

## **MALZARD TAKES TITLE THRILLER JERSEY RACING - END OF SEASON REPORT**

**By Mark Johnson**

In racing's record books it will simply be reported that St Ouen-based Aly Malzard was crowned Champion Trainer in the Channel Islands for a record fourteenth time at Les Landes on Bank Holiday Monday.

In reality the drama that led to her regaining the Champion Trainer title from Christa Gilbert is the plot of compelling, yet unbelievable, fiction.

Mrs Malzard started the day, and the last five races of the season, in only fourth place in the Trainers Championship with just five winners to her name all season. She was three winners behind James Moon, two behind reigning Champion Christa Gilbert and one behind Karl Kukk.

Then the first news to spread across the racecourse, early on Monday morning, was that the Malzard team's "banker" for the day Mendacious Harpy was to be scratched from the fourth race due to a leg injury. Title aspirations were now surely off the table.

But the all the way wins of BARWICK in the opening Handicap Hurdle and WINKLEVI in the featured Stenham Wealth Management Clarendon Handicap (both under Mattie Batchelor) meant a win by one of the four Malzard-trained representatives in the nine-runner season finale - the Hunscombe Stud Breeding Success Handicap Mile - would be enough to secure the title again.

However the odds suggested that was an unlikely result as a pair of Christa Gilbert-trained runners, Captain James (6/4 Favourite) and Chapeau Bleu (5/2 second favourite) dominated the betting market.

The betting got it wrong and with a furlong to go the Malzard-team's celebratory cheers were already resounding around the Grosnez-Point venue as stable-mates FLUTTERBEE and Ice Royal pulled clear of the rest of the field with the 6 year-old mare FLUTTERBEE (a 7/2 chance), under Freddie Tett, finally taking the honours by 1¼ lengths.

Although both Aly Malzard and James Moon tied on the number of winners during the season (both had eight victories) Mrs Malzard took the Championship by virtue of placed count-back. She sent out 14 runners-up during the season where as Moon sent out only six.

“It was a very difficult season,” confessed the Champion Trainer after racing, “And we never really got going. We just had far too many second and third-placed horses” (the Malzard team had no less than 21 third-placed finishers during the campaign).

“I’d really like to thank my owners for sticking with me and sending me such lovely horses to train,” continued Malzard before answering if a fifteen championship had a nice ring to it, “Oh yes, we’ll be all out to win it again next year”.

Without doubt the most important winner of the afternoon was WINKLEVI in the featured Clarendon Handicap over 1½ miles. The Clarendon is the most prestigious Handicap of the entire Channel Islands season and the centre-piece of the Bank Holiday Monday meeting. It was a fourth win in the race for trainer Aly Malzard - she first won it back in 1993 with Premier Princess, then in 2005 with Khuzdar and most recently in 2012 with Neuilly.

WINKLEVI, the junior in the six runner field as the only 3 year-old in the line-up, was given a positive front-running ride by Mattie Batchelor (who was recording his third win in the race) and came home 1¾ lengths clear of 2015 winner Aussie Lyrics with Benoordenhout back in third.

WINKLEVI, a dual winner in France this summer at Marseille-Borely and Vichy before being bought to race in the Channel Islands, is a very exciting recruit to the local racing scene. He runs in the colours of Guernsey Race Club President Trevor Gallienne. Understandably connections reported that the Jersey Derby next year is now the aim.

BARWICK made all the running to win the final hurdle race of the Chanel islands season - the 2¼ mile Farewell To Summer Handicap Hurdle - jumping accurately to beat Veronica’s Napkin 7 lengths. This

was only a second win over jumps for BARWICK but a tenth career success in all including a win at Mons in Belgium last Autumn.

UK-based trainer Mick Appleby cast his net wide in the search for winners last weekend. On Sunday he saddled Hakam to win at Ovrevoll in Norway and on Bank Holiday Monday it was LEXINGTON TIMES who won for the Appleby team at Les Landes.

The classy LEXINGTON TIMES, ridden to victory by Jersey-born UK-based professional jockey Tim Clark, simply toyed with his six rivals in the Bloodstock Advisory Service Handicap Sprint coming home an unchallenged 6 lengths clear of Fruit Salad with Country Blue in third.

The Arzal Memorial “Glory Bee” Handicap (restricted to horses who hadn’t won previously during the season) over 1¼ miles produced an 8/1 shock winner when KOSHI - trained by Karl Kukk with Paddy Aspell aboard - came home 4 lengths clear of Frivolous Prince.

Like Clarendon Handicap winner Winklevi, KOSHI is a 3 year-old. This was by far her best run of her career to date - she had never even been placed in any of her previous four races.

After racing the end of season Championship presentations were made. Philip Prince (who did not ride at the final meeting) won the Channel islands Jockeys Championship for the first time. UK-based Prince rode 7 winners during the season (including a double at the annual meeting on Guernsey in May) to beat Frenchman Davy Delalande and leading Lady Rider Alice Mills by a single winner.

This season’s Jersey Derby winner BLACK NIGHT (trained by James Moon and owned by his mother Anne) was Champion Racehorse. The Irish-bred 6 year-old entire colt, by Excellent Art, won all four of his races at Les Landes in 2018. Anne Moon was Champion Owner.

Jersey Race Club President Tony Taylor addressed the crowd after the trophy presentations. He confessed that 2018 had been a very difficult season for the JRC with two abandoned meetings - one due to the weather and the other because of an outbreak of Equine Strangles on the island - a

free admission race day being hit by thick fog and racing during mid summer being affected by the prolonged hot dry spell.

Mr Taylor stressed that the JRC remains reliant upon the help of a team of dedicated volunteers to keep racing on the island going and urged anyone interested in getting involved, in any way, to get in touch with the JRC well ahead of the new season which opens at Les Landes on Easter Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2019.

#### JOCKEYS CHAMPIONSHIP

Philip Prince	7 winners (4 seconds, 2 thirds)
Davy Delalande	6 winners (3 seconds, 3 thirds)
Alice Mills	6 winners (3 seconds, 2 thirds)

#### TRAINERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Aly Malzard	8 winners (14 seconds, 21 thirds)
James Moon	8 winners (6 seconds, 3 thirds)
Karl Kukk	7 winners (6 seconds, 7 thirds)
Christa Gilbert	7 winners (5 seconds, 2 thirds)