

Al Asayl's Asyyad Takes Feature in Abu Dhabi



17 December 2017, Abu Dhabi ~ The Listed Abu Dhabi Championship over 1600m, was the feature in the capital on Sunday evening, 17 December, and it produced a finish worthy of its billing with Asyyad landing the spoils by a rapidly diminishing nose.

That, however, only tells half the story as the **son of Burning Sand** representing Al Asayl had led inside the final 100m seemingly about to win easily when sweeping past **Goshawke**. But the race was far from over.

Both **Asyyad** and **Goshawke** (Thoroughbred by the Burning Sand daughter, Sand Witchh) were having just their second career start, having finished third on their respective debuts, both over this trip, Goshawke here at Abu Dhabi and Asyaad at Al Ain.

Ridden by Tadhg O'Shea for Eric Lemartinel and HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, **Assyad** appeared to think his job was done once in front with Goshawke throwing down a renewed and very determined challenge. To the naked eye, it was impossible to split them as they flashed across the line.

The **judge's verdict went the way of Asyyad** and O'Shea explained: "*He actually jumped well from the gates but was then, immediately, impeded from both sides so, given his inexperience, as this was just his second start, he has done remarkably well to win. The plan was to be quite handy but, after that start, I had to take my time and luckily, the gaps appeared when I needed them.*

"Listen, he is a nice, young horse and had to be tonight because, given the way the race panned out, that was a lot better performance than it probably looked. Basically, a good horse has helped me get out of a bit of trouble and hopefully he is a nice one for the future."

That feature was one of a trio of races restricted to three-year-olds. The meeting opened with the Abu Dhabi Fillies' Championship, and was followed by the colts' equivalent, both carrying Prestige Status and over 1400m.

Fifteen may have gone to post in the opener but in reality only two were ever realistically involved. **AF Sharesah** jumped out in front under **Antonio Fresu** for **Champion Owner Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda** and trainer **Ernst Oertel** and was closely tracked by Omani raider **Ghazayel**.

The most experienced runner in the race, having won three of her five outings in Oman, where her season started in January, as opposed to her rivals, whose racing campaign only began in November, she always looked the likely winner and hit the front 200m out.

Ghazayel was making her turf debut, as they race on dirt back home in Muscat, she soon had matters under control, providing trainer Younis Al Kalbani a winner with his first runner in the UAE and apprentice jockey, **Saif Al Balushi**, a second victory.

The jockey, who rode the winner for his cousin, **Sheikh Mohd Shibab Hamed Al Balushi**, also having his first local runner, said: *"Her form in Oman was very good and she had already won twice this season so we were very hopeful of a big run. The switch to turf was not an issue and I thought from a long way out we would get there. She stays further and is versatile with regards to ground so hopefully is a nice filly going forward."*

Nabooda, Oertel and Fresu had to settle for second once again, in the Abu Dhabi Colts' Championship, over the same course and distance but in contrasting circumstances. On this occasion their **AF Motaghatres** was pretty much in that position throughout.

They chased **MH Rahal**, confidently ridden by Connor Beasley for Elise Jeanne and the race was between themselves for the whole of the straight with Fresu's mount never really looking likely to peg back the deficit, as was the case when the pair clashed at Sharjah four weeks ago.

Beasley said of his winner: *"He was very well away from the gates so I was able to get a good position early and he was very professional throughout the race. He clearly knew what was expected of him and was a good winner in what had looked a competitive race."*

Al Nabooda and Oertel earned a deserved change of fortune when **Noof KB**, initially the first reserve, gained a place in the field for a 1600m maiden and promptly opened her account at the fifth attempt. Always first or second under Fernando Jara, she was committed for home leaving the home turn and never really looked likely to be caught.

"The trainer was pretty confident before the race and clearly very pleased she squeezed into the race when there was a non-runner," said Fernando Jara. *"In fairness, he was right because I was always going strongly and she then picked up nicely in the straight."*

AF Asheham was then a third runner-up on the card for the owner, trainer and Fresu despite having led throughout the majority of a 1400m handicap. With most of their 15 rivals beaten on the home turn, it was left to **Al Shabab** to throw down the telling and decisive challenge leading inside the final 200m.

In doing so, he provided a second winner of the season for trainer **Ahmed Al Mehairbi** and a quick double for Jara who said: *"It was a good spare ride as I was not originally riding him so it is a nice*

Replace with
your logo

horsereporter.com

www.horsereporter.com ~ Bringing you the world of Arabian horses

<http://www.horsereporter.com>

surprise and the horse has done it well."

The finale was a 2400m handicap, the only Thoroughbred race on the card. Here Jara made it a third consecutive winner partnering Mustahdaf to a narrow success, providing trainer Maria Ritchie a belated first winner of the season.

~ end