

## Mukaram Produces Perfect Challenge to Win Abu Dhabi Handicap

**3 February 2019, Abu Dhabi, UAE ~ The most valuable race Arabian race on the Abu Dhabi track on Sunday, 3 February 2019 was the best of the Purebred Arabian action, a quality 1600m handicap, produced a thrilling finish with AF Maher making a gallant effort from the front and seemingly going to be hard to beat when kicked clear by Tadhg O'Shea at the top of the straight. However, half a dozen of his 11 opponents were in pursuit with AF Monsef finally getting past him with about 200m left, only to be snared by Bainoona who was then caught herself, right on the line, by stable companion Mukaram (TH Richie x ELMALAK ELWAHEED by Djel Bon), produced with a perfectly timed challenge by Pat Cosgrave. Eric Lemartinel trained the winner.**

*"At least a nice narrow win should mean he does not go up too much in the handicap," Cosgrave quipped. "He ran a great when winning here last week over this course and distance so it was a case of deciding whether to run him back again so quickly. Fair play to Eric and the team for freshening him up and it is great for everyone he has won again."*

The following 2200m handicap, restricted to those foaled locally, was equally dramatic with the lead changing hands several times in the final 300m, which was the point Richard Mullen hit the front aboard Elise Jeanne-trained **MH Tawag**, the pair seemingly having the race at their mercy. However, Cosgrave and Sheikh Khalifa's **Ras Esina** threw down a challenge, as did their stable companion, **Mahfouz**, not to mention O'Shea and **AF Kafu**. Ultimately Mullen's mount shrugged them all off only to be then challenged as the line approached by **AF Al Montaqem**, only just failing to snatch a dramatic victory. **MH Tawag** (Bibi De Carrere x ARKADYA (FR) by Dormane). Win time:2:34:56.

*"I am delighted for the connections, the owner, Elise and her team who do not have that many horses, but do very well with the ammunition they do have," Mullen said. "They presented the horse here in great shape today after a very good effort when second last Sunday and he has found plenty for me to hold on."*

**Jeanne** added: *"Luckily we picked this race because we were thinking of running him the next over 1400m, but we know he stays this trip well and Richard was available to ride him, which was a bonus."*

Having missed the break aboard **Dassan Da** (MAJD AL ARAB x Froda DA by Altis Del Sol) in the opening 1600m handicap, Emirati apprentice Saeed Al Mazrooei allowed his mount plenty of time to find his stride, with the pair settling in last throughout the early stages before making smooth

progress down the back straight, racing widest of all. With Al Mazrooei still sitting motionless, they swept past **AF Makerah** with 300m remaining and were never going to be caught, landing the spoils in similar fashion to the course and distance handicap they won just last week for trainer Helal Al Alawi and owner Khalid Mohd Rahma Al Shamsi.

**Al Mazrooei** said: *“As I said last week, this is a horse who does not like to be crowded, so after the slow break, I was quite happy to take my time and pull him wide. He has really traveled well and enjoyed passing horses on the outside without having to exert too much energy, so, from quite a long way out, I was very confident we would win again.”*

**Al Alawi** added: *“This is a good horse and we have discovered the key to riding him now with Saeed doing everything perfectly again as he did last week.”*

Former UAE champion owner Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda is enjoying a prolific season, particularly with his horses based with Ernst Oertel. The pair combined to land the 1600m maiden with **AF Saabah** (AF ALSALAAM x AF NAJMATI by Amer), never headed under Tadhg O’Shea. With the field reduced to 12 after two withdrawals at the start, the homebred 4-year-old filly broke sharply and always looked happy out in front before quickening clear leaving the home turn.

**O’Shea** explained: *“She ran very well the last day at Al Ain over the 1600m, but probably did not quite stay on the sand and would have won if the race was over 1400m so we thought the 1600m here would suit her better. She has a lot of natural speed, which took us to the front and then she has displayed a great attitude to see off any challengers.”*

Ridden by Fabrice Veron for his main local employer, Ismail Mohammed, **RB Inferno** (TH Richie x Burning Firestar by BIG EASY) Wathba Stallions Cup for private ownership. Yet another race on the evening when the result was in serious doubt until the very final strides, the pair were able to deny **Hawafez**, only in front for about 50m, having wrested the initiative from **Nawwak KB**, leading for 1300m of the contest. Owned by Saif Ali, the 8-year-old was winning for a fifth time, but first for current connections

*“He ran well here for us two weeks ago so we were quite hopeful,” Veron said. “He has really picked up nicely in the straight when I asked him and luckily we were just able to get there in time.”*

The only contest for Thoroughbreds was the concluding 1600m handicap, which looked competitive on paper, but nobody had warned **Juthoor**, easily the meeting’s smoothest winner, relishing the rain-dampened yielding course. Jockey Jim Crowley, riding for His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, settled the 4-year-old Shamardal gelding well off the pace before pulling him wide to make ground as the runners departed the back straight. Entering the final 400m, they pulled wider still, eventually challenging on the nearside rail and sweeping to the front 200m from home and running on strongly. The same owner’s Mashaheer for Ali Rashid Al Rayhi

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finished second under Dane O'Neill.

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