

Meydan Review: TREBLES FOR AL MHEIRI AND FRESU AFTER JAYIDE AL BORAQ LANDS MEYDAN FEATURE

Racing at Meydan on Thursday evening was officially highlighted by the only Purebred Arabian contest on the card, the 1400m Group 2 Bani Yas sponsored by Gulf News, won by the improving and consistent **Jayide Al Boraq**.

Confidently ridden by Bernardo Pinheiro, in the predominantly yellow silks of Al Rahmani Racing, the 6-year-old entire was winning for the seventh time on just his ninth start and in by far the strongest contest he had tackled. One of his two defeats was actually over 1400m, but that was his sole turf outing, when second at Abu Dhabi in a handicap having landed his previous start, a handicap at Al Ain, over 1400m.

This was his third attempt at the trip and, as well as consistent, he has to be considered versatile as he is now victorious over 1000m, 1400m and 1600m, the distance over which he made a winning debut, at Al Ain, in March 2019. He also won at the same track on his reappearance, over 1000m, exactly three weeks ago, but that was in handicap company and, as alluded to, this was a big step up in class.

Success looked unlikely at halfway when RB Money To Burn was going clear at the front whereas Pinheiro was attempting to find racing room, appearing trapped on the rail in about sixth, albeit travelling well. Pulled wide entering the straight, Jayide Al Boraq made relentless progress and, with RB Money To Burn, weakening in the final 150m, was able to sweep past that rival about 50m out to score going away at the line.

It was a biggest UAE winner for all the connections and Pinheiro said: "I was pretty confident coming here this evening because he is a lazy horse who only ever really does enough, so I thought there was improvement there.

The jockey added: "I was not able to race as prominently as I wanted, but he was always going strongly. The eventual second was a long way clear, but I knew, entering the straight, I would at least get second and in the final 200m I was always going to win. It is a great result, not only for myself, but for a smaller trainer and owners, so we will enjoy it and hope there is more to come.

"An extra 200m will not be a problem, but I doubt he will stay much further than 1600m."

Five juvenile fillies lined up for REACH by Gulf News, a 1200m maiden and, having missed a fortnight through injury, Pat Dobbs wasted no time getting back in the winner's enclosure, scoring on his first mount back, **Super Chianti**. Slower departing the stalls than the remaining quartet, Dobbs was content to settle the Super Saver filly, homebred by Charles Fipke, in rear before asking her to close leaving the home turn, soon moving from fifth to second before passing stable companion Heshmah entering the final 250m. The race appeared over before Dobbs' mount belied her inexperience, idling once in front and allowing Nayefah, also by Super Saver, to close fast, but never really looking like getting there.

Watson, who won the equivalent race last year with Rio Angie, said: "She was in front quite a long time and showed her lack of experience. She should have learned plenty and will have a nice break now. She has always worked very nicely, so we were hopeful and we have always thought she is a nice filly."

Watson completed a double, combining this time with Dane O'Neill, riding for his main employer, Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum to win The Friday, a 1400m handicap, aboard the owner's **Mayaadeen**. A 5-year-old Invincible Spirit gelding, he tracked the early leader, Circle Dream before swooping past that one at the top of the straight after which they never looked likely to be caught, providing O'Neill a first winner of the season at the tenth attempt. It was a third career success for the winner, all over 1400m and second over course and distance having opened his local account at the beginning of January.

O'Neill said: "He's a bonny little horse with a great attitude. He was dropping in grade with the benefit of a run this season and everything dropped into place."

One of a pair of belated first runners of the season for Musabbeh Al Mheiri, who also saddled Apolo Kid who was fourth, **Antonio Vivaldi** made his dirt debut a winning one, landing the Getthat.com, a 1400m maiden, in the hands of Antonio Fresu. The 4-year-old Zebedee gelding was making it third time lucky having finished third, then second on his two previous outings, both over 1600m on turf in January, at Meydan then Abu Dhabi three weeks later. Settled just behind the leaders, once asked to close by Fresu he quickened nicely and had the race in safekeeping passing the 200m pole.

Fresu said: "He ran well both times last season and was unlucky at Abu Dhabi. He is a bit older now and has had that experience, but he should improve because he still was a bit green."

Jockey and trainer doubled up in The Thoroughbred feature, a 1600m rated conditions stakes, the gulfnews.com which produced a dramatic finish with Fresu producing **Casey Jones** to deny Thegreatcollection, who would have been another winner for Watson, right on the line. Thegreatcollection had only hit the front inside the final 200m, grabbing the initiative from Al Mheiri's second runner, Alkaamel, who held on for third under O'Neill. Slowly away Casey Jones started to fly once in the straight, sweeping past six of his seven rivals before nailing Thegreatcollection in the final stride.

Thrice a winner in Britain for John Gosden, the 5-year-old gelded son of Casamento was making it third time lucky in the UAE having joined Al Mheiri after being purchased by Nasir Askar.

Fresu said: "He ran well in both races for us last season, 1400m at Jebel Ali and 1900m here at Meydan, so he is a horse we like and hope can have a good season.

"He stays further obviously, so a nice early gallop has helped him and he really picked up well for me, but to be honest, I was not sure we had won. Obviously I was delighted when the result was announced."

The concluding 2000m handicap, the Watch Time, was another prize to head to Al Mheiri and Fresu, this time courtesy of Welsh Lord, opening his local account at the eight attempt and doubling his career tally in the process. A first UAE winner for owner Miteb Zaid Al Shammari, whose silks were being carried for just a fifth time, all by this horse, the 5-year-old Dark Angel gelding was making his seasonal debut having last been seen in public back in March.

One of no less than seven in the race for Satish Seemar, **Lavaspin** was soon in front under Tadhg O'Shea in a 1200m handicap, the agnc3, the pair dashing clear with about 450m remaining after which the race, basically, was all over as a contest. Owned by Mohd Khaleel Ahmed, the 6-year-old Hard Spun gelding was making it five wins from just 13 starts, but scoring for the first time since a Dubai World Cup Carnival success, over this Meydan 1200m course and distance in February 2019.

In fairness, all bar one of his five subsequent outings have been in much better company, thrice in Meydan Group Three contests, all over 1200m, as well as finishing fourth in February's 1000m Listed Jebel Ali Sprint. This was his fourth victory over this 1200m track and trip.

O'Shea said: "That was a good performance in a competitive heat, but we know these conditions are probably his optimum and, once he gets out in front, in a rhythm, he is not an easy horse to pass."

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