

BF Mughader Victor in Three-Way Action at Al Ain

5 January 2018, Al Ain, UAE ~ Racing at Al Ain Racecourse on Friday evening, 5 January 2018, highlighted by a competitive 2000m handicap, did not disappoint with the lead changing hands at least three times in the final 500m.

RB Goliath took up the running at about halfway but was immediately challenged for the lead by **AF Mahshoum**, passing him briefly before **RB Goliath** regained the initiative once. He was then able to hold on to until headed passing the 200m pole by **RB Rich Surprise**, living up to his name. Meanwhile, **BF Mughader** was able to challenge between, snatching the lead with about 100m left and staying on well to land the spoils.

It had not looked a likely victory when BF Mughader found himself last of the ten runners after veering left at the start, but Antonio Fresu riding for Ibrahim Al Hadhrami and completing a double, did not panic letting let his mount find a good rhythm before making steady progress throughout the straight. A winner once on dirt in his native Oman, **BF Mughader** (Falak (GB) x Watan (OM) won on his third and previous UAE outing, all on the Abu Dhabi turf, before switching surfaces here.

Al Hadhrami said: *"He has not had that much racing and we were happy the surface would suit him. He won at Abu Dhabi over 2200m, so the distance was never going to be a problem. It was a good performance by horse and jockey."*

Just 30 minutes later, the trainer was celebrating a double when **Al Mobher** (Big Easy (US) x Radwa De Faust (FR) landed a 1600m maiden, winning for the first time at the eighth attempt. Owned by **The Royal Cavalry of Oman**, it was a belated first winner of the season for jockey Adrie de Vries. *"Obviously it is nice to get that winner on the board after a quiet start,"* de Vries said. *"Hopefully I can add to that now, especially with the Carnival at Meydan about to start."*

De Vries did not have to wait long to double his seasonal tally, recording an ultra-smooth victory on **Munowra** in the concluding 1400m maiden. Having just her second start, the Munjiz filly is trained by **Jean de Roualle**. *"She is a lovely filly and one we have big expectations from,"* said de Roualle. *"She was clueless on her first start, but is starting to understand what we want now. She has a lovely pedigree and will be a nice broodmare, but hopefully she can win more races. We will take her to Abu Dhabi on the turf next and expect her to be better on grass."*

The action kicked off with a 1000m handicap, won in style by **AF Mukhifah** (AF AL Bryaq x AL Bayyinah by Pavot Al Maury (FR), never headed under Fresu and chased throughout by stable companion **AF Meeqat**, the mount of Connor Beasley, with the pair first and second throughout. It was a third career victory for Fresu's mount, but first on dirt after two Abu Dhabi turf wins. Both the first two are homebred by reigning Champion Owner, **Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda** and trained by Ernst Oertel.

If the previous victory was comfortable, that of **AF Sanad** in the conditions race that followed over the same 1000m was far from so. Having tracked the early pace, he went to the front about 300m from home but was soon collared by **AF Al Asef**, seemingly with the race in the bag entering the final 100m. However, he started to tire markedly and rider Anas Al Siyabi was able to muster a desperate late challenge from **AF Sanad**, regaining the initiative right on the line for a challenging finish. Trained by Khalifa Al Neyadi, **AF Sanad** has now won two of his five career outings, both at Al Ain, having won a 1600m handicap in early December.

Al Neyadi, who also owns the winner, said: *"He is a nice young horse who is learning all the time. He has done well to get back up over a trip that short."*

The powerful **Al Asayl** team rarely leave Al Ain empty-handed but had to wait until the penultimate race, to get on the scoresheet, courtesy of a hard-fought victory in the 1600m by **Wathiq** (Njewman (FR) x Atlaal (AE) by Djel Bon (FR)). Previously a maiden after just two starts on turf at Abu Dhabi, he was ridden patiently by Tadhg O'Shea and sported the silks of HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Trainer Eric Lemartinel said: *"I am really pleased to see this horse win because he nearly died last year from colic and it has been a big effort from the whole team to get him on the track."*

Like the feature, the only Thoroughbred race was also a 2000m handicap and it proved the ideal opportunity for Jintshi to open his UAE account at the 12th attempt with Richard Mullen always looking confident.

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