

WOMEN ON TO A WINNER AT WORLD-FIRST MEETING FOR LADY JOCKEYS ONLY

Girl power will take over Carlisle Racecourse next summer when the Cumbrian track stages the *world's first* meeting exclusively for female jockeys.

Called Ultimate Ladies' Night, the unique six-race evening meeting on Monday 1 August, 2011, will raise money for two national breast cancer charities and adopt a pink theme throughout.

National racing chiefs have given the go-ahead for Carlisle to only invite lady jockeys to ride at its popular annual Ladies Night meeting, which already attracts one of the racecourse's biggest crowds of the year.

Professional and amateur female riders will be able to compete at the Flat race night, which will be rounded off with a live open-air concert by a top female performer to be announced shortly.

But although the meeting is open to men and women spectators, no male jockeys will be allowed to ride.

Sarah Oliver, chief executive of the Amateur Jockeys' Association, welcomed the event, saying: "The AJA applauds Carlisle's innovation in hosting the Ultimate Ladies' Night. This certainly should prove highly popular, with strong support from northern trainers and lady jockeys, who have always figured so prominently in ladies' races since their inception."

The all-female riders' event has been officially approved by the British Horseracing Association's Race Planning Committee. It will raise money for two national charities - Breast Cancer Care and the Breast Cancer Campaign - via a special charity race for lady riders which will be run outside the rules of racing half an hour before the official first race off time. There will also be a ladies' fun foot race along the track started from the starting stalls which will raise money for local charity Hospice at Home.

John Baker, Carlisle Racecourse's managing director, said: "This is a world-first, truly unique event and we are expecting national and international interest in it. We have already had some tremendously positive feedback from all those we have contacted as well as support from the AJA and senior lady amateur jockeys."

John, who was named Cumbria's Businessman of the Year for 2010 last month, added: "This is not only about giving opportunities to showcase lady riders and raise money for charity, it is a high-profile meeting and there will also be a significantly positive economic impact on Carlisle and for tourism in our whole region with the on-spends for hotels, restaurants, bars, transport and shops.

"We have had a tremendously positive and supportive response from Racing For Change who are fully behind this innovative, exciting and unique new event. Serena Brotherton, the leading senior ladies amateur rider in the north, has also been extremely helpful in putting together our proposals and generating industry support. Serena has been in China recently, becoming the first overseas lady jockey to ride there."

The all-female racing will see the feature race carry a minimum of £10,000 prizemoney.

More than 8,000 spectators attended this year's Ladies' Night meeting at Carlisle.