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QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY VISIT QATAR SET TO SHOWCASE TANTILISING FIELDS IN FEATURE RACES AT THIS YEAR'S MEETING

Group 1 Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup – Tuesday 29 July

Gosdens Prepare Strong Challenge Against Illinois in Premier Staying Contest

The Group 1 Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup, set for Tuesday, 29 July, is shaping up to be a fascinating renewal, with 19 high-class stayers remaining after the latest scratchings.

Aidan O'Brien's **Illinois**, runner-up in the Ascot Gold Cup and currently the ante-post favourite, heads the market. The Ballydoyle colt will aim to go one better this time, and with **Trawlerman** not among the entries, the door is open for new challengers.

Leading the opposition could be **French Master**, trained by John and Thady Gosden for Wathnan Racing. A progressive type, French Master impressed when landing the Copper Horse Stakes Handicap at Royal Ascot but now faces a significant step up in both class and distance as he attempts Group 1 company for the first time.

O'Brien is also likely to be represented by **Jan Brueghel**, a five-time winner from six starts who recently defeated the accomplished Calandagan in the Coronation Cup at Epsom.

Further depth is added by **Serious Contender**, also from the O'Brien yard. The consistent colt was second in both the Irish Derby and the King George V Stakes at Royal Ascot, underlining his reliability at the top level.

The Gosden team has several potential runners to support French Master, including **Sweet William**, **Military Academy**, and **Palladium**. Sweet William, who finished second to Kyprios in this race last year, remains a reliable campaigner over staying trips.

From Joseph O'Brien's yard, **Al Riffa** could make the step up in trip after a solid second in the Hardwicke Stakes behind Rebel's Romance.

Joseph O'Brien said: "He has the option of the Goodwood Cup, or else the Curragh Cup. He's been training very well since he came out of the Hardwicke and we're looking forward to seeing how he gets on as we step him up in distance."

Group 1 Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes – Wednesday 30 July

Field Of Gold To Headline a Stellar Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes

The Group 1 Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes, held over a mile on Wednesday, 30 July, promises to be one of the highlights of the meeting with 26 entries, including major three-year-old talents and older Group 1 winners.

Top billing could go to **Field Of Gold**, John and Thady Gosden's standout colt, who has delivered on his early promise this season. After a narrow defeat in the 2,000 Guineas, he followed the path of his illustrious sire, Kingman, by landing both the Irish 2,000 Guineas and the Group 1 St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot, the same treble his sire completed in 2014 enroute to Sussex Stakes glory.

However, a major talking point ahead of this year's renewal is who will partner the Juddmonte-owned colt. Retained rider Colin Keane is set to miss the Qatar Goodwood Festival after receiving a 14-day suspension, ruling him out of the Sussex Downs showpiece. The decision on his replacement will be eagerly awaited.

Rosallion, trained by Richard Hannon, remains one of the most exciting horses in training. After a setback earlier in the season, the son of Blue Point has returned in strong form, with placed efforts in the Lockinge and Queen Anne Stakes.

Hannon said: "Rosallion is in great form. We aren't a hundred percent sure where we are going to go. Probably the Sussex, but maybe the Prix Jacques Le Marois. It's all ground dependent... He came out of his last race absolutely no problem at all. I think he thinks he won."

Aidan O'Brien could be triple handed, with **Delacroix**, **The Lion In Winter**, and **Henri Matisse** all still engaged. Delacroix looks the pick of the trio following his determined win in the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown. The Lion In Winter showed a return to form in the Prix Jean Prat, while Henri Matisse looks to rebound after his below-par run in the Irish 2,000 Guineas.

The Queen Anne winner **Docklands**, trained by Harry Eustace, adds further intrigue, having beaten Rosallion at Ascot in what was a career-best performance in the Group 1 Queen Anne.

International interest includes the former American-based **Carl Spackler**, now trained by Ciaran Maher. He finished sixth in the Queen Anne on British debut and could improve further.

Facteur Cheval, a proven performer in this race, could return for a third attempt after placing in the previous two editions.

Group 1 Visit Qatar Nassau Stakes – Thursday 31 July

See The Fire, Whirl and Bedtime Story Set for High-Class Visit Qatar Nassau Renewal

The Group 1 Visit Qatar Nassau Stakes on Thursday, 31 July, is likely to feature a competitive mix of proven older fillies and fast-developing three-year-olds, with 22 horses remaining in contention for the 1m2f contest.

See The Fire, trained by Andrew Balding, brings strong form after her third-place effort against colts in the Prince of Wales's Stakes at Royal Ascot. Her previous 12-length demolition in the Group 2 Middleton Stakes confirmed her ability to handle top company.

Balding said: "She had a little holiday after Ascot... We're very happy with her run at Ascot against the colts – those are top class performers in that category, so she did a great job."

From Ballydoyle, **Whirl** and **Bedtime Story** could represent the powerful O'Brien stable. Whirl narrowly missed out in the Oaks before landing the Pretty Polly Stakes, while Bedtime Story finished a close second in the Prix de Diane, suggesting she will be a leading player.

There's added strength in depth with the progressive **Estrange**, who has risen quickly through the ranks under David O'Meara. After winning the Group 3 Lester Piggott Fillies' Stakes, she followed up in the Lancashire Oaks with another authoritative display.

Cinderella's Dream and **Crimson Advocate** also remain in the mix, although both have engagements in the Falmouth Stakes at Newmarket. Their participation will depend on how they emerge from that contest.

An intriguing outsider is **Cercene**, trained by Joseph G Murphy, who recorded a landmark Group 1 success in the Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot, defeating the French 1,000 Guineas winner **Zarigana**.

Alongside the Group 1 features, the Qatar Goodwood Festival will offer a rich undercard of competitive action throughout the week, with top-quality handicaps, listed races, and emerging talent providing fans and connections with a superb five days of racing on the Downs.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

Tickets

Tickets, dining, and hospitality on sale on the website. Visit Goodwood.com or call 01243 755055 to find out more.

Contact

For more information about Goodwood Racecourse events, please contact Louise Gould, Press Officer: Louise.Gould@Goodwood.com

For all other press enquiries please contact: Media@goodwood.com

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About Goodwood Racecourse

Introduced to the Goodwood Estate in 1802 by the 3rd Duke of Richmond, the Goodwood Racecourse has long been steeped in horseracing heritage. From Lord George Bentinck's winning horse in the 1836 St Leger, which was transported in secret from Goodwood to Doncaster, to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's horse Love Affair taking its final win, the racecourse has been home to some significant moments in horseracing history.

Situated on the South Downs and hosting 19 race days from May through October, thousands of racegoers flock to one of the world's most beautiful racecourses each year to enjoy a season of top-class racing and entertainment. With a varied calendar of fixtures, race day highlights include Three Friday Nights, the May Festival, the Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit

Qatar—more affectionately known as Glorious Goodwood—and the Season Finale, to name a few.

The [Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar](#) is one of the undisputed highlights of the British flat racing season. 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 Qatar Goodwood Festival 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 (2m), the £1 million Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes (1m), and the £600,000 Visit Qatar Nassau Stakes (1m2f).

Tickets, dining, and hospitality are now on sale for all fixtures at Goodwood Racecourse.

Visit [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com) or call 01243 755055 to find out more.