

Taunton Saturday 16th May Preview

By Paul Simmons

1st race – The Zayin Arabian Stud and The Arabian Magazine Maiden Stakes **Over 7 furlongs**

An interesting looking maiden with a real international theme with Arabs bred in Iraq, Oman and the UK. Gill Duffield's runner Ebraam, a smart progressive colt who ran a couple of times last season as a juvenile, and came a solid fifth behind stablemate Namoos over 6f at Wolverhampton in September looks a good bet. Main dangers come from first season trainer Adam Newey (formerly assistant trainer to leading Arab trainer Sam Davison) who runs the smart Iraqi bred performer Al Harith, who was placed in some decent maidens last season and was placed in a valuable handicap at Lingfield. Julian Smart has several well bred horses lined up for the Royal Cavalry of Oman including the impeccably bred Al Rasheeq who ran some smart races in defeat last season.

2nd race – The Eclipse Series Open Race (Series Qualifier) **Over 1 mile 4 furlongs**

Son of Sophie made hay in these races last year and was deservedly crowned champion TB at the end of 2008 with five wins and a second from 6 starts. Trip and track will suit and should take all the beating. Helen Bona had a superb season last year and won the small/owner trainer award; she runs Reminiscent, who won at Wolverhampton over this trip where he beat the selection 1½ lengths and should give him the most to do. Delorain ran some good efforts last season including when 3rd to the smart Marbaa at Wolverhampton over 12f and 2nd to Son of Sophie over 10 f at Warwick in the TB finale, and should be thereabouts.

3rd race – The Harwood Arabian Stud Handicap Stakes **Over 6 furlongs**

An ideal opportunity for smart sprint handicapper Ajyaal to get his head in front for Welsh trainer Delyth Thomas; a winner of numerous races under a mile, he last won in September over 7f where he beat subsequent winner Whisper. Main opposition comes from the Adam Newey trained Pinkie Tuscadero, who ran some excellent races in defeat last year. She should go close, as should Edjalie, who won her maiden over 6f last season and was 2nd at this track last term over 6f to Baseerah.

4th race – The Jebel Ali Racing Club Handicap Stakes (Series Qualifier) **Over 1 mile 5 furlongs**

Floren was a smart performer in 2007 notching up several wins over staying trips including when winning the sweepstakes final; trip and track should suit and will be fresh from his year out and should take all the beating. Main danger comes from the progressive Brigitta who won on her final start of the season when winning the valuable Jebel Ali Bronze Final over 10f at Warwick. Anganate Safinat can never be discounted in these sort of races and won over 8f last season at Exeter and was 2nd in this race last year so should be in the shake up.

5th race – The Royal Cavalry Of Oman Handicap Stakes (Series Qualifier) **Over 1 mile 2 furlongs**

A very competitive race with Champion trainer Duffield fielding two smart performers for champion owner/breeder HH Sheikh Hamdan Al Maktoum. Shibl won his maiden over 8f at Nottingham beating subsequent winners Alsharq and Try My Best, however, Marsak is the selection having won his maiden at Hereford over 8f beating subsequent winner Billoube. He was a decent 3rd to Falak on Dubai Day and 2nd to stablemate Ejaabi over 10f in Premier Handicap at Newbury and will take all the beating. Noble Athlete has strong place claims and won at this track last season over 7f as well as winning over 12f on the all weather in September, he was also a close 3rd to Shuhood in the Royal Cavalry of Oman final at Newbury.

6th race – The Robin Barwell Memorial Open Race Handicap **Over 7 furlongs**

An ideal opportunity for smart spring performer Ela Figura to get off the mark here over a course and distance that will suit. She won and was placed over this trip last season and will take all the beating. Burnley also showed some smart form over these sort of trips last season

a and should be in the shake up, as should Exclusive Air who can never be discounted in these events although he may find this trip a touch on the sharp side.

7th race – The Friends of Arab Racing Handicap Stakes

Over 1 mile 4 furlongs

Final Fling is a bit of an enigma, but on his day he is a very good horse; he lost his maiden tag in fine style when leading home his four stable mates in a valuable Premier Handicap at Kempton Park in 2007 over 10f, and last year won a decent handicap at the Qatar Festival at Lingfield Park over 10f beating Gazal and Al Mamoon. This step up in trip will suit and he should take this. Debrett was in superb form last season winning over 14f at Hereford and being placed numerous times including when third to Few And Far in the Jebel Ali Gold final at Warwick over 10f; the trip and track look ideal here.