

US\$12 MILLION DUBAI WORLD CUP

THUNDER SNOW BECOMES THE FIRST HORSE IN HISTORY TO LAND TWO CONSECUTIVE WINS

By DRC

“HE IS SUCH A BRAVE HORSE. I WASN’T SURE IF HE WILL WIN, BUT WE HAD THE BEST JOCKEY IN THE WORLD ON BOARD AND HE KNOWS HIM SO WELL. HE HAS WON THE UAE DERBY AND NOW THE DUBAI WORLD CUP TWICE.” _SAEED BIN SUROOR- TRAINER



Thunder Snow overcame a huge amount of difficulty to become the first horse in history to have consecutive wins in the US\$12 million Dubai World Cup sponsored by Emirates Airline (G1).

Christophe Soumillon was in the saddle as he was 12 months ago and the victory capped a superb evening for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and the Godolphin team who scooped four of the eight thoroughbred races.

“ Last year I won by five, six, even more lengths, and today Thunder had to fight hard. I really want to say a big thank you to Saeed bin Suroor, and also to HH Sheikh Mohammed, just before the race they said to me in the paddock you should have so much confidence and do everything right. Thanks to Thunder Snow, because without him I would not be able to do such things.”_ Christophe Soumillon, Jockey

The 5-year-old defied the widest stall bar one to score and was providing trainer Saeed bin Suroor with a remarkable ninth win in the Dubai World Cup in a winning time of 2 minutes 3.87 seconds.

\$6,000,000 LONGINES DUBAI SHEEMA CLASSIC

Old Persian proved too powerful in the US\$6 million Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) to present owners Godolphin and potent trainer-jockey combination Charlie Appleby and William Buick with a remarkable treble on the Dubai World Cup card.

A 4-year-old homebred colt by the mighty stallion Dubawi, Old Persian had been considered a major contender beforehand and benefitted from saving ground on the rail behind the pacesetter Japanese-trained Rey De Oro.

As the eight runners swung into the homestretch, Buick was able to point his classy bay mount into clear running and quickly they established a winning break before the final 200m.

The Japanese pair of Cheval Grand and Suave Richard came from off the pace to get within a length and a half and half a length respectively of the winner at the line. The time clocked for the 2410m was the second fastest in the past decade at 2 minutes 27.17 seconds.

Charlie Appleby, Trainer, OLD PERSIAN (1st)—“It has just been a fantastic night, and I’m so pleased for His Highness Sheikh Mohammed and the whole Godolphin team. They went a good sensible gallop and William made a sensible move turning for home to make his gap, allowing himself to get the run he needed. I knew the acceleration was there.”

\$6,000,000 DUBAI TURF SPONSORED BY DP WORLD

She arrived in Dubai with a huge reputation and Japan’s super filly Almond Eye proved herself on a world stage at Meydan when showing brilliant acceleration to win the US\$6 million Dubai Turf sponsored by DP World.

The Lord Kanaloa filly, trained by Sakae Kunieda to win all three legs of the Filly Triple Crown and the Japan Cup at home, was produced with a well-timed run by Christophe Lemaire to land the 1800m Dubai Turf.

The race provided a great result for Japan with compatriot Vivlos a length and a quarter back in second and Deirdre finishing fourth. British trainer David O’Meara saddled Lord Glitters to produce a career-best run to take third.



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Christophe Lemaire, Jockey, ALMOND EYE (1st)—“She was very impressive. The way she accelerated is unbelievable. Today was her first start of the year, and quite early on she was actually in front of the rest of the field. I think she relaxed a little bit and she had a bit of a margin on them. The distance was a little bit short for her today but she is so good that I had no fear about that.”

\$2,500,000 DUBAI GOLDEN SHAHEEN SPONSORED BY GULF NEWS

X Y Jet was first out of the gate and first home with a powerful front-running performance to capture Saturday’s US\$2.5 million, Group 1 Dubai Golden Shaheen sponsored by Gulf News at Meydan Racecourse.

Trained by Jorge Navarro for owners Rockingham Ranch and Gelfenstein Farm, X Y Jet had finished second twice previously in this event, defeated by a neck in 2016 when collared by Muarrab and by a head last year to Mind Your Biscuits.

Emisael Jaramillo hustled X Y Jet from the gate on Saturday night and immediately took command of the race with Matera Sky, piloted by Yutake Take, applying pressure through an opening 400m in 24.34 seconds.

The 7-year-old Kantharos gelding maintained his advantage into the turn as Matera Sky tried to keep pace with Imperial Hint saving ground in third. As the field straightened away, Matera Sky again took aim at the pacesetter, but X Y Jet found another gear and flew home a length and a half winner. X Y Jet completed 1200m in a final running time of 1:10.75.

Emisael Jaramillo, Jockey, X Y JET (1st)—“I’m very happy. For me, this is so special. I’m very excited. I’ve come back two times and now I’ve won today, it’s very emotional for everyone with the horse. What a horse he is.”

\$2,500,000 UAE DERBY SPONSORED BY THE SAEED AND MOHAMMED AL NABOODAH GROUP

Brendan Walsh, who once spent a decade working on the Godolphin team in Dubai before heading to the USA with hopes of becoming a trainer, saw his long-held dream come true when his first runner in the Dubai, Plus Que Parfait, won the \$2.5 UAE Derby Sponsored by the Saaed & Mohammed Al Naboodah Group (G2).

Under a perfect ride by Jose Ortiz, who won his second race on the Dubai World Cup card in as many tries, Plus Que Parfait earned 100 qualifying points for the Kentucky Derby in May. The son of Point of Entry found racing room in the field of 14 at the top of the straight and after the rider switched him to the inside; he accelerated between Gray Magician and Manguzi and dug in to prevail by three-quarters of a length.

Plus Que Parfait, which means more than perfect in French, covered the 1900m on a fast track in 1:58.41. He boosted his lifetime earnings to US \$1,949,800 with his share of the purse and the Imperial Racing LLC’s colorbearer now has a record of 7 2-1-2.

Brendan Walsh, Trainer, PLUE QUE PARFAIT (1st)—“This is huge - Jose gave him such a great ride and what a night for him with two winners. This has been the plan for quite a while and his owners are based out here. We said if things didn’t work out to get to the Kentucky Derby then we would come here. He had a bad day the last time he ran but we didn’t hold it against him and it has worked out. Brilliant.”

\$2,000,000 AL QUOZ SPRINT SPONSORED BY AZIZI DEVELOPMENTS

Blue Point stamped his claim to being the best sprinter on the planet when he stormed to victory in the 1200m Al Quoz Sprint sponsored by Azizi Developments (G1).



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Blue Point stopped the clock in 1.08.39, only narrowly sitting outside the mark set by last year’s Al Quoz Sprint winner Jungle Cat when taking the Nad Al Sheba Turf Sprint last March. In doing so, he provided a second success on the card for trainer Charlie Appleby, jockey William Buick and owners Godolphin, coming hot on the heels of Melbourne Cup winner Cross Counter’s triumphant return in the Dubai Gold Cup sponsored by Al Tayer Motors (G2).

This was Blue Point’s second Group 1 victory, adding to his win in the 1000m King’s Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot last June, and it hardly looked in doubt as he cantered up towards the leaders at the 300m. Once Buick shook the reins, it took only a handful of strides before he had the pacesetters in his sights.

Charlie Appleby, Trainer, BLUE POINT (1st)—“You have got a combination here of William and the horse. They thrive off each other. William knows him inside out. I knew from the body language, as much as you never get confident too soon, but I felt that William had pretty much everything covered there. I’m delighted. I have always been very fond of him, ever since his 2-year-old days and he’s doing what we always hoped he would do one day and that is to become a finished article in the top sprinting division.”

\$1,500,000 DUBAI GOLD CUP SPONSORED BY AL TAYER MOTORS

Cross Counter successfully bridged the gap between Australia and the UAE with a brilliant

victory for jockey William Buick over Isopolini – like the winner a 4-year-old owned by Godolphin and trained by Charlie Appleby – in the Dubai Gold Cup sponsored by Al Tayer Motors (G2), run over 3200m and with a purse of \$1.5m.

Winner of the Melbourne Cup last November, Cross

Counter defied the lengthy lay-off, showing great courage as the two stablemates drew clear of their eight rivals from 500m out. Ispolini surrendered the lead 250m from the finish, where Cross Counter forged ahead to gain victory by one and a quarter lengths in a time of 3min 19secs, the third-best in 11-year history of the race.

Cross Counter, who gave both his trainer and jockey their first successes in the race, was taking his career record to six wins and two second placings from nine races.

French-trained Call The Wind stayed on over the last 500m to be third, three lengths off the first two and four lengths ahead of Gold Mount, Hong Kong’s first runner in the race.

Charlie Appleby, Trainer, CROSS COUNTER (1st)—“It was his first opportunity to run since Melbourne and he answered all the questions. William was put in a bit of a pocket in the race but you’re actually never too worried when you’re working with the nice horses and good jockeys we have.”

\$1,500,000 GODOLPHIN MILE SPONSORED BY MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM CITY

Over 1600m on the Meydan dirt surface, the \$1.5 million Group 2 Godolphin Mile sponsored by Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum City-District One produced a thrilling finish with Heavy Metal looking set to defend his title only to be caught in the dying strides by Coal Front.

Trained by Todd Pletcher for Robert La Penta & Heads Of Plains Partners, the 5-year-old ridgling was drawn wide in 12 and not able to get to the front under Jose Ortiz, who had hoped to do so, but forced to track Heavy Metal, Muntazah and Good Curry.



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The last named was the first to crack with Muntazah looming large alongside Heavy Metal at the top of the straight before weakening with 300m to run.

That left Heavy Metal clear with a seemingly insurmountable advantage but Ortiz had a willing partner who finished off his race in style to put his head in front where it mattered.

The winning verdict was three parts of a length with Ortiz making his first UAE mount a winning one as well as supplying Pletcher his maiden local success with his 17th runner.

Jose Ortiz, Jockey, COAL FRONT (1st) — "The emotion right here is for my family back home and I just want to say that I love them all. The horse felt great for me and he broke well, which was important. I wanted to be on or near to the lead and it worked out perfectly. I knew I had to be patient to time my run for home. I had two horses in front of me which gave me a great lead, and I just sat and watched Jim Crowley and Muntazah as he is the main man around here. I followed him and my horse dug in for me late on and he has done it well."

\$1,000,000 DUBAI KAHAYLA CLASSIC SPONSORED BY MUBADALA

The 2019 edition of the US\$ 1 million Dubai Kahayla Classic sponsored by Mubadala will go down as one of the most thrilling in the history of the Group 1 PA race. Neck to neck the locally trained AF Maher and the Polish raider Fazza Al Khalediah battled it to the line of the 2000m race that is run on dirt. With 300m to go, AF Maher lost his advantage that he had held since the gates opened, but he fought back and slowly but surely got his head in front once more to pass the winning post

as the new victor of this Purebred Arabian classic.

"You need courage and that is what he has," said his jubilant jockey Tadhg O'Shea, who had had the choice between the 6-year-old son of AF Al Buraq and AF Raad and the other Ernst Oertel-trained runner AF Al Sajanjle. Only a few hours before the race, he said he was hoping to have made the right choice after AF Maher had impressively disposed of Ziyadd in his prep race, which statistically has not been the greatest pointer towards the Kahayla Classic.

"Statistics and records are there to be broken," he continued. "I have had great belief in this horse and already told Ernst (Oertel) a long time ago that I thought he was very good. He was still very unexposed and it was always the plan to take him to the front and set the pace. It's been ten years since I won this race on the mighty Mizzna and it's just absolutely amazing to win it again."

Owned by Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda, AF Maher offered Ernst Oertel his first victory in this race and the trainer said: "This is what Arabians do. They battle. I'm so happy and I'm lost for words. I am just so proud."

With such a strong pace from the start, last year's winner Tallaab Al Khalediah was not able to dictate the pace from draw number 12. He travelled on the outside and when AF Maher and Fazza Al Khalediah quickened coming out of the bend, he was quickly outpaced. In the end, it was Goshawke who finished ten and a quarter lengths behind the leading pair in third, while Tallaab Al Khalediah had to accept the first defeat in his career and finished fourth.



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