

CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE MEDIA RELEASE

for immediate release, Thursday, December 10, 2009

MAXIMUM FIELD FOR Boylesports.com GOLD CUP

RICHARDS AIMING TO CONTINUE FAMILY TRADITION AS SKIPPERS “MADE TO MEASURE” FOR £150,000 CONTEST

Meeting: *The Boylesports International*

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

Gates Open: *10.00am both days*

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

Go to www.cheltenham.co.uk for further information

Please find a media guide for the Boylesports International attached

Nicky Richards anticipates a bold show from the progressive **Skippers Brig** in the £150,000 Grade Three Boylesports Gold Cup (2.25pm) at Cheltenham on Saturday, December 12. A maximum field of 17 horses have stood their ground for the two-mile, five-furlong handicap chase at today's final declaration stage. The contest also has two reserves, which can be utilised if there are any withdrawals prior to 9.00am on Friday.

The Greystoke trainer revealed today: “Skippers Brig looks made to measure for the job to me, so let's see how we go. I would not be going there if I was thinking any different.”

Skippers Brig (10st 11lb), a 12/1 shot with the sponsor, returned from an eight and a half-month absence when making a pleasing seasonal debut at Bangor on November 11. The eight-year-old carried top-weight that day in an extended three-mile handicap chase and finished a close third to the smart That's Rhythm.

Richards' charge made it seven wins from 13 career starts on his latest outing at Ayr on December 2. Once again lumbered with 11st 12lb, Skipper's Brig made light of his burden to register an easy success in the two and a half-mile handicap chase run on soft going.

Richards continued: “He has run two nice races this season. He ran a smashing race first time at Bangor and just blew up turning in. Then he confirmed that promise at Ayr last week and the jockey's words were, ‘he

never came out of second gear,' so I'm pleased with him. He bounced out of that race and he seems in very good form with himself.

"If the going stick reading at Cheltenham is correct - at 6.2 yesterday - that should put it on the slower side of soft, so I would imagine it will be very similar ground to what he won on at Ayr.

"At Bangor, which I thought was quite a competitive race, they went a good even clip over three miles and he travelled well and jumped well. One thing you have to do at Cheltenham is you have to stay well."

Richards is hoping Skippers Brig can join previous Boylesports Gold Cup winners trained by his late father Gordon at Greystoke. Titus Oates (1969), Clever Folly (1989) and Addington Boy (1996).

Gwanako, trained by Paul Nicholls, and the David Pipe-trained **Our Vic** share top-weight of 11st 12lb. Pipe also saddles the 2007 winner **Tamarinbleu** (11st 10lb), who was runner-up in the Grade Two Charlie Hall Chase at Wetherby in October.

The Nicholls contingent includes current 5/1 joint-favourite **Poquelin** (11st 8lb), second in the Grade Three Paddy Power Gold Cup at The Open, and **Chapoturgeon** (11st 10lb & 6/1), who fell in that contest.

Course and distance winner **Atouchbetwenacara** (11st 5lb) is the other 5/1 joint-favourite and is one of two Tim Vaughan-trained runners, the other being **Stan** (11st 5lb).

Edward O'Grady ensured that the Paddy Power Gold Cup headed back to Ireland last month when he saddled Tranquil Sea to victory in that race and the trainer is bidding for a second major Cheltenham prize this season with 10/1 shot **Sky's The Limit** (10st 13lb). Fellow Irish trainer Willie Mullins is set to run **Jayo** (10st 12lb)

Paddy Power Gold Cup third **Hold Em** (10st 5lb & 12/1) represents trainer Keith Goldsworthy, while Andrew Turnell, who rode the 1972 victor Arctic Bow, is set to saddle **Bible Lord** (11st & 25/1).

The Nigel Twiston-Davies-trained **Razor Royale** (10st 11lb) won the Irish Times Amateur Riders' Handicap Chase at The Open, while stablemate **Knowhere** (11st 3lb), runner-up to Exotic Dancer in the 2006 Boylesports Gold Cup, is also in the field.

The progressive Colin Tizzard-trained **Mount Oscar** (10st 11lb) is primed to take his chance, as are the Venetia Williams-trained **Idole First** (10st 7lb) and the Philip Hobbs-trained **From Dawn To Dusk** (10st 7lb).

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 (**17 declarations, plus 2 reserves**). Form figures supplied by Weatherbys and are correct up to & including the racing of Sunday, December 6.

Form	Horse	Age/Wgt	Owner	Trainer/Jockey
1)	U125F-U	GWANAKO (FR)	6-11-12	The Stewart Family Paul Nicholls/Harry Skelton (3)
2)	11/PP4-61	OUR VIC (IRE)	b11-11-12	David Johnson David Pipe/Danny Cook (3)
3)	3/2030-2	TAMARINBLEU (FR)	b9-11-10	The Arthur White Partnership David Pipe/Tom Scudamore
4)	211F2-F	CHAPOTURGEON (FR)	5-11-10	David Johnson Paul Nicholls/Timmy Murphy
5)	1300-12	POQUELIN (FR)	6-11-08	The Stewart Family Paul Nicholls/Ruby Walsh
6)	1P04PF-	STAN (NZ)	10-11-05	Paul Beck Tim Vaughan/Seamus Durack
7)	1F/2F21-	ATOUCHBETWEENACARA (IRE)	8-11-05	Paul Beck Tim Vaughan/Barry Geraghty
8)	100P-3P	KNOWHERE (IRE)	11-11-03	Raymond Mould Nigel Twiston-Davies/Noel Fehily
9)	06FF-1F	BIBLE LORD (IRE)	8-11-00	Martin Tedham Andrew Turnell/Edward Cookson (7)
10)	544/30-P4	SKY'S THE LIMIT (FR)	v8-10-13	Exrs of the Late Raymond Rooney Edward O'Grady IRE/Andrew McNamara
11)	1145-15	JAYO (FR)	6-10-12	Peter Garvey Willie Mullins IRE/
12)	F313-01	RAZOR ROYALE (IRE)	7-10-11	Colin Cornes Nigel Twiston-Davies/Paddy Brennan
13)	25020-11	MOUNT OSCAR (IRE)	t10-10-11	Jean Bishop Colin Tizzard/Joe Tizzard
14)	0//1141-31	SKIPPERS BRIG (IRE)	8-10-11 (inc 5lb ex)	Ashleybank Investments Limited Nicky Richards/Brian Harding
15)	2/31/21-3	FROM DAWN TO DUSK	t10-10-07	Charles Lloyd-Baker Philip Hobbs/Rhys Flint (3)
16)	1341/P0/-	IDOLE FIRST (IRE)	10-10-07	D and J Racing Ltd Venetia Williams/Aidan Coleman
17)	6P0353	HOLD EM (IRE)	t, c/p 7-10-05	David Hughes Mike Evans & Partners Keith Goldsworthy/Robert Thornton

RESERVES

R18)	5F-262U	THE SAWYER (BEL)	9-10-05	D R Fear Bob Buckler
R19)	2162-52	SAPHIR DES BOIS (FR)	5-10-03	F Lloyd Jonjo O'Neill

17 declarations, plus 2 reserves

2 Irish-trained

Latest Boylesports prices:

Atouchbetweenacara 5/1, Poquelin 5/1, Chapoturgeon 6/1, Tamarinbleu 8/1, Razor Royale 10/1, Sky's The Limit 10/1, Hold Em 12/1, Skippers Brig 12/1, Mount Oscar 14/1, From Dawn To Dusk 16/1, Gwanako 16/1, Jayo 16/1, Our Vic 20/1, Saphir Des Bois 20/1, Stan 20/1, Bible Lord 25/1, The Sawyer 25/1, Idole First 33/1, Knowhere 33/1

BOYLESPORTS INTERNATIONAL GETS UNDERWAY TOMORROW

The two-day Boylesports International begins tomorrow, Friday, December 11, when the highlight of the seven-race programme is the £50,000 Listed Neptune Investment Management Handicap Chase (1.50pm), a race won by subsequent Grand National victor Mon Mome 12 months ago.

This year's race has attracted 12 declarations with the weights headed by **Joe Lively**, who enjoyed his finest hour when taking the Grade Two Letheby & Christopher Chase on Festival Trials Day at Cheltenham last season. Paul Nicholls is represented by **The Tother One** while **According To Pete**, who ran well when fifth in the Paddy Power Gold Cup at The Open, has also been declared. Nigel Twiston-Davies is set to run recent impressive Rehearsal Chase scorer **Beat The Boys** while **Kia Kaha** ran well on his reappearance at Haydock last month and represents the powerful Jonjo O'Neill/Tony McCoy combination. In-form local handler Martin Keighley runs bottom weight **Any Currency**, successful at Sandown and Ascot on his latest two starts.

Tomorrow also features the second of the season's three races over Cheltenham's unique Cross Country course. The £22,500 Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Steeple Chase (1.15pm) has 16 declared runners, with cross country specialist Enda Bolger saddling three runners - **Garde Champetre**, **Freneys Well** and **Headsontheground**. Garde Champetre won this race last year, as well as the last two runnings of the Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Steeple Chase at The Festival and last month's Glenfarclas Cross Country Steeple Chase at The Open. Headsontheground also boasts course winning form, having taken the Glenfarclas Cross Country Handicap Steeple Chase at The Festival in 2007 while the 12-year-old was a length and three quarters behind Garde Champetre when runner-up at The Open last time out. Also declared are the 2007 Grand National victor **Silver Birch** and **Sizing Australia**, who chased home the two Enda Bolger-trained runners at The Open.

Racing gets underway tomorrow at 12.05pm with the Cheltenham Collection Novices' Chase (12.05pm) which has five runners including **Weird Al**, a winner at The Open on November 13 in the Steel Pate & Sections Novices' Chase.

Also featuring on tomorrow's card are the Caspian Caviar Handicap Hurdle (12.40pm, 11 runners), the CF Roberts Electrical + Mechanical Services Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Chase (2.25pm, 17 runners), the Boylepoker.com Handicap Hurdle (3.00pm, 15 runners) and the E B F "National Hunt" Novices' Hurdle (3.35pm, 9 runners).

LATEST CHELTENHAM GOING

The course had 1.2 millimetres of rainfall last night, leaving the going unchanged at **Soft, Good to Soft** in places on both the Hurdles and Chase courses.

The Cross Country course is currently **Good to Soft, Soft** in places. The outlook is dry but cooler for the remainder of the week.

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

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