullivan Family Trust in memory of George Sullivan and his wife. The Sullivans were hugely generous supporters of racing in Jersey including in the development of the new facilities and it is entirely fitting that they remembered in this way. Unfortunately just three runners will line up for the race, but they include CI Champion Hurdler Landolino who shrugged off two poor runs with an impressive win on the flat last month. Curiously Lavender Racing's star actually receives weight from Deepika who has been deeply unimpressive so far in her local starts. Her big weight is due to a number of successes on little provincial tracks in France and it's impossible to assess that form in relation to Landolino's achievements here; she would have to show significant improvement to trouble the favourite. Nordic Affair completes the line up; second at a respectful distance to Landolino in this race last season, he's considerably better off at the revised weights, but needs things to drop right for him, which seems unlikely in such a small field.

The St Brelade Handicap will be run over the extended mile and is a typically tight handicap with all five runners having shown good form this year, four of them winners. Lucifer's Shadow is the non-winner, but he ran a race full of promise first time up and can be forgiven last month's less eye-catching performance when slowly away and always chased along over a shorter trip. First Cat won that race from Pas D'Action, now 3lb better in. The latter has the reputation of preferring ease underfoot, but that last outing was on firm ground and he ran as well as ever. Grey Panel apparently suffered a slipping saddle so is excused his last run and is a genuine and likeable sort. Beck's Bolero won this last year and has been thoroughly consistent this term. Grey Panel could bounce back.

The LBS Properties Handicap brings down the curtain with a low level handicap over a mile and a quarter. I have remarked before that modest horses can provide excellent racing and these events for the lower rated animals invariably produce thrilling contests. I thought Athenia would win a similar race last time over a slightly shorter trip and she very nearly obliged, but was just caught by stablemate Red Lago, given a super ride by Phil Collington. It would be nice to think she might get her revenge on slightly revised terms, but Red Lago was the strong finisher that day and he seems the more likely to appreciate the extra distance, although it should be remembered Athania has won at two miles, but over hurdles. There's a third runner from Stephen Arthur's stable in the shape of

Lady Petrus who is honest and quite consistent, but you have to go back to July 2011 for her last victory, admittedly in a much better race. Vamos has ability, but doesn't always show it while Rebel Woman is gradually finding her form. This is best left to the Arthur team, but which one?

Selections

Landolino
Bollin Fergus
Spanish Bounty
Grey Panel
Red Lago