Meydan Review: MESHAKEL JUSTIFIES FAVOURITE TAG TO WIN MEYDAN FEATURE FOR BIN GHADAYER, WHILE SEEMAR AND JARA CELEBRATE DOUBLES

Meydan Review: Meshakel justifies favourite tag to win Meydan feature for Bin Ghadayer under Ziani, while Seemar and Jara celebrate doubles

A domestic six-race card, sponsored by Pillar Partners Azizi Developments, brought up the last day of racing at Meydan, which will now reopen to host the showpiece Dubai World Cup night on March 27.

All dirt races and all involving Thoroughbreds, the feature event of the night was the1600m Conditions Mina by Azizi, where Salem bin Ghadayer’s **Meshakel** dominated the remaining field of six, with a gate to post victory. The 3-year-old Shamardal colt carried an official rating of 100, earned over a period during which he lost his maiden tag, with a seven length win in a 1400m event in January, followed by a narrow defeat in the Group 3 UAE 2000 Guineas.

Involved in an out of sorts performance in the Saudi Derby at Riyadh in February thereafter, Meshakel was back to his best in the Meydan feature and looked the one to beat. He broke very well under Xavier Ziani, hitting the front immediately, and kept the lead, throughout as he kicked clear 600m from home to win by a massive seven and three fourths of a length from Ali Rashid Al Rayhi’s Zhou Storm with Antonio Fresu in the saddle.

Ziani said: “He’s a quality horse and a very classy horse and he just needs to know how to use himself and not to burn himself out. The day he learns that we can have big expectations from him and don’t be surprised if this horse reaches World Cup night next season.”

Winning trainer Bin Ghadayer said this could be Meshakel’s last run of the term. “He showed he’s a classy horse and he showed we’re going to have a lot of fun with him next season. He’s a young horse and started his career in England so he’s had a lot of runs and he deserves his rest,” the Emirati handler said.

The evening got underway with the ‘Berton by Azizi’, a 1200m maiden, which was won by the Mujeeb Rahman trained and Fernando Jara piloted **Major Cinnamon** who picked up a first career success on the 10th time of asking. The four-year-old Tapiture gelding looked solid and kicked clear powerfully in the straight to win by two lengths from the Rashed Bouresly-trained and Szczepan Mazur-guided Ajmal, who had led the field turning for home, but failed to hold on under pressure.

Winning trainer Rahman commented: “I think he was knocking on the door for quite some time and I was confident because all his runs were at Jebel Ali and he’s climbed the hill well, so I knew I could take my chance. The field had a few good horses, but my horse has done well this season.”

Winning rider Jara echoed similar sentiments and said: “You could tell he had been knocking on the door and today it was just set up very well for him.”

Jara made it two in two as he nailed the 1900m maiden titled ‘Park Avenue by Azizi’ that followed. Riding **Al Mureib** for Ahmad bin Harmash. Jara settled the 5-year-old Dubawi gelding just behind the leading group and held him nicely making the turn for home. With plenty of gaps emerging and the momentum with him, Al Mureib shifted into top gear and zipped clear of the rest to win with the fastest time of the season for the course and distance of 1:57.96.

At the finish he was a massive seven and a- quarter-lengths ahead of the bin Ghadayer-trained Tolmount, the ride of Xavier Ziani. A further four and a quarter back in third was Doug Watson’s Cosmo Kramer with Sam Hitchcott in the saddle.

Defending UAE Champion Trainer and Jockey, Satish Seemar and Tadgh O’Shea, combined to land the ‘Riviera by Azizi, 2000m handicap for 4-year-olds and above rated 80-100, with **Remorse**, who showed no mercy for the rest of his 14 rivals to win by a commanding six lengths. Saqqara King, trained by Charlie Appleby for Godolphin, set the pace early on with teammate Bright Start, trained by Saeed bin Suroor taking over later on and leading the field into the turn for home.

O’Shea rode his 4-year-old Dubawi gelding in third for the most part and was three wide going into the final stretch. In a prime spot to attack, the former Andre Fabre trainee delivered perhaps his best career performance as he clinched a second career success in seven starts.

O’Shea said: “He is a model of consistency. He was briefly trained in France and won there and then was second many times. He came in second for us on his first run, it was an encouraging win and tonight he jumped and travelled well and was clearly a lot fitter. I sat him there in third and kept him out of kickback and he did good.”

Winning trainer Seemar added: “It was a very impressive performance. We’ve always thought highly of this horse as he’s come from Andre Fabre’s yard. We love Dubawis, naturally, he has the right formula. We don’t want to jump too forward, but he could be a good Carnival horse for next season.”

Charlie Appleby wasn’t present but William Buick showed great heart to produce the best out of **Desert Peace** in the Creek Views by Azizi, a 1600m handicap. Ridden mid-division for most of the trip, the 4-year-old Curlin gelding got into his mojo 300m out and somehow found his way through the centre of a roadblock to win by a shorthead on the line.

Winning rider Buick said: “He jumped ok and the pace was on. He wasn’t in his comfort zone. He had to navigate his way through and had a lot to do. Hopefully he could be a nicer horse for next season.”

Seemar claimed a second success of the night in the card closing Al Furjan by Azizi, a 1400m handicap, which was won by **Sharamm** who was given a calculated ride by Ryan Curatolo. The pair raced in the latter half of the field, but Curatolo’s brilliance was evident as he brought the six-year-old Shamardal gelding along the outside of his rivals to win with a neck to spare. Al Mheiri’s California Jumbo was second in the hands of Fernando Jara.

Curatolo said: “We waited for the turn and then accelerated and he showed he was the best today. He showed the speed and I cut a corner and made the move at the right time.”

Dubai’s marquee racecourse will next open its doors to the prestigious Dubai World Cup card on March 27.

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