



FRANCE
GALOP



PRESS RELEASE

24/02/2024

**Grand Steeple-Chase Masters :
Prix Robert de Clermont-Tonnerre
Jazz Manouche:
youth trumps maturity**



The race

The first leg of the Grand Steeple-Chase Masters took place at Auteuil on Saturday 24 February in the form of the Group 3 Prix Robert de Clermont-Tonnerre. It was the first of the recognised prep races for the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris (Group 1, 19/05), which is France's most prestigious jumps' race. The Prix Robert de Clermont-Tonnerre (Gr3) was a pointer as to whether the horses, which had contested the Pau Winter Meeting were up to the task of securing their passage for the Grand Steeple, or conversely whether the emerging talent, Jazz Manouche, was up to the task of beating them, and so affirming himself at this level. And it was indeed the latter who won, and so becoming the first 5-year-old to win the Prix Robert de Clermont-Tonnerre since 2013. Emotionally overcome, his trainer Lucie Pontoir affirmed that Jazz Manouche would be heading to the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris via the Prix Murat (Gr2), which is another stepping stone to the Grand Steeple-Chase Masters... A young trainer, Lucie Pontoir is based at Maisons-Laffitte. The Chantilly-trained Gallipoli tried to do it the hard way by making every post a winning one, only to be pipped at the post by Jazz Manouche.

The technical result

1st JAZZ MANOUCHE

2nd GALLIPOLI

3rd TOSCANA DU BERLAIS

Distances: 3/4l – 6l – 4 1/2l. Time: 6m 02'3s

What connections said:

Lucie Pontoir (the trainer of Jazz Manouche, 1st) – (France)

« It was the first time that Jazz Manouche was up against older horses. It was also his reappearance. Was it a surprise to see him win? Yes and no... These are true races. As good horses and great trainers were on display. I'm just a mère youngster! I'm very lucky and I'd like to thank the Berger family for their trust placed in me, and also the jockey Damien Mescam. I went to school with Damien Mescam. We've known each other since we were 13. He's a good friend of mine. Honestly, given the way the race unfolded, I thought I'd be happy with second or third place. However, I think Damien heard me from the stands and said to himself that I shouldn't give up. There's no doubt that the heavy ground is to Jazz Manouche's advantage. However, he's still a great horse. We talked a lot about the horse's programme, and we said to ourselves that if we won this race that we'd have no choice but to go for the Grand Steeple, via the Prix Murat. »

Damien Mescam (the jockey of Jazz Manouche, 1st) – (France)

« There was pace in the race and fortunately so because my horse raced freely. At the end of the backstretch, I could see that Gallipoli was a long way in front. That's when I thought to myself that he was going to take some catching. However, Jazz Manouche has so much heart that he went in pursuit of Gallipoli. The horse has matured since last autumn. He needs to race and so get tougher with his racing. I think he'll act on a sound surface as he matures. »

Noel George (the trainer of Gallipoli, 2nd) – (France)

« You have to be positive with him all the whole time as he's a creature of moods, and Baptiste Le Clerc rode him very well. He loves to dominate [from the front] as he did today, and is best when fresh. I think he'll be better on good ground and we're going to give him plenty of time to recover. He could be heading to the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris. We'll think about it, depending on how he comes out of the race. »



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LE GRAND
STEEPLE-CHASE
DE PARIS

GRAND
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MASTERS

17 MARS

PRIX
TROYTOWN
GR3

27 AVRIL

PRIX
INGRÉ
GR3

24 FÉVRIER

PRIX R. DE
C. TONNERRE
GR3

06 AVRIL

PRIX
MURAT
GR2



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