



QATAR PRIX

DU JOCKEY CLUB

DIMANCHE
31 MAI



HIPPODROME DE CHANTILLY

ENTRÉE
À PARTIR

5€

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Press release

Wednesday May 27, 2026

Qatar Prix du Jockey Club

Trainer Francis-Henri Graffard outlines the major challenge facing Daryzan, the half-brother of champion Daryz

On Wednesday, France Galop continued its series of press conferences dedicated to the 2026 edition of the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club (Group 1, the highest international level). This great classic race of world Flat racing, first run in 1833, will take place on Sunday, 31 May 2026, at Chantilly Racecourse.

Run over 2,100 metres, this prestigious event is reserved for three-year-old colts and fillies. It offers €1.5 million in prize money.

This third media session notably shone a spotlight on the candidature of the French colt Daryzan, with:

- **His trainer, Francis-Henri Graffard, based at the Chantilly training centre, which is managed by France Galop**
- **Nemone Routh, Racing Manager France of the Aga Khan Studs, owner and breeder of Daryzan.**

A younger brother of Daryz, the most recent winner of the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, Daryzan will attempt an unprecedented feat. Indeed, he only made his racecourse debut on 5 May at Saint-Cloud, where he won very decisively against other newcomers. No horse has ever managed to win the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club with the experience of just one race!

Francis-Henri Graffard, the man who can do no wrong



Francis-Henri Graffard, 49, inherited his passion for racing from his grandfather, Dr Henri Champliau, a breeder of National Hunt horses and an emblematic figure in the Charolais region, the family's birthplace. Francis Graffard very quickly knew that he wanted to become a trainer. He studied law and obtained a master's degree in business law. After several experiences, notably in the field of horse sales, he joined the first intake of Darley

Flying Start, an international training programme for future leaders in the racing industry, founded by Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum. It was during those years that he met Lisa-Jane, now his wife. He then worked for Godolphin in Newmarket before returning to France, where he became assistant to trainer Alain de Royer Dupré in Chantilly. In autumn 2011, Francis-Henri Graffard decided to set up on his own. Following Alain de Royer Dupré's retirement at the end of 2021, he took over the Aga Khan Studs string based at Aiglemont, while continuing to manage his own stable.

Francis-Henri Graffard is beginning his 15th season as a trainer and finished at the top of the trainers' standings [leading French trainer, ranked by prize money] last year.

In 2025, he also set the record for the number of Group 1 races won by a French trainer in a single season, with 14 victories. Among those 14 major wins were, of course, Daryz's Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe and Calandagan's Japan Cup.

Francis-Henri Graffard:

"It is a bold gamble, because it is never easy to take on this kind of competition with very little experience. My role is to assess the horse's mental and physical potential and to adapt his work so that we can respond to his different characteristics. Daryzan should have made his debut earlier in the season, but I went through a period when my horses were a little under the weather, and that delayed his debut. So the fact that he has run only once is also down to circumstances.

Daryzan really matured all at once after his debut race. There is only one Prix du Jockey Club each year: he has the pedigree to take part in this kind of race, so we are taking our chance.

We are fortunate to train in Chantilly, so we were able to take him to the racecourse for a gallop over the track. And this winter, he often went to the all-weather track at the racecourse to do canters. Travelling in the horsebox and seeing the racecourse helped him progress mentally. Last year, he was still very babyish mentally; he could start sweating quickly and get a little worked up.

He behaved very well at Saint-Cloud on his debut. And since the race, mentally, he has really taken a big step forward. He is much calmer, and his morning rider has told us that too. So, of course, on Sunday there will be crowds and the race conditions will be a little different, but we will focus on keeping him in his own bubble so that he is very professional on the day!"

On the opposition, notably the horses trained by Aidan O'Brien:

"Aidan O'Brien is incredible in terms of his results and the way he prepares his horses. He is generally the one to beat at these major events. (...) I am reading in the press at the moment that everyone wants to beat Calandagan. On Sunday, the situation is different because Daryzan has run only once. We are basing our decision on his pedigree, on what he has shown us, and on his talent. Whereas Aidan O'Brien's horses are much more battle-hardened than he is. But I do like it when he comes to see me after the race to congratulate me! I would still like to stress the importance of the number of runners and the draw we will have."

Nemone Routh:

"Daryzan is his dam's eleventh foal, and the penultimate one. As she was getting older, we preferred to send her to one of our own stallions. She had already produced very well with Dubawi, so it was fairly logical to send her to Zarak, himself a son of Dubawi. But I have the impression that this mare produces Stakes winners whatever stallion she is sent to! So far, she has produced six Stakes winners. Daryzan could be the seventh. She has already produced two Group 1 winners, Group 2 winners and Listed winners. She herself was a Group 1 winner. And her dam won the Prix de Diane. It is an incredible family. Daryz, Daryzan's older brother, is very strongly stamped by his sire. Daryzan is more refined, but he moves very well. He is a true athlete. He was born late, on 10 May. When he made his debut, he was not yet three years old. He was entitled not to be very precocious! He has the same quality as his brother, that strong acceleration. It is a real gamble to run on Sunday in only his second race, but we believe the quality is there. He obviously lacks a little experience. His draw will be crucial. Mickaël Barzalona had the choice of riding Dolmalan or Daryzan, and he chose Daryzan."



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