

FORMER CHAMP MULHOLLAND SEEKS LADIES DAY SUCCESS

SUNDAY'S JERSEY RACING PREVIEW

By commentator Mark Johnson

This Sunday Les Landes Racecourse in St Ouen hosts its annual Ladies Day with five competitive races on the track (first race 2.30) sharing the spotlight with a quartet of competitions designed to bring a touch of Royal Ascot-style, or on this occasion Hollywood-style, glamour to the picturesque cliff-top venue.

There will be a competition to find the Best Dressed Young Person, the Most Outstanding Hat, the Best Dressed Lady and, as something slightly different, a "Best Marilyn" competition.

As well as the competition between fashionistas, the action on the track promises to be ultra-competitive too with a strong turnout of 37 runners declared on a card comprised exclusively of handicaps.

Highly successful Wiltshire-based trainer Neil Mulholland returns to Les Landes this Sunday to saddle runners in the Channel Islands for the first time this season. He has a runner declared in each of the five races.

Mulholland enjoyed considerable success in Jersey a few years ago and became the first ever UK-based trainer to be crowned C.I. Champion Trainer in 2014, when he saddled ten winners during the campaign, including The Bay Bandit in the C.I. Champion Hurdle and Midnight Sequel in the Clarendon Handicap. He went on to win the C.I. Champion Hurdle again in 2016 with Rossetti.

It is possible the best two chances for Mulholland come in the opening two races on the card with **MASTER BURBIDGE** and **MASQUERADE BLING**. Leading UK-based jump-jockey Tom Scudamore is coming over to ride both.

MASTER BURBIDGE faces three rivals in the opening Ladbrokes Betstation Bonus Handicap Hurdle over 2½ miles - the longest race of the entire Channel Islands racing season.

A versatile 7-y-o, **MASTER BURBIDGE** has won 7 races including a flat race at Lingfield and a chase at Fontwell already this year. He ran poorly on his only previous visit to Les Landes (back in April 2016) but his general level of form is consistent. Dangers include BRAC JAG (a winning hurdler in France who has and a recently joined Aly Malzard) and VERONICA'S NAPKIN who has already won at Les Landes over hurdles this season.

MASQUERADE BLING has already won twice over 7 furlongs, the distance for the Ladbrokes Slots Cash Match Bonus Handicap (3:05), on

the all weather in the UK but she has yet to win on turf despite running some really good races in defeat. She faces seven rivals here including the Christa Gilbert-trained CHAPEAU BLEU who won this race twelve months ago but who ran disappointingly in a hot handicap on Derby Day.

Officially the feature race on Ladies Day is the Ravenscroft Ladies Day Feature Handicap (3:40) over a 1m½f. Being restricted to horses rated only up to 55 on official handicap ratings (*this year's Jersey Derby winner Black Night is rated a lofty 103 in comparison*) it is a chance for the Channel Islands' equine lesser-lights to have a race in the spotlight.

A big field of ten line up but, adhering to the old racing saying that “the bigger the field, the bigger the certainty” top weight **CAPTAIN JAMES** looks a decent bet to boss his subordinates. He put up a strong performance when taking a slightly weaker 0-50 Handicap by 4 lengths here, over 7 furlongs, last month.

At the weights, the one horse who has legitimate claims to be a clear danger to **CAPTAIN JAMES** is the popular veteran GREY PANEL. The winning-most horse at Les Landes currently in training (he boasts 15 victories in Jersey) GREY PANEL continues to race consistently well.

Quite appropriately the Ladbrokes Ladies Day Handicap (4:15) over 1¼ miles can go to a diminutive little lady in the shape of **FLUTTERBEE**. Although she is a small mare she is gutsy and she won this corresponding race back in 2016. This season has been rather a disappointing one for **FLUTTERBEE** to date but a runner-up finish on Derby Day suggests things are about to get a whole lot better. ICE ROYAL & HAWAIIAN FREEZE may chase her home.

Don't leave Les Landes before the final race - it is a cracker. The Ladbrokes Grid Best Odds Guaranteed Handicap (4:50) over 1½ miles would deserve to be the feature race on most cards and should be an electric betting heat. **BENOORDENHOUT** has never won a race beyond 1m2f in distance but has run a couple of fabulous races in defeat in the last two renewals of the Jersey Derby.

He deserves to win this after his agonisingly close runner-up finish to Black Night in the Derby last month but what did that epic stretch-duel take out of him only three weeks ago?

If **BENOORDENHOUT** even “bounces” a little off form the likes of Derby third SAFIRA MENINA, recent French winner WINKLEVI or UK-trained raider MRS BURBIDGE (who won both her races at Les Landes back in 2015) could come out on top.

With only two meetings (ten races) left of the 2018 Channel Islands racing season the Championship tables could hardly be closer -

2018 Channel Islands Jockeys Championship

Davy Delalande	6 winners
Philip Prince	6
Alice Mills	5
Paddy Aspell	4

2018 Channel Islands Trainers Championship

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

Sunday's Selections:

2.30	2	MASTER BURBIDGE
3.05	6	MASQUERADE BLING
3.40	1	CAPTAIN JAMES
4.15	2	FLUTTERBEE
4.50	1	BENOORDENHOUT