



**QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL 2018
RACECNEWS RACECOURSE SERVICE
SECOND DAY, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1**

ROCKERFELLER A REAL MONEY-SPINNER

Pulling off a one-year plan in racing is rare, but racehorse owner Andy Smith managed it with the victory of Lil Rockerfeller in today's £50,000 Matchbook Betting Podcast Goodwood Handicap.

Smith, a professional punter by trade, recognised the race conditions - a handicap over more than two and a half miles - were ideal for the horse in which he is a joint-owner, and who is best known as a top-class staying hurdler. Rated 153 over hurdles, he is rated just 82 on the Flat.

Lil Rockerfeller was not quite ready for last year's race, but today, under Silvestre De Sousa, he made the running and ground his rivals into a long submission, scoring as the 11/4 favourite by 15 lengths and half a length from Altaayil (28/1) and Imphal (7/1).

Wiltshire-based Neil King, who is best known as a trainer of jumpers, had not saddled any Goodwood winner before today. He said: "That's terrific - fantastic. I'm so thrilled with him and delighted for one of his owners, Andy Smith. He's had his heart set on winning this for the past year, but I was worried about the ground at this time of year, and he's missed two engagements because of quick ground already this season. He's been on the go a long time since finishing second at Sandown [over hurdles in late April], and I'm delighted we have pulled it off.

"He is set to go novice chasing in the autumn, but this is one of the few Flat races we can run him in because he failed a stalls test, and this race is started with a flag. When the ground is safe, he will go over fences.

"It's glorious to have a winner at Goodwood, and I've long admired the way my neighbour, Alan King, trains winners on the Flat and over jumps. We've had a bit of success on the Flat at a lesser level, and we had a third at Royal Ascot a few years ago [2012] with Nafaath, a 50/1 outsider in the Ascot Handicap."

Smith said: "A year ago I said to the other lads in the partnership, 'Let's go for this race at Goodwood', and they all said, 'We don't want to run him on the Flat'. I said, 'Trust me, this horse will win'. He didn't run last year because Neil had left off him and the rain came and it was wet, but this year I said, 'Please Neil, keep him in and get him ready for Goodwood'.

"Neil wanted to run him in a recent race at Salisbury over a mile and six furlongs [also with a flag start], but I said 'Why do that when he could win three or four grand, go up 10lb or 12lb and blow the chance of winning this?'.

"Trevor Whelan [who rides Lil Rockerfeller over jumps] made this horse, but was not going to be able to do the weights, so I rang [jockeys' agent] Shelley Dwyer two weeks ago and booked Silvestre De Sousa. Then the top-weight came out, the weights went up 7lb and I was gutted for Trevor, but what could I do? I had booked the champion jockey and couldn't turn him down.

"Before the race I said to Silvestre, 'You're not riding a two-mile Flat horse, you're riding a three-mile hurdler, and he will keep galloping'. He's won £400,000 as a hurdler, and out of his winnings we bought Danehill Kodiak [a five-year-old trained by Richard Hannon] who has taken us to Hong Kong, was second at Chester in May, and is rated 112. We've also bought an unraced three-year-old that we put into training with Rod Millman, and we hope to call Singing The Blues - we're hoping lightning strikes three times."

Asked if he backed his horse, Smith said: "I could have got 5/1, but I rarely back my own and didn't need to today because the prize money was so good. All the owners have come down and we have had a great picnic. Goodwood has looked after us brilliantly today with badges."

LIL ROCKERFELLER DAZZLES AT GOODWOOD

The well-supported 11/4 favourite Lil Rockerfeller got punters off to the perfect start on day two of the Qatar Goodwood Festival with a facile 15-length success in the Matchbook Betting Podcast Goodwood Handicap.

Trained by Neil King and ridden by Silvestre De Sousa, the seven-year-old Hard Spun gelding helped set the tempo in the early stages of the extended two-mile and four-furlong contest and ran on strongly in the home straight to obliterate his rivals in a devastating front-running display.

Currently rated 153 over hurdles, the 2017 G2 Ascot Hurdle winner raced off a mark of 82 in today's contest and made a mockery of his handicap rating with a dazzling performance.

Winning rider De Sousa said: "Lil Rockerfeller travelled strongly through the race. I let him bowl along. We set some good fractions early on.

"He got tired a bit at the end, but he was well on top at the line.

"I've been riding for a while and I knew how fast I was going throughout.

"I didn't quicken up the pace at any stage, I was always going the same pace, but he just lengthened so well."

1.50pm Matchbook Betting Podcast Goodwood Handicap

1 Lil Rockerfeller (Davies, Smith, Govier & Brown) Neil King 7-8-13 Silvestre de Sousa 11/4 fav

2 Altaayil (P Moorhead) Gary Moore 7-9-06 Hector Crouch 28/1

3 Imphal (Mrs M Slade) Marcus Tregoning 4-9-01 Hayley Turner 7/1

14 ran

Time: 4m 28.58s

Distances: 15, ½

Tote Win: £3.30 Places: £1.70, £11.60, £2.30 Exacta: £147.30

Neil King - 1 Goodwood winner (1 at Qatar Goodwood Festival)

Silvestre de Sousa - 24 Goodwood winners (12 at Qatar Goodwood Festival)

GOING AFTER THE FIRST

Silvestre de Sousa, jockey of the 11/4 favourite Lil Rokerfeller, said: "It is on the quick side of good."

Hector Crouch, rider of the 15-length second Altaayil (28/1), said: "Beautiful ground."

Hayley Turner, on the 7/1 third Imphal, said: "It is safe quick ground. Good to firm."

Josephine Gordon, on board fourth Cool Sky, said: "Lovely ground."

Ryan Moore, partner of Kloud Gate, said: "Good."

Martin Harley, rider of Coeur De Lion, said: "Good ground, though they are maybe taking the top off."

Paul Hanagan, on board Northwest Frontier, said: "Good and drying up all the time."

P J McDonald, jockey of Dominating, said: "Good ground. It has tightened up from yesterday."

Robert Winston, partner of Denmead, said: "Lovely good ground, though it is a bit loose on top."

Shane Kelly, partner of Great Sound, said: "Good. It has not dried up as much as you would imagine."

Luke Morris, rider of Piedita, said: "It is quicker than yesterday. Good."

Liam Keniry, rider of Arthur Mc Bride, said: "Good."

Nicky Mackay, partner of The Secrets Out, said: "Nice ground."

Hollie Doyle, jockey of General Allenby, said: "Good."

UNIBET STEWARDS' CUP DRAW

The draw for the £250,000 Unibet Stewards' Cup takes place, tomorrow, Thursday, August 2 at noon, and will be held in the conservatory of the 1812 bar, situated at the back of the Richmond Stand.

Connections of the 28 runners need to register by 11.30am on the day of the draw.

This year's draw will be hosted by Rishi Persad, who is conducting the ceremony for the first time, and the draw will be made by Goodwood legend Richard Hughes, who won the historic contest four times as a jockey.

The draw will be broadcast live on RUK.

The Unibet Stewards' Cup is run on Saturday, August 4 over six furlongs at 3.40pm.