

By Bobsbest – Racing Correspondent for the Jersey Evening Post

Racing resumes

It's been a long, often frustrating, wait but at last local racing will resume with 34 declared runners contesting five races at the newly named **CoinShares Racecourse at Les Landes** on Friday evening. The Grosnez course has not witnessed a race since August Bank Holiday 2019, but returning racegoers will see a spruced-up building, freshly painted rails and a racing surface in good condition. We'll hear more from the Race Club's new financial supporters later in the season as they have agreed to sponsor the Jersey Derby for the next three years.

Having previously said the bar tent would be serving drinks outside, in a late change the Race Club has announced there would be no public bar at the course due to Health Authority requirements. The Club will refund ticket holders who no longer wish to attend. That said, true supporters of the sport are expected to forego their pint in order to enjoy the resumption of live racing. They are reminded of the continuing need for social distancing, particularly in queues for toilets, tote and bookmakers. It would be tragic if, due to a failure to observe these necessities, the authorities refused to permit future meetings. Apply care and common sense and everyone will be able to enjoy a full programme of racing this year.

The long awaited first race is **The Koka Fast Handicap Hurdle** over an extended 2 miles. The weights are headed by Bowl Imperior who when last seen was completing a perfect 2019 season with a fourth win from as many runs. Mixing flat and jumping with equal effect he is eight for nine, the only defeat coming in an interrupted 2018 season. Molliana from Neil Mulholland's Bath yard was an habitual winner in 2019 scoring six times at Les Landes. Unlike most locally trained horses she has been kept busy, winning a hurdle at Chepstow last October and placing six times on the flat and over hurdles. After finishing third of 13 at Kempton, she enjoyed a 120-day break before running fourth at Uttoxeter on the 16th of this month, that will have put her spot on for this return to Jersey.

Bal Amie has won twice since joining Alyson Malzard from France, but overall has been a shade disappointing; Steely is a former champion hurdler, having taken the race in 2017 during a purple patch of three successive victories, but he didn't recapture that form in 2019; Little Lotte won twice here for Tom Gretton early in 2017, but has gone off the boil since; she and Steely compete from outside the handicap. A race fit Molliana will be very hard to beat.

Race two is **The ThatcherMacKenzie Handicap** over 7 furlongs. It has drawn a highly competitive field of ten headed by Native Rosie, automatic top weight because she has not run enough times to qualify for a handicap mark. Man of the Sea, another Mulholland raider heads the rest and is a four-time winner over 5 furlongs at Les Landes; he's run 17 times since we last saw him, with just one win over this 7 furlong trip. Having run at the end of May he'll be race fit. Another UK raider is Phil McEntee's Lets Go Lucky, a winner over this trip at Chelmsford last month and racing here off a mark only a pound higher. Alyson Malzard runs three, of which Relaxed Boy is highest rated; Christa Gilbert also

fields a trio including Chapeau Bleu lurking near the bottom of the weights and due to be reunited with leading UK amateur Serena Brotherton.

Third on the card and the principal event of the day is **The Quilter Cheviot Warwick Vase**, a handicap over a mile and a quarter. The Warwick Vase, like The Clarendon at the other end of the season, is one of Jersey's longest established prizes and Quilter Cheviot, a long-time supporter of racing in Jersey, has sponsored the race for the past eleven years. Once again, the raiding party looks formidable: Phil McEntee runs Contingency Fee, a winner on 28th May at Brighton over this trip. He made all that day under Grace McEntee, but the handicapper has put him up 7 pounds. Princess T is one of Neil Mulholland's team yet to make an appearance in Jersey; she'll be fit having run this month, but has been campaigned mostly over hurdles in which sphere she has won twice.

Local standing dish Aussie Lyrics heads the weights. He's a tremendously popular nine race winner and has won some of the top races here, but he's 11 now and won't be getting any quicker and like almost all locally trained horses will lack match fitness. Island Song and Hard To Handel are both very consistent, but don't win as often as one might expect; Kenoughty won once for James Moon in 2019, but would probably have missed last season anyway due to the need for surgery in the UK. Ormskirk completes the line-up and he won over hurdles for Seamus Mullins on his only run here and has since been transferred to Karl Kukk.

Superior fitness and recent winning form point to Contingency Fee.

The Jersey Bookmakers Handicap over a mile and a half is race four. This is another prize that could be UK bound as Master Burbidge looks to have a favourite's chance. We've seen him twice previously, both time over hurdles, but he's not entirely devoid of pace and a recent run under his girths will give him a fitness edge. Safira Menina is best of the locals according to the handicapper; she really deserves a win having been beaten a head and a short head in her last two starts. Gabster has shown her best form on good to firm going and is a winner and William Booth ended a frustrating run when scoring on the last day that racing took place at Les Landes.

The biggest field of the day lines up for the closing **UBS Handicap**, a low-level affair over 9 furlongs. These are not the fastest of horses, but restricted events often provide the most exciting races. Nina's Field, a 3-year-old filly, gets all the allowances and her fourth of 11 at Leicester at 200/1 could be the best form of the race – she won't start at that price here! Neil Mulholland also runs Sky Central who is fit from three runs, but the form is poor. N Over J is a new addition to Christa Gilbert's yard. Formerly with Michael Appleby he hasn't won since the first of 33 appearances, but will have the assistance of Serena Brotherton in the saddle. No doubt there will be support for Jersey Jack, who has shown little so far for Karl Kukk, but he's had just two runs under automatic top weight and runs off a low mark here.

Selections

Molliana
Man Of the Sea
Contingency Fee *

Safira Menina
Nina's Field