

ROSSETTI READY FOR FAMILY FUN RACES

SATURDAY EVENING'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW

By commentator Mark Johnson

The Jersey Race Club stages the first of its two evening meetings of the year this Saturday when it hosts a Family Fun Day at Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouens. Gates open at 5pm with the first race at 6.30pm.

As well as a competitive five-race card there will be several special events during the evening aimed at promoting racing to all the family.

At 5.40 there will be a "Punters Panel" in the Winners Enclosure, in which racing professionals preview the evening's action, followed at 5.55 by a Jockeys Racecard Signing Session in front of the Weighing Room. Younger racegoers also have the chance to win a special trophy in the free to enter "Design a Silks" Competition in which they have to design and colour a jockey's silks template in the most imaginative and eye-catching way possible! There will also be a free Bouncy Castle for children as well as free Face Painting by Karen at Face Painting Jersey.

But when all is said and done it is about the horses and with 33 runners set to contest the five races during the evening this this looks a really interesting card with the opening Midsummer Handicap Hurdle (6.30), over 2¼ miles, particularly intriguing.

Last July's Jersey Derby winner **ROSSETTI** (trained by Alyson Malzard & ridden by Mattie Batchelor) really impressed on his hurdling debut at the last meeting, winning by 18 lengths, a performance which immediately made him a leading locally-trained contender for the Channel Islands Champion Hurdle on 12th July. However that victory did only come in a Maiden Hurdle and this time, for the first time, he faces proven jumpers including two English-trained raiders **AGAPANTHUS** (representing last year's leading trainer in the Channel Islands Neil Mulholland) and **THE KVILLEKEN** (trained by Martin Keighley).

AGAPANTHUS won twice at Les Landes last year, including this race 12 months ago by 14 lengths, and comes here on the back of a win over fences at Kempton but he is not the most straight forward of rides and so, if **ROSSETTI** is potentially up to C.I. Champion Hurdle class, he should be able to beat him.

Given the tight nature of the Les Landes circuit big strong horses don't always have the greatest record around the track but **STEELY**, one of the biggest horses currently in training in Jersey, has his chance to shine in The Green Valley Handicap (7.05) over 1½ miles. Consistently placed both on the flat and over hurdles the Karl Kukk-trained 7 year-old hasn't won since back-to-back victories at Lingfield and Brighton in late May/early June of 2012 but he loves quick ground (unusual for a horse of his size) and his trainer had his first winner of the year at the last meeting.

He has two previous Jersey Derby winners to beat amongst his seven rivals - MAJOR MAXIMUS and KING KENNY as well as popular front-runner RIVER DU NORD.

The most valuable race of the evening is for sprinters - The Episode Fund Handicap (7.40) over 5½ furlongs, or just 1,100 metres - and the Alyson Malzard-trained **KERSIVAY** bids to win the race for the third year running having scored by 6 lengths in 2013 and just a length last year from COUNTRY BLUE and PURLEY QUEEN. The latter won the first 5½f sprint of the Jersey season a month ago while COUNTRY BLUE finished second in that race and also finished just a head second over 7 furlongs at the last meeting. A bunch finish looks on the cards.

Hat-trick seeking grey LUCIFERS SHADOW is likely to be all the rage in the betting for the fourth race - The PraxisIFM Handicap Mile (8.15) but he might be a short-priced favourite to be slightly wary of given he is now stepping up in grade from restricted handicaps into an open handicap and he was a well beaten fourth in this race twelve months ago behind FAST FREDDIE. In a tricky race the narrow vote goes to last month's Jersey Guineas runner-up **PAS D'ACTION** (who had to miss an intended engagement at the last meeting due to a slight set-back) over HERBALIST who was given a great ride by Mark Quinlan to make all the running to win over 1¼ miles at the last meeting.

As the sun sets over the North-West corner of the islands, eight runners will go to post for the concluding 1¼ mile Handicap (8.50). There might be a real grandstand finish here if the late-running **LADY PETRUS** is the fastest finishing silhouette. She doesn't like running down hill, so often gets a long way behind early in her races, but flies at the end. She has finished third and second in the last two renewals of this race. Dangers include CARRERA, GREY PANEL and BECK'S BOLERO.

This year the Channel Islands Trainers Championship looks to be one of the most open for many years. After four of the season's ten meetings a single winner splits four trainers with Tony Carroll (England) & Christa Gilbert (Jersey) on 4 winners just ahead of Aly Malzard (Jersey) & George Baker (England) on 3 winners.

6.30	#3	ROSSETTI
7.05	#4	STEELY
7.40	#6	KERSIVAY
8.15	#3	PAS D'ACTION
8.40	#7	LADY PETRUS