

LADIES LEAD AT LES LANDES

SUNDAY'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW

By commentator Mark Johnson *

This Sunday Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouens hosts it's annual Ladies Day with five competitive races on the track (first race 2.30) sharing the spotlight with a trio of competitions designed to bring a touch of Royal Ascot-style glamour to the cliff-top venue.

There will be a competitions to find the "Best Dressed Young Person" (a prize for the winning girl and boy), the "Most Outstanding Hat" (open to both sexes) and of course the "Best Dressed Lady" - the winner of which will win a treatment cut & blow dry at Matisse Hair & Beauty, St Aubin, as well as some champagne to celebrate.

Judging will take place throughout the afternoon with the announcement of the winners and prize giving due to be made between the fourth and fifth races at about 4.25 (subject to racing running to time).

It is fitting that on Ladies Day, two of Jersey's leading lady trainers continue their head-to-head battle to win this year's Channel Islands Trainers Championship.

With just ten races of the C.I. remaining (five this Sunday and five more on the August Bank Holiday Monday closing day card) Christa Gilbert currently leads Aly Malzard by a single winner but should the latter finish the season level on winners she would regain her Championship on second-place count-back.

The current standings read -

Christa Gilbert: 9 winners; 3 seconds; 5 thirds; £16,825 prize money; 21 runners in total

Aly Malzard: 8 winners; 14 seconds; 5 thirds; £23,040 prize money; 53 runners in total

As might be expected both trainers are attacking the Ladies Day card with a strong team. Christa Gilbert, who at the last meeting saddled the winner of the Jersey Derby for the third time but has yet to be Champion Trainer, runs five horses on the card while multiple former Champion Aly Malzard will be represented by seven runners in her bid to regain the title she lost last year to UK-based Neil Mulholland.

Both Gilbert & Malzard are represented in the classiest race of the day - the concluding Ladbrokes Best Odds Guaranteed Handicap (4.50) over a 1½ miles which boasts amongst it's eight-runner line-up the winners of the last five Jersey Derbys: AUSSIE LYRICS (this year); ROSSETTI (2014); MAJOR MAXIMUS (2013 & 2012) and KING KENNY (2011).

AUSSIE LYRICS could not have been more impressive winning the Jersey Derby three weeks ago by 7 lengths from ROSSETTI but he now must concede that rival 14lbs in this Handicap and, perhaps even more

significantly, he has to concede his stablemate from the Christa Gilbert yard **MAJOR MAXIMUS** 22lbs on rain-softened ground which should play to the latter's strengths. Due to injury **MAJOR MAXIMUS** has run only twice this year but, if back to form, he'll take some beating.

Although much attention on Sunday will be focused on the race for C.I. Trainers Championship it is notable that Britain's reigning Flat Champion Trainer, Richard Hannon, will have his first ever runner on Jersey. The Hannon-trained 3-y-o filly **LARCH**, will face five rivals in the Coutts Handicap (3.40) the third race on the card.

LARCH, whose syndicate owners include Jersey-based members, isn't a leading light in her illustrious yard and she has yet to finish in the money in six career starts - she was seventh of 13 at Windsor in a 6f Handicap last time out - so, given she may be over-bet, it may be worth taking her on with **CAPTAIN JAMES** who won here over 1m1f at the end of June.

The longest race of the entire Channel Islands season is the opening Ladbrokes **GRID** Handicap Hurdle (2.30) over 2½ miles. This stamina test has attracted four runners, all of whom are seeking a first win of 2015, and although **FOURNI** was an eye-catching second at the last meeting over hurdles this race could be ideal for five-times hurdles winner **DALMO** to return to form after an ulcer affected campaign.

It has also been a frustrating season for **PAS D'ACTION** but on Sunday he bids to win the Ladbrokes **GRID** Price Surge Handicap (3.05), over his optimum trip of 7 furlongs, for the third year running. He is one of four Aly Malzard-trained runners in that race which also include Jersey newcomer **OCEAN CRYSTAL** a winner at Lingfield in May.

The Ladbrokes Ladies Day Handicap (4.15) could be an intriguing tactical affair with **LUCIFERS SHADOW** likely to find a bit more at the end of the race than **CARRERA**.

* There will be a change in the commentary box for this meeting as my RacingUK colleague Alex Steedman will be calling the action.

Selections:

- 2.30 **DALMO**
- 3.05 **PAS D'ACTION**
- 3.40 **CAPTAIN JAMES**
- 4.15 **LUCIFERS SHADOW**
- 4.50 **MAJOR MAXIMUS**