

BOWL TO BOW OUT IN STYLE  
Sunday's Jersey Racing Preview  
by commentator Mark Johnson

The 2017 Channel Islands Horse Racing season ends on Sunday when Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouen stages its last meeting of the year. The five-race card (first race at 2.30) is a rearranged fixture, making up for the Spring Bank Holiday meeting lost in late May due to thick fog.

Victory on Sunday would secure the title of Champion Racehorse of the Year for BOWL IMPERIOR who lines up in the season finale - the 1m6f William Hill Handicap (4.50) - against six rivals including three-time Jersey Derby winner Aussie Lyrics. The Champion Racehorse award is decided on a Grand Prix-style points system and the Aly Malzard-trained BOWL IMPERIOR has a three-point lead over Black Night and Lucifers Shadow going into the final day. All three are due to run on Sunday but obviously should BOWL IMPERIOR win his race he is also certain to take the title.

BOWL IMPERIOR has won his last three races - a 1m6f flat handicap on Jersey Derby Day followed by the longest race of the Channel Islands season, a Hurdle over 2 1/2 miles on Ladies Day, and then a 2 1/4-mile Hurdle at the last meeting.

This is a competitive race for the season finale but the selection has always had a fair bit of class in his armoury, as well as abundant stamina, having finished 10 lengths runner-up to Aussie Lyrics in last year's Jersey Derby. In that race, the two old adversaries meet on level-weight terms now, in this handicap, BOWL IMPERIOR receives 25lbs from the three-time Derby hero. This isn't just a two-horse race however with dual hurdles winner this season Little Lotte, recent "Glory Bee" Handicap heroine Ocean Crystal and last year's Clarendon winner Hawaiian Freeze also amongst the seven-strong field.

Feature race on the card is the 1m2f Patrons 2017 Jersey Warwick Vase (3.40) which sees a field of six go to post. Last year's renewal went to BENOORDENHOUT who beat Black Night

2 1/2 lengths. It is possible that is how it will finish up again this year. At the last meeting Black Night put up one of the greatest weight carrying performances we have seen here in years at Les Landes when lumping top-weight of 10st 12lbs to an impressive 8 length victory, Aussie Lyrics, in the 1m4f Clarendon Handicap. Black Night had the very firm under foot conditions he loves that day but it is likely it will not be as fast for him this time around and the handicapper now has him rated another 5lbs higher. BENOORDENHOUT simply didn't turn up in the Clarendon, running a lacklustre 5th, but he should appreciate conditions more this time around and the trip of 1m2f is his optimum distance.

Only three go to post for the opening race, the Green Island Conditions Hurdle, over 2 miles (2:30) and if ever a horse deserved to win a race this season it surely is the mare FOURNI who has run at 7 of the previous 8 Les Landes meetings this year. She has finished runner-up four times over hurdles so far during this campaign including in the Champion Hurdle. She should be capable of beating rivals Grey Gem (who has won his only race so far over jumps) and Beyond Measure.

It is almost certain that St Helier-based Christa Gilbert will be crowned Champion Trainer of the Channel Islands for the first time on Sunday and she has a good chance of completing a double on the card with CHAPEAU BLEU (3:05) and LUCIFERS SHADOW (4:15). The latter is looking to take the extended mile handicap on this card for the third time having the corresponding race in both 2014 and 2015.

After racing, as is traditional at the last meeting of the season, the end of season championship awards will be presented.

Standings with one meeting (five races) to run -

Jockeys Championship

13 wins Paddy Aspell

11 wins Alice Mills

4 wins Philip Prince

Trainers Championship

12 wins Christa Gilbert  
8 wins Alyson Malzard  
5 wins Karl Kukk

Champion Racehorse (9 points a win, 3pts for 2nd, 1pt for 3rd)  
33 points BOWL IMPERIOR  
30 points BLACK NIGHT  
30 points LUCIFERS SHADOW

Selections -

2.30pm. 2 FOURNI  
3.05pm. 3 CHAPEAU BLEU  
3.40pm. 5 BENOORDENHOUT  
4.15pm. 2 LUCIFERS SHADOW  
4.50pm. 3 BOWL IMPERIOR