

RACE BY RACE PREVIEWS: VAAL@2026.05.21

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 1, Gallops, 1400m, Turf, R105.000, 12:00GMT+2

Race Summary: SNAP YOUR FINGERS was a beaten favourite over 1600m last time against winners after a promising debut second over this trip. The return to this distance and drop back into maiden company will suit and she should atone. Stablemate SECRET FATE and well-related QUIRKY are bred to be useful so worth a market check on debut. FOREST ACT and FREESTYLE DANCE are other newcomers to keep an eye on. EMPRESS OF PEACE will know more about it after a pleasing introduction and could improve to make her presence felt.

Selections:

#7 Snap Your Fingers, #5 Quirky, #6 Secret Fate, #1 Empress Of Peace

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 2, Gallops, 1400m, Turf, R125.000, 12:35GMT+2

Race Summary: RAPTOR KING caught the eye once the penny had dropped when staying on to finish third over 1200m on debut. On that evidence the step up to this distance, with that experience to count on, should be more to his liking. LIFE IN COLOUR improved in first-time headgear and could have a role to play if building on that with the headgear retained. However, a bigger threat will likely come from one of the first-timers so follow the betting moves. DISDAIN, MASTER SMOKER, NOBLE SAINT and WARTRAX BLAZE are of particular interest before any market clues.

Selections:

#9 Raptor King, #7 Master Smoker, #6 Life In Colour, #3 Disdain

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 3, Gallops, 1200m, Turf, R110.000, 13:10GMT+2

Race Summary: MISS FANTASTIC hasn't been seen since finishing a close-up third on debut over this trip 17 weeks ago but she would've come on since and won't need to improve much to make a winning reappearance. RENDEVOUS IN RIO fits a similar profile and has both the form and experience to play a leading role. GATHERING WINTER and MISS RIVER DANCER had legitimate excuses for disappointing last starts and they can make their presence felt if bouncing back to earlier form. DESTINY'S DREAM, ARTIFACT and CHERICHERILADY have also shown enough to get a look in. Watch the betting on the newcomers.

Selections:

#10 Miss Fantastic, #4 Miss River Dancer, #7 Artifact, #5 Rendezvous In Rio

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 4, Gallops, 1200m, Turf, R115.000, 13:45GMT+2

Race Summary: SANDS OF VALHALLA raced prominently throughout when only outrun late on debut over track and trip. He would've benefitted from that experience and won't need to improve much - if at all - to go one better. HIGHWAYMAN HARRY and BERRY LANCER have the form and experience to challenge the selection while CAPTAIN COOPER should, on the evidence of his debut course-and-distance debut, pose more of a threat back in a maiden after finishing unplaced in a sales race last time. Newcomer SHINING STAR is attractively bred and warrants respect, especially if the market speaks in his favour.

Selections:

#15 Sands Of Valhalla, #16 Shining Star, #1 Highwayman Harry, #9 Captain Cooper

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 5, Gallops, 2400m, Turf, R120.000, 14:20GMT+2

Race Summary: FUTUREWOLFF has found his niche over this distance. He defied a 3-point penalty and rise in class to remain undefeated over this trip last time and a career-high mark may not be enough to prevent him from completing the hat-trick. DAMOVA has a bit to find on the form of a recent meeting with the selection but is weighted to pose more of a threat. Last-start winner WE ARE THE LOGANS won his only start over 2400m so could also have a say. TITANS OF WAR, POPLAR PARK and BELLEROPHON appeal most of the remainder.

Selections:

#7 Futurewolff, #5 Damova, #8 We Are The Logans, #3 Poplar Park

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 6, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R110.000, 14:55GMT+2

Race Summary: OPEN SESAME bounced back to form with a close-up third last time in first-time blinkers and a repeat of that effort, with the headgear retained, could suffice. CEUTA is finding it hard to win but is unbeaten over track and trip so could snap a 340-day winless run. WOMAN'S WORLD was a game-in-defeat third from the front in a 2000m KZN feature and will be hard to peg back if adopting similar tactics over this shorter trip off an unchanged mark. Returning FIRE IN HER SOUL and RINGA RINGA ROSES have shown enough to be competitive, so too are hard-knockers AZALEAS FOR ALL and BOOM BOOM.

Selections:

#9 Open Sesame, #2 Woman's World, #4 Ringa Ringa Roses, #1 Ceuta

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 7, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R100.000, 15:35GMT+2

Race Summary: FASHION NEWS won a Work Riders' maiden on debut and did so in the manner of an above-average 3yo filly. She is open to any amount of improvement with that experience under her belt so it should pay to follow her progress, especially as this extended trip should be more to her liking. Fellow recent maiden winner UTSAAH has improved with blinkers fitted and should remain competitive on her handicap debut. Class-dropper PRINCESS ILARIA and returning REFLECTIVE also warrant respect. TOP SHELF TEDDY will be suited by the drop to this distance and should make her presence felt too.

Selections:

#5 Fashion News, #6 Utsaah, #3 Top Shelf Teddy, #8 Sikeloi

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 8, Gallops, 1400m, Turf, R120.000, 16:10GMT+2

Race Summary: Debut winners WILD AS THE WIND and SHIVERING LIGHT are open to any amount of improvement over this extended trip after successful 1160m introductions. BRISTOL HERCULES, TURBO POWER and BUDDY BOY have the form and experience to challenge the unbeaten duo, though a bigger threat will likely come from DRIVELIKEAMASTER whose winning turn is near after 3 consecutive second-place finishes. Last-start winner CHIEFTAIN'S SHIELD and consistent PRINCE OF KILDARE have earning potential too.

Selections:

#13 Wild As The Wind, #14 Shivering Light, #5 Drivelikeymaster, #8 Prince Of Kildare

Vaal, 21.05.2026, Race 9, Gallops, 1400m, Turf, R90.000, 16:45GMT+2

Race Summary: BLOOMINGTON has improved at a higher level since dropping in ratings. He is competitive off his current mark and with blinkers fitted could capitalise on this ease in grade. Last-start winners EMPRESS WU and PRETTY ANALIA remain competitive under 3-point penalties, while ROYAL HORIZON could also have a role to play dropped to this class off a reduced mark. SIX OF ALL, GOLDEN ASPEN and Highveld returnee OH MY GUCCI GIRL are others with earning potential.

Selections:

#1 Bloomington, #8 Pretty Analia, #3 Six Of All, #5 Golden Aspen

Best Win: #5 FASHION NEWS

Best Value Bet: #1 BLOOMINGTON

Best Longshot: #1 BLOOMINGTON