

THE PRIZE

The WH Stayers' Million is a prize of £1 million that will be awarded to the connections of a horse that having won one of four recognised prep races in May - Longines Sagaro Stakes (Ascot), Boodles Diamond Ormonde Stakes (Chester), Yorkshire Cup (York) or the Matchbook Henry II Stakes (Sandown Park) - then goes on to win the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot in June, the Qatar Goodwood Cup at the Qatar Goodwood Festival in July and the Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup at York's Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival in August.

The £1 million would be split as follows between the following connections: 70% to the owner, 7.50% to the trainer, 7.50% to the stable staff, 7.50% to the breeder and 7.50% to the jockey (split 1/3rd per race if there is a different jockey in the three principal races).

THE PRELIMINARY RACES

The four preliminary races all take place at intervals in May and are recognised preparatory races for the season's feature staying races:

**i) The Longines Sagaro Stakes: Ascot, Group 3, 2 miles, 4 year olds and up
2nd May 2018**

Formerly known as the Paradise Stakes, it was renamed the Sagaro Stakes in 1978 after Sagaro, the winner of the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot in each of the preceding three seasons. Several winners of the Longines Sagaro Stakes have won the Gold Cup in the same season, the most recent being Estimate in 2013.

**ii) The Boodles Diamond Ormonde Stakes: Chester, Group 3, 1 mile 5 furlongs, 4 year olds and up.
10th May 2018**

The race is named after Ormonde, an unbeaten Triple Crown winner owned and bred by the Duke of Westminster at his Eaton Hall Stud in Cheshire. It is run during Chester's May meeting and is used as stepping stone for major races of 1 1/2 miles + later in the season. In recent years it has been won by leading stayers such as Brown Panther and Dartmouth.

**iii) The Yorkshire Cup: York, Group 2, 1 mile 6 furlongs, 4 year olds and up.
18th May 2018**

First run in 1927, it takes place during York's Dante Festival and its winners include legendary horses such as Classic Cliché (Gold Cup at Royal Ascot winner), Kayf Tara (Dual Gold Cup at Royal Ascot winner) and Red Cadeaux (2nd 3 times in the Melbourne Cup). In 2017 it was won by the Queen's Dartmouth who was beaten by a nose in the Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup in the same year.

**iv) The Matchbook Henry II Stakes: Sandown Park, Group 3, 2 miles, 4 year olds and up.
24th May 2018**

First run in 1963 this race is an established trial for the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot and was won by Big Orange in 2017 on his way to victory in the Royal Ascot showpiece in June. Persian Punch, a winner of both the Goodwood Cup and Lonsdale Cup in 2001, won it three years in succession.

THE MAIN EVENTS

i) Gold Cup at Royal Ascot: Ascot, Group 1, Two miles four furlongs, 4 year olds and up. 21st June 2018

England's most prestigious race for Stayers is the centrepiece of the Royal Meeting and was first run in 1807, sandwiched between Trafalgar and Waterloo. It has been won by owners and trainers from England, Ireland, France and Italy. Yeats won it a record four times 2006-2009.

ii) The Qatar Goodwood Cup: Goodwood, Group 1, Two miles, 3 year olds and up. 31st July 2018

First run in 1808, a year after the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot, it is a natural progression for the winner of that race. It takes place during the Qatar Goodwood Festival and is normally around five to six weeks after Ascot. Double Trigger won the race three times between 1995-98 - having also competed in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot in three out of those four years.

iii) The Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup: York, Group 2, Two miles, 3 year olds + 24th August 2018

Weatherbys Hamilton has sponsored the Lonsdale Cup since 2013 and it is run during the Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival at the end of August. The third and final leg of The WH Stayers' Million has been won by top class stayers' such as Further Flight, Persian Punch, Celeric and Royal Rebel and is a fitting conclusion to the series.

THE RECORDS

Although the records do not give us a previous winner of the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot, Goodwood Cup and Lonsdale Cup in the same season, they do show a number that have won both the Gold Cup and the Goodwood Cup and would presumably have been given the chance of winning the Lonsdale Cup if the bonus had been in existence. These include Le Moss (1979 & 1980), Ardross (1981), Gildoran (1984), Sadeem (1988), Double Trigger (1995) and Yeats (2006 & 2008).

In 1995 Double Trigger covered himself in further glory by also winning two of the preliminary races - the Sagaro and Henry II Stakes and finishing third in The Yorkshire Cup. He was a truly remarkable horse that embodied all the finest qualities of the Stayer.

Further Flight (1992) notched up the Goodwood Cup/Lonsdale Cup double but pride of place must go to Persian Punch in 2001 who was only beaten a head by Royal Rebel in the the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot before going on to win both the Goodwood Cup and the Lonsdale Cup.

Royal Rebel, Kayf Tara and Big Orange have all won two out of three of the the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot, Goodwood Cup and Lonsdale Cup treble but not in the same year.

LEADING EUROPEAN STAYERS

-leading performers from 2017 who could play a significant role in this division in 2018.

Big Orange

Michael Bell / W. J. and T. C. O. Gredley

An admirable globetrotter who gained his first success at the top level when coming out on top in an epic battle with Order of St George in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot last June. That form was reversed in the Qipco British Champions Long Distance Cup but he is still a top performer on his day.

Capri

Aidan O'Brien / Mr D. Smith, Mrs J. Magnier, Mr M. Tabor

Enjoyed a successful three-year-old campaign in both the UK and Ireland last year, winning the Irish Derby at the Curragh at the expense of Cracksman before reigning supreme in the St Leger at Doncaster.

Desert Skyline

David Elsworth / C. Benham, D. Whitford, L. Quinn & K. Quinn

Progressive winner of last season's Group 2 Doncaster Cup, having been placed behind Big Orange in the Group 1 Goodwood Cup and Marmelo in the Group 2 Prix Kergorlay. Now turned 4yo, a likely contender for this year's Cup races with a trainer well-versed in bringing on horses in this division.

Harbour Law

Laura Mongan / Mrs Jackie Cornwell

Was unraced as a juvenile but progressed sharply as a three-year-old for his current stable, ending 2016 with Classic success in the St Leger. He produced a career-best effort when third behind Big Orange and Order of St George in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot.

Ice Breeze

Pascal Bary / Mr K. Abdullah

Only made his racecourse debut in April 2017 and he progressed throughout the campaign to win twice at Group 2 level. Ended the year by putting in a career-best effort when defeating Vazirabad in the Group 1 Prix Royal-Oak at Saint-Cloud.

Idaho

Aidan O'Brien / Mr M. Tabor, D. Smith & Mrs J. Magnier

Placed in the Derby in 2016 behind Harzand, this son of Galileo has some very strong form in the book, without having won a Group 1, and would be a fascinating contender were he to be stepped up in trip.

Montaly

Andrew Balding / Farleigh Racing

Streetwise campaigner who has won five of his 23 career starts. He took his form to new heights last term, beginning the campaign with a victory off a rating off 99 in the Chester Cup and producing his most impressive performance when landing the Group 2 Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup from Dartmouth in the summer.

Mount Moriah

Ralph Beckett / Mr Norman Brunskill

He progressed steadily through the handicap ranks earlier in his career, winning three on the spin and earning himself the right to compete at Pattern level. He's since posted solid efforts in defeat behind Order of St George in both the Irish St. Leger (third) and Qipco British Champions Long Distance Cup at Ascot (fourth).

Order of St George

Aidan O'Brien / M. Tabor, D. Smith, Mrs J. Magnier, L. Williams

Confirmed himself as Europe's best stayer when winning the Qipco British Champions Long Distance Cup at Ascot on Champions Day in October last year. This multiple Group One winner, who has amassed more than £1m in career earnings, is very much a force to be reckoned with in this sphere for leading connections.

Raheen House

Brian Meehan / Mr J. L. Day

A Group 3 and Listed winner last season, this son of Sea The Stars looked to be at his best when tackling marathon distances and, at the age of just four, could have plenty more to offer for Brian Meehan. Decent ground suits and he is fancied to be dining at the top table in all of the top-class staying contests this year.

Rekindling

Joseph Patrick O'Brien / Mr Lloyd J. Williams

Had a very consistent season, apart from a blip in the Derby, culminating with success in the Melbourne Cup. Only a four-year-old, he looks open to further improvement and can make his mark in the staying division.

Stradivarius

John Gosden / Mr B. E. Nielsen

Won the Goodwood Cup as a three-year-old and that followed his Queen's Vase victory at Royal Ascot. His 2017 campaign finished with two third-placed finishes in the St Leger and the Qipco British Champions Long Distance Cup.

Thomas Hobson

Willie Mullins / Mrs S. Ricci

A creditable sixth in the Melbourne Cup back in November, the eight-year-old won valuable handicaps at Fairyhouse and Royal Ascot and finished second in the Grade 2 Doncaster Cup in September. He looks to be getting better with age.

Torcedor

Jessica Harrington / Te Akau Torcedor

Improved considerably for stepping up in trip last season and nearly caused a shock when almost winning on Champions Day at Ascot. He will undoubtedly prove a force to be reckoned with.

Vazirabad

Alain de Royer-Dupré / H.H. Aga Khan

A dual winner of the Group 1 Prix Royal-Oak at Saint Cloud who only found one too good in his bid for a hat-trick in that race last October. Has also won the Group 2 Dubai Gold Cup at Meydan on two occasions, while another victory at the highest level came in the Prix du Cadran last year.

Wicklow Brave

Willie Mullins / Wicklow Bloodstock (Ireland) Ltd

A globe-trotting dual-purpose veteran who can boast successes in the Grade 1 Irish St. Leger and Punchestown Champion Hurdle on his CV. He was far from disgraced in a number of big races in both codes last season, including the Melbourne Cup and Goodwood Cup on the flat, and the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham.

QUOTES

Charles Hamilton, Chief Executive of Weatherbys Hamilton said:

"We are very excited about The WH Stayers' Million and hope that it will be as enthusiastically received by owners, breeders, trainers and the industry as a whole. It would be thrilling if a horse can come to York in August with the chance to win the seven figure prize and in doing so underline just how important the Stayers are to racing. If the unique diversity of European racing is to be maintained, it is vital that these horses are encouraged and I very much hope that the WH Stayers' Million can be a talisman for that cause."

Industry

Nick Rust, Chief Executive, British Horseracing Authority said:

"This is a superb initiative which the BHA supports wholeheartedly. Not only will it create a fascinating and exciting story and an interesting extra dimension to the Flat season, it will also provide yet another incentive to own and train a staying horse here in Britain. We are investing heavily in this area at the moment and it is essential that we do all we can to ensure that stayers are being bred in this country, and when they are bred, that they remain here to race."

Julian Richmond Watson, Chairman of the Thoroughbred Breeders Association said:

"Since the publication of the TBA Stayers Report in 2015, there has been increased awareness of the issues surrounding the future of the staying horse. The TBA is delighted that Weatherbys Hamilton has developed this new initiative to support the stayers race programme."

"The TBA's aim is to protect the heritage and diversity of the British thoroughbred. The WH Stayers' Million initiative will provide further support to the progress being made in the development of the race programme and enhanced prize money in 2018 and beyond to encourage the breeding and racing of stayers for the benefit of both Flat and National Hunt."

Charlie Liverton, Chief Executive of the Racehorse Owners Association said:

"Over the years this division has given racing many of its household names and I'm sure that racehorse owners will be encouraged to continue racing their stayers in Britain with initiatives such as the WH Stayers' Million. The ROA wholeheartedly supports the general industry undertaking to protect and enhance the Stayers' programme."

Trainers

John Gosden said:

"This an exciting and very welcome initiative for the Stayers' programme which is so important to our racing and breeding industry."

Aidan O'Brien said:

"It's great that Weatherbys Hamilton is supporting the Stayers' programme with this exciting initiative. I'm sure that it will generate plenty of interest for this race division that is so important to the sport."

Mark Johnston said:

"I think the move to promote Stayers is admirable, to say the least, and initiatives like this are certainly a big incentive to keep the best Stayers in Britain."

Michael Bell said:

"Fantastic initiatives such as the Weatherbys Hamilton Stayers' Million will help breathe new life into the Stayers' Division which has for too long felt like the poor relation within flat racing. Naturally I hope that Big Orange will be a contender and indeed last year he won two of the races making up the WH Stayers Million – fingers crossed for 2018 !"

Alain de Royer-Dupré said:

"This is an interesting challenge and it is something we could consider for Vazirabad this year. He is currently being prepared for a campaign in Dubai where he would run the same two races he did last year in an attempt to win a third Dubai Gold Cup. We could definitely think about this challenge upon his return from Dubai, as Vazirabad is now mature enough to race in England. We were preparing him for a run in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot last year but he injured himself during his prep race, so he was unable to race last summer."

Racecourses

William Derby, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Course at York Racecourse, said:

"We are delighted to be part of the WH Stayers' Million with both the Yorkshire Cup as one of the four preliminary races and the Weatherbys Hamilton Lonsdale Cup as the anchor leg of what would be a truly remarkable sequence. The prospect of the leading stayer of the season coming to the Welcome to Yorkshire Ebor Festival with a live chance of collecting not only the prize fund but a £1m bonus would be a tremendously exciting prospect for everyone with an interest in horseracing."

Nick Smith, Director of Racing and Communications, Ascot Racecourse, said:

"Great strides have been made in recent years to build on the stayers' pattern, notably the promotions of the Goodwood Cup and Queen's Vase last year. This bonus will shine a light on long distance opportunities which can only be good for the overall European initiative."

Richard Thomas, Chief Executive, Chester Racecourse, said:

"We are enthusiastic supporters of the efforts to promote the programme for staying horses. This is a fantastic initiative from Weatherbys Hamilton and we are delighted that the Boodles Diamond Ormonde Stakes has been chosen as one of the prep races. Let's hope that an Ormonde winner can go on and secure the bonus!"

Alex Eade, General Manager, Goodwood Racecourse, said:

"Goodwood Racecourse whole-heartedly supports the development of the Stayers' programme throughout Europe, with our investment evidenced by the elevation of the Qatar Goodwood Cup to Group 1 status last year. Goodwood is delighted that the race will be a part of this excellent new initiative, as the WH Stayers' Million should provide a terrific incentive for breeders and connections to continue producing distance horses."

Andrew Cooper, Clerk of the Course and Head of Racing at Sandown Park, said:

"This is a great initiative, we are delighted that the Matchbook Henry II Stakes forms part of it and hope the WH Stayers' Million will be a further boost to the recent work undertaken on the Stayers' programme."

ABOUT WEATHERBYS HAMILTON

Weatherbys Hamilton is an insurance broker specialising in all the needs of private clients, from horses to houses, cars to castles and brings the highest level of personal service to everything it does. It is a partnership that combines a group of talented and motivated insurance professionals with the Weatherbys group, which has been synonymous with the administration of British racing since 1770.

Weatherbys Hamilton provides an energetic and innovative insurance service to clients from its five offices in Newmarket, London, Wellingborough, Swindon and Penrith. At a time of growing anonymity in the insurance sector, where brokers are consolidating and becoming increasingly corporate, all too often the interests of shareholders seem to override those of the clients. That is exactly the opposite at Weatherbys Hamilton where the interests of our clients are, and will remain, at the heart of everything we do.