

A JEWEL ON THE THRONE OF HORSE RACING THE WORLD'S RICHEST RACE DAY: DUBAI WORLD CUP 2017

By Menna Loutfy



Arrogate (USA) (Bob Baffert – Mike Smith) winner of the Dubai World Cup

IT WAS A RAINY DAY IN THE CITY OF DUBAI BUT THIS DID NOT CHANGE ANY OF THE PLANS MADE FOR UAE'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS SPORTING EVENT. HELD IN THE STATE OF ART, MEYDAN RACECOURSE, I WAS THRILLED TO BE HT'S REPORTER IN THE WORLD RICHEST RACE DAYWORTH US\$30 MILLION.

FEATURING NINE RACES, FASHION STAKES AND A MUSICAL CONCERT BY WORLD CLASS SINGER SIA, SPORT ENTHUSIASTS GATHERED FROM ALL AROUND THE GLOBE TO WITNESS THE MIND-BLOWING EQUESTRIAN SPECTACLE. AT RACE TIME, YOU COULD ACTUALLY FEEL THAT YOUR HEART BEATS WERE SYNCHRONIZING WITH THE THUNDERING HOOVES OF THE HORSES AS THEY SWEEP THEIR WAY TO THE FINISH LINE.

Annually held on the last Saturday in March, this year's 22nd edition of DWC was a meeting point of the world's finest horses, most talented trainers and jockeys, as well as thousands of spectators who gathered in world's longest single-structure grandstand at Meydan Racecourse.

"We believe in the power of dreams and the importance of committing to a vision and what you see before you today at Meydan Racecourse is the tangible proof that truly great things can be achieved when dreams are followed." HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

The Style Stakes were the fashion highlight of the day that grabbed the attention of fashionistas and stylists. Prizes were offered to men, women and couples for the best hat, most creative hat, best dressed couple, best dressed man and lady. Celebrity expert judges from the fashion industry and media like Kelly Lundberg, Lucy Wildman, Dom Bagnato, Daniel Higgins and Saufeeya Goodson were present to choose the lucky winners.

"Be brave, but not brazen; sophisticated, but not showy; elegant but not edgy. Remind yourself that you will be mingling with royalty at the world's richest horse race, and your look will be seen by millions across the globe – so this is the day to put 150 percent into your outfit, and dress like the whole world is watching you!" Lucy Wildman when asked for advice to contestants.



Second Summer (USA) ridden by Patrick Dobbs winning the Godolphin Mile



The World's longest single-structure grandstand at Meydan Racecourse



2017 DUBAI WORLD CUP



Rocka (QAT) ridden by Harry Bentley after winning the Dubai Kahayla Classic



Registered couple for the best dressed competition at the DWC Style stakes



Ladies participating in the style stakes for best hat.



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I personally admired the sophisticated outfits and how everybody looked so elegant. Then it was time for the moment everyone was waiting for, and excitement elevated ahead of the opening race. All eyes were on the field as the jockeys came out riding their horses and trainers stood by between hopes and fears. Photographers and broadcasting channels pointed their cameras toward the racecourse as it was ShowTime!

RACE 1: THE GODOLPHIN MILE 1600M (DIRT), SPONSORED BY MEYDAN SOBHA.

With 13 participant horses and jockeys, the opening US\$1,000,000 race for the Dubai World Cup night resulted in a great victory for Second Summer (USA) ridden by Patrick Dobbs. Giving the UAE champion trainer Doug Watson his second Godolphin win in a row, winning last year's title with One Man Band.

It was a very exciting twist when Sharp Azteca (USA) had the lead until suddenly at the final 400m, Second Summer and Ross (IRE) snatched it away from him taking the first and second place.

"He broke slowly. I had to use him up a bit earlier than I wanted. When he kicked on I thought we had it but he got tired in the last 50m. The start cost me." Edgard Zayas - jockey Sharp Azteca 3rd

RACE 2: DUBAI KAHAYLA CLASSIC – GROUP 1 – 2000M (DIRT), SPONSORED BY IPIC

Despite receiving his invitation only one week before the race, the Purebred Arabian Reda gave Qatar the title of the Dubai Kahayla Classic, storming at the final 300m to beat Rb Burn (US) who was heading to the finish line in first place. Trained by Julian Smart and ridden by Harry Bentley, Reda's first place win in the US\$1,000,000 race was a great result for His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani.

"For the amount of kickback he was getting he faced it brilliantly. I was quite a long way back. He just kept persevering and around the bend. He was so full of running and it was just of matter of when he'd get there." Harry Bentley

RACE 3: DUBAI GOLD CUP 3200M (TURF), SPONSORED BY AL TAYER MOTORS

Vazirabad (FRA) nailed his second consecutive win in the Dubai Gold Cup when he overtook Beautiful Romance (GB) by a neck in the final 50m of the race. Trainer Alain de Royer-Dupre and jockey Christophe Soumillon brought France the title of the US\$1,000,000 Dubai Gold Cup in addition to Vazirabad's new title, being the first dual winner of the race.

"On the last corner I just preferred to stay on the inside to drop some lengths there. And when I came into the straight I knew he was going to give me a good turn of foot but I was not really sure I could arrive to take the lead in the end. When he passed the two horses he started to shift in a bit but then when he felt the field in front of him he just kept running." Christophe Soumillon

RACE 4: UAE DERBY 1900M (DIRT), SPONSORED BY THE SAEED & MOHAMMED AL NABOODAH GROUP

Out of 16 horses and jockeys competing in the UAE Derby, it was down to Epichares (JPN) and Thundersnow (IRE) battling in the final 100m to cross the finish line with a few inches difference. Announcing victory of the US\$2,000,000 race for Godolphin's star Thundersnow.

"I was very confident before the race. He had good gate speed and jumped well, but he was startled by the lines on the ground or something and changed leads, shifting out for a few strides. I was able to get him focused again and thought I still had time to come back." Winning jockey Christophe Soumillon

RACE 5: AL QUOZ SPRINT 1200M (TURF), SPONSORED BY AZIZI DEVELOPMENTS

Another very exciting finish was for the US\$1,000,000 AL Quoz Sprint when French-trained The Right Man (GB) surpassed Long on Value (USA) by a nose. None of the spectators surely knew who the winner was until it was announced as they almost crossed the finish line together. Ridden by Francois-Xavier Bertras, The Right Man hit the lead at the final 100m of the race, followed by Long on Value and then last year's second place winner Ertijal (IRE).

"20 years ago I would never imagine I'd win a Grade 1 here. This is an amazing achievement in my career. The horse ran well last time in his prep race. The horse

is going to Hong Kong next if he's well and then maybe Royal Ascot." Didier Guillemin, trainer

RACE 6: DUBAI GOLDEN SHAHEEN 1200M (DIRT), SPONSORED BY GULF NEWS

Mind Your Biscuits (USA) won the US\$2,000,000 Golden Shaheen when he stormed down the center of the track in the final 200m to dominate the race with three lengths difference. Meanwhile Comicas (USA) came in second place followed by Morawij (GB), who maintained his 3rd place since last year. It was a winning gamble for the jockey Joel Rosario who had to risk racing in a wide turn to get a clear path between the 14 galloping horses.

"I think I got some ground in the turn, not much, and then for a second I thought we might not get there," Rosario said. "I was so wide on the outside. I was thinking, 'Is this going to work?' But he showed that he was the best horse in the race."

RACE 7: DUBAI TURF 1800M (TURF), SPONSORED BY DP WORLD

It was a happy night for Japan as they captured their second consecutive win in the US\$6,000,000 Dubai Turf, when Joao Moreira and Vivlos came out of the blue to prevail in the race during the final seconds. Heshem (IRE) was approaching the finish line in first place followed by Ribchester (IRE) when the Japanese filly Vivlos zoomed down in the final 50m to surpass them and win by three quarters of a length.

"She was brilliant, from the time that I sat on top of her on Friday, she gave me the feel that she was going to be very competitive. She was probably one of the lightest horses in the race. If the ground was soft, which is probably what the people were thinking about, she wasn't sinking (into the turf) the most. I think that is why she was able to let down and was able to get there." Joao Moreira.

RACE 8: LONGINES DUBAI SHEEMA CLASSIC, 2410M (TURF)

Godolphin's second victory for the night was through Jack Hobbs (GB) who won the Dubai Sheema Classic which offers a purse of US\$6,000,000. Trained by John Gosden and ridden by jockey William Buick, Jack Hobbs made a superb finish to overtake the lead from Seventh Heaven (IRE) who came second and last year's winner Postponed (IRE) who followed in third.

"I was travelling well in the right spot but he didn't let down like he can on that ground. But to be fair the winner was in a different league tonight. Our horse will come back." Andrea Atzeni (jockey, Postponed (IRE), 3rd)

RACE 9: DUBAI WORLD CUP 2000M (DIRT), SPONSORED BY EMIRATES AIRLINE

When the time came for this race, you could tell that all the spectators were already on the edge of their seats, everyone in the audience was eager to watch the Dubai World Cup. Even HH Sheikh Mohammed Ben Rashid

Al- Maktoum, HH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein and the family stood by the rail to witness the US\$10,000,000 race and indeed it was a brilliant finale! It came to everyone's surprise when the stalls were open that Arrogate (USA), the world's best horse in 2016, was last in the first 100 meters of the race. Teamed up by Mike Smith (USA), they gradually swept their way to the lead for a spectacular two and a quarter-length triumph that left the crowd thrilled.

"I can't believe we won. That is a great horse right there. It was terrible, terrible; he walked out of the gate. I tell you what, Mike Smith did a great job. He didn't panic, he just thought, well I just get him around there. Mike Smith, what a job he did. Unbelievable! This is the greatest horse we have seen since Secretariat. Unbelievable! "Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert (USA)

"When I was watching it, I thought 'I hope Mike takes care of him', maybe I shouldn't have come here, and it's unbelievable what he did. I was listening to the crowd and everybody was thinking, 'Oh, he has no chance'. That was an incredible performance.

When he turned for home, he started to give and I thought 'This is it'. He did it. That is the best I have ever seen in my life." 🏆

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Quotes © DWC News



Dubai Kahayla Classic – Group 1 – 2000M (Dirt), sponsored by IPIC

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UAE Derby Winning jockey Christophe Soumillon during Trophy presentation by al Naboodah group.

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Arrogate storming out of the last place at the beginning of the Dubai World cup race

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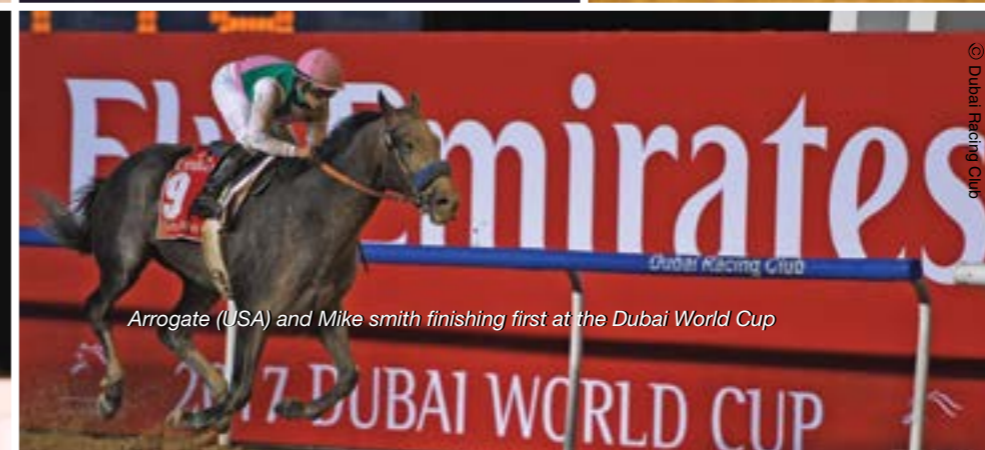
Reda (QAT) and RB Burn competing at the Final 300m of the Dubai Kahayla Classic

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Joao Moreira and Vivlos (JPN) winners of the Dubai Turf

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Arrogate (USA) and Mike Smith finishing first at the Dubai World Cup

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ERTIJAAL (IRE) ridden by Jim Crowley

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