



WORLD'S FINEST LINE UP FOR QIPCO BRITISH CHAMPIONS DAY



- The winners of 71 Group 1s and 17 European Classics hold entries for the ninth running of QIPCO British Champions Day
- Entries include:
 - Four of the World's top 10 rated horses
 - The top-ranked European three-year-old, Ten Sovereigns
 - 2019 Classic winners Magna Grecia, Hermosa, Anthony Van Dyck and Anapurna
 - Superstar stayer Stradivarius bidding for back to back QIPCO British Champions Day wins
 - The winners of Group 1 races in UK, Ireland, Japan, Australia, UAE, France, Germany and USA all entered

The winners of 71 Group 1s and 17 European Classics feature among the entries for what is set to be an exhilarating QIPCO British Champions Day at Ascot on Saturday 19th October.

Potential runners include the current Longines World's Best Racehorse **Crystal Ocean**, who has an entry in the QIPCO Champion Stakes, and the highest-rated three-year-old in Europe, **Ten Sovereigns**.

The roll-call of entries for the finale to the British flat racing season, which features four Group 1 prizes, includes this year's British Classic winners **Magna Grecia**, **Hermosa**, **Anthony Van Dyck** and **Anapurna**, with the final fields battling it out for more than £4 million in prize money.

Superstar stayer **Stradivarius** is set to defend his crown in the QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup, having recently equalled Frankel's record of nine QIPCO British Champions Series wins after his third successive win in the Qatar Goodwood Cup last week. He could be joined by stablemates **Enable**, **King Of Comedy** and **Star Catcher**.

John Gosden stole the show at Ascot's glittering end-of-season bonanza last year after notching up a treble with Stradivarius, Cracksman and Roaring Lion.

He said: "QIPCO British Champions Day has gained enormously in its significance of bringing the season to a great crescendo.

"The quality of horses running in the races speaks for itself. It's important to all the owners, trainers and jockeys to have a day like QIPCO British Champions Day otherwise we slightly give way to Ireland and France when we've held, in a sense, the most important races throughout the year.

"It's essential we have a Champions Day of that gravitas which has now gained from the first year when Frankel was there winning.

"Last year for all of us and our staff, it was the crowning moment of what was a great year. If we come back and have one winner this year we'll have done well.

"You don't normally expect to have a winner on QIPCO British Champions Day let alone a treble."

Another man who has had more success than most on the day in recent years is owner-breeder Anthony Oppenheimer.

Cracksman won the last two editions of the QIPCO Champion Stakes and Oppenheimer's Kerrygold Irish Oaks winner, **Star Catcher**, looks to be heading for the QIPCO British Champions Fillies & Mares Stakes.

"QIPCO British Champions Day is extremely important to British racing. It's a window on to British breeding," Oppenheimer said.

"At the moment, the prestige of British breeding and British racing is at an all-time high, I think. The quality of British racing is very high and this day only enhances it."

Despite Gosden's domination 12 months ago, he is still one behind Aidan O'Brien in the list of most successful trainers on QIPCO British Champions Day.

O'Brien nudged ahead with seven wins at Ascot's prestigious star-studded meeting when **Magical** landed the QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes last year.

"It's a great day at a great track with great prize money," O'Brien said.

"We always have a lot of runners. Obviously it's a long way off and we take everything one race at a time but it is somewhere we always like to be."

QIPCO Champion Stakes (£1.3million) Group 1

The horses entered for the feature race of the day have accumulated no fewer than 32 Group 1 victories between them and ten European Classics. Some of the stand out names include **Crystal Ocean**, and last week's Goodwood heroine **Deirdre** who could become the first Japanese runner to compete on Britain's showcase day.

They will have to overcome the challengers from John Gosden's stable who will be going for a third straight win in the QIPCO Champion Stakes having trained Cracksman to a stunning wide-margin victory in the £1.3million contest in each of the last two years. Gosden has long-since earmarked **King Of Comedy** as a likely contender in his hat-trick attempt and the improving three year old son of Kingman did not disappoint when going down by just a neck to Circus Maximus in the St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Gosden said, "I said after the St James's Palace Stakes that the QIPCO Champion Stakes would be an obvious target. I think it will be right up his alley.

"We've freshened him up and given him a break since Ascot. He was on the go fairly early in the spring.

"I think in the end his best trip is going to be a mile and a quarter and he likes Ascot. He'll be suited by the trip and the track in the QIPCO Champion Stakes.

"He's going to run in the Juddmonte International and he wouldn't necessarily go straight to Ascot as he's been entered in the QIPCO Irish Champion Stakes as well. He's going the right way and we've always thought enough of him."

Gosden has also entered superstar mare **Enable**. She got the better of another QIPCO Champion Stakes entry, Crystal Ocean, in a thrilling finish to last month's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth QIPCO Stakes. That was her ninth top-level victory and leaves her just one short of Frankel's perfect 10 Group 1 wins.

It's incredible that the uber-tough and consistent **Crystal Ocean**, top of the most recent Longines world's best racehorse rankings with a rating of 127, has just a

single Group 1 win to his name. He was runner-up in last year's QIPCO Champion Stakes and has also been second in three other QIPCO British Champions Series races.

His finest hour came at Royal Ascot when he landed the Prince Of Wales's Stakes over the same course and distance as the QIPCO Champion Stakes before going down by a neck in an epic battle with Enable in the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth QIPCO Stakes last month.

Enable's owner Prince Khalid Abdullah has another possible QIPCO Champion Stakes contender in **Headman**, trained by Roger Charlton.

Lord Grimthorpe, Prince Abdullah's racing manager, said: "Headman is going to run in Deauville so we'll see how he goes from there but he certainly could be one for the QIPCO Champion Stakes."

Circus Maximus is likely to return to longer distances after finishing half-a-length second behind Too Darn Hot in the Qatar Sussex Stakes at Goodwood last week. He had previously finished sixth in the Investec Derby and he is joined among the QIPCO Champion Stakes entries by **Sir Dragonet**, also trained by Aidan O'Brien, who was fifth in the Epsom Classic.

O'Brien said: "I was delighted with Circus Maximus in the Qatar Sussex Stakes. There are a lot of things open to him as he is a relaxed horse. He is so relaxed at home he just takes everything in his stride. It looks like it could be back up to a mile and a quarter next time."

The Ballydoyle master has, predictably, made a stack of other entries for the £1.3 million contest, including a whole host of previous Group 1 winners. Investec Derby hero **Anthony Van Dyck**, QIPCO 2000 and 1000 Guineas winners **Magna Grecia** and **Hermosa**, as well as **Fleeting, I Can Fly, Japan, Magic Wand** and **Sovereign** are all entered.

A step up in distance is being considered for the Tattersalls Irish 2,000 Guineas winner **Phoenix Of Spain** who has entries in both the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (sponsored by QIPCO) and the QIPCO Champion Stakes.

Trainer Charlie Hills said: "We're scratching our heads a little bit with Phoenix Of Spain as he seems fine after the Goodwood race. We need to try to find out what went wrong.

"He's in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes and the QIPCO Champion Stakes. We've been thinking about going up to a mile and a quarter for a while. There's a fair bit of stamina in his pedigree but there's a fair bit of speed in there as well.

"QIPCO British Champions Day is high up our list of priorities. These are the races you need to be in."

Elarqam booked his ticket to top-class races when beating **Addeybb** impressively to win the Group 2 York Stakes last month. The QIPCO Champion Stakes is on his radar and he is likely to be put to the test in Group 1s before Ascot. His trainer, Mark Johnston, is confident he is up to the task.

He said: "I was absolutely delighted with Elarqam at York. The QIPCO Champion Stakes is a possible but it is one of many possibles. Any mile and a quarter Group 1s between now and the end of the season are under consideration and that includes the QIPCO Champion Stakes. We think he's got the class for Group 1s, of course we do."

The QIPCO Champion Stakes could have a very international feel to it this year as Japanese mare **Deirdre**, surprise winner of last week's Qatar Nassau Stakes at Goodwood, has been given an entry. She is also in the QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes and would be the first horse from Japan to compete on the day.

Globetrotting Godolphin star **Benbatl** may also make an appearance, who was runner-up behind Australian legend Winx in the Cox Plate at Moonee Valley in November on his last start.

Other Group 1 stars who could potentially line up include **Old Persian**, who also sits in the top 10 of the world rankings following his performance in the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic, as well as European Classic winners **Sottsass** and **Study of Man. With You**, winner of the Prix Rothschild last year for Freddy Head, is also entered.

Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (sponsored by QIPCO) £1.1million Group 1

Lord Glitters is on course to return to his favourite track for another crack at the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (sponsored by QIPCO).

He gave trainer David O'Meara and Flat Jockeys' Championship title contender Danny Tudhope their sole winners on QIPCO British Champions Day when flying home from the rear to win the Balmoral Handicap two years ago.

Although he could only finish sixth behind Roaring Lion in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes last year he put his hold-up tactics to good use under a nerveless ride from Tudhope when landing the Queen Anne Stakes at Royal Ascot by a neck this summer.

The star-studded QIPCO British Champions Day will again be his big end-of-season target and his return to Ascot is sure to bring back happy memories for his connections.

The race didn't pan out for him when fifth in the Qatar Sussex Stakes at Goodwood last week and O'Meara is already looking forward to QIPCO British Champions Day.

O'Meara said: "He's run fine in the Qatar Sussex Stakes. They didn't go very quick and he always needs a strong pace to run at. He didn't get it the other day.

"The track at Goodwood wouldn't be as ideal as Ascot but he did run well when third in the Sussex Stakes last year. It was all about the pace of the race this time. When Phoenix Of Spain got to the front he pulled it up and they hacked round.

"He likes the straight mile at Ascot because it's stiff and they generally go a good pace. He goes on any ground.

"His Queen Anne win was a great day. He was runner-up in it last year as well and you don't think you're going to get a second bite of the cherry. For him to go back and win was brilliant."

Last year's Queen Anne winner is also being aimed at the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes. **Accidental Agent**, trained by Eve Johnson Houghton, sprung a 33-1 shock when beating Lord Glitters by half a length in the mile Group 1 contest last year.

Of his latest start, Johnson Houghton said: "I thought he ran quite well at Goodwood considering the track didn't suit him, either.

"Hopefully, touch wood, we've sorted his starting problems out. He'll go to Salisbury for the Sovereign Stakes next week.

"The Queen Elizabeth II Stakes is the obvious race to go for and he loves Ascot's straight mile. Hopefully, he'll bounce back to form in it.

"QIPCO British Champions Day is a great target to aim for with a good horse. It's a really good festival and celebration of racing."

Another Royal Ascot winner could return to the scene of her greatest victory. **Watch Me**, trained in France by Francis-Henri Graffard, caused a 20-1 shock when beating dual 1000 Guineas winner Hermosa in this year's Coronation Stakes.

Graffard said: "Going to Ascot I knew Watch Me was a very good filly and I knew she was going to run well. I can't say I was confident that she was going to win like that but I was obviously very pleased to see that.

"It was a great day. There's a chance she could go back to Ascot for QIPCO British Champions Day but her next race, the Jacques Le Marois in Deauville, is a big target. After that we'll see."

This season's QIPCO 2000 Guineas hero **Magna Grecia**, trained by Aidan O'Brien, is another potential contender for the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes.

O'Brien said, "Magna Grecia is on the way back. The plan was that he might go to York and he might go to Leopardstown and then finish up in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes."

Magna Grecia is one of eight entries from O'Brien's powerful Ballydoyle stables. **Circus Maximus**, **Hermosa**, **I Can Fly**, **Le Brivido** and **Magical** are among the others.

One-time QIPCO 2000 Guineas hope **Mohaather**, trained by Marcus Tregoning, and Charlie Fellowes' highly-rated mud-lover **King Ottokar** are other potential runners, as well as course specialist **Raising Sand**, who won the Moet & Chandon International Stakes at Ascot on QIPCO King George Day.

Other notable inclusions are **Benbatl**, **Phoenix Of Spain**, 2018 Irish 2000 Guineas winner **Romanised**, **Royal Meeting**, who was last seen when beating Hermosa in the Criterium International at Chantilly in October last year, and recent winner of the Tattersalls Falmouth Stakes **Veracious**.

QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes (£550,000) Group 1

The entries for the QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes have thrown up a head-to-head between Flat racing's two top trainers with John Gosden and Aidan O'Brien responsible for nearly half of the 41 entered.

Three-time champion trainer Gosden has an incredibly-powerful team spearheaded by Investec Oaks winner **Anapurna** and that also includes Qatar Nassau Stakes runner-up **Mehdaayih** and Kerrygold Irish Oaks winner **Star Catcher**.

Last year's second and third – **Coronet** and **Lah Ti Dar** – could both return 12 months later and there are also entries for **Enable**, **Enbihaar**, **Promissory** and **Sparkle Roll**.

Gosden said: "We've had an amazing year for owner-bred middle-distance fillies. One thing that's given us a huge amount of pleasure this year is that we've had six individual Group 1 winners for six individual different owner-breeders. That, to me, is what it's about.

"We've had Oaks winners, Ribblesdale winners, all kind of things. Obviously, the QIPCO British Champions Fillies and Mares is a race we'll be concentrating on.

"Anapurna is one, very much so. She's in great order. It was always the plan to give her a break after the Oaks. She had a busy spring so we have freshened her up.

"Mehdaayih has come out of Goodwood in very good order. She doesn't mind a mile and a quarter or a mile and a half. Star Catcher obviously gets a mile and a half well.

"We were delighted Coronet was able to win a Group 1 in France. She is an incredibly tough and consistent filly and I'm sure we'll be looking towards QIPCO British Champions Day with her again."

Star Catcher's owner Anthony Oppenheimer is no stranger to success on QIPCO British Champions Day following the success of Cracksman in 2017 and 2018.

Oppenheimer said, "I would think Star Catcher could run in the QIPCO British Champions Fillies and Mares race, definitely.

"I would think if she was going to go to QIPCO British Champions Day she would probably go to the Prix Vermeille on the way.

"She seems to be improving gradually but surely. We're very pleased with her.

"Her Irish Oaks win was fantastic, mainly due to the jockey. Frankie Dettori rode a brilliant race."

O'Brien will also have a strong pack to shuffle as he attempts to win the QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes for the third year running.

Last year's winner **Magical** could return with ambitions of becoming the first back-to-back winner of the race and the third two-time winner on QIPCO British Champions Day after Frankel and Cracksman. She followed her Royal Ascot second behind Crystal Ocean in the Prince Of Wales's Stakes with an equally-good effort when runner-up behind Enable in the Coral-Eclipse.

O'Brien said: "Magical is on a little break at the moment. Whether she'll be back in time for York or somewhere like that we'll see. Then we'll get going again but obviously she's a possible for all those races later on, including the fillies' race on QIPCO British Champions Day."

Magical could be joined by dual 1000 Guineas winner **Hermosa**. She was bitterly disappointing when she trailed in last in the Qatar Nassau Stakes at Goodwood. Her trainer was at a loss to explain the poor run and suggested maybe she just had an "off-day".

The QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes has been won by horses from the Classic generation in four of the last five years. **Fleeting** and **Pink Dogwood** – second and third in the Irish Oaks – are other O'Brien three-year-olds with QIPCO British Champions Day on their radar.

Japanese raider **Deirdre**, surprise winner of the Qatar Nassau Stakes at Goodwood last week, could extend her stay in Britain to take in the QIPCO British Champion Fillies & Mares Stakes. She has also been given an entry in the QIPCO Champion Stakes.

Prix de Diane Longines (French Oaks) winner **Channel** could bid to give France a win in the race whilst superstar mare **Enable** and two-time Group 1 winner **Iridessa** are other eye-catching names.

QIPCO British Champions Sprint Stakes (£550,000) Group 1

There looks to be a changing of the guard among the top six-furlong sprinters and the young guns are on course to make it a red-hot renewal of the QIPCO British Champions Sprint.

The five three-year-olds to run in the Group 1 Darley July Cup at Newmarket filled the first five places with **Ten Sovereigns** leading home the likes of **Advertise** and **Fairyland**, all of whom have been given entries.

Advertise added Sunday's Prix Maurice De Gheest at Deauville to his win in the Phoenix Stakes last year and Royal Ascot's Commonwealth Cup this season. His trainer has revealed Advertise is likely to head straight to the QIPCO British Champions Sprint Stakes without another run.

Trainer Martyn Meade said, "We were very pleased with him on Sunday. He might go straight to Ascot. He could go up to Haydock for the Sprint Cup but I think maybe that might come a bit soon for him. I don't think you want to go to the well too many times.

"The only other alternative would be to go to Longchamp for the Prix de la Foret over seven furlongs on Arc day but the QIPCO British Champions Sprint should be what we're aiming for. It's certainly on the agenda."

That could lead to a possible rematch with **Ten Sovereigns**. The score stands at 1-1 with Ten Sovereigns getting revenge with a devastating display in the Darley July Cup having finished only fourth behind Advertise in the Commonwealth Cup.

His trainer Aidan O'Brien said, "Ten Sovereigns is a possible for the QIPCO British Champions Sprint. He's pencilled in to go to York for the Nunthorpe at the moment and we'll see after that. We wouldn't worry about five or six furlongs but we wouldn't want to run him on bad ground. We were delighted with him in the July Cup at Newmarket.

"Fairyland is in good form. We're looking at York for her as well at the moment. We always take it one race at a time but QIPCO British Champions Day is where we'll be looking with a lot of them."

Khaadem is another three-year-old heading for what looks likely to be a mouth-watering contest. He's travelled a slightly different path into the top sprints having run away with the Unibet Stewards' Cup at Goodwood last Saturday.

Trainer Charlie Hills reckons his new rating is likely to dictate a step up to the top level.

He said, "We've always liked Khaadem. He's taken a bit of time to come to himself, mentally as well, and he's taking his racing well now. He's improving nicely.

"We thought he was well handicapped going into the Unibet Stewards' Cup and three-year-olds have a good record in that race. He's one of the highest-rated three-year-olds to have won it and he did it very well indeed. He'll probably go up to a rating of something like 116 and that shows you where we are.

"He'll probably go to Haydock for the Sprint Cup next and then hopefully on to Ascot for QIPCO British Champions Day. He handles most ground – he wouldn't mind a bit of cut.

"We won that race with Muhaarar four years ago so we're hoping Khaadem is in the same class as him."

Khaadem's owner Sheikh Hamdan also has **Tabdeed** entered. He made a winning return to action after 10 months off the track at Doncaster last weekend.

The last three winners of the QIPCO British Champions Sprint Stakes could all return. **The Tin Man**, **Librisa Breeze** and **Sands Of Mali** are all on the list of possible runners.

Brando, **Eqtidaar**, **One Master** and **Pretty Pollyanna** complete the list of 11 Group 1 winners out of 40 top-class entries.

QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup (£450,000) Group 2

Superstar stayer **Stradivarius** stands out among the 48 entries as he bids to defend his QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup crown.

The popular five-year-old chestnut has repeated last year's victories in the Matchbook Yorkshire Cup and the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot. His third win in last week's Qatar Goodwood Cup might have only come by a neck from Dee Ex Bee but he remains on target to scoop the Weatherbys Hamilton Stayers' Million once more this year.

Trainer John Gosden said, "Stradivarius has been in good form since Goodwood. The Weatherbys Hamilton Insurance Lonsdale Cup is coming so we'll freshen him up and then we'll look at the QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup again - I'm all pro for running on QIPCO British Champions Day.

"Stradivarius does look after himself and that's one of the reasons he's been able to hold this level of form. He does what he has to do and no more.

"He's not an old boy, he's only five. I was always told a Flat racehorse is at its peak - its zenith - at five."

The signs are that Stradivarius could stay in training next year as well but Gosden joked, "That's an owner's decision not a trainer's decision. We'd never let anything go if it was down to us, we'd be running them forever!"

Dee Ex Bee has had to settle for a supporting role behind Stradivarius in both the Gold Cup and the Qatar Goodwood Cup. A third clash could be on the cards for trainer Mark Johnston.

He said: "We were disappointed to come second with Dee Ex Bee in the Goodwood Cup but you can't be disappointed with the horse. He's doing everything bar winning. The QIPCO British Champions Long Distance Cup is one of a few options."

Johnston also has Goodwood winners **King's Advice** and **Nayef Road** in the list of entries. King's Advice made it eight wins for the season - more than any other

horse in Britain this year – when holding off fellow QIPCO Long Distance Cup entry **Outbox** in the Qatar Summer Handicap last week.

Aidan O'Brien dominates the longest race on QIPCO British Champions Day with 18 of the 48 entries. Three-year-olds **Barbados**, **Broome**, **Constantinople**, **Norway** and **Sovereign** might all step up in distance to take in the Group 2 prize. They could be joined by smart older horses like the 2017 & 2018 William Hill St Leger winners **Kew Gardens** and **Capri**, as well as regular contender **Southern France**.

With so many entries coming from Coolmore horses it's no surprise supersire Galileo is either the sire or grandsire of 28 of the 49 entries. Frankel is responsible for six of the potential runners.

Top handicap stayer **Withhold**, trained by Roger Charlton, is also on the list of potential runners, as is 2018 Lexus Melbourne Cup winner **Cross Counter**.

Ends

Notes to editors

Assets available for your use:

- The 2019 QIPCO British Champions Day [media pack](#)
- The 2019 QIPCO British Champions Day initial entries video, in the style of the opening credits of Stranger Things
 - Watch [here](#)
 - Embed code: `<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/6CAOqBckUEU?rel=0" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen></iframe>`
 - *Please credit QIPCO British Champions Day*
- The 2019 QIPCO British Champions Day entries graphic
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About QIPCO British Champions Series

QIPCO British Champions Series showcases 35 of the UK's finest Flat races, including six of the world's top 12. The Series features at all of the UK's most iconic Flat festivals, from the Derby and St Leger, to Glorious Goodwood and Royal Ascot, presenting unparalleled, quality racing across 10 of the country's finest racecourses.

The Series exhibits world-class sporting action across five different categories – Sprint, Mile, Middle Distance, Long Distance and Fillies & Mares.

Five top-class races mark the climax of the Series on the Ultimate Raceday, QIPCO British Champions Day at Ascot on Saturday 19th October, where the world's best compete at the nation's richest raceday.

Put simply, QIPCO British Champions Series shines the spotlight on the best horses, the best jockeys and the best racecourses, so that millions worldwide can follow the finest Flat racing.

For tickets to QIPCO British Champions Day on Saturday 19th October go to britishchampionsday.co.uk