

RB MONEY TO BURN PUTS IT IN THE BANK WITH ABU DHABI CHAMPIONSHIP

Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club staged its penultimate meeting of 2018 on Sunday with half of the six races dedicated to 3-year-old Purebred Arabians, including the featured 1600m Abu Dhabi Championship (Listed PA), won in determined fashion by RB Money To Burn.

In a field reduced to 14 after two withdrawals on veterinary advice, **Pat Cosgrave sent RB Money To Burn** (Majd Al Arab x RB Burn Baby Burn (US) by TH Richie) straight to the front where they held off the challenge of **Hakeemat Muscat** in a race where only four runners ever really held any chance of winning. Immensely impressive when never headed on her debut in a 1400m maiden on the Al Ain dirt surface four weeks ago, the 3-year-old daughter of Majd Al Arab, saddled by Eric Lemartinel for Sheikha Alyazia bint Sultan Al Nahyan, handled the switch to turf with aplomb and soon had a substantial advantage.

Hakeemat Muscat (OM) came in a close second while **Hadiyah** was third.

"To be honest she almost ran away with me in the first half of the race so enthusiastic was she," Cosgrave admitted. "She has plenty of speed and enthusiasm, but just as importantly, she is tough and has a great attitude as she showed there when she had to dig deep near the line. Obviously it is always nice to win the big races and this is a filly who should improve with experience. Hopefully she has learned a lot this evening."

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Also for 3-year-olds, the meeting opened with the 1400m Abu Dhabi Fillies Classic (Prestige) in which Tadhg O'Shea was ultra-positive from the outset aboard debutante **AF Mouterah** (AF Al Buraq x AF Kalrami by Ouragan Du Cayrou). The pair, despite being drawn 15 of the 16 runners, were soon able to get to the front. At halfway, they were a long way clear and remained so until the

final 100m when, tiring, her advantage was reduced at the line to almost a length by fellow debutante **Al Shaheenya**, but the result was never in doubt.

O'Shea, riding for Ernst Oertel and Khalid Khalifa Al Nabooda, who also bred the filly, said: *"She is a lovely big filly and from that wide draw I was keen to be positive and she is still very raw. Hopefully she has learned a lot from that and can improve markedly. The final 200m seemed a long way because we have gone plenty fast enough early on and she was getting tired late on as she was entitled to. She is a filly we really like and—unusually for us—we have actually taken her for a couple of racecourse gallops to try and help her education so it is particularly pleasing she has won."*

Owner and trainer then supplied first and second in the Abu Dhabi Colts Classic (Prestige), over the same 1400m, but O'Shea was denied on this occasion by Antonio Fresu, who was never headed aboard **AF Saab** (AF Alsalaam x AF Waed by Amer). Runner-up on his sole previous racecourse appearance, Fresu's mount galloped on relentlessly in the straight.

"He was a second in what was a pretty good maiden on debut and I was very pleased to be asked to ride him," Fresu said. *"Riding for these connections, you know you always have a chance in such races and he has shown a very good attitude this evening to win that nicely."*

The Khalid Al Nabooda connections only had one runner in the 2200m handicap and O'Shea completed his own double and a treble for owner and trainer when producing **AF Kafu** (AF Al Buraq by AF Malika by Oh By Gosh (US) that led close home.

"We had a double at Sharjah yesterday so it has been a good two days," **Al Nabooda** said. *"I have a very good trainer and we are lucky to be able to use these top jockeys."*

Oertel added: *"We have changed tactics a bit with this horse. (Being) ridden a bit more patiently certainly seems to suit him. I am very lucky to train these horses for such an enthusiastic and successful owner."*

The only Thoroughbred contest, a 2400m handicap, provided trainer Ismail Mohammed with a belated first winner of the season with his 19th runner. **Brass Ring** and Fabrice Veron swooped from last at halfway to lead inside the final 100m, having suddenly emerged as a real threat on the rail at the top of the relatively short straight and going on to win.

The 1600m maiden was won quite stylishly by **Majd Al Ghariba** (Majd Al Arab x Haida De Faust by Dormane). Ridden by apprentice Saif Al Balushi, the 6-year-old was saddled by Ridha ben Attia for Suhail Ali Salmeen Ali Al Mazrouei for his first win of the season.

Al Balushi said: *"I was actually pretty happy most of the way round. Once he quickened to challenge, I knew we would win."*