



RISING STARS AND CLASSIC HOPEFULS HEADLINE GOODWOOD MAY FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY FITZDARES

Goodwood Racecourse hosts two days of quality action this weekend as the May Festival presented by Fitzdares returns to the Sussex Downs, featuring three competitive Listed contests across Friday and Saturday. Friday's card is headed by the Listed Fitzdares Festival Stakes, before attention turns to Saturday's Listed Fitzdares Height of Fashion Stakes and Listed British Stallion Studs EBF Cocked Hat Stakes, Goodwood's traditional early-season tests for three-year-olds with top-level middle-distance ambitions.

Listed Fitzdares Festival Stakes preview

Friday's feature, the Listed Festival Stakes, boasts Group-winning credentials and looks set to provide a fiercely competitive renewal should some of the current 14 entries stand their ground at declaration stage. With several proven course performers among the field, the 1m2f contest for four-year-olds and up promises to be a fascinating clash on the opening day of the May Festival.

HAATEM is among the headline entries for Richard Hannon. An ultra-talented performer, he has recorded notable successes at both Royal Ascot and the Qatar Goodwood Festival, where he landed the Group 2 Vintage Stakes over seven furlongs in 2023. He sets a high standard on form, having come agonisingly close to Classic success when beaten just a head by stable companion Rosallion in the Group 1 Irish 2,000 Guineas in 2024.

Richard Hannon told Goodwood Racecourse:

"He's in great form. This is his warm-up race before he goes to Royal Ascot in search of a hat-trick of wins at Royal Ascot three years in a row- that'd be nice.

"It's an ideal race. He could have gone to France, but I prefer Goodwood as it's only up the road.

"He's going to need it. He needs his run every year. He's a big, big horse, but I still think he's pretty close to being at his best and everyone here is very much looking forward to him running.

This horse has got a huge following and he's one of my favourites, so hopefully he can run very well. It's a nice race, but at the moment he's definitely running.

“Sean Levey will take the ride because James Doyle [retained rider to Wathnan Racing] is suspended.”

Among the possible leading contenders is Julie Camacho's stable star **NAQEEB**, who recorded his Listed victory over course and distance in last season's Virgin Bet Foundation Stakes and could return to the Sussex Downs in search of further success.

Steve Brown, Assistant Trainer and husband to Julie Camacho said:

“He's in good form and has stepped forward nicely from his reappearance at Ascot. We're very much looking forward to coming back down to Goodwood, where obviously he put up a good performance last year in a Listed race [Virgin Bet Foundation Stakes]. It's going to be a little bit harder with our penalty, but hopefully he'll go well and give Niall [O'Keeffe, owner] another good day.”

ICE MAX comes from last year's winning stable, with Karl Burke seeking back-to-back victories in the contest. The five-year-old arrives race-fit following a placed effort in a Group 2 at Chester and should relish a return to Goodwood, where he produced one of the standout performances of his career when landing the Group 2 Celebration Mile in 2024.

Further intrigue is added by James Owen's **WIMBLEDON HAWKEYE**, who brings further strong Group form into the contest. The son of Kameko landed the Group 2 Royal Lodge Stakes at Newmarket as a juvenile and continued to perform consistently at a high-level last season, including when narrowly denied in the Group 3 Gordon Stakes at Goodwood.

He rounded off his campaign with victory in a Group 3 at Keeneland before a Breeders' Cup bid when last seen.

Saturday's card shifts the focus towards the Classic generation, with the Listed Height of Fashion Stakes and Cocked Hat Stakes providing an important early-season examination for three-year-olds with aspirations at the highest level. Both contests have long held a reputation as informative middle-distance trials, regularly attracting horses targeting major domestic and international races later in the campaign.

Listed British Stallion Studs EBF Cocked Hat Stakes preview:

The British Stallion Studs EBF Listed Cocked Hat Stakes could provide further clues ahead of the upcoming Derby Festival, with Epsom Listed Trial Stakes winner **SAXON STREET** among the standout entries. Unbeaten in two starts so far, the colt showed signs of greenness despite prevailing last time and this contest could provide valuable additional experience before a possible Derby bid next month.

Joint trainer Thady Gosden said:

“He won the Blue Riband at Epsom well on second start, hitting the line strong. I expect Saturday's trip will suit him well, and Goodwood is a track he'll learn a lot at.”

Charlie Appleby enjoyed a return to the winner's enclosure over the weekend, highlighted by Group 1 success in the Lockinge Stakes following a quieter spell for the stable. With the yard back among the winners, he could saddle **DEL MARO** in Saturday's contest.

The son of Camelot has faced some talented opposition in recent starts, and the Cocked Hat Stakes may provide connections with a clearer indication as to whether his Classic engagement should be taken up. He also brings solid juvenile form into the race, having finished third behind Pierre Bonard in the Group 3 Zetland Stakes.

George Scott's Listed-winning juvenile **COMMAND THE STARS** is another of interest, alongside the unexposed novice winners **BAY ROYALE** for Harry Eustace and **GOLDEN KNIGHT** for Ed Walker.

Listed Fitzdares Height Of Fashion Stakes preview:

The Listed Fitzdares Height of Fashion Stakes looks another informative renewal, with several exciting fillies entered in the traditional Oaks trial. Run over 1 mile 2 furlongs, the contest has long provided a platform for emerging middle-distance talent and could once again offer valuable clues for the remainder of the season's Classic campaign.

The William Haggas-trained **EARTH SHOT** is highly regarded by connections and announced herself in emphatic fashion this season with a five-length maiden success at Newmarket. She holds an Oaks entry and Saturday's contest could prove an important fact-finding mission for connections.

Jockey Tom Marquand said:

"She's obviously a very exciting prospect after making such an impressive start to 2026 at Newmarket, having only raced once last year at the back end the main hope is that there's still improvement to come, and the prospect of twelve furlongs looks well within her realms. Goodwood will be pivotal in helping us direct her season in the right direction."

INIS MOR, trained by David Menuisier, made an impressive start to her career as a juvenile, recording two wins and a second from three starts. She returned this season with a respectable effort in the Group 3 Nell Gwyn and the 1,000 Guineas, though this step up in trip could unlock further improvement from the daughter of Galiway.

David Menuisier said:

"Inis Mor ran two good races in defeat this season in the Nell Gwyn and the 1000 Guineas. She's bred to stay well and the Height Of Fashion will be her first test over an extended trip. She's in good form so let's hope the race will help her show improvement

"The [Group 1 Prix de] Diane is probably more favourable at the moment should she win this weekend."

John and Thady Gosden could also hold a strong hand in this race with **BRILLIANT STAR**. The daughter of Cracksman has recorded two big margin wins from three starts and remains an exciting prospect at this stage of her career. She boasts an outstanding pedigree as the daughter

of Irish Oaks winner Star Catcher, and Saturday's contest could prove another step towards the top table.

Thady Gosden told Goodwood Racecourse:

“Brilliant Star was impressive on her recent two starts winning by wide margins. It is a big step up to Listed class from restricted novices, but she has come out of her last start well and it's a good spot to step her up.”

There could also be international interest courtesy of Tim Donworth's possible French raider **MARYLENE DU SERRE**. The daughter of Gleneagles was narrowly denied black type when fourth in a Listed contest at Saint-Cloud on her penultimate start and could line up here in pursuit of that valuable catalogue update.

RIBBON OF SEA could provide another intriguing representative for Charlie Appleby's stable. A winner on her seasonal reappearance earlier this year, she subsequently finished second behind Felicitas in a Sandown novice contest, with the form boosted by the winner's narrow defeat in last week's Group 3 Musidora Stakes at York.

The daughter of Sea The Stars would also be bidding to continue a successful family tradition, with her full sister Sea Silk Road having landed this contest in 2022 before going on to achieve Group 1 honours.

-ENDS-

Notes To Editors:

Tickets, dining, and hospitality for the 2026 horseracing season at Goodwood Racecourse are now available to purchase. Visit [Goodwood.com](https://www.goodwood.com) to find out more.

Contact

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About Goodwood Racecourse

Introduced to the Goodwood Estate in 1802 by the 3rd Duke of Richmond, Goodwood Racecourse has a long and distinguished horseracing heritage. Set on the South Downs, Goodwood Racecourse is regarded as one of the world's most beautiful racecourses and has been home to significant moments in horseracing history.

Hosting 19 race days from May through October, thousands of racegoers flock to Goodwood each year to enjoy a season of top-class horseracing and entertainment. With a varied calendar of fixtures, race day highlights include the May Festival, Three Friday Nights, Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar—more affectionately known as Glorious Goodwood—and Season Finale to name a few.

About Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar

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 2026 Qatar Goodwood Festival takes place from Tuesday 28 July to Saturday 1 August. The week is headed by three Group 1 races, including the Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup (2m), the Visit Qatar Sussex Stakes (1m), and the Qatar Nassau Stakes (1m2f).