

**DIMANCHE 12 MAI**  
**PARISLONGCHAMP**

# EMIRATES POULES D'ESSAI

**Le fabuleux destin d'un poulain**

PRESS RELEASE

Sunday, May 12th 2024

Sunday, May 12th 2024, ParisLongchamp racecourse

## **Emirates Poule d'Essai des Pouliches**

Race report and quotes



The French filly Rouhiya won the Emirates Poule d'Essai des Pouliches at ParisLongchamp on Sunday, giving her owner-breeder, His Highness the Aga Khan, a fifth victory in the fillies' classic race. The Aga Khan colours had previously triumphed via Masarika (1984) Zalaiyka (1998) Zarkava (2008) and Ervedya (2015), without forgetting that the colours of his daughter, Princess Zahra Aga Khan, had proved successful in 2007 with Darjina. However, Rouhiya's win marked a first win in the race for her trainer Francis-Henri Graffard, whereas jockey Maxime Guyon (previously successful in 2020 with Dream And Do) was recording his second win in the classic. Rouhiya was very much an outsider in this Group 1 race - the pinnacle of excellence in horse racing. She was coming off a third in the Prix du Louvre at this course on 18 April on her reappearance. Her entourage allowed the filly to take her chance on strength of the filly's last piece of work at the beginning of the week. After enjoying an excellent passage during the race, having raced in the slipstream of Romantic Style and close

to the pace, Rouhiya produced a lightning burst which enabled to nail the British raider, Kathmandu, who had led most of the race, by a a mère head. The finish was particularly tight: as Ireland's Vespertilio, a strong closer, was a neck further away in third.

## **The technical result**

Emirates Poule d'Essai des Pouliches

1<sup>st</sup> ROUHIYA (M. Guyon)

2<sup>nd</sup> KATHMANDU (S. Levey)

3<sup>rd</sup> VERSPERTILIO (W. Lee)

## **What connections said :**

### **Princesse Zahra Aga Khan, owner-breeder of Rouhiya (1<sup>st</sup>) – Chantilly (Oise region)**

« It's huge to win this Poule d'Essai! Francis-Henri Graffard's gut feeling last years was that she was a Poule [d'Essai des Pouliches] filly. This week, we asked ourselves the question. Should we run the Poule d'Essai on Sunday? Or head to the Prix des Lilas at Chantilly on Saturday? We reasoned in terms of the future, and in terms of the filly as a breeding prospect. So we opted for the Poule d'Essai.

The filly's jockey, Maxime Guyon, rode a superb race, as the filly was perfectly positioned, having harnessed her energies accordingly. Although half way up the straight a great deal of uncertainty had set in. For a breeder to produce a filly like her is extraordinary. It's the reward of decades of work. Classic winners are so important for breeding, and especially so over a mile [editor's note : 1600 metres].

Our breeding operation is also experiencing a great moment with the successes of our stallions such as Zarak and Siyouni. Their success is no coincidence, as it's a long-term project and their breeding pages have a lot going for them. It's a game of intellectual chess with nature as my father likes to say. In our quest [to what we want to achieve] we are helped by the fact that we don't need to follow a [particular] trend. »

### **Francis-Henri Graffard, the trainer of Rouhiya (1<sup>st</sup>) – Chantilly (Oise region)**

« What an incredible race! We had a perfect run despite a bad draw. I had informed her jockey that she has a sharp turn of foot although her burst isn't a lasting one. So he waited as long as possible before delivering his challenge. Rouhiya had made a lot of progress since her seasonal debut and she had been working very well. I had hesitated between the Poule d'Essai and the Prix des Lilas, but the Princess advised me to try our luck in the Poule d'Essai. It's my first Gr1 winner for these colours – furthermore it has been gained in a classic.

### **Sam Sangster – the owner of Kathmandu (2<sup>nd</sup>) – trained in Great Britain**

« It's a fantastic performance. We bought this filly last July. Although she has needed a little time to adapt to her new environment. She's done nothing but progress since she's been with us. She opened her account at the end of November - and then we gave her a little break. She has a fantastic temperament which she has no doubt inherited from her dam's sire, Galileo. She's a great filly with a great future. Brian Meehan and I have been buying

horses together for ten years. I'm delighted for him and his team. We'll certainly be going to Royal Ascot with her, and namely the Jersey Stakes, which is run over a shorter trip. »

**Kieran Lalor, the racing manager of Al Shira'aa Farms – the owner of Vespertilio (3rd) – trained in Ireland**

« We're very happy! Willie [editor's note: McCreery (the trainer)] has done a great job in getting her to the top [of her form] today. Perhaps, her draw didn't help. She was a bit tense initially but then she settled well. She's put her best foot forward and confirmed it, which really bodes well for the rest of the season, especially as she has handled the journey to France very well. We had our doubts about her ability to stay 1,600 metres, but those doubts have been dispelled. Well done to all those who are connected with the winner! In the interim, we're going to see how she recovers from the race before discussing future plans. She's entered in the Irish 1,000 Guineas and the Coronation Stakes at Royal Ascot. Her owner would love to run at Royal Ascot. »

**Charlie Appleby, the trainer of Romantic Style (4<sup>th</sup>) – trained in Great Britain**

I'm delighted! There were two major questions going into race: the draw and the fast ground. She was coming off a very good effort on heavy ground at Deauville in the Prix Imprudence and, as a 2-year-old, her best performances were on soft ground. Her jockey William [editor's note : Buick] thought she didn't let herself down as she usually does on this fast ground. As far as distance is concerned, she saw out the trip. We'll be thinking about what to do next - certainly keeping the ground in mind - but the Haras d'Étreménil - Prix Jean Prat over 1400 metres is a possibility. »



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