

VALMINA CAN FIRE TO BULLET VICTORY

MONDAY'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW

By Commentator Mark Johnson

The fastest horses in the Channel Islands take centre stage at Les Landes Racecourse on Monday afternoon when the most important sprint of the year - the Jersey Bullet - is the feature on the five race Bank Holiday card (first race 2.30).

The La Vallette 2016 Jersey Bullet Handicap (Race 3 on the card, due off at 3.40) has attracted a field of six and is run over the shortest distance contested in the Channel islands - 5½ furlongs or 1100 metres.

Confirmation that these really are the best sprinters currently running on Jersey can be found in this statistic - all year at Les Landes only six races are run over this short specialist distance but between them the six runners in this year's race have won 15 races in total over this exact course & distance! In other words 2½ years worth of Jersey sprints!

Last year's winner Country Blue (with a total of five local course & distance successes to his name) is an obvious major player and is likely to put up a spirited defense of his crown while his old adversary Purley Queen (who herself boasts four course & distance wins) is another very much for the short list. However a comparative new kid on the local circuit **VALMINA** may come out on top.

VALMINA, formerly trained by Tony Carroll in England but now based with local trainer Karl Kukk, won the first sprint of the Jersey season on 17 April by 5 lengths from Country Blue and although the handicapper has now given the runner-up a 6lbs pull in the weights the manor of the victory suggests **VALMINA** (a winner of 11 races in total during his career) is capable of taking this prestigious prize carrying top-weight.

Another intriguing aspect of Monday's card is the debut on Jersey of a couple of exciting prospects who have previously run successfully in other jurisdictions.

One of these horses is **DRUM VALLEY** in the opening The Presidents Handicap Hurdle (2.30) over 2¼ miles. This race, as the name implies, is sponsored by the Jersey Race Club President Tony Taylor and his wife Sandra and **DRUM VALLEY** is owned by the Taylors.

They formerly had **DRUM VALLEY** trained in the UK by 2015 Grand National winning trainer Oliver Sherwood and he won four times over there, including a 2m5½f Handicap Hurdle at Fontwell in October, but since that victory he has failed to fire in three other starts. Connections are hopeful that this classy recruit to the Aly Malzard yard will have his enthusiasm for racing rekindled by the change of scenery.

Twelve times Channel Islands Champion Trainer Aly Malzard also has another intriguing new recruit making his debut for her on Monday in the

shape of **BOWL IMPERIOR** in the 1m4f Geoffrey Edwards Memorial Handicap (3.05). The 4-y-o son of Breeders' Cup Classic winner Raven's Pass faces seven rivals in the opening leg of the Pick 4 Jackpot.

BOWL IMPERIOR has won two of his ten career starts to date in France - having won over a mile, on his racecourse debut in October 2014 at Lyon Parilly for Henri-Alex Pantall and then also winning last time out (on the 29th April) in a 2m2f Claiming Hurdle at La Teste de Buch when trained by Arnaud Chaille-Chaille.

One imagines, given his versatile profile, that connections are hopeful **BOWL IMPERIOR** could be both a local Champion Hurdle and Derby candidate later in the season. In this race he receives 4lbs from last year's Jersey Derby winner Aussie Lyrics who could prove tough to beat as he steps up to his favored 1m4f trip for the first time in 2016.

LUCIFER'S SHADOW, a stablemate of Aussie Lyrics in the yard of Christa Gilbert, may be worth supporting again in the Whitsun Handicap Mile (4.15). He was well beat at the last meeting but found UK raider Admirable Art 8 lengths too good that day and could only finish second. In what looks a really open handicap **LUCIFER'S SHADOW** may be able to get the better of inform rivals Pas D'Action (better over a shorter distance), Benoordenhaut (who won the 1m2f Warwick Vase at the last meeting) and the consistent but frustrating maiden Tax Reform.

Biggest field of the day is reserved for the finale when ten go to post for the Crawford Family Handicap (4.50) over 1m2f. The sponsors see their popular 12-y-o Fast Freddie, a winner on Guernsey earlier in the month, carry their maroon and white hooped colours but he may find one or two younger rivals too quick for him here. **GREY PANEL** a winner over 1m1f in April, may be able to beat Steely and Captain James.

SELECTIONS

2.30 1 DRUM VALLEY
3.05 3 BOWL IMPERIOR
3.40 1 VALMINA (NAP)
4.15 5 LUCIFER'S SHADOW
4.50 7 GREY PANEL

* Big race headline selection at the last meeting Benoordenhout repaid readers handsomely winning at 5/1 !