

22 December 2018, Abu Dhabi, UAE ~ The final UAE racing fixture before Christmas is at the Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club on Sunday, 23 December 2018.

The best of the Purebred Arabian action is a 1600m handicap with 14 declared. Champion Jockey Tadhg O'Shea, riding for the last time in 2018 having incurred a two-day suspension at Abu Dhabi last Sunday, partners AF Maher for his main employer, Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda and Ernst Oertel. A course and distance winner in March, he made a winning return to action over 1700m on the dirt at Sharjah in November, but was a bit disappointing on his latest outing, over the same Abu Dhabi 1600m as Sunday's race.

"We have a better draw this time than last which is a big plus," O'Shea said. "He has been in good form at home, and hopefully is going to be thereabouts in a competitive race."

For His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Eric Lemartinel saddles three with Pat Cosgrave aboard **Elyaah**. However, the stable jockey would have struggled to 'make the weight' at 54kg on stable companion **Bainoona** ridden by Fabrice Veron. A course and distance winner under Cosgrave on her most recent start, a month ago, she looks a big danger to all.

For Sheikh Hamdan and Al Mheiri, Curtis partners **AF Monse** looking another to consider, along with **Nizora**, to be ridden by Antonio Fresu for Helal Al Alawi who also saddles **Da'Areen**. Richard Mullen is aboard the last named for Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and another to have won her most recent start, in her case defeating stable companion Nizora over 2000m on the Al Ain dirt surface and supplying her trainer his 100th winner in the process.

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