

# MEETING DE DEAUVILLE BARRIÈRE

DU 2 AU 30  
AOÛT 2026

HIPPODROME DE  
DEAUVILLE - LA TOUQUES

ENTRÉE  
DÈS 5 €

GRATUITE POUR LES - 12 ANS\*

\*1<sup>ère</sup> CATÉGORIE ENTRÉE GÉNÉRALE, DANS LA LIMITE DES PLACES DISPONIBLES

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Press Release

Sunday, 16 August 2026

## 2026 MEETING DE DEAUVILLE BARRIÈRE

### Deauville-La Touques Racecourse

#### THE AGA KHAN STUDS PRIX JACQUES LE MAROIS

## Rayif gives France its first Jacques Le Marois victory since 2017



The Aga Khan Studs Prix Jacques Le Marois, the third Group 1 (the highest level of horse racing) of the 2026 Deauville Barrière Meeting, went to French three-year-old colt Rayif. Held up for a long time in the group racing on the far side, Rayif made his move 300 metres from the finish and prevailed by a neck over British-trained Zeus Olympios, who looked a possible winner but whose jockey lost his whip (which did not help, even though he would not have beaten Rayif). Irish-trained Precise finished strongly to take third place, half a length further back.

Rayif gave his owner and breeder, the Aga Khan Studs, a first victory in the race since Kalamoun in 1973! Like Rayif, Kalamoun had won the Poule d'Essai des Poulains before

going on to win the Prix Jacques Le Marois. This rare double had not been achieved since Vahorimix in 2001...

Rayif's victory is all the more symbolic as his owners and breeders, the Aga Khan Studs, have sponsored the Prix Jacques Le Marois since last year.

### **Graffard-Aga Khan in flying form**

Trained in Chantilly, Rayif also enabled a French representative to return to the winner's circle in this race, nine years after the last French success, in 2017. Francis-Henri Graffard won his first Prix Jacques Le Marois and his second Group 1 of the meeting, following Samangan's victory — also for the Aga Khan Studs — in the ARC Prix Maurice de Gheest - FEE - En mémoire de Louis Romanet on 9 August. Jockey Mickaël Barzalona also added his name to the race's roll of honour for the first time.

Rayif came into the race on the back of a fifth-place finish in the Haras de Fresnay-Le-Buffard Prix Jean Prat (Group 1), run at Deauville on 12 July. The colt is now expected to head to Ascot (GB) for the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (Group 1).

The two Japanese representatives, Strauss and Sixpence, raced away from the rest of the field on the stands' side. They were never able to get involved and filled the last two places.

### **Technical result**

1st RAYIF (M. Barzalona)  
2nd ZEUS OLYMPIOS (C. Lee)  
3rd PRECISE (R. Moore)  
Margins: NK – ½ – ¾.  
Time: 1'35"50.

### **Reactions from connections**

#### **Francis-Henri Graffard, trainer of Rayif (1st), Chantilly (Oise)**

"I think what Rayif has already achieved is magnificent. He has won the Poule d'Essai and the Jacques Le Marois. His next races will always be stressful, but he has already achieved a great deal. I never thought he was a horse who needed soft ground or that he had won because of the soft ground. He is simply a good horse. He had already shown that in the Poule d'Essai, where he had a somewhat similar trip. He came through on the inside, quickened well and, when he was challenged, he found more. He enjoys what he does, he enjoys his job. Mickaël actually told me: 'I was never worried.' You must not lose faith in horses. He is a fantastic horse and, when he was beaten, we had excuses. We did not lose faith. It is wonderful to win this race for these colours with this horse, who had already won the Poule d'Essai. It is an extraordinary victory. The whole story is beautiful. My job is to try to get the best out of the horses and bring them to the major races. I have an extraordinary team around me and I think that helps.

"Ideally, the race at Ascot, the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes, could be interesting, particularly because it is run on a straight course. If the ground is soft, he can handle it; if it is fast, he can handle that too. If I had to set him one target for the end of the year, that would be it."

**Mickaël Barzalona, jockey of Rayif (1st)**

"It's incredible. I'm part of a team where everything is working extremely well. Everyone has tremendous confidence in each other, there is a lot of communication and the horses are delivering. At the moment, it feels a little like a waking dream. Once I had found my position during the race with Rayif, I was well placed, with horses who had good chances right beside me and others who were a little exposed. The race was run at a very even pace."

**Karl Burke, trainer of Zeus Olympios (2nd), England**

"Zeus Olympios ran a very good race and he is progressing physically. I think that is now starting to show on the racecourse as well. And, obviously, the question of whether he remains in training next year will have to be discussed. I am certain he has one of these Group 1s in him. He is a very good horse. He simply came up against an outstanding horse here. And a trainer in tremendous form. But we beat a filly, Precise, who was receiving a lot of weight from us. And she is a Guineas winner. So, you know, there is no disgrace in finishing second here today."

"We need to discuss what comes next. Obviously, we are entered in the race at Longchamp in early September. I doubt we will bring him out again for that one. But the race at Ascot on Champions Day would certainly be seriously considered. Especially if he remains in training. We could give him a good break and then take him there nice and fresh."

**Ryo Takei, trainer of Strauss (9th), Japan**

"We knew that Strauss did not necessarily need to be covered up and that he could gradually work his way into the race. We decided to go to the stands' side, where the ground was softer but more even. In the middle, it was much drier, but also a little more uneven. In the end, we chose that part of the track, even though it probably would have been better to go through the middle. When he was asked to quicken, he did not respond. It may simply have been because of the ground."

**Joao Moreira, jockey of Strauss (9th), Brazilian based in Hong Kong**

"At halfway, I managed to get him settled and have him galloping comfortably at a good rhythm. Unfortunately, when I pulled him out at around 400 metres from the finish, he did not really respond. He simply kept going at the same pace and I realised he was not going to be competitive all the way to the finish."

I don't think he was able to show his best level today, although, in my opinion, this was a very strong race. The question now is whether he really has the level required for this kind of race. I am happy and proud that he was given his chance. He deserves another one because, if he simply did not show his true colours today, perhaps he will do better next time. In any case, he ran well below what we were hoping for.

Initially, I intended to move towards the middle of the track because, having watched the previous races, we had seen several horses win down the centre. But to get there, I would have had to come out of Sixpence's slipstream far too early, from halfway. I knew that, at that point, he would have started to accelerate and challenge the leaders, with the risk of tiring sooner.

Frankly, I don't think the condition or the part of the track we raced on explains his below-par performance. That said, it is a legitimate question to ask. In any case, Strauss is a very talented horse. As I have already said, it was worth coming all the way here to ride him. He has given me an enormous amount of happiness in the past. I am very happy and grateful to all his connections for entrusting me with such a wonderful horse."

**Hiroyasu Tanaka, trainer of Sixpence (10th), Japan**

"Sixpence broke well, but he was unable to quicken. Perhaps he was not in optimal condition: he was blowing a little after his last piece of work. It was also his first race on a straight course."

**Press Contacts France Galop**

**Hélène Dupuy** – Tel. : 06 30 41 85 89 – Email : [hdupuy@france-galop.com](mailto:hdupuy@france-galop.com)  
**Bertrand Bridon** – Tél. : 06 63 86 66 08 – Email : [bridonbertrand@gmail.com](mailto:bridonbertrand@gmail.com)