

**Sophie Forsyth Victorious in the 2025 Markel Magnolia Cup**

Sophie Forsyth, a London-based insurance underwriter at Markel International, was successful in the 2025 Markel Magnolia Cup on her mount Woodcote Girl.

The Markel Magnolia Cup, a charity race over five and a half furlongs, has raised more than £2.7 million since its inception in 2011. This year, the race will support The King’s Trust International’s Project Lehar.

The initiative operates in the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with a focus on empowering adolescent girls through vocational training, skills development and promoting gender equality within their communities.

Forsyth said: “It is unbelievable. I have dreamed of this, but it is absolutely incredible. I am 29, and I turn 30 in August, but this is the best day of my life!”

“We wanted a good start, but then we wanted to sit in behind and then to get him ready to push and go from two furlongs out. I was in full concentration from the start, thinking ‘what’s the next step, don’t do anything wrong’, but I’m exhausted now.

“I am really lucky as I have loads of family and friends here. Goodwood was really generous with the tickets and, as I work for Markel, there are a lot of people here from there.”

Trainer Ed de Giles, who supplied Woodcote Girl (actually 11-year-old gelding Treacherous), said: “This race wasn’t really on my bucket list, but we’ve been planning for it since early spring as there’s a connection between Markel and the owner, as the owner’s son is a client of Sophie’s. The horse was perfect for it.

“Sophie has been down and ridden him plenty. She rode him most days last week and he’s an easy ride who knows where he’s going, although he’s inclined to pull up when he hits the front. He ran a blinder in sixth at York on Saturday in the Jump Jockeys’ Nunthorpe, and Sophie rode him brilliantly here. It is fantastic for them all.”

Showjumper Lois Logan, daughter of TV presenter Gabby and former Scotland rugby union player Kenny, was unplaced on Spirit of Ecstasy. She said: ‘‘It was over so quickly and such a thrill. The horse was incredible and put up such a fight against strong opposition. We finished in midfield, which was not a bad result. I had to push from the third furlong because they set off so quickly. I have got more of an edge for winning now and am not so scared of speed. It was really good fun.”

Gabby Logan said: ‘‘It’s harder to watch than rugby, which is so long – and you have so many more chances to make an impact. It is over so quick and like being a sprinter. All those 4.40am starts and the months of physical training have been worth it. Since she broke up from university, she has been going down to Andrew Balding’s stable at Kingsclere four times a week. I have been down there to see her training. It is such a different style of riding to what she has grown up doing. She has loved it. She will definitely go down again if they need her to ride out.”

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to Editors:**

**This is the 14th running of the Markel Magnolia Cup, which takes place on the Thursday of Qatar Goodwood Festival, presented by Visit Qatar.**

**RIXO have designed this year’s racing silks which were then made and printed by Allertons.**

**Tickets**

Tickets, dining, and hospitality are now on sale for Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar. Visit [*Goodwood.com*](https://www.goodwood.com/horseracing/qatar-goodwood-festival/) or call 01243 755055 to find out more.

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**About the Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar**

The Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar is one of the undisputed highlights of the British flat racing season. Affectionately known as ‘Glorious Goodwood,’ the world-famous five-day festival is a sporting and social occasion like no other, unrivalled style, superb racing, and hospitality experiences to savour mean it’s not to be missed. The 2025 event takes place from Tuesday 29 July to Saturday 2 August. The week is headed by three Group 1 races, including the £500,000 Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup, the £1 million Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes, and the £600,000 Qatar Nassau Stakes.

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**About the Markel Magnolia Cup**

On Thursday 31 July, 12 dedicated amateur jockeys will ride in the Markel Magnolia Cup following months of intensive training. In 2019, the race captured the eyes of the world when Khadijah Mellah galloped to glory up Goodwood’s home straight. Mellah was 18 years old when she won in spectacular style just months after sitting on a horse for the first time. Previous jockeys have included doctors, Olympians, CEOs, journalists, students, models, and presenters, among them Edie Campbell, Sara Cox, Rosie Tapner, and Vogue Williams. Last year’s winner was Australian-based TV presenter, Lizzie Jelfs.

Fundraising takes place through race and horse sponsorship, as well as at the Regency Ball, a stunning themed evening held at Goodwood House after the Markel Magnolia Cup.

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**About Markel**

We are Markel, a leading global specialty insurer with a truly people-first approach. As the insurance operations within Markel Group Inc. (NYSE: MKL), we operate the Markel Specialty, Markel International, and Markel Global Reinsurance divisions, as well as State National, our portfolio protection and program services operations, and Nephila, our insurance-linked securities operations. Our broad array of capabilities and expertise allow us to create intelligent solutions for the most complex risk management needs. However, it is our people—and the deep, valued relationships they develop with colleagues, brokers and clients—that differentiates us worldwide.

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**About Project Lehar**

Project Lehar is a King’s Trust International initiative focused on empowering adolescent girls through vocational training, skills development, and promoting gender equality within their communities. The project takes a holistic approach, offering a series of complementary learning modules that help girls enhance their earning potential, build self-confidence, and plan for a brighter future.