

RACE BY RACE PREVIEWS: VAAL CLASSIC@2026.01.29

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 1, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R95.000, 12:30GMT+2

Race Summary: POWER OF TIGER confirmed recent improvement with a career-best second last time and a repeat of that performance should suffice in this lineup. VARACHINO'S CHAMP is held by that rival on recent form but has shown enough to be competitive. AMAZE ME and EMPRESS WU fit a similar profile but are vulnerable to less-exposed rivals. Newcomers EL ZANI and stablemate WISPINTHEWILLOW don't need to be special to make their presence felt. The betting should provide a guide to their chances.

Selections:

#3 Power Of Tiger, #6 El Zani, #1 Varachino's Champ, #5 Empress Wu

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 2, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R120.000, 13:05GMT+2

Race Summary: Well-related SECRETARY BIRD caught the eye when running on strongly once the penny had dropped to finish a close-up third on debut. She would've come on with the benefit of that experience and could improve sufficiently to open her account. NO DRAMA has shown enough to keep the selection honest, though a bigger threat will likely come from VERSATILITY who finished alongside that rival on debut and will have more to offer given that introduction. The betting could provide a guide to the chances of the newcomers, of whom well-bred STAGGERWING makes most appeal.

Selections:

#6 Secretary Bird, #9 Versatility, #3 No Drama, #7 Staggerwing

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 3, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R130.000, 13:40GMT+2

Race Summary: BUFFALO KING CODY improved after an introductory outing to finish third over this trip behind re-opposing CATFISH, who wouldn't be winning out of turn after filling the runner-up berth in both starts. However, the fitting of blinkers and engagement of a 4kg claimer could give the former the edge. TIME IS PRECIOUS showed promise on debut and will be competitive with natural improvement. Well-bred debutante PERFECT SKY is worth a market check and betting support would speak volumes of her chance.

Selections:

#1 Buffalo King Cody, #2 Catfish, #4 Time Is Precious, #7 Perfect Sky

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 4, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R120.000, 14:15GMT+2

Race Summary: After consecutive runner-up finishes, well-related STONEYWOOD won't need to improve a great deal to go one better. TREASURE STATE attracted market support when finishing third on debut, so she could play a leading role in receipt of a sex allowance and with natural improvement expected. ROCK MUSIC and CHARLESTON DAWN also have the means to make their presence felt. Newcomer KING REDOUTE is bred to be useful and won't need to be special to run a forward race in this company. Watch the betting for clues.

Selections:

#2 Stoneywood, #7 King Redoute, #8 Charleston Dawn, #9 Treasure State

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 5, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R160.000, 14:50GMT+2

Race Summary: A case can be made for most, but none appeal more than progressive MIAMI MOUNTAIN who bounced back to best with a last-start win when returning to sprinting after his no-show in a 1400m Grade 2. He has shown enough pace to be effective over this trip and a resultant 2-point penalty isn't likely to halt his momentum. Fellow 3yo AFRICAN PRIDE has the form and experience to

fight out the finish, and is distance suited too. Older rivals COSMIC STAR, KARATE KID, GIMMETHEGOODLIFE and RAFA BAY are proven at this level and remain competitive off their current marks.

Selections:

#10 Miami Mountain, #6 African Pride, #11 Rafa Bay, #1 Cosmic Star

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 6, Gallops, 2000m, Turf, R125.000, 15:25GMT+2

Race Summary: THE PLAYBOY BOMBER produced a career-best effort when winning over 1800m in his first go at the trip last time. A 5-point penalty seems fair but this extended trip could be even more to his liking. Runner-up GIMMEACHOICE is 0.5kg better off and would've tightened up since that comeback run, so he could improve sufficiently to turn the tables. JORDAN, closely matched on the form, is both consistent at this level and competitive off his current mark. REPETITION was an unlucky loser of his last start but that was at a lower level, so he must find improvement in his peak outing to have a say.

Selections:

#1 Gimmeachoice, #2 The Playboy Bomber, #3 Jordan, #10 Repetition

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 7, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R100.000, 16:00GMT+2

Race Summary: AGOGE won a course-and-distance maiden before he was thrown into the deep-end of a 1400m 3yo Grade 3 which probably came too soon for him. A return to this distance in these calmer waters will suit so it could pay to follow his progress. Class-dropper HEAVENLY GOOD, last-start winner over this track and trip CARNELO, as well as hard-knockers UNSOLVED RIDDLE and PEACE TREATY get weight from the selection so they could make life difficult for him.

Selections:

#3 Agoge, #5 Heavenly Good, #6 Carnelo, #2 Unsolved Riddle

Vaal Classic, 29.01.2026, Race 8, Gallops, 1200m, Turf, R125.000, 16:40GMT+2

Race Summary: ENSUING and ANTONIO GAUDI are closely matched on the form of their course-and-distance meeting in a similar contest recently. Both have the means to fight it out from midfield berths. FULLY LOADED is course-and-distance suited and proven at this level, but his wide draw is a concern. DRIVELIKEAMASTER, RED PENNY and HALBERDIER have the means make their presence felt, though it could pay to side with AFRICAN PRINCE whose Highveld introduction was encouraging. The selection is ideally positioned in gate 2 and is open to improvement.

Selections:

#5 African Prince, #2 Fully Loaded, #8 Antonio Gaudi, #1 Ensuing

Best Win: #3 POWER OF TIGER

Best Value Bet: #5 AFRICAN PRINCE

Best Longshot: #5 AFRICAN PRINCE