

Sandeed and Ijad win HH Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed races at Craon, France

September 1, 2012, Craon, France ~ Press release:

A large crowd witnessed some top quality Purebred Arabian racing at the Craon racecourse about 300 kms from the French capital of Paris on Saturday evening. In a double treat, Sandeed scored a surprise win under Gerald Avranche in the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Cup (Group 2) while later in the evening 20-year-old Alison Massin came up with a fantastic finish on Ijad to win the HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies World Championship IFAHR race.

The two races are part of the HH Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Flat Racing Festival.

Ijad, owned by Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, was given a superb ride by Massin to win and clinch a spot in the season-ending final race of the series in November in Abu Dhabi.

After winning on the Jean-Pierre Totain-trained Ijad, Massin said, "I was asked to just allow him to run his race and not force him much in the early stages. Ijad settled in well and then showed a good turn of foot to win easy," the winning jockey said.

Mirabel Del Sol under Jane Foley and **Badjy** under Leena Mattis finished second and third respectively in the Euros 20,000 race which is the richest race for amateur lady riders to be staged in France.

In the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Cup (Group 2), which was also run over 11 furlongs (2,200 metres), all four runners were in top form but Avranche, who won on Sandeed said his horse was the least favoured of the four.

"I expected Munzade and Merzal to fight it out and my horse's trainer just asked me to stay behind. Sandeed is still green but towards the end he had enough in the tank and despite going a bit wide held on to beat Munzade," the French jockey, who is based in Abu Dhabi, said.

Munzade was second and Merzal finished third ahead of French Athbah.

HE Mohammed Meer Abdullah Al Raeesi, the UAE Ambassador to France said, "The addition of the HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies World Championship IFAHR race has put the spotlight on lady jockeys including one from the UAE and one from Oman."

"It is great to see these opportunities being created for lady jockeys while the Festival is doing a great job promoting the Purebred Arabian horses," he said.

Ms Lara Sawaya, Director of the HH Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Flat Racing Festival and head of IFAHR ladies racing said, "Two exciting races and the large turnout of racing fans were fully satisfied with the action."

"The HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies World Championship IFAHR made its debut here in Craon and a French girl winning on Ijad made it a memorable evening for the home fans," she said.

HE Hamad Al Zaabi, First Secretary at the UAE Embassy in France, Stephen Bowey, Executive Director (Corporate Development) Invest AD, Adnan Sultan Al Nuaimi of Director General of ADEC, Khalid Abdullah Al Hussein, Director of Sports Affairs, General Authority for Youth and Sports Welfare (GAYSW), Abdelrahim Al Hashemi representing the UAE General Women's Union, Mansour Al Mansouri representing the UAE Falconry Club and Abdulla Al Merhairi of the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority attended the races and the prize distribution.

Henri Malard- President of Craon racecourse , thanked the HH Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Flat Racing Festival for staging the race here for the fourth year in succession.

The HH Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan Global Arabian Flat Racing Festival is organized by the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority and co-ordinated by Abu Dhabi Sports Council in association with Emirates Racing Authority, IFAHR and Emirates Arabian Horse Society, supported by General Authority for Youth and Sports and Fegentri with Emirates airlines as the official carrier and sponsored by Invest AD, Al Rashid Investment, Areej Al Ameerat, Mauzan, Al Awani General Enterprises, Kabale, the UAE's General Women's Union, the Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Ladies Sports Academy, Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition 2012, Wathba Stud Farm and Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club.

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