

Sharjah Excitement Saturday with Six Races



5 January 2018, Sharjha, UAE ~ Sharjah Equestrian & Racing Club complete three consecutive days of UAE racing on Saturday afternoon with a six-race card, highlighted by the finale, a 1700m handicap for which 14 were declared before favorite Hammsa was scratched on Thursday. Her unfortunate absence, due to lameness, would appear to leave the race at the mercy of the Al Asayl team with Eric Lemartinel saddling three runners for HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Of the trio, Tadhg O'Shea has opted to partner RB Burning Ash, a winner just once, on turf at Abu Dhabi in March 2015, but generally very consistent.

The Burning Sand 7-yr-old was a fast third in the 2000m Sharjah handicap on his most recent start two weeks ago, and he appears the one to beat. His stable companions **Bashayer** and **Bainoona** are to be ridden by Gerald Avranche and Jesus Rosales, respectively.

O'Shea said: "A case can be made for all three of the Al Asayl runners and it was another tough choice as to which one to ride. Hopefully Eric and the team have the winner among the trio and, with luck, I have picked the right one with RB Burning Ash, who has run well at Sharjah, is tough, consistent and seems in good form."

Champion Trainer Doug Watson does not have that many Purebred Arabian runners, but saddles **Bougdelah** in this one. The mount of Pat Dobbs, he remains a maiden after nine starts, five locally, but has generally run well. He should not be disregarded in an open contest.

Ernst Oertel is enjoying a good season and his **AF Hakeem** enters the equation on what will be his first dirt outing since late January 2017. His five subsequent starts have been on turf, but he made his winning racecourse debut over 1200m here at Sharjah on his only previous visit to the course. He has also ran well on his only two other dirt appearances at Al Ain. Sam Hitchcott, the most successful jockey at Sharjah over the last two seasons, rides.

The only Thoroughbred race is a 1200m handicap for which the maximum field of 16 has been declared and looks wide open.

Champion Jockey Richard Mullen rides Libyan Peace for his main local employer, Satish Seemar, and they must have realistic claims arriving here on the back of two thirds in arguably stronger Jebel Ali races.

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