

WINK GETS THE NOD IN THE CLARENDON MONDAY'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW

By commentator Mark Johnson

WINKLEVI, a dual winner in France already this year, can land the Channel Islands' most prestigious handicap - the 2018 Stenham Wealth Management Clarendon Handicap - when the domestic racing season ends at Les Landes racecourse, St Ouen, on Monday.

"The Clarendon", run over 1½ miles, is regarded as the third and final leg of the Channel Islands Triple Crown (following the Champion Hurdle and the Derby) and is always the centre-piece of the popular August Bank Holiday meeting with the first race due off at 2:30pm.

However unlike the Champion Hurdle and the Derby, in which the runners carry level weights to find the best horse on the day, the Clarendon is a handicap in which an official "handicapper" allots weights to all the various horses to, in theory, give each runner a level chance of winning. This year's race, in which six runners go to post (including two previous winners), looks ultra-competitive.

Very few horses race in the Channel Islands as 3 year-olds (horses tend to be much older when they come here from other jurisdictions) but ex French-trained 3 year-old **WINKLEVI** arrives here with a progressive career profile which includes two victories this summer in France - a 1m5f Handicap at Marseille Borely in June by a head and a 1m4f Claimer at Vichy in last month. He was claimed out of that race.

WINKLEVI, a son of dual French Group 1 winner Maxios, made his debut for new connections (he is now trained by Aly Malzard) at the last meeting, on 12th August, also in a handicap over 1m4f when he finished a highly creditable 3½ lengths runner-up to the UK-trained course specialist Mrs Burbidge.

Trainer Aly Malzard is seeking her fourth win in the Clarendon - she first won it back in 1993 with Premier Princess, then in 2005 with Khuzdar and most recently in 2012 with Neuilly. Former multiple C.I. Champion Jockey Mattie Batchelor is booked for the ride. He has won the Clarendon twice - in 2009 on High Octave and 2012 on Neuilly.

With last year's winner Black Night by-passing the race (he is due to run in the Group 3 Prix Quincey Barriere over a mile at Deauville on Sunday) top-weight will now be carried by three-time Jersey Derby winner

AUSSIE LYRICS. The Christa Gilbert-trained 8 year-old won this race back in 2015 and was runner-up (beaten 8 lengths by Black Night) twelve months ago.

AUSSIE LYRICS impressed when winning over course & distance (for the eighth time) in April but found the extremely firm underfoot conditions against him when only fifth in this year's Jersey Derby. Given more cut in the ground now he must again be a major player.

With his stable star Black Night off to France at the weekend, trainer James Moon relies on 2016 Clarendon winner HAWAIIAN FREEZE to attempt to give his yard an unprecedented three straight wins in the race.

Versatile HAWAIIAN FREEZE has already won over hurdles and on the flat at Les Landes this season and, as bottom weight in the handicap, receives lumps of weight from all five of her rivals on this occasion.

Completing the field are BENOORDENHOUT (runner-up in this year's Jersey Derby and runner-up in this race in 2016), SAFIRA MENINA (third in this year's Jersey Derby but on a losing run of 18 races) and GABSTER who has won three handicaps here already this year.

The chief supporting race on the Clarendon card, and something of an end-of-season tradition, is the Arzal Memorial "Glory Bee" Handicap (4:15) over 1¼ miles. The "Glory Bee" is a race for lower-grade horses who haven't managed to win during the course of the season.

If there is any justice to be had **MENDACIOUS HARPY** will finally get her head in front this season. The 7 year-old mare has finished runner-up three-times this year and was very unlucky not to win last time out when badly hampered at the start and then was run down on the line by inform course specialist Captain James.

MENDACIOUS HARPY is trained by Aly Malzard (whose Ocean Crystal has won this race for the last two years) and is ridden by the trainer's daughter Victoria who is looking for her first win under rules. The dropped in grade Frivolous Prince may be the main danger.

Going into the final day of the season, James Moon has a slender single winner lead in the Trainers Championship but he only has two runners on the card. As well as Hawaiian Freeze in the Clarendon, Moon is represented by VERONICA'S NAPKIN in the opening Farewell To Summer Handicap Hurdle (2:30).

The Moon-trained mare finished third to Cahill in the Channel Islands

Champion Hurdle in July but that was 11 lengths, and one place, behind runner-up **BARWICK** who now may be able to make all the running and kick-start what might be quite a day for trainer Aly Malzard and jockey Mattie Batchelor.

UK-based trainer Mick Appleby has a good record with his raiders over to the Channel Islands (he had a winner at the Guernsey meeting in May) and he sends out his new acquisition LEXINGTON TIMES in the 5½f Bloodstock Advisory Service Handicap Sprint (3:05). The Appleby runner certainly has the “back class” to win this race - he won a Listed race at Lingfield 2015 - but he might just find this trip a bit on the sharp side and so local sprinter **COUNTRY BLUE** (winner of the Jersey Bullet in June and runner-up in this race last year) is a tentative pick in a wide open looking dash ahead of DOCTOR PARKES and LIMELITE.

Reigning Champion Trainer Christa Gilbert begins the final day of the season just one winner behind James Moon and she will be hopeful of securing the last race of the campaign - The Hunscombe Stud Breeding Success Handicap Mile (4:50) as she saddled four of the ten runners including likely favourite and second favourite - CAPTAIN JAMES (ridden by Alice Mills) and **CHAPEAU BLEU** (Tom Garner).

The former bids for a hat-trick of wins but most of his victories have come in lower-grade races to this and it is his stable-mate **CHAPEAU BLEU** (runner-up in this race last year) who is more consistent in this higher level of competition.

After racing the end of season awards will be held in the winner’s enclosure.

Trainer & Jockey Championships going in to the final day of the season -

TRAINERS

James Moon	8 winners
Christa Gilbert	7
Karl Kukk	6
Aly Malzard	5

JOCKEYS

Philip Prince 7 winners
Davy Delalande 6
Alice Mills 6
Paddy Aspell 4

Selections:

2.30 1 BARWICK
3.05 7 COUNTRY BLUE
3.40 4 WINKLEVI
4.15 6 MENDACIOUS HARPY
4.50 4 CHAPEAU BLEU