

G1 options for Flora Of Bermuda after Rolls-Royce Oak Tree Stakes win

Flora Of Bermuda (5/2F) took the step up to seven furlongs in her stride in the G3 Rolls-Royce Oak Tree Stakes, completing a quickfire double for Wathnan Racing and James Doyle.

Lining up with a 3lb penalty, Flora Of Bermuda was produced approaching the final furlong and stayed on well to deny Sayidah Dariyan (7/2) by a neck. Radiant Beauty (11/2) was just over a length further back in third.

Winner of the Alice Keppel Fillies' Conditions Stakes at this meeting in 2023, Flora Of Bermuda has now won three of her four starts this season for Andrew Balding and has G1 entries later in the season.

Balding said: "We have been thinking about seven furlongs for a bit. It just seemed an obvious race to try it in. She has been very consistent at a high level throughout her career. She is a fantastic filly. She has done very well physically this year and is happier now she is going into the stalls late.

"That is her flaw, if she has one; she is just not very patient. She will go straight into the stalls, but she will not stand there for more than 30 seconds, and poor old James [Doyle] got a perforation of his eardrums riding her at Ascot. It was a disaster, but apart from that, she is three from three this year when not fluffing her starts.

"I do not know what is next. We cannot really go abroad with her because of the stalls issue, as we cannot be guaranteed to have the same dispensations. I think we could go to York or we could go to Haydock. The great thing about her is that she goes on any ground; she is amazingly versatile. She won here on heavy ground and has won today on fast ground, so not many horses can do that."

Doyle said: "Andrew's horses are absolutely flying off the back of a huge weekend. Flora Of Bermuda was presented magnificently today. The only slight worry was going up in trip, but we were quietly confident it would not be a problem, especially when she got the low draw [4]. We did not have to use any petrol early, we got a lovely coast into the race, and the only slight worry was getting past a few. But once she found a clear path, she found the line well enough.

"I think she is versatile. There are some races at six and a half furlongs, and she goes on a bit of give as well. Arguably, she is even better on slightly slower ground, so she has a whole host of options. I am sure the team will work out what is best for her, but I am just glad we got that right today; it was quite important. She owed me that. She gave me a fair old whack on the side of the head at Ascot and I could not hear for about four to six weeks, so it was nice that she repaid me there."

Richard Brown of Wathnan Racing said: "James was brave, wasn't he, waiting for the gap. But you need a lot of luck to go your way. She is such a tough filly. You just know if the gap is there, she will go for it.

"She has won a Listed race for us this year, a Group Three on her last start, and a Group Three here under a penalty — she has been a star for us. She is tough. Look at her there, ears back, head down. She is a star.

"We have always talked about trying seven furlongs. This is the first time we have tried it, which opens up a lot of opportunities now. I need to talk to James, but I would have thought maybe the City of York Stakes, as a quick seven there would be similar to here in terms of needing speed. I would say something like that. We can have a go now as she is entitled to go back up in class."

Sayidah Dariyan's trainer Richard Hughes said: "I am thrilled with her run. Ryan [Moore] just felt he needed to commit a little earlier than he would have liked. The winner had a penalty and put in a good performance, but we are thrilled with ours."

On where she might head next, he added: "Kentucky Downs is an option."

Marco Ghiani said of Radiant Beauty: "She did really well today, but unfortunately the winner was a bit quicker than me at the two. I was closing the gap, though."

3.00pm Rolls-Royce Oak Tree Stakes (Group 3)

1 Flora Of Bermuda (Wathnan Racing) Andrew Balding 5-9-09 James Doyle 5/2F

2 Sayidah Dariyan (Jaber Abdullah) Richard Hughes 4-9-06 Ryan Moore 7/2

3 Radiant Beauty (Mr & Mrs D Turner) James Owen 5-9-06 Marco Ghiani 11/2

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Andrew Balding – 29th Qatar Goodwood Festival winner

James Doyle – 24th Qatar Goodwood Festival winner

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Notes to Editors:

Qatar Goodwood Festival presented by Visit Qatar takes place Tuesday 28 July – Saturday 1 August.

Tickets

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Media Contacts

Goodwood

Gary Double, Double Communications for Goodwood
gary@doublecomms.com – 07768825114

For more information about Goodwood Racecourse and its events, please contact Saskia Osmond-Evans, Press Officer: Saskia.Osmond-Evans@goodwood.com

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

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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, with unrivalled style, superb racing, and hospitality experiences to savour. 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), while Ladies' Day on Thursday 30 August sees the running of the Markel Magnolia Cup charity race for amateur female jockeys.