

SPORTS STARS HEADING FOR CARLISLE RACECOURSE

Carlisle Racecourse has announced the line-up of VIP guests who will be taking part in this year's Sporting Champions Family Day fixture.

Ex-England cricketer Paul Nixon and Carlisle United's Wembley-bound players will be joined by eight-times champion jump jockey Peter Scudamore at the annual event on Sunday March 21.

Other Cumbrian-based stars appearing include international rally driver Paul Bird, who runs the Kawasaki motorcycle world series team, along with former world champion boxer Charles Shepherd, Olympic archer Alan Wills and speedway riders from Workington Comets, who will display their bikes.

All the VIPs will be available for autographs and photographs at designated times to be announced.

Live interviews with the sporting celebrities will be broadcast from the winner's enclosure over the course's PA system between races during the afternoon meeting, which features children's entertainment. Some will even be staging special displays of their sporting expertise and inviting spectators to join in.

Spectators of all ages will have the chance to try their hand at a range of different sports such as golf, rugby union and judo via professional displays set up around the course.

The Sporting Champions Family Day attracted more than 4,000 spectators when it was held for the first time last year, proving a major success.

John Baker, the racecourse's managing director, said: "It was incredibly popular for a new event and we are confident we will have another bumper crowd this time, given the line-up we have.

"Carlisle United manager Greg Abbott and his players really enjoyed themselves here last year and it will be great to see them back again just seven days before their big cup final at Wembley.

"There really will be something for everyone. Besides six jumps races and a stack of kids entertainment, there is the chance to meet some of Cumbria's top professional sportsmen and actually have a go at different sports. You might even pick up some tips from your sporting hero!"

As well as horse-racing, the action will include sparring sessions by boxer Charles Shepherd and displays by world champion triathlete Georgie Rutherford as well as hound trailing, Cumberland wrestling and the Pirelli Rally. There will also be Wii Sport on a giant screen.

Admission to the meeting is free for all under-16s accompanied by an adult. Parking is also free. Gates open at 12 noon, with the first race under way at 2.30pm. The last one is at 5.15pm. Admissions costs £18 or £12, with concessions £8.

List of VIPs:

- Paul Nixon (Leicestershire & ex-England wicket-keeper)
- Greg Abbott (Carlisle United manager with first team squad)
- Peter Scudamore (eight times champion jump jockey)
- Paul Bird (rally driver & Kawasaki motorbike team leader)
- Charles Shepherd (former world champion boxer)
- Alan Wills (Olympic archer)
- Georgie Rutherford (world champion triathlete)
- Workington Comets speeding riders (names to be confirmed)

List of displays:

- Pirelli Rally
- Rugby union
- Golf
- Hound trailing
- Judo
- Cumberland wrestling
- Triathlon
- Wii Sport

ends