

CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE MEDIA RELEASE

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## **WESTLIN' WINDS LOOKING TO BLOW HOT ON FESTIVAL TRIALS DAY**

### **FRENCH RAIDERS OUT TO GIVE DOUMEN MORE CHELTENHAM GLORY**

**Meeting:** *Festival Trials Day*

**Date:** *Saturday, January 30, 2010*

**Gates Open:** *11am*

**First Race:** *12.55pm*

*Admission prices from £10 in advance & £15 on the day. Racegoers aged under 18 are admitted FREE of charge, while FREE parking is available.*

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**Trainer Charles Egerton is hoping that Westlin' Winds** can continue his preparation for the JCB Triumph Hurdle with victory in the £27,000 Grade Two Betfair Finesse Juvenile Novices' Hurdle (12.55pm) on Festival Trials Day at Cheltenham this Saturday, January 30.

The four-year-old son of Montjeu went down by two and a quarter lengths when conceding 7lb to current JCB Triumph Hurdle favourite Mille Chief, a winner again at Huntingdon this afternoon, in a juvenile novices' hurdle at Kempton on December 27.

He had previously made a faultless start over hurdles, recording an emphatic 10-length success on his debut at Hereford in November and following up with another wide-margin victory at Plumpton in December, beating the well-regarded **Anak** by nine lengths.

Egerton reported today: "We are hoping to run Westlin' Winds in the Betfair Finesse Hurdle. I was happy with his run at Kempton - he hit the last flight but I don't think that it would have made any difference to the result. We were giving Mille Chief 7lb on that occasion and the penalty meant that he had too much to do against a horse like that.

"His form has worked out and he certainly deserves to take his chance in a race like this. He didn't show the greatest form on the Flat but he is improving all of the time and I hope that we haven't seen the best of him yet.

"We will obviously see how he gets on over the weekend but I would like to think that we can aim for the JCB Triumph Hurdle. He seems to go on any ground but I want to see how he runs at Cheltenham before finalising any plans for The Festival."

An entry of 13 for the Betfair Finesse Hurdle also includes the Francois Doumen-trained **Good Lord**, who was seventh behind leading JCB Triumph Hurdle contender Advisor on his British debut in a juvenile hurdle at Newbury on December 16.

The four-year-old, who is owned by leading jump owner J P McManus, had previously posted some promising efforts over hurdles in France, taking second in a Grade Three juvenile contest at Enghien in November and going down by a head in a Listed event at Auteuil in September.

Doumen, whose six victories at the Cheltenham Festival include Snow Drop in the 2000 JCB Triumph Hurdle, commented: "We gave Good Lord an entry in the Stellar Football Handicap Hurdle (4.20pm) on the same card because I wanted to find out the rating of the horse but he will run against his own age in the Betfair Finesse Hurdle instead.

"I am a bit concerned about running him on soft ground - it was very soft when he ran at Newbury and I don't think that he coped with it very well. I like the horse but I would ideally like to run him on faster ground.

"He has some good form in France but he would need to improve to enter the picture for the JCB Triumph Hurdle. He really needs to show his true French form before I can run him in a championship race at The Festival."

The Grade Two Betfair Finesse Hurdle is one of the leading trials for the JCB Triumph Hurdle, which is run on Friday, March 19, the final day of The Festival. Subsequent Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle victor Katchit scored in the race before going on to take the championship juvenile hurdle, while the last two winners on Festival Trials Day, Franchoek and Walkon have both gone on to be second at The Festival.

This year's race is also set to feature **Pistolet Noir**, who is on course to make his debut for Paul Nicholls having triumphed in the Grade Two Prestbury Juvenile Novices' Hurdle at Cheltenham's Open Meeting in November for former trainer Nick Williams.

Apart from Good Lord, Doumen is also planning to send over progressive novice chaser **Doctor Pat**, who holds an entry in the £22,500 Timeform Novices' Handicap Chase (1.30pm).

The six-year-old, whose dam Bilboa was third in the 2002 Smurfit Kappa Champion Hurdle for Doumen, is chasing a hat-trick of victories in novice handicap chases, having kept on strongly to win at Newbury on December 29 and got up on the line to take a Sandown contest earlier the same month.

Doumen added: "Doctor Pat seems be improving nicely and he is a decent horse. We have to face a bit of weight punishment after his latest victory but he is very well in himself, despite the difficulties we have had with the weather recently.

“I have given him an entry in RSA Chase and the National Hunt Chase but I will have to discuss with J P and Frank Berry as to whether he will take either of them up. He is certainly going the right way, like his mother did, and he goes to Cheltenham in good form.”

Festival Trials Day, the last day's racing at Cheltenham prior to The Festival, also features the £100,000 Grade Two Argento Chase (2.35pm), which could see the 2008 totesport Cheltenham Gold Cup victor **Denman** make his final appearance prior to the totesport Cheltenham Gold Cup, and the £50,000 Grade Three Betfair Trophy Chase (2.05pm).

Some of the leading contenders for the Ladbrokes World Hurdle are set to clash in the £50,000 Grade Two Betfair Cleeve Hurdle (3.40pm), while some of the top novice hurdlers will be out to advertise their Cheltenham credentials in the £27,000 Grade Two Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle (3.10pm).

## GROUND

The going at Cheltenham is currently **Soft, Good to Soft in Places**.

Simon Claisse, Cheltenham's Director of Racing, reported today: “After a dry night, the going is now soft, good to soft in places.

“The forecast remains the same - small amounts of rain are expected over the next three days and temperatures will become colder towards the end of the week with a frost expected on Friday night.

“In light of the forecast, frost covers will be put down on the chase and hurdles course tomorrow.”

***For further information please contact Andy Clifton, Communications Manager at Cheltenham Racecourse, on 07876 330090, or visit the website at [www.cheltenham.co.uk](http://www.cheltenham.co.uk)***