

GUNNEVERA & THUNDER SNOW MAY MEET AGAIN IN DUBAI



DUBAI (November 6, 2018)—The form of Dubai World Cup night 2018 was strong on Saturday at the Breeders' Cup World Championships in Louisville, Kentucky, highlighted by dynamite performances in the weekend's centrepiece affair, the Grade 1 \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic.

An impressive six horses with Meydan form went to post in the 2000m dirt feature, topped by four runners from the Dubai World Cup sponsored by Emirates Airline (G1): Godolphin's DWC winner **Thunder Snow** (far right), Bob Baffert-trained runner-up **West Coast** (pink and black silks), Doug O'Neill-trained fourth-place finisher **Pavel** (far left) and eighth-place finisher **Gunnevera** (third from right). Two-time Dubai Golden Shaheen sponsored by Gulf News (G1) winner **Mind Your Biscuits** (second from left, far rear), as well as Coolmore's UAE Derby sponsored by The Saeed & Mohammed Al Naboodah Group (G2) romper **Mendelssohn** were also in participation.

Fourteen horses started in the 35th edition of the Classic, headlined by America's top-rated middle-distance dirt horse, **Accelerate** (second from right), who ultimately would not be denied. Margoth's Gunnevera and Saeed bin Suroor-trained Thunder Snow made the favourite work for his victory, nonetheless. Gunnevera closed fastest of all from far astern and after a tough break from the starting gate, pipping Thunder Snow for second. Thunder Snow overcame the unenviable rail post to get position behind pace-setting Mendelssohn, on what many considered to be the slowest part of the racetrack, made a strong bid at the top of the lane and ultimately finished a valiant third. Mendelssohn, despite setting a torrid pace of 46.46 seconds for the first 800m and 1:10.61 for the first 1200m, held well to finish fifth, beaten a mere four

lengths at the wire. Pavel was in great position until steadying hard with 400m to go, ultimately giving way, and West Coast was prominent early before fading when the real running commenced.

Thunder Snow will now return to Dubai on a Thursday flight to prepare for a 5-year-old season and defence of his Dubai World Cup title. He will commence his winter campaign in either the Al Maktoum Challenge R1 (G2, 1600m, \$350,000, Jan. 10) or Al Maktoum Challenge R2 (G2, 1900m, \$450,000, Feb. 7). Sano confirmed that Gunnevera will point to the \$9 million Pegasus World Cup Invitational (G1) before a possible return date to Dubai. Grade 1 winner on turf and dirt, **Yoshida** (left, white blaze), who ran an excellent, fast-closing fourth in the Classic for trainer and 1996 DWC winner Bill Mott, is possible to point for the Dubai World Cup, but no solid plans have been made just yet.

“(Thunder Snow) ran a huge race,” bin Suroor reported after the Classic. “I’m happy with him. It’s the big stage and the big race with the best horses in the world and it was a good run from him. Now we take him back to Dubai to Sheikh Mohammed to prepare for the Dubai World Cup. It was no problem with the draw. I wasn’t really worried about that. He jumped well and was in a nice position. It was too fast early, but he still ran a huge race. I’m happy with that.”

Owner Charles Fipke and trainer Dallas Stewart, whose partnership resulted in champion Forever Unbridled’s fifth-place finish in the 2018 Dubai World Cup, may be back for more in March. Their **Seeking the Soul** was second on Saturday in the \$1 million Breeders’ Cup Dirt Mile to **City of Light**.

“I thought he ran great and I’m really proud of the horse,” Stewart said. “He needed a little more ground (distance), that’s all. I’m very happy for Mike McCarthy (trainer, City of Light) and his team. We just got outrun today and that’s horse racing. We’ll point toward the Pegasus from here.” He added the day after: “Hopefully we can get an invite for Dubai.”

With excitement already beginning to build for the centrepiece of Meydan’s racing calendar, it is worthwhile to keep an eye on Baffert-trained **McKinzie** (12th as the Classic’s second choice), who fits the mould of the three-time winner’s prototypical DWC horses, as well as **Axelrod** (ninth), who was recently purchased in part by Dubai-based Phoenix Thoroughbreds. Improving Oklahoma Derby (G3) winner **Lone Sailor** (sixth), aforementioned **Pavel** and 2000m-loving **Catholic Boy** (13th) also appear like candidates-to-be if they progress over the winter enough to earn an invite and their connections deem them worthy of a trip to Dubai.

Mind Your Biscuits, who was wide throughout and never truly involved, retreated to 11th and will now possibly have one more run in the \$750,000 Cigar Mile (G1) on Dec. 1 in his home state of New York before heading to stud in Japan.

“It was not our day,” trainer and co-owner Chad Summers said. “Congrats to Joel (Rosario, jockey of Accelerate and former rider of Mind Your Biscuits), John Sadler (winning trainer) and Accelerate.”

All in all, the Breeders’ Cup provided Meydan Racing fans a great deal of which to anticipate as we march toward the Dubai World Cup Carnival, a mere eight weeks away (Jan. 3 launch), and the world’s richest day of racing, the \$35 million Dubai World Cup card (Mar. 30).

ROY H RESURGENT IN BC SPRINT; DUBAI RETURN POSSIBLE



Dubai Racing Club | Mathea Kelley

There were doubts as to whether beaten Dubai Golden Shaheen sponsored by Gulf News (G1) favourite Roy H was the same horse after his trip to Dubai last spring, but those ambiguities were annihilated when the defending Breeders' Cup Sprint (G1) champion successfully doubled up in said \$2 million, 1200m affair. It was a grand return to form following a third in the Dubai Golden Shaheen and a pair of good, but not mind-blowing, efforts in Grade 1 California company.

“He’s really training good and doing good,” trainer Peter Miller said after the race. “I just can’t say enough about this horse. (Jockey) Paco Lopez gave him a great ride. Just unbelievable. I can’t believe it. Too good to be true.”

Owned by Rockingham Ranch and David Bensen, the son of More Than Ready is now under consideration for a bit of atonement in the UAE. Rockingham partner and racing manager Brian Trump confirmed that the Dubai Golden Shaheen, which has been upped to \$2.5 million in prize money, is on the radar.

STORMY LIBERAL EYES AL QUOZ SPRINT REDEMPTION



When Rockingham Ranch and David Bernsen's Peter Miller-trained **Stormy Liberal** (third from left) came to Dubai in March, there was much speculation as to the credibility of his victory the previous fall in the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint (G1) over his home track of Del Mar, especially after a horrible subsequent run in the Hong Kong Sprint (G1) at Sha Tin. Now, seven months later, there is no such doubt about the son of Stormy Atlantic.

Given a superbly confident ride by Drayden Van Dyke in his title defence, the now 12-for-30 6-year-old gelding ran down a stubborn **World of Trouble** (far right) to win by a measured neck at the wire on Saturday. The effort backed up his strong run in Dubai when a gaining second, beaten a half-length by Godolphin's Jungle Cat, in the Al Quoz Sprint sponsored by Azizi Developments (G1). Now doubled to \$2 million purse, the Al Quoz Sprint is one of the possible aims for the global star sprinter, offering him an opportunity at redemption.

"We'll definitely look at defending our (Breeders' Cup) title again next year, but perhaps some business abroad beforehand; perhaps Dubai," Miller said in the winner's circle immediately following the victory.

Miller added later on in the day: "We're definitely thinking about it. I will have to talk to the owners and obviously see how all the horses are doing. All those sorts of things. I like it in Dubai and they treat us very well. I'd like to go."

Stormy Liberal's traveling partners to Dubai in March, Al Quoz Sprint third-place finisher **Conquest Tsunami** and sixth-place **Richard's Boy** (fifth in 2017), finished 11th and 14th at Churchill Downs on Saturday. Both remain possible for a return to Dubai.



QUICK HITS: Trainer Luis Carvajal Jr. said after the Breeders' Cup Sprint that third-place finisher **Imperial Hint**, the beaten favourite, is still under consideration for a run in the Dubai Golden Shaheen in March... Rockingham Ranch and Gelfenstein Farm's 2016 & 2018 Dubai Golden Shaheen runner-up **X Y Jet** remains aimed toward a return to Meydan, despite scratching from the Sprint last week... Dubai World Cup-winning (2008) conditioner Steve Asmussen remarked "I'd love to come back. Hopefully I have a 3-year-old (for the UAE Derby)," so it may be worth watching how his soon-to-be sophomores develop. In March, he was third in the UAE Derby with **Revide**... An improving sort to keep an eye on moving forward toward the Longines Dubai Sheema Classic is Donegal Racing's Kentucky Turf Cup (G3) winner **Arklow**, who ran a respectable fourth in the \$4 million Breeders' Cup Turf (G1) for red-hot trainer Brad Cox. On the improve, he fits the kind of horse his ownership likes to bring to Dubai (a la **Keen Ice**)... Of course, the racing world and Dubai racing fans will be waiting with bated breath as to the plans of Juddmonte's John Gosden-trained Turf winner and international star **Enable**. A run in the Dubai Sheema Classic would obviously be a coup, but one must not get hopes too high just yet... 2016 Group-placed Carnival runner **Vale Dori** never got to her customary front-running position in the \$2 million Breeders' Cup Distaff (G2) and failed to factor... Dubai World Cup runner and defending Turf champion **Talismanic** was stuck on dodgy inside ground throughout the Turf before running into traffic issues turning into the straight; ultimately failing to hit the board. Future plans for the flashy son of Medaglia d'Oro have yet to be announced... In other international news, Saeed bel Obaida's Charlie Fellowes-trained Carnival star **Prince of Arran** deserves much applause after finishing a valiant third in the Melbourne Cup (G1) at Flemington on a mere three days' rest (after winning the Lexus Stakes (G3)). Fellowes reported earlier this fall that a return to Dubai is likely for the improving stayer who was eighth in the Dubai Gold Cup sponsored by Al Tayer Motors (G2).

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