



Ascot Racecourse Media Release

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## **Fabulous contests in prospect at Ascot's Christmas Racing Weekend**

- **JLT extends sponsorship of Long Walk Hurdle, which remembers three-time winner Reve de Sivola**
- **Feature handicap hurdle to mark invaluable work of Racing Welfare**

Ascot stages its most valuable day of Jump racing on Saturday, December 23, day two of the Christmas Racing Weekend, which offers £420,000 in prize money.

Entries are revealed today for the three feature contests – the £150,000 Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle (a G3 contest staged over two miles), the £100,000 JLT Reve De Sivola Long Walk Hurdle (which carries G1 status and is run over an extended three miles) and the £100,000 Lavazza Silver Cup (a G3 handicap chase held over three miles).

JLT has recently extended its sponsorship of the Long Walk Hurdle for a further three years and this year's race will be run in honour of the late Reve De Sivola, who ran in the contest for five consecutive years from 2012 to 2016, winning in 2012, 2013 and 2014, while the feature handicap hurdle to marks the invaluable work of Racing Welfare.

Nick Smith, Director of Racing and Communications at Ascot, said: "Having recently announced that £20,000 has been raised through our IJF initiative which provides past and present jockeys to educate and entertain in hospitality areas, running our feature £150,000 handicap as the Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle further supplements our policy to support important racing charities.

"It is also tremendous news that JLT's support of the JLT Long Walk, which this year commemorates race legend Reve De Sivola, has been expanded to run a further three years."

Dawn Goodfellow, Chief Executive of Racing Welfare, commented: "We're absolutely thrilled to be working with Ascot Racecourse during the Christmas Racing Weekend to help raise the profile of Racing Welfare.

"The charity plays a vital role in supporting the thousands of stud, stable and racecourse staff who are working behind-the-scenes all year, including over the festive period"

Jonathan Palmer-Brown, Chairman of JLT International Specialty, said: “JLT has had a long and successful collaboration with the horseracing industry, and we recognise the important contribution that Ascot Racecourse makes to this.

“We’re delighted to renew this deal with one of the UK’s most successful and popular racing venues and help support the work they do to promote and support the horseracing industry as a whole.”

There are 36 entries for the Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle, headed by **Elgin** (Alan King). The five-year-old, who is owned by the Elite Racing Club, is seeking a hat-trick of wins in big-race handicap hurdles, having landed the Listed William Hill Handicap Hurdle over the course and distance on November 4 followed by the G3 Greatwood Handicap Hurdle at Cheltenham on November 19.

Alan King, who landed this race with Raya Star in 2011, said: “The Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle is the plan for Elgin.

“He hasn’t done much since Cheltenham and he is just cantering away at the moment. He’s up to 151 now and it’s getting more difficult but there you go. I think we have got to stay down the handicap route with him for the moment.

“We also have **William H Bonney** (fifth behind Elgin at Cheltenham) entered. He would only be a possible at this stage and could maybe go to Sandown this weekend.”

Ireland has landed the Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle twice since it was first run at Ascot in 2001, with both of those winners trained by Gordon Elliott – Cause Of Causes (2012) and Bayan (2014). There are eight Irish-trained entries in 2017 with Elliott responsible for **Mick Jazz** and **Veinard**. Ireland’s champion Jump trainer Willie Mullins has made entries for three – G1 winner **Bapaume**, **Bleu Et Rouge**, **Cilaos Emery** and **Meri Devie**. Completing the Irish-trained entries are **Tigris River** (Joseph O’Brien) and **Top Othe Ra** (Tom Mullins).

Nicky Henderson is the most successful trainer in the Racing Welfare Hurdle with four victories, most recently Brain Power last year. His quartet of entries for the 2017 renewal are **Charli Parcs**, runner-up in a Listed contest at Newbury on Saturday, **Verdana Blue**, who scored over the course and distance on November 24 when defeating **Speredek** (Nigel Hawke), plus **Lough Derg Spirit** and **Jenkins**.

The 13 entries for this year’s JLT Reve De Sivola Long Walk Hurdle include last year’s hero **UnowhatimeanHarry** (Harry Fry) and **Lil Rockerfeller** (Neil King), runner-up in 2016 and successful last time out in the G2 Coral Ascot Hurdle on November 25.

The two Irish-trained entries are formidable – last season’s G1 Stayers’ Hurdle hero **Nichols Canyon** (Willie Mullins) and the mare **Apple’s Jade** (Gordon Elliott), who got the better of that rival by nine lengths when recording her sixth G1 success in the Hatton’s Grace Hurdle at Fairyhouse on December 3.

**Sam Spinner** (Jedd O’Keeffe) sauntered to a very impressive 17-length success in the valuable Betfair Stayers’ Handicap Hurdle over two miles and seven furlongs at Haydock Park on November 25. Following his Haydock Park success, the five-year-old was raised 16lb in the handicap, taking him up to a rating off 155.

O’Keeffe, who trains in North Yorkshire, commented: “We are definitely aiming Sam Spinner at the JLT Reve De Sivola Long Walk Hurdle. We really need to get a guide as to how far he has progressed and far he is going to progress. This will help us to map out the rest of his season. Ascot is a definite target.

“Going up 16lb has forced our hand a little and probably just pushed us out of handicaps for the moment.

“He has been spot on since Haydock and couldn’t be better at the moment. I was really surprised how well he won at Haydock. We knew he was decent, would improve for his first run of the season at Chepstow and that there was general improvement in him as he learns his craft better but I didn’t expect him to win as well as he did.

“I don’t think he has to have ground as soft as it was Haydock and he has won on ground that has been nearly good in the past. He certainly handled heavy ground and whether it played to his strength more than the horses, we just don’t know.

“With the race at Newbury (the G2 Long Distance Hurdle on December 1), it looks an open division and shows even the top horses are beatable.”

Other interesting contenders include the Nicky Henderson-trained duo of **Thomas Campbell**, an impressive winner at Cheltenham last month, and **L’Ami Serge**, a G1 winner in France in June and runner-up to Lil Rockerfeller in the Coral Ascot Hurdle.

Last year’s winner **Regal Encore** (Anthony Honeyball) is among 34 entries for the Lavazza Silver Cup. The nine-year-old ran a good race at Newbury on December 2 when third in the Ladbrokes Trophy.

Another Ascot winner among the entries is **Go Conquer** (Jonjo O’Neill), an eased-down winner of the Sodexo Gold Cup at Ascot on November 4, when he came home four and a half lengths to the good over **Rock Gone** (Dr Richard Newland).

Weights for the Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle and Lavazza Silver Cup will be revealed on Wednesday, December 13.

Saturday, December 23 is a designated family day, with children under 18 admitted for free. There will be plenty happening off the track to keep younger racegoers amused with a visit from Father Christmas and Mrs Christmas, carol singing in the grandstand after racing, funfair rides and Christmas-themed activities.

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# The Racing Welfare Handicap Hurdle

**G3, £150,000 total prize fund.** Saturday, December 23, two miles. For four-year-olds and upwards. Penalties: after December 10, a winner of a hurdle 4lb, no penalty to increase a horse's weight above 11st 12lb. Entries close December 5, entries revealed December 6 (**36 entries**). Five-day confirmations December 18, final declarations December 21. Maximum field 21 runners.

Horse	Age	Owner	Trainer
<b>A HARE BREATH (IRE)</b>	9	Mrs S N J Embiricos/Mr S N J Embiricos	Ben Pauling
<b>AIR HORSE ONE</b>	6	The Dons	Harry Fry
<b>AMOUR DE NUIT (IRE)</b>	5	Andrew Williams	Paul Nicholls
<b>BAPAUME (FR)</b>	4	Susannah Ricci	Willie Mullins IRE
<b>BLEU ET ROUGE (FR)</b>	6	J P McManus	Willie Mullins IRE
<b>CAID DU LIN (FR)</b>	5	Foxtrot Racing	Dr Richard Newland
<b>CHARLI PARCS (FR)</b>	4	J P McManus	Nicky Henderson
<b>CHESTERFIELD (IRE)</b>	7	The Rumble Racing Club	Seamus Mullins
<b>CILAOS EMERY (FR)</b>	5	Luke McMahan	Willie Mullins IRE
<b>CLAYTON</b>	8	Ashley Head	Gary Moore
<b>DIVIN BERE (FR)</b>	4	Chris Giles	Paul Nicholls
<b>ELGIN</b>	5	Elite Racing Club	Alan King
<b>EVENING HUSH (IRE)</b>	4	M J Haines	Evan Williams
<b>FERGALL (IRE)</b>	10	Andrew Cocks And Tara Johnson	Seamus Mullins
<b>FIDUX (FR)</b>	4	AXOM LXVIII	Alan King
<b>GASSIN GOLF</b>	8	Will Roseff	Kerry Lee
<b>GWAF A (IRE)</b>	6	Saleh Al Homaizi & Imad Al Sagar	Paul Webber
<b>HUNTERS CALL (IRE)</b>	7	Holloway,Clarke,Black	Olly Murphy
<b>IRVING</b>	9	Axom XLIX	Paul Nicholls
<b>JENKINS (IRE)</b>	5	Pump & Plant Services Ltd	Nicky Henderson
<b>LOSTINTRANSLATION (IRE)</b>	5	Taylor & O'Dwyer	Colin Tizzard
<b>LOUGH DERG SPIRIT (IRE)</b>	5	Grech & Parkin	Nicky Henderson
<b>MAGIC DANCER</b>	5	Mark E Smith & The Magic Partnership	Kerry Lee
<b>MAN OF PLENTY</b>	8	G Thompson	Sophie Leech
<b>MERI DEVIE (FR)</b>	4	Andrea & Graham Wylie	Willie Mullins IRE
<b>MICK JAZZ (FR)</b>	6	G P Mahoney	Gordon Elliott IRE
<b>NIETZSCHE</b>	4	D Gilbert, M Lawrence, A Bruce, G Wills	Brian Ellison
<b>POPPY KAY</b>	7	Aiden Murphy & Alan Peterson	Philip Hobbs
<b>SILVER STREAK (IRE)</b>	4	L Fell	Evan Williams
<b>SPEREDEK (FR)</b>	6	Kapinhand	Nigel Hawke
<b>TIGRIS RIVER (IRE)</b>	6	J P McManus	Joseph O'Brien IRE
<b>TOP OTHE RA (IRE)</b>	9	Mrs H Mullins	Tom Mullins IRE
<b>VEINARD (FR)</b>	8	T D Howley Jnr/J N O'Brien	Gordon Elliott IRE
<b>VERDANA BLUE (IRE)</b>	5	Crimbourne Stud	Nicky Henderson
<b>WILLIAM H BONNEY</b>	6	Mr & Mrs R Scott	Alan King
<b>ZUBAYR (IRE)</b>	5	P J Vogt	Paul Nicholls

*36 entries*

*8 Irish-trained*

# The JLT Reve De Sivola Long Walk Hurdle

**G1, £100,000 total prize fund.** Saturday, December 23, three miles and half a furlong. For four-year-olds and upwards that are allotted a rating of 130 by the BHA Head of Handicapping following a review of the horses entered and after taking account of races run up to and including the day prior to confirmation. Weights: 11st 7lb, fillies and mares allowed 7lb. Entries close December 5, entries revealed December 6 (**13 entries**). Five-day confirmations December 18, final declarations December 21. Maximum field 21 runners.

<b>Horse</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Trainer</b>
<b>AGRAPART (FR)</b>	6	The Gascoigne Brookes Partnership III	Nick Williams
<b>APPLE'S JADE (FR)</b>	5	Gigginstown House Stud	Gordon Elliott IRE
<b>L'AMI SERGE (IRE)</b>	7	Simon Munir & Isaac Souede	Nicky Henderson
<b>LIL ROCKERFELLER (USA)</b>	6	Davies Smith Govier & Brown	Neil King
<b>NICHOLS CANYON</b>	7	Andrea & Graham Wylie	Willie Mullins IRE
<b>OLD GUARD</b>	6	The Brooks, Stewart Families & J Kyle	Paul Nicholls
<b>SAM SPINNER</b>	5	Caron & Paul Chapman	Jedd O'Keeffe
<b>TAQUIN DU SEUIL (FR)</b>	10	Martin Broughton & Friends 1	Jonjo O'Neill
<b>THE LAST SAMURI (IRE)</b>	9	Paul & Clare Rooney	Kim Bailey
<b>THE WORLDS END (IRE)</b>	6	McNeill Family	Tom George
<b>THOMAS CAMPBELL</b>	5	Mrs Van Geest & Mrs Kelvin Hughes	Nicky Henderson
<b>UBAK (FR)</b>	9	Nick Peacock	Gary Moore
<b>UNOWHATIMEANHARRY</b>	9	J P McManus	Harry Fry

*13 entries*

*2 Irish-trained*

# The Lavazza Silver Cup

Listed handicap chase, £100,000 total prize fund. Saturday, December 23, three miles. For four-year-olds and upwards. Penalties: after December 10, a winner of a chase 5lb. Entries close December 5, entries revealed December 6 (**34 entries**). Five-day confirmations December 18, final declarations December 22. Maximum field 18 runners.

Horse	Age	Owner	Trainer
ART MAURESQUE (FR)	7	Mrs Johnny de la Hey	Paul Nicholls
AS DE MEE (FR)	7	The Stewart Family & Judi Dench	Paul Nicholls
BALLYKAN	7	Simon Munir & Isaac Souede	Nigel Twiston-Davies
BEWARE THE BEAR (IRE)	7	G B Barlow	Nicky Henderson
BIGBADJOHN (IRE)	8	Nigel Morris	Rebecca Curtis
BISHOPS ROAD (IRE)	9	Alan Halsall	Kerry Lee
CAROLE'S DESTRIER	9	Mrs C Skipworth	Neil Mulholland
CLONDAW CIAN (IRE)	7	Wolf Allisat & Chris Ames	Suzy Smith
FORTUNATE GEORGE (IRE)	7	The George Inn Racing Syndicate	Emma Lavelle
FRODON (FR)	5	P J Vogt	Paul Nicholls
GO CONQUER (IRE)	8	Paul & Clare Rooney	Jonjo O'Neill
GOLD PRESENT (IRE)	7	John & Barbara Cotton	Nicky Henderson
ICING ON THE CAKE (IRE)	7	Palmer-Brown Worcester Lousada Shrubsall	Oliver Sherwood
KING'S ODYSSEY (IRE)	8	William & Angela Rucker	Evan Williams
MASTER DEE (IRE)	8	Paul & Clare Rooney	Fergal O'Brien
MORE OF THAT (IRE)	9	J P McManus	Jonjo O'Neill
MYSTICAL KNIGHT	8	J P McManus	Rebecca Curtis
O O SEVEN (IRE)	7	Christopher Hanbury	Nicky Henderson
ON TOUR (IRE)	9	T Hywel Jones	Evan Williams
PLEASANT COMPANY (IRE)	9	Malcolm C Denmark	Willie Mullins IRE
PTIT ZIG (FR)	8	Barry Fulton & Chris Giles	Paul Nicholls
REGAL ENCORE (IRE)	9	J P McManus	Anthony Honeyball
ROCK GONE (IRE)	9	Chris Stedman & Mark Albon	Dr Richard Newland
SAMETEGAL (FR)	8	John & Barbara Cotton	Paul Nicholls
SINGLEFARMPAYMENT	7	N T Griffith & H M Haddock	Tom George
SIZING CODELCO (IRE)	8	Ann & Alan Potts Limited	Colin Tizzard
SOLSTICE SON	8	The Summer Solstice	Anthony Honeyball
SOUTHFIELD THEATRE (IRE)	9	Angela Yeoman	Paul Nicholls
THE YOUNG MASTER	8	Mike Burbidge & The Old Masters	Neil Mulholland
TRAFFIC FLUIDE (FR)	7	Gallop On The South Downs Partnership	Gary Moore
VICONTE DU NOYER (FR)	8	Ann & Alan Potts Limited	Colin Tizzard
VIRILIO (FR)	8	C J Edwards, D Futter, A H Rushworth	Dan Skelton
WALK IN THE MILL (FR)	7	Baroness Harding	Robert Walford
YALA ENKI (FR)	7	Hills of Ledbury (Aga)	Venetia Williams

*34 entries*

*1 Irish-trained*