

A perfect summer evening together with the attraction of the appearance of one of the most prolific winners in the history of national hunt hurdle racing meant that an estimated 2,500 racegoers enjoyed the Jersey Race Clubs annual Friday evening meeting.

Big Bucks simply dominated the staying hurdle scene in the UK winning eighteen continuous races between January 1st 2009 and December 1st 2012 which included four consecutive World Hurdle titles at the jump racing's most prestigious and competitive annual renewal, the Cheltenham Festival before injury forced him to miss the 2013 campaign, then after two unsuccessful racecourse appearances earlier this year, connections took the wise decision to let him enjoy a well earned retirement from racing. Friday evening was the superstar's first race course appearance since when he parading in the ring prior to the start of racing.

The evening's card began with a match in The Gwanako Handicap Hurdle named in honour of Big Bucks travelling partner, as a contest the race was over when the long odds on favourite Agapanthus passed his solitary rival Steely after jumping the first hurdle on the second circuit eventually cruising to an effortless fourteen length win. It is hoped that a match like this will not become the norm in the hurdle races at Les Landes as such an event has been the traditional opening of each meeting with a hurdle for many years, therefore it is hoped that local owners will support the jumping sphere by placing a few more dual purpose horses in training.

Unfortunately with King of Arnor being a non runner only three went to post in The Episode Fund Handicap, Rossetti formally trained in the UK by Gary Moore but now in the care of the Malzard stable went off a short priced favourite but with his two rivals happy to lob along in the early part of the race the favourite was forced to set his own pace this made him a sitting target and it was Sweet Liberta who took advantage turning for home running out an easy five length winner from the long time leader with King Kenny seven lengths back in third.

The feature event of the evening was The Quilter Cheviot Handicap over the minimum distance of five furlongs, thankfully on this occasion the field got off to a level break at the first attempt, this is the optimum trip for Kersivay who set his normal scorching pace from the start to lead from pillar to post just holding off the late challenge of stable mate Country Blue by a length with Purley Queen half a length back in third. Favourite for the race was the UK trained Novabridge who finished six and a half lengths behind the winner in fourth.

The Ravenscroft Big Buck's Handicap probably produced the evening's most popular winner as the veteran Fast Freddie saluted the judge four lengths clear of stablemate Becks Bolero with First Cat three lengths away in third. These days the ten year old needs every inch of the Les Landes mile trip as over a shorter distance he gets outpaced by his younger rivals.

Final race of the evening saw trainer Tony le Brocq who was successful earlier in the evening with Sweet Liberta complete a double on the card when favourite Mr Opulence a winner over hurdles at the previous meeting won the mile and a quarter Dandara handicap by a length from Lady Petrus with Rocquaine three and a half lengths back in third.

Next meeting is the Champion Hurdle meeting on Sunday 6th July with the first race at 2.30pm.