

MEYDAN PREVIEW: MESHAKEL APPEARS STAR ATTRACTION AT MEYDAN ON THURSDAY



Meshakel trained by Salem bin Ghadayer and ridden by Royston Ffrench seen here winning the Mina Hamriya 1400m Maiden, at the sixth Racing at Meydan meeting. (credit:Erika Rasmussen/ Dubai Racing Club) [DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

DUBAI (March 10, 2021) - Racing at Meydan on Thursday, a card sponsored by Pillar Partners Azizi Developments, is officially highlighted by the Mina by Azizi, a 1600m conditions contest, restricted to the 3-year-old Classic generation and for which seven have been declared.

With an official rating of 100, **Meshakel** should be the one to beat with Xavier Ziani riding for Salem bin Ghadayer aboard the Shamardal colt who lost his maiden tag in a 1400m maiden at Meydan in January before being denied, over 1600m, in the final strides, of the Group 3 UAE 2000 Guineas. Most recently, he contested the 1600m Saudi Derby, leading throughout the majority of the race before tiring in the final 400m.

Ziani said: “I rode him at Jebel Ali on his local debut when the 1200m was too short, but he battled on well. He is a decent horse and this looks an ideal opportunity for him.

“The Saudi Derby was three weeks ago and he has had a nice break since, so hopefully, is going to be the horse the others have to beat.”

Bin Ghadayer is enjoying a fine season as is Rashed Boursesly who relies on **Hawa Bilady** who lost his maiden tag in a 1200m Jebel Ali conditions race just last Friday. That was his fifth racecourse appearance, all this year and Boursesly said: “Our horses have been running well this season and this horse is a nice one.

“He has run well on turf as well as dirt, but this will be the longest trip over which he has raced. We hope it will suit him.”

Having won both his first two career starts, last year as a juvenile, **Zhou Storm** has not prospered in three starts during 2021, including finishing behind Meshakel in the UAE 2000 Guineas and well beaten by Hawa Bilady at Jebel Ali last weekend.

Even more recently in action, for Fawzi Nass, was **Mayehaab**, far from disgraced when seventh in the 1900m Listed Al Bastakiya on Super Saturday. That was actually his dirt debut, on his fourth start and Adrie de Vries rides him for the first time since a winning 1400m Meydan turf debut in the middle of February.

Doug Watson saddles two for Al Rashid Stables, Pat Dobbs seemingly preferring the chances of **Anbar** over those of stablemate **Al Baqar**, the mount of Sam Hitchcott.

The septet is completed by local and dirt debutant **Miami Joy**, to be ridden by Jim Crowley for Ismail Mohammed and Tariq Saeed Al Tayer. Well beaten on his sole turf outing, albeit in the Group 2 Superlative Stakes at Newmarket, the colt won three of his four UK starts on all-weather surfaces.

All six races, kicking off at the traditional Thursday start time of 6.30pm, are for Thoroughbreds and to be staged on the renowned Meydan dirt surface.

Away from the official feature, the 2000m handicap, the Riviera by Azizi, has attracted a capacity field of 16, seven of whom were actually eligible for races at the Dubai World Cup Carnival.

Among that seven, Godolphin duo **Bright Start** and **Real World**, both trained by Saeed bin Suroor, were actually reserves in the 1600m Group 3 Burj Nahaar on last weekend’s Super Saturday card.

Also for Godolphin, Charlie Appleby saddles **Saqqara King** but perhaps the most interesting runner is **Pharoah King**, the choice of Pat Dobbs from four Doug Watson confirmed runners (the trainer also has first reserve Tried And True).

Dobbs’ mount has won both his local outings, over 2000m at Al Ain and 1950m at Jebel Ali with the stale jockey opting to partner him both times from various options. Clearly held in some regard by connections, the low mileage 4-year-old gelding, could be a name to remember ahead of the 2022 Dubai World Cup Carnival.

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