

DWC Carnival

UPDATE

RACING AT MEYDAN

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THE BEAT GOES ON FOR ONE MAN BAND



Dubai Racing Club | Andrew Watkins

DUBAI (December 20, 2018)—Sheikh Saeed bin Mohammed Al Maktoum's **One Man Band** returns on Thursday night in a much-anticipated edition of the Listed Dubai Creek Mile, worth approximately US\$72,000. Formidable on paper and in the hearts of the local racing fans, the son of Pivotal owns the track record over this 1600m trip, but that was 999 days ago and the last time he was seen racing. An immediate return to the winner's enclosure would be another gem in the crown of multi-season UAE champion trainer Doug Watson, but the U.S. expat conditioner is well aware that this is a tall task for the 2016 Godolphin Mile (G2) victor.

"The weird part is that he has been the soundest horse," Watson said. "When he started back training the next season after winning the Godolphin Mile, he had a slight tendon injury that stopped us, basically. We were two days into cantering and he got loose and knocked himself pretty good. We did some stem-cell work with him and got him back."

As hopes of returning to top form during the 2016-17 season dashed, all focus with the eight-time Meydan winner was placed on the 2017-18 season.

"We got him back and he was doing well," Watson continued. "He was going to run in a seven-eighths conditions up the hill at Jebel Ali. In his last work before, we found a lesion on his other tendon and that set him back again. It's unfortunate because he's been so sound the whole time. He's never taken a lame step since I've known him."

From finishing 1-2-3 in the 2016 Godolphin Mile to 999 days of tempered optimism when it comes to one of the most talented horses in his yard, Watson is ready to turn the page and start a new stave with One Man Band.

“He obviously may need the race coming off two years, but he has had a really good few works and come back great from them,” he concluded. “He worked (1400m) out of the gate with two nice horses and they couldn’t get near him, so hopefully he comes back just as well on Thursday.”

KEEP AN EYE ON MCKINZIE



When a trainer wins three Dubai World Cups, it is natural to start taking notice of the kinds of horses he usually sends to the globe’s richest racing affair. Such is the case with Bob Baffert, whose modus operandi around this time of year is a bit transparent; a natural by-product of consummately working at the top level, where there are only but so many places to point class Grade 1-level performers and \$35 million reasons to send your best to Dubai.

At this point, if forced to choose a prototype from the Baffert barn for UAE racing fans to keep an eye on, it would have to be **McKinzie**. A lightly raced, multiple Grade 1-winning grandson of 2002 Dubai World Cup winner **Street Cry** (being by **Street Sense**), McKinzie carries the familiar red and yellow silks of Mike Pegram, whose Baffert-trained **Captain Steve** (above) won the Dubai World Cup in 2001 at Nad Al Sheba. Like McKinzie, he was a son of a U.S. champion 2-year-old (**Fly So Free**) who failed to win the previous year’s Breeders’ Cup Classic, but had shown ample G1 class on the racetrack.

While Captain Steve had a sole prep for Dubai, like Baffert’s 2017 winner **Arrogate**, in the Donn Handicap (G1)/Pegasus World Cup Invitational (G1) at Gulfstream Park, McKinzie is using the same race Baffert’s other Dubai World Cup winner, **Silver Charm**, used as a springboard toward his 4-year-old campaign—Santa Anita’s 1400m Malibu Stakes (G1) on Dec. 26. The final G1 of the American season restricted to 3-year-olds, the Malibu is often an intriguing clash of routers and sprinters grasping for G1 black type like a proper ‘day-after-Christmas’ sale.

The Malibu leads to a point worth noting: Baffert has won all three of his Dubai World Cups with 4-year-olds who were top-class 3-year-olds with room for improvement. Even Silver Charm, a Kentucky Derby (G1) and Preakness (G1) winner, and Arrogate, a Travers (G1) and Breeders’ Cup Classic winner, had the physical scope to suggest that their best may still be ahead. While his older horses to compete such as Pegram-owned **Hoppertunity** and **Mubtaahij** deserve much respect, it was clear when they ran that they were not the primary candidate in the barn; roles filled by Arrogate and West Coast, respectively.

FIVE 2-YEAR-OLDS TO WATCH THURSDAY



Anyone who was impressed by last month's dynamite debut of the long-legged Al Shamkhah had to be equally as impressed with the gritty runner-up effort of her yard-mate **Foggy Flight** (above, right), who returns Thursday night to try to open her account in the Azizi Mina (Race 4, 8:15 p.m.) over 1600m on dirt. The daughter of Rattlesnake Bridge looked like a winner after a decisive move at the top of the lane, but was unable to hold. A step up in trip to 1600m is a bit of a worry for the speedy filly, but the Sandeep Jadhav trainee holds a rating of 84, which is likely the highest of any UAE 2-year-old who has yet to actually win.

In the same race, keep a lookout for a real 'looker' in Doug Watson-conditioned **Razeena**, a Canadian-bred daughter of Malibu Moon who cost \$185,000 for Sheikh Rashid bin Humaid Al Nuaimi and greatly pleases the eye on appearance. Born and raised at the quality-over-quantity operation of David Anderson, she is out of the Empire Maker mare Pink Palace—implying stamina—and hails from the same Ontario fields that begat 2018 Queen's Plate winner **Wonder Gadot** and 2017 sale-topping, 2018 Group 3 winner **Sergei Prokofiev**.

The Azizi Star (Race 2, 7:05) over 1400m has a few of note, but none with the same amount of buzz as Phoenix Ladies Syndicate's Ahmad bin Harmash-trained **Changqing** ('Chang-Ching'), a dark bay son of U.S. juvenile champion Shanghai Bobby out of a mare by Leroidesanimaux, the sire of Dubai World Cup winner Animal Kingdom. Considering the identical connections already have three victories with 2-year-olds, this one must be respected.

Fawzi Nass, who debuted Bila Shak to a fine runner-up effort a couple weeks ago, comes back with another well-bred type he purchased out of the Keeneland September Sale 2017, **Obeyaan**. A son of Tiznow, the \$100,000 bay colt is out of Street Girl, a multiple Grade 1-placed stakes winner who was fifth in the 2013 Breeders' Cup Distaff (G1). Being by Tiznow, the colt likely could need a few races, but appears to be well-intended in this spot.

A trio of Watson trainees start in the Azizi Star and despite yard jockey Pat Dobbs' choosing of **Alda'iya** (Afleet Alex) and **Al Seel Legacy's** having a \$105,000 price tag that far outweighs his pedigree, one must take a good look at the optimistically named **Nitro**. A son of Candy Ride, he is a son of the Bernardini mare Secret Jewel, a \$1.2 million purchase and is the first foal to race. A \$32,000 purchase, Nitro resides in the same stall as another previous star of Red Stables by the same sire, Candy Boy. The fact that Dane O'Neill was attracted to ride does not dissuade confidence, while it is also of note that owner Kildare Stud (Frankie O'Connor) was responsible for unveiling Watson's **Cosmo Charlie** and **Big Brown Bear** over the last two seasons.

MUNTAZAH, LADY WEDAD TO CARNIVAL

Dubai Racing Club | Neville Hopwood



Trainer Doug Watson was disappointed but not disheartened by the recent losses of Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum's **Muntazah** (above, center) and Mohd Bintook Al Marri's **Lady Wedad** and is marching forward with two of his most highly regarded horses. Godolphin Mile (G2) runner-up Muntazah failed as the favourite two weeks ago in the Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan National Day Cup (Listed) at Abu Dhabi, while the much-lauded unraced 2-year-old filly Lady Wedad faltered on unveiling Nov. 22.

Both charges will head to the Dubai World Cup Carnival, with Muntazah pointing to Round 1 of the Al Maktoum Challenge (G2) on Jan. 10 and Lady Wedad taking on winners in the UAE 1000 Guineas Trial on Jan. 3 (opening night).

"Muntazah, he's a big heavy horse and it was his first time running since last year," Watson said. "He came out of the race in great shape and that's what's important. That was a good prep and I'm not worried about it. We will go on to Round 1.

"Lady Wedad had a bit of a breathing issue in her first run," he continued. "She will likely run back in the Trial. She has so much speed, but I think there's more to her. In her last piece of work, she sat off of a horse and that was her best work ever. I don't want to go a mile yet with her, so the 1400m is a good spot."

QUICK HITS: While McKinzie is worth watching, as noted above, in the Malibu (G1), pay attention to how **Solomini** does for Zayat Stables. A three-time G1-placed colt, he exits a layoff and is running below his optimal trip. A big effort, especially at the end of the race, could bode well for possibly seeing the horse in Dubai come March 30th... It goes without saying that the Japanese contingent has been formidable over the last few years in the UAE Derby (G2). The strength of its upcoming 3-year-olds was on display Wednesday when the talented **Nova Lenda** won the Zen-Nippon Nisai Yushun over 1600m on a left-handed dirt course at Kawasaki. The smooth-traveling son of Daiwa Major defeated a fast-closing son of Pyro named **Derma Louvre**, who ran greenly and enthusiastically enough to imply a positive trajectory... Doug Watson has also reported that both **Drafted** and **Kimbear** are on schedule for the Dubawi (G3) and Al Maktoum Challenge Round 1 (G2), respectively. Unfortunately, Watson also reported that perhaps his highest-regarded 2-year-old, **Martial Art**, is likely out for the season with a tendon injury.

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