

CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE MEDIA RELEASE

for immediate release, Monday, December 7, 2009

Meeting: *The Boylesports International*

Dates: *Friday & Saturday - December 11 & 12*

Gates Open: *10.00am both days*

First Race: *12.05pm Friday, 12.10pm Saturday*

Admission prices from £9. Go to www.cheltenham.co.uk for further information

32 CONFIRMED FOR Boylesports.com GOLD CUP

- Boylesports.com INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTS 10

- PIPE, NICHOLLS & KING TALK ABOUT THEIR CHANCES AT CHELTENHAM ON SATURDAY

The £150,000 Grade Three Boylesports.com Gold Cup (2.55pm) at Cheltenham on Saturday, December 12, day two of the Boylesports International, has attracted 32 confirmations at the five-day stage.

With the defection of the original top-weight Tranquil Sea, the handicap is now headed by **Gwanako** (16/1 with Boylesports), one of three confirmations for champion trainer Paul Nicholls, and yesterday's Warwick scorer **Our Vic** (20/1), who is among three possible starters from the David Pipe yard.

Pipe, who landed the 2007 Boylesports.com Gold Cup with **Tamarinbleu** (8/1), spoke about his three possible runners today.

He said: "Our Vic has come out of yesterday's win at Warwick very well and he escapes a penalty for the Boylesports.com Gold Cup.

"He could go for Saturday's race, or else we are toying with running him in the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day. We will make up our minds later this week.

"Tamarinbleu ran a great race at Wetherby in the Charlie Hall Chase on his reappearance (October 31) and he is going to go for either the Boylesports.com Gold Cup or the Peterborough Chase. We will study the five-day confirmations and speak to the owners before coming to a decision.

“It was a good performance from **Seven Is My Number** (6/1) to win at Sandown last time out (December 4) but I’m not sure how much you can take out of the race.

“Timmy (Murphy) said that it didn’t ride like a great race and Seven Is My Number has gone up 9lb for the win. We have left him in at the five-day stage and again we will mull over whether to run him in the next few days.

“He was visually impressive at Sandown and it would be great if the form did work out.”

In addition to Gwanako, Paul Nicholls could also be represented by Paddy Power Gold Cup runner-up **Poquelin** (6/1), and **Chapoturgeon** (8/1), who was successful at last season’s Festival in the Listed Jewson Novices’ Handicap Chase but fell on his reappearance in the Paddy Power Gold Cup at Cheltenham on November 14.

Speaking about his chances in the Boylesports.com Gold Cup, Nicholls revealed today: “Chapoturgeon will definitely run in the Boylesports.com Gold Cup as he will not mind the ground. The same goes for Gwanako as he doesn’t mind soft going either.

“Poquelin is much more ground dependent - he would not want it too soft and we will see what conditions bring up. It is meant to be dry in the later part of the week and the New Course hasn’t been watered at all this autumn.

“If Poquelin runs, then Ruby Walsh will ride him. If not, then he will partner Gwanako and I expect that Timmy Murphy will be on board Chapoturgeon.”

The Irish are seeking their seventh victory in the Boylesports.com Gold Cup and there are four possibles from Ireland remaining in this year’s race - the Willie Mullins-trained trio of **Scotsirish** (16/1), **Jayo** (20/1) and **Pomme Tiepy** (25/1), as well as **Sky’s The Limit** (14/1), who is trained by Edward O’Grady, successful in 2000 with Go Roger Go.

Welsh handler Tim Vaughan is seeking the biggest win of his career so far and has two live chances with **Atouchbetweenacara** (5/1 favourite with Boylesports) and **Stan** (25/1). Both horses boast winning form over the course and distance with Atouchbetweenacara having landed the Grade Two Silver Trophy at Cheltenham’s April Meeting last season and Stan having won the same event in 2008. Another horse to have triumphed over the course and distance is **Something Wells** (16/1), who could make his first appearance since his victory in the Grade Three Freddie Williams Festival Plate at The Festival back in March.

Trainer Nigel Twiston-Davies, who was the leading trainer at The Open last month, has two possible runners with **Razor Royale** (10/1), a winner at Cheltenham last time out in the Irish Times Amateur Riders’ Handicap Chase and stable stalwart **Knowhere** (33/1), runner-up in the 2006 Boylesports.com Gold Cup.

A horse who has shown markedly improved form this season is **Mount Oscar** (14/1), an impressive winner at Newbury last time out for trainer Colin Tizzard, while **Hold Em** (12/1) ran a good race when third in the Paddy Power Gold Cup.

Other possible starters include **Skippers Brig** (14/1). Trained by Nicky Richards, the eight-year-old is lightly raced and was an impressive winner at Ayr on December 2.

THE Boylesports.com GOLD CUP

Class One, Grade Three, £150,000 Total Prize Fund. 2.25pm, Cheltenham, Saturday, December 12, 2009. For four-year-olds & upwards, two miles & five furlongs. Penalties: after November 28, a winner of a chase 5lb - no penalty to increase a horse's weight above 11st 12lb. Entries closed November 24, entries released November 25 (45 entries), weights revealed December 2, five-day confirmation stage December 7 (**32 confirmations**), final declaration stage, 10.00am, December 10. Form figures supplied by Weatherbys and are correct up to & including the racing of Sunday, December 6.

Form	Horse	Age/Wgt	Owner	Trainer
U125F-U	GWANAKO (FR)	6-11-12	The Stewart Family	Paul Nicholls
11/PP4-61	OUR VIC (IRE)	11-11-12	David Johnson	David Pipe
21354-35	SCOTSIRISH (IRE)	8-11-11	Double R Stables LLP	Syndicate Willie Mullins IRE
3/2030-2	TAMARINBLEU (FR)	9-11-10	The Arthur White Partnership	David Pipe
211F2-F	CHAPOTURGEON (FR)	5-11-10	David Johnson	Paul Nicholls
1300-12	POQUELIN (FR)	6-11-08	The Stewart Family	Paul Nicholls
202021-	SOMETHING WELLS (FR)	8-11-07	Favourites Racing XVIII	Venetia Williams
1P04PF-	STAN (NZ)	10-11-05	Paul Beck	Tim Vaughan
1F/2F21-	ATOUCHBETWEENACARA (IRE)	8-11-05	Paul Beck	Tim Vaughan
100P-3P	KNOWHERE (IRE)	11-11-03	Raymond Mould	Nigel Twiston-Davies
25020-11	MOUNT OSCAR (IRE)	10-11-02 (inc 5lb ex)	Jean Bishop	Colin Tizzard
64U5-34	LORD HENRY (IRE)	10-11-02	Karola Vann	Philip Hobbs
3P11-1P	TAROTINO (FR)	7-11-02	J B Webb	Alan King
00-11141	SEVEN IS MY NUMBER (IRE)	7-11-01 (inc 5lb ex)	David Johnson	David Pipe
12FP-PP	MY PETRA	6-11-00	Richard & Lizzie Kelvin Hughes	Nicky Henderson
06FF-1F	BIBLE LORD (IRE)	8-11-00	Martin Tedham	Andrew Turnell
544/30-P4	SKY'S THE LIMIT (FR)	8-10-13	Exors of the Late Raymond Rooney	Edward O'Grady IRE
1145-15	JAYO (FR)	6-10-12	Peter Garvey	Willie Mullins IRE

0//1141-31 **SKIPPERS BRIG (IRE)** 8-10-11 (inc 5lb ex) Ashleybank
Investments Limited Nicky Richards
F313-01 **RAZOR ROYALE (IRE)** 7-10-11 Colin Cornes Nigel Twiston-
Davies
13445-0 **POMME TIEPY (FR)** 6-10-08 Susannah Ricci Willie Mullins
IRE
2/31/21-3 **FROM DAWN TO DUSK** 10-10-07 Charles Lloyd-Baker Philip
Hobbs
1341/P0/- **IDOLE FIRST (IRE)** 10-10-07 D and J Racing Ltd Venetia
Williams
1231FP-4 **POP (FR)** 6-10-06 Robert Kirkland Henry Daly
1///1P2P1-5 **AU COURANT (IRE)** 9-10-06 Michael Buckley Nicky
Henderson
6P0353 **HOLD EM (IRE)** 7-10-05 David Hughes Mike Evans & Partners
Keith Goldsworthy
5F-262U **THE SAWYER (BEL)** 9-10-05 D R Fear Bob Buckler
141P-25 **WATCH MY BACK** 8-10-03 Tony Ambler Ferdy Murphy
2162-52 **SAPHIR DES BOIS (FR)** 5-10-03 F Lloyd Jonjo O'Neill
4/2120-60 **AKILAK (IRE)** 8-10-03 ADA Partnership Howard Johnson
430PF-6 **BUCK THE LEGEND (IRE)** 7-10-03 Alan Parker, C Fell & A
Harris Nigel Twiston-Davies
10P52-0 **PRIVATE BE** 10-10-01 David and Daphne Walsh Philip Hobbs

32 five-day confirmations

4 Irish-trained

Latest Boylesports prices: Atouchbetweenacara 5/1, Poquelin 6/1, Seven Is My Number 6/1, Chapoturgeon 8/1, Tamarinbleu 8/1, Razor Royale 10/1, Hold Em 12/1, Mount Oscar 14/1, Skippers Brig 14/1, Sky's The Limit 14/1, Tarotino 14/1, From Dawn To Dusk 16/1, Gwanako 16/1, Pop 16/1, Scotsirish 16/1, Something Wells 16/1, Au Courant 20/1, Jayo 20/1, Lord Henry 20/1, My Petra 20/1, Our Vic 20/1, Saphir Des Bois 20/1, Watch My Back 20/1, Bible Lord 25/1, Pomme Tiepy 25/1, Stan 25/1, Akilak 33/1, Buck The Legend 33/1, Idole First 33/1, Knowhere 33/1, Private Be 33/1, The Sawyer 33/1

Boylesports.com INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTS 10

Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle victor **Punjabi** is set to make his seasonal debut in the £150,000 Grade One Boylesports.com International (3.05pm) at Cheltenham on Saturday, December 12, for which 10 horses have been entered today.

The Nicky Henderson-trained champion captured the hurdling crown at The Festival in March when holding the Paul Nicholls-trained **Celestial Halo** by a neck and that rival is also among the entries for the prestigious two mile, one furlong race.

Celestial Halo finished second to Binocular in last year's renewal of the Boylesports.com International, en route to his runner-up finish in the Grade One Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle. The Stewart Family-owned five-year-old warmed up for his Cheltenham date with an impressive 10-length victory under top-weight in the Grade Two Elite Hurdle at Wincanton on November 7. Boylesports make Celestial Halo the 11/10 favourite to gain his revenge over Punjabi on Saturday at Cheltenham, with Punjabi currently a 13/8 chance.

Paul Nicholls said today: "Celestial Halo is in good order. He came out of his race at Wincanton very well - he surprised me there with his performance - and he looks like he has improved a lot for the run.

"He was at a similar stage at Wincanton as Twist Magic was in the Haldon Gold Cup on his seasonal return. We saw how much Twist Magic had improved on Saturday and hopefully Celestial Halo has gone the same way.

"He was a good stayer on the Flat and he needs a good gallop. I will have to chat to Clive Smith to see if he will let us have Kauto Star as a pacemaker!

"Last year, he was four going on five and is much stronger and more mature this season. He likes Cheltenham and I am very happy with him. He needs to improve as he is taking on Punjabi but we are hoping for a good run.

“We have also entered Oslot and, if it looks like there is likely to be no pace, we might run him to ensure a good gallop.”

Khyber Kim, trained by Nigel Twiston-Davies, showed improved form to win the Grade Three Greatwood Handicap Hurdle at The Open in November. **Medermid**, a high-class novice last term when runner-up to Go Native in the Grade One Supreme Novices’ Hurdle at The Festival, was third behind Khyber Kim that day for trainer Alan King.

Alan King commented: “The plan is to run Medermid in the Boylesports.com International. We did think about novice chasing but we want to make up our minds one way or the other after Saturday.

“We think that he has improved since running well under top-weight in the Greatwood Hurdle and it is a question of whether we aim him at the Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle or the Irish Independent Arkle Trophy Challenge Chase.

“Deep down, I have a feeling that he is not a champion hurdler but we will see on Saturday. He was unlucky not to win the Supreme Novices’ Hurdle last season and he ran very well in the Greatwood Hurdle. I am looking forward to seeing him out again.”

Ashkazar won the Grade Two Kingwell Hurdle at Wincanton in February before disappointing in the Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle. The David Pipe-trained five-year-old won a beginners’ chase at Stratford in October but could revert to hurdles after finishing fourth in the Steel Plate And Sections Novices’ Chase at The Open last month.

Another looking to switch back to hurdles after a disappointing flirtation with fences is the Charlie Longsdon-trained **Songe** who landed the Grade Two Champion Hurdle Trial at Haydock last season

Malcolm Jefferson saddled **Cape Tribulation** to win the Grade Two Albert Bartlett Novices’ Hurdle over an extended three miles at Doncaster in January and the five-year-old could step back in trip for Saturday’s contest.

Ebadiyan was a classy juvenile hurdler last term and was in contention when running out with two flights to jump in the Grade One JCB Triumph Hurdle at last season’s Festival. The Oliver Brady-trained gelding showed his well-being when third in a Listed hurdle at Naas on December 3.

The novice **Secret Dancer** could take on the big boys after finishing third to Loosen My Load in the Grade Two Sharp Novices’ Hurdle over an extended two miles at The Open in November for trainer Alan Jones.

Boylesports prices for the Boylesports.com International: Celestial Halo 11/10, Punjabi 13/8, Medermid 6/1, Khyber Kim 8/1, Ashkazar 14/1, Ebadiyan 33/1, Songe 40/1, Cape Tribulation 40/1, Secret Dancer 66/1, Oslot 100/1

Saturday's action commences at 12.10pm with the £17,000 Cheltenham Military Charity Ball Juvenile Novices' Hurdle over two miles, one furlong, which has attracted 16 entries, including the unbeaten pair of **Sergeant Pink**, trained by Steve Gollings, and **Ultimate** from the Brian Ellison yard, as well as impressive Wetherby winner **Bocamix**, trained by Andy Crook, and the Tom George-trained **Olofi**, third to Pistolet Noir in the Grade Two Prestbury Juvenile Novices' Hurdle at The Open.

The £20,000 Ryman The Stationer Novices' Chase (12.45pm) over an extended three miles, one furlong, has 15 entries including the hat-trick-seeking **Any Currency** from the Martin Keighley yard, recent Southwell winner **Mobaasher**, and the well-regarded **Forest Pennant** from the Nicholls stable, who defeated the Colin Tizzard-trained **Flight Leader** when winning his chase debut at Exeter on November 20.

A 23-strong entry for the extended two-mile £22,500 Jenny Mould Memorial Handicap Chase (1.15pm) could see the Nicholls-trained **Free World** line up, while others of note include the progressive **Sa Suffit**, **My Petra**, **Moon Over Miami**, **Beggars Cap**, **French Opera** and **Crackers**.

Grand National winner **Mon Mome** is among 15 entered for the £30,000 Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle (1.50pm) over three miles alongside the likes of the Paul Nolan-trained Irish raider **Shinrock Paddy** and **Tell Massini** from the Tom George yard, who won the Grade Two Cleanevent Novices' Hurdle at The Open. Other entries include **Billie Magern**, **The Knoxs**, **The Minack** and the hat-trick-seeking **Lord Generous**.

GOING

The going at Cheltenham is current **Good to Soft**, **Soft in Places** on both the Chase and Hurdles Course and the Cross Country Course.

Unsettled conditions are forecast for up until the end of Wednesday, with up to 16 millimetres of rain possible. For the second half of the week, drier conditions are predicted.

Racing takes place on the New Course at the Boylesports International, utilising ground that has not been raced on for seven months.

For further information please contact Andy Clifton, Communications Manager at Cheltenham Racecourse, on 07876 330090, or visit the website at www.cheltenham.co.uk