

RB Torch Wins National Day Cup in Abu Dhabi

9 December 2018, Abu Dhabi, UAE ~ The Purebred Arabian Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan National Day Cup (PA G3) on 9 December 2018 at Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club ran over 1600m and was won by RB Torch (TH Richie (US) x Burnie Gee PW by Burning Sand). Originally the first reserve but granted a place in the 16-strong field after the defection of stable companion Abhaar, withdrawn after spiking a temperature over the weekend.

RB Torch and **Abhaar** along with three others entered are trained by Lemartinel for his main patron, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Recording an eight career victory, fifth on turf and third over course and distance, **RB Torch** was having his eighth start of the 2018-2019 season, with the first win. Bouncing back in emphatic style, he settled in midfield under Fabrice Veron, chasing down leading duo **AF Mahshoum(2)** and **AF Al Sajanjle(3)** at the 200m pole and going on to victory.

Lemartinel, completing a double for himself and the owner, added: *“Turning into the straight, I could see him making ground and was very hopeful because he is a very tough horse who has plenty of ability, especially when he is in a good mood!”*

“We broke reasonably, but then my horse took a little while to get into a rhythm,” Veron said. “Once he was settled, he was always traveling nicely and I was able to give him a little breather before challenging in the straight. He picked up well when I asked him and has won going away from the other at the end. You always know when riding for these connections that you have a good chance. Luckily, I was on the right one this evening.”

In the Thoroughbred version of the Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan National Day Cup, it was Chris Hayes in the predominantly yellow silks of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, on 10-year-old on **Forjatt**, winner of this race in 2015 that led in for the win.

Weaving through runners throughout the straight, they hit the front 100m out to gain a popular victory for new Jebel Ali Stables trainer Nicholas Bachalard.

Forjatt became the first horse to regain the title; all the more impressive being three years apart. *He is a great little horse, especially for his age,” Hayes said. “He jumped great and has then really traveled strongly in behind. The one thing with this horse is he needs to be produced late and I was able to take my time, threading through the gaps as they opened in the straight. That is a brilliant effort from all the team at home to get the old boy back to win this race again.”*

The opening 1400m maiden was contested by the maximum allowed field of 16, but very few were ever able to get involved and Pat Cosgrave, riding for Sheikh Khalifa and Lemartinel, was never

headed aboard **Eghel De Pine** (AF Albahar x Razza Di Gallura (IT) by Dormane). They were pursued throughout by stable companion **Highh Altitude**, plugging on gamely to hold on to second and supply the Al Asayl Stables team with a one-two finish.

“He ran a very good race the first day behind(RB Money to Burn),” Cosgrave said. “He learned a lot from that experience and we were pretty confident coming here today that he had progressed. He will improve again because he was looking about in the straight when he was probably getting a bit lonely out in front. Hopefully he can continue to progress with racing experience.”

The 1400m handicap was decided in the very last strides when Connor Beasley produced **Hawafez** (AL Nasr x Early Morning by Johnny Onthe Spot) with a desperate late lunge while snaring Sam Hitchcott and **AF Hakeem**, were leading themselves about 100m out.

Trained by Ridha ben Attia, saddling his first winner of the season for Salem Ali Murshed Al Marar, the 5-year old Hawafez is now a winner twice after 20 starts, both over course and distance, having landed a maiden at this meeting 12 months ago.

The 1600m maiden was a race trainer Saeed Al Shamsi will never forget after **AF Shearr** (AF Maqam Alezz x Dayrah(AE) by Bibi De Carrere) provided both himself and owner Khalid Salmeen Ali Theeban with their very first winners. Confidently ridden by Szczepan Mazur, who settled him just behind the leaders, he led halfway up the straight and held the challenge of runner-up Sallal Al Reef.

Well-beaten on the dirt at Al Ain on debut just over two weeks ago, he provided his jockey a second victory of the campaign. **Mazur** from Poland, said: *“He has certainly preferred racing on turf here after a debut on dirt and hopefully can build on this. He will come on again for that run and I am delighted for both the trainer and the owner, as well as grateful to them for the chance to ride him again.”*

The concluding 1600m handicap produced a polished performance from **Qader** (Munjiz x Fazzaha by Dahman El Arami) confidently ridden by Adrie de Vries, who was never far off the pace before asking his mount to win the race inside the final 200m. The response was immediate and they ran on strongly with the pair pulling clear in the closing stages. Trained by Jean de Roualle for Yas Horse Racing Management, 6-year-old Qader has now landed four of his ten UAE outings.

Full results:

[Results 11373 Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan National](#)

~ end supplied report