

Loraa, Sniper De Monlau, Abu Alabyad Top Rated in Abu Dhabi Gr 1 HH The President Cup

10 February 2018 ~ HH The President Cup, worth AED2500,000 (US\$680,698), one of the world's most valuable Purebred Arabian contests, is the highlight of a seven race card at Abu Dhabi on Sunday, 11 February 2018, which also includes the 1200m Group 3 Al Ruwais, originally scheduled to run two weeks ago when racing in the capital was postponed.

[Full race card below](#)

Over 2200m, the Group 1 HH The President Cup has attracted the maximum allowed field of 16, including two previous winners and the first eight home from the course and distance prep race staged three weeks ago.

Fifth on that occasion was **Loraa**, victorious in HH The President Cup last year (2017) having finished third in the prep. Trained by Jean de Roualle, she is joined in the field this year by stable companion **Ziyadd**, third in this year's prep on his local debut, as well as **Dahham**, a new recruit for the Frenchman.

Adrie de Vries rides **Ziyadd**, **Gerald Mosse** is on **Dahham**, with **Richard Mullen**, as he was 12 months ago, aboard **Loraa**.

De Roualle said: *"I was very pleased with both who ran in the prep when Ziyadd made a very pleasing debut for the yard and Loraa would have needed that first run since March. Both have been in good form since and should again run well in a very strong renewal, while Dahham is a nice new horse but has been off since June."*

Second to Loraa in the 2017 HH Presidents' Cup but victorious in the prep three weeks ago was **Sniper De Monlau** trained by Helal Al Alawi and to be ridden by **Pat Cosgrave**, who will be aboard for the sixth consecutive occasion.

"He is a horse who takes a bit of knowing," Cosgrave said. "He is not always the most straightforward to ride but he is very good. He is not the type who is ever likely to win by far but he is a very capable performer as he showed in this race last year and when winning the prep. This is a stronger race but he should run well and the 11 draw, a good one for him."

Second in the prep and winner of this big race itself in 2015 and third last year was Abu Alabyad, one of four in this year's renewal for Al Asayl, trained by **Eric Lemartinel** for **HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**. They also include **Mahbooba** winner of the prep in 2017, but only fifth behind Loraa over the same 2200m course and distance, the Group 1 Emirates Championship

in December under Tadhg O'Shea. O'Shea has elected to ride **Darius Du Paon**, having just his ninth start but appears progressive.

O'Shea said: "It was a tough choice; *Mahbooba and Abu Alabyad are both proven at this level but Darius Du Paon is a nice young horse. On the figures he has a bit to find, in a strong renewal, but he should be competitive and it is great to see Al Asayl with good chances in such a prestigious race.*"

From Oman, Chaddad and Al Zahir, trained by Ali Rashid Al Rayhi for **HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, are just two others who merit a mention in an ultra-competitive renewal.

Meanwhile, seven have been declared for the rescheduled Al Ruwais. The weights are headed by **RB Torch**, penalised for his victory in the Group 2 Bani Yas on the Meydan dirt surface in December, having also won his seasonal reappearance, a 1600m conditions race, the **Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Prep** a month prior. **Trained at Al Asayl by Lemartinel for Sheikh Khalifa, he will be ridden by O'Shea, the season's leading jockey thus far.**

His only previous outing over 1200m was a winning one, over Sunday's course and distance, in January of last year and **O'Shea said:** "*He is a good horse who should be competitive on Sunday. Obviously, the penalty makes the task a bit more difficult against some decent performers but, if things fall right for him, he should be thereabouts in an open race.*"

Reigning champion jockey Richard Mullen appears to be aboard one of the main dangers, **Rmmas**, to be saddled by **De Roualle**. This will be just his third local outing and he won the most recent, over 1600m on dirt at Al Ain in the style of a very useful performer. This will be the shortest trip over which he has raced, but his other career victory was over 1400m on turf in France and he did not appear devoid of pace when winning at Al Ain.

"*He is a nice, young, horse and we really like him,*" De Roualle said. "*Returning to turf is certainly not an issue and, we hope, he will cope well with the drop in trip. We are hopeful of a good run.*"

Full Race card:

~ end