

BLACK NIGHT SHOULD BE SUNDAY'S BRIGHTEST STAR

Sunday's Jersey Guineas Meeting Preview

by Commentator Mark Johnson

BLACK NIGHT, currently the highest rated horse running on the flat in Jersey, is the star attraction in the nine-runner La Verte Rue Associates 2017 Jersey Guineas (3.40) – feature race of the Jersey Race Club's second meeting of the season at Les Landes on Sunday.

The first of the five races on the card is due off at 2.30 at the course situated in the North-West corner of the Island in St Ouen.

Trained locally by James Moon the versatile Black Night won three times during a successful, yet injury effected, first season in the Channel Islands last year which caused him to miss the Jersey Derby in July for which he would have been a short-priced favourite.

Last Autumn he returned from his mid-season setback to win over Sunday's extended mile course & distance when scoring, by 4 lengths under top-weight, in an open handicap at the last meeting of the season in September. After that he shipped to the UK and was far from disgraced when tried in top class company including when seventh (only beaten 9¼ lengths) in the Group 3 Cumberland Lodge Stake at Ascot in October.

Coming into Sunday's race 5-year-old Black Night is officially rated 84 by the Channel Islands' Handicapper - putting him 12lbs clear in the ratings ahead of his nearest rival Flutterbee on 72. On Sunday, Black Night (who will be ridden by Philip Prince) only has to concede 3lbs to Flutterbee hence the former's likely short-priced odds to open his 2017 Channel Islands' campaign with a win.

Dual Jersey Derby winner Aussie Lyrics begins his season in the Rocquette Cider Handicap, over the Derby distance of 1½ miles, up against five rivals in Race 4 at 4.15.

Understandably trainer Christa Gilbert will be focusing all attention at Aussie Lyric's hat-trick bid in the Channel Islands Racing Season's most prestigious event on Sunday 23rd July and victory on Sunday certainly isn't the be-all-and-end-all. Indeed Aussie Lyrics has never won first time out in any of his five racing seasons.

In RAINBOW LAD, Aussie Lyrics faces a classy and progressive foe who will take a great deal of beating if turning up in the same form that saw him win over course & distance by 10 lengths on Easter Monday. Rainbow Lad represents UK-based trainer Mick Appleby who sent out a double here on the opening day of the season and despite taking a hike in the weights for that victory, in a lesser quality race, he has to be the one to beat again.

The best sprinters in training in the Channel Islands get their first opportunity of the season to race over the specialist distance of 5½ furlongs (1,100 metres) in the JT Rewards Handicap Sprint (3.05) when a competitive field of ten go to post.

Country Blue, the Channel Islands' top sprinter of both 2015 & 2016, during which time he has won nine races over tis course & distance, has finished runner-up in this corresponding race for the last three years so he may be worth taking on. His main two rivals are the UK-trained raider It Must Be Faith (another Mick Appleby trainee) and the mare PURLEY QUEEN representing Christa Gilbert. The latter won the race in both 2014 & 2015 and after an interrupted campaign last year she may be able to bounce back to form.

Opening race on the card is the Praxis IFM Handicap Hurdle (2.30) over 2 miles and this looks a very open and competitive race in which all of the five runners can be given some sort of chance.

Steely, trained by Karl Kukk, won this corresponding race last year and must have a good chance again although arguably this year's contest may be slightly stronger. British-trained Little Lottie has enjoyed a refreshing holiday on Jersey since her win in the opening race of the season, over course & distance on Easter Monday and is another to enter calculations

while Founi (a faller in that race) and last year's Channel Islands Champion Hurdle runner-up CAHILL also command respect. A tentative vote goes to CAHILL.

Final race on the card, the Liberation Brewery Handicap (4.50) could see impressive Easter Monday winner LUCIFERS SHADOW follow up but expect 13-times Les Landes winner Grey Panel to run much better than he did on the opening day of the season while Ocean Crystal is another for the short list.

SELECTIONS:

2.30	2	CAHILL
3.05	4	PURLEY QUEEN
3.40	2	BLACK NIGHT
4.15	1	RAINBOW LAD
4.50	3	LUCIFERS SHADOW