

## **LOCAL FILLY LARCH FOR LADIES DAY SUNDAY'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW**

By commentator Mark Johnson \*

This Sunday Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouen hosts its 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 posy being awarded to the winning girl and boy), the "Most Outstanding Hat" (open to both sexes! for which the winner receives a voucher from Catherine Best, a bottle of Champagne and a posy) and of course the "Best Dressed Lady" - the winner of which will receive six Art Deco Glasses as well as some champagne to celebrate and a posy.

Judging will take place throughout the afternoon but, in a slight change to previous years, the various competition finalists will be invited to the Winners' Enclosure at 5.25 (about half-an-hour after the last race as opposed to before the last race) for the announcement of the winners and the prize giving. There will also be live music, starting shortly after the last race has been run, to keep racegoers and fashionistas entertained.

The action on the track promises to be ultra competitive with a strong turnout of 33 runners declared on the card, eight of which are trained in the UK.

Two of the six runners in the opening Ladbrokes BETSTATION Handicap Hurdle (2.30) - run over 2½ miles and therefore the longest race of the entire Channel Islands racing season - are UK-trained.

Newmarket-based Phil McEntee will saddle the 10 year-old Jonnie Skull in this race. Jonnie Skull holds the record as currently the "most raced horse" in the UK - his run on Sunday being his 201<sup>st</sup> career start of which he has won 21 times, been runner-up 19 times and third 27 times. He has recorded 10 all weather flat wins, 9 turf flat wins and 2 victories over Hurdles but he is on a 28 race losing run having not won since scoring in a mile all weather flat race at Lingfield in May last year.

The other UK runner in the contest is Jazzy Lady (trained by Sue Gardner) who has won 4 times on the flat but is 0-8 over hurdles.

This is a prize which can remain with the strong home team and CAHILL (trained by Christa Gilbert) sets the form standard following his excellent head second in the Channel Islands Champion Hurdle last month behind Rossetti. He is given the nod over the novice Hawaiian Freeze and the mare Fourni in a high-class Handicap Hurdle.

One of the Channel Islands' most popular current racehorses PAS D'ACTION has a great chance of giving his legion of fans another win to celebrate in the Ladbrokes BET LIVE IN PLAY Handicap (3.05) over his

optimum distance of 7 furlongs. The Aly Malzard-trained 8 year-old has now won 12 times during his career and 10 of those victories have been at Les Landes over 7 furlongs. At the last meeting Chapeau Bleu beat Pas D'Action 2 lengths over a longer trip. Now Pas D'Action gets a 5lbs pull in the weights, as well as the drop in distance, in his favour.

The most valuable race on the card is the Coutts Handicap (3.40) over an extended mile in which 7 go to post including the duo of Mendacious Harpy and Too Many Diamonds trained in the UK. Although the former has some claims on UK form (he won around a similar tight left-handed track at Catterick in 2014) his overall profile of just 1 win from 27 starts makes him opposable and again the home team can strike gold.

It would be no surprise to see Grey Panel continue his excellent 2016 campaign with another win but perhaps the inconsistent filly LARCH may offer some punting value. She was in the process of running a good race here over course and distance on Derby Day (in a stronger race) before being hampered and unseating her rider. Jemma Marshall now takes over in the saddle and the pair may out-run their likely odds.

Given 24% of the runners on the card are UK-trained there should be at least one winner for the visitors and top-weight FLUTTERBEE may be the one in the Ladbrokes LADIES DAY handicap (4.15). Trainer George Baker has a good strike-rate when he brings horses to Les Landes (he has two runners on this card) and with three-time Champion Jockey Mattie Batchelor aboard Flutterbee can record her third career success following two wins last year at Brighton. She was a good second at Ffos Las last time out over Sunday's distance of 1m2f.

AUSSIE LYRICS impressive 10 length winner of the Jersey Day at the last meeting bids to defy top-weight in the concluding Ladbrokes BEST ODDS GUARANTEED Handicap (4.50) and if in the same form he should do so at the expense of Bowl Imperior and Mr Opulence.

\* There will be a change in the commentary box for this meeting as my colleague Lee McKenzie will be back calling the action.

#### Selections:

2.30	1	CAHILL
3.05	3	PAS D'ACTION
3.40	6	LARCH
4.15	1	FLUTTERBEE
4.50	1	AUSSIE LYRICS