

Abu Dhabi's Final Meeting of the Season Posts Hakeemat Muscat with Triple Crown Win

6 April 2019, Abu Dhabi, UAE ~ Abu Dhabi staged its final meeting of the campaign on Saturday, 6 April 2019, with a fixture that was postponed when originally scheduled at the beginning of March, now highlighted by the 1400m Group 2 Liwa Oasis won handily by Sharaf Al Reef.

Probably last of the 12 runners at halfway, the 10-year-old by Bibi De Carrere out of NOMARCHIE (FR) by Djelfor (FR) kept passing rivals throughout the straight under Gerald Avranche, sporting the lime green silks of Al Ajban Stables and riding for trainer Abdallah Al Hammadi. The combo completed a double on the card for all concerned, a sixth career victory for the veteran, all at Abu Dhabi.

It was also the shortest trip over which he has won and Avranche explained: "They went very, very quick up front which has really helped me because this horse stays a lot further, so his stamina has really come into play in the final stages."

The maximum field allowed of 16 may have gone to post for the opening 1600m maiden, but barely a handful were ever involved and **Alhaan Al Reef** (DARIYA (FR) x Matheela (AE)) by Tibet (RU)) took advantage with a late challenge under Richard Mullen.

A 4-year-old colt, trained by Al Hammadi for Al Ajban Stables where the handler is based, the winner was having his third career start.

Slowly away, he found his stride under Avranche and they were able to tag onto a select group of runners with the majority beaten at halfway. Once in the straight, Avranche's mount picked up well to hit the front 75 from home and the pair winning going away at the line.

Avranche said: "Obviously the start was not ideal and then we had some traffic problems, but once we had racing room he was always going well and then picked up nicely to win his race in decent style."

The main support race, the 2400m Group 3 Arabian Triple Crown R3 for the 4-year-olds, produced a thriller with the lead constantly changing hands throughout the final 700m.

When and where it mattered, **Hakeemat Muscat** (Akim De Ducor (FR) x Djourella (FR) by Kerbella (FR)) and Szczepan Mazur emerged on top with the 4-year-old filly powering home in the final 200m to snatch the spoils. Trained by Younis Al Kalbani for Muscat Stud For Pure Arabian Horses, breeder of the filly, she was winning for a third time after two victories in her native Oman on the dirt surface at Muscat, but was making it third time lucky here in the UAE. Win time: 02:46:68

Al Kalbani said: "She is a really lovely filly and one we really like. She has done nothing wrong when second in her first two starts here and really deserved that win. She has really battled gamely and is just so game and honest, so it is nice to see her win a big race here in Abu Dhabi."

Originally third reserve, **AF Nafece** (AF AL BURAQ (AE) x BUCELIA DU CAYROU (FR) by Dormane) took full advantage of the late opportunity afforded to him to land the 1400m maiden for horses foaled in the UAE, providing owner **Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda** and his main trainer, **Ernst Oertel**, yet another winner in what has been a prolific season.

Homebred by Al Nabooda, the 6-year-old gelding was opening his account after 13 previous fruitless starts having finished third on three occasions, his best previous placings.

Having tracked the early pace, he was sent to the front fully 700m out by Antonio Fresu who said: "He was a reserve, but luckily made the field and has done that quite nicely."

The owner later completed a double in the 1600m handicap for horses in private ownership, also helping Mazur to complete a brace as he was aboard **AF Momtaz** (AF AL BURAQ (AE) x Fleur Du Cayrou (FR) by Dormane) doubling his own career tally having landed one of his previous ten starts for Musabbeh Al Mheiri.

As with the vast majority of the Al Nabooda string, also bred by the owner, the 6-year-old entire had previously won on his turf debut, after one previous Sharjah outing almost 12 months earlier in November 2018 over this Abu Dhabi 1600m.

The very final race of the season in the capital, and only Thoroughbred contest on the card, was a 1600m handicap and Mazur completed a treble with victory aboard **Sugar Boy**, owned and trained by Qaiss Aboud who was celebrating his first winner in both categories.

Racing in the UAE for this season concludes next weekend with racing at Al Ain on Thursday and Meydan on Friday.

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