

## **RB Lam Tara Breaks Impressive Maiden for Lemartinel in Abu Dhabi**

**27 November, Abu Dhabi, UAE ~ Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club raced for the third time this season on Sunday evening, 25 November 2018, with a six-race card with added drama provided by the persistent rain in which it was contested.**

The opening 1400m conditions contest, restricted to 3-year-olds foaled in the UAE, went to **AF Tahoonah** (AF ALSalaam x Aberfeldy by Amer), having just her second career start for Ernst Oertel and his main patron, Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda.

A well beaten fifth on her debut partnered by Tadhg O'Shea, she had clearly progressed well from that experience. Ridden on this occasion by Richard Mullen, she chased the early pace before closing on the home turn. Asked to challenge, she hit the front as the leaders were about to enter the straight and Mullen's mount proved a willing one, fending off debutant **Hajjar W'Rsan** looking a major threat when looming on her outside 300m out.

Mullen said: *"I was lucky to get the spare ride with Tadhg opting to ride **AF Kal Noor**. To be fair, Tadhg deserves a lot of credit because he gave this filly a nice introduction to racing three weeks ago and connections have reaped the reward. Riding in these colours and for Ernst you always know you have a decent chance. Hopefully it will cheer the owner up. He rarely misses the races but is apparently not feeling too well."*

Owner, trainer and jockey completed a double with **AF Kafu**, the comfortable winner of the 2200m handicap for horses carrying the silks of private owners. Again, Mullen was the man in the saddle with O'Shea electing to partner the same connections' **AF Motaghatres**, never able to land a blow before finishing sixth.

Never far off what appeared a frantic early gallop, with about seven runners seemingly wanting to lead into the first turn, Mullen always appeared happy to take his time with **Shareef KB**, also representing Oertel and Al Nabooda, cutting out the running. When that stable companion weakened leaving the final bend, Mullen committed for home, soon hitting the front and the pair

stayed on strongly to make a victorious seasonal bow for **AF Kafu**.

AF Kafu and Mullen finished ahead of **AF Al Mawhebah** under Sam Hitchcott with **LaYfootkum** under Fernando Jara in third place in the 2200m handicap carrying a prize fund of Dh 70,000.

**AF Kafu** (AF AL BURQA x AF MALIKA by Oh By Gosh), a 5-year-old, has now run 14 times and was registering a first turf victory to add to two at Sharjah, the first over 1700m and more recently in January, over 2000m.

An almost rueful **Mullen** said: *“Again it must have been a tough choice for Tadhg and he probably chose the other one because he had won on turf and had the benefit of an outing this season. As I said, for this owner and trainer, any spare ride is a good one and I have been lucky to be on two winners for them this evening.”*

The maximum field allowed of 16 may have contested the 1600m maiden, but in reality, very few were able to get involved. O’Shea was soon at the head of affairs aboard debutant **AF Saab**, looking, at the time, to complete a double for Oertel and Al Nabooda. From halfway, they had most of their rivals toiling, but a notable exception was debutante **RB Lam Tara** (General (GB) x RB Sweet Pea (US) by MAJD AL ARAB), traveling strongly under always seemingly confident Fabrice Veron, sporting the silks of Sheikha Alyazia bint Sultan Al Nahyan and riding for Eric Lemartinel. In a virtual home straight match, Veron’s mount always looked the likely winner and went clear inside the final 200m.

*“I have to thank connections for this ride on a young lovely filly,”* Veron said. *“She was always going strongly before picking up nicely, but she is going to improve for that initial experience.”*

The trainer went on to complete a double with Pat Cosgrave the man on board **Bainoona** (Mahabb x Miledy Del Ma (IT) by Kesberoy) that ran out a smooth winner of the finale, a second 1600m handicap on the card. Owned by Lemartinel’s main patron, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the 5-year-old mare was winning for a fourth time, third on the Abu Dhabi turf and second over course and distance.

The first of the two 1600m handicaps looked very competitive on paper and a real tussle unfolded on the far rail where a host of the 16 runners were able to throw down some kind of challenge. However, unfortunately for them, jockey Szczepan Mazur had taken **Duc De Faust**, having tracked early leader **Saayif Al Arab** into the home turn, towards the centre of the track to deliver what proved a decisive challenge. The pair swept to the front halfway up the straight and were never in any danger of relinquishing that lead, stylishly landing the spoils for the Royal Cavalry of Oman and trainer Younis Al Kalbani, doubling his score for the campaign.

A maiden before the race, his tenth start, **Duc De Faust** (Munjiz (FR) x Isis Du Clos by Djourman) ran consistently well last season, apart from one blip in a much better race on the dirt at Al Ain and

was winning here on his seasonal debut, his first outing since January.

**Mazur**, like Avranche earlier opening his seasonal tally, said: *“The trainer was pretty hopeful and the horse took me along strongly throughout. When I asked him to challenge he picked up nicely and has won quite easily”*.

In the only Thoroughbred race of 1400m, Gerald Avranche, having just his fifth mount of the campaign and first at Abu Dhabi this season, jumped **Ajwad** out of the gates sharply and went straight to the front with the 5-year-old entire son of Rock Of Gibraltar seemingly bowling along happily. Stalked initially by Tafaakhor, that dropped out of contention in the straight, Ajwad looked about to be swamped at the 400m pole with Dream Dubai appearing a big danger. However, Avranche's steed galloped on relentlessly, seeing off that challenge before Billingsgate entered the fray. He looked likely to gain the initiative, but again, Ajwad found more, sticking his neck out gallantly, only to then also be challenged by Azmaam.

The three flashed past the post in unison with Avranche and **Ajwad** prevailing by a head from **Azmaam** for trainer Rashed Bouresly, like his jockey, celebrating his first winner of the campaign.

~ end supplied report