

HEAVYWEIGHT NIGHT FLOORS RIVALS

FRIDAY EVENING'S JERSEY RACING REPORT

By Mark Johnson

Just like a pumped up heavyweight boxer issues a challenge to his nemesis, BLACK NIGHT effectively threw down an equine equivalent to three-time Jersey Derby winner Aussie Lyrics on Friday evening at Les Landes Racecourse.

If ever a horse's performance could be translated as "I want your crown and I'm coming to take it" then Black Night's knockout win in the Quilter Cheviot Evening Feature Handicap was just that.

Twelve months ago Black Night finished a flared nostril (officially a nose) second to Aussie Lyrics at the end of an epic race for the Jersey Derby. On the evidence of Friday's performance Black Night is at his physical peak and ready to take his revenge.

The 1m4f Jersey Derby (the Channel Islands' most important race, run on Sunday 22nd June) is of course a "level weights" championship race where as Friday evening's contest was a 1m1f handicap and Black Night had to concede lumps of weight to a trio of inferior rivals.

Every racehorse in training is given a numerical rating, by an independent official "Handicapper", after each of it's races to reflect the ability it has shown. The higher the rating, the better the horse. In races the difference in ratings is translated into weight carried - for example a horse rated 50 carries 4lbs more than a horse rated 46.

After winning his first two races this season, by 8 lengths on each occasion, Black Night had his rating increased to 99 (by far the highest rating of a horse currently running on the flat in the Channel Islands) but it meant he had to concede 31lbs or more all round.

Black Night doesn't look like a heavyweight, indeed the Irish-bred 6-y-o trained by James Moon for his mother Anne is quite a small horse, but he punches well above his weight and simply scampered clear of Hard To Handel (to whom he was conceding 34lbs) to win by 3½ lengths thus setting a new Channel Islands weight-carrying record by defying his rating of 99. He was ridden to victory by French jockey Davy Delalande.

This was a tenth career win for Black Night (from just 27 starts) and a

ninth success at Les Landes - his first win coming at Lingfield in the UK.

Veteran sprinter DOCTOR PARKES is an even more prolific winner. The 12-y-o lined up for his 122nd career start when contesting the Prince Of Wales Inn & Green Island Restaurant Handicap, over 5½f, and promptly racked-up his fourteenth win.

Ridden by Philip Prince, for UK-based trainer Natalie Lloyd-Beavis, 6/1 chance Doctor Parkes came home 2 lengths clear of Fruit Salad.

After very nearly a whole year off the track CAHILL (Alice Mills riding for trainer Christa Gilbert) bounced back with victory in the opening UBS Handicap Hurdle. Runner-up in the 2016 Channel Islands Champion Hurdle the 6-y-o was posting a fourth career success. He made all the running to beat Samuel French by 3 lengths.

It had been a very long time - almost three years to the day - between drinks for PRINCESS KODIA who belatedly recorded her second career success, in 24 starts, when taking the Glorious Les Landes Races Handicap by 2¼ lengths from Grey Panel. Her previous win had come at Bath, on only her fourth ever start, back in June 2015. She was a second winner of the season for locally-based rider Michelle Hooper who works for winning trainer Aly Malzard.

Following on from Black Night earlier in the evening GABSTER became the second horse on the night to complete a hat-trick of wins this season when holding UK-raider Barwick at bay, by half-a-length, in the concluding Friends Of Jersey Race Club Handicap over 1m4f. The Karl Kukk-trained 5-y-o mare was ridden to victory by Paddy Aspell.

Over halfway through the local racing season there is a real battle on to be crowned Champion Jockey & Champion Trainer in 2018.

There is currently a three-way tie at the top of the Jockeys Table with reigning Champion Paddy Aspell joined at the top with four winners by Philip Prince and Davy Delalande. As Aspell and Prince have the same number of second places (four) the former is leading on count-back only by virtue of having more third-placed finishes so far.

Karl Kukk and James Moon are tied at the top of the Trainers Table with five winners to date with Kukk having the most runner-up finishers. Aly

Malzard and Christa Gilbert are one winner behind with four successes.

* With 8/1 & 6/1 winners in the sequence, the popular Pick4 Jackpot bet was not hit by any racegoers at Les Landes on Friday evening. There will be a significant carry-over of £488.48 into the Pick4 Jackpot pool at the next meeting - Champion Hurdle Evening on Friday 6th July.