

DUAL DUBAI WORLD CUP CHAMPION THUNDER SNOW CONFIRMED FOR WHITNEY HANDICAP



Dubai Racing Club | Erika Rasmussen

Two-time Dubai World Cup sponsored by Emirates Airline (G1) winner **Thunder Snow** has been confirmed to start in the Whitney Handicap (G1) on Saturday, August 3, at Saratoga Racecourse in Saratoga Springs, New York, USA. The Whitney is the most prestigious summer race for dirt horses, 3-year-olds and upward, in America and carries a purse of \$1 million.

Owned by Godolphin and trained by Saeed bin Suroor, Dubai's most beloved equine star will make his second consecutive run in the United States following a good third behind **Mitole** and **McKinzie** in the Runhappy Metropolitan Handicap (G1) on June 8—his first run following a hard-fought victory in the Mar. 30 Dubai World Cup over American classic-placed **Gronkowski**.

“He is doing great,” Bin Suroor said. “He had a very nice work, his last piece of work, over the gallops at Newmarket this week and I’m happy with him. He’s in good form and improved from his last race at Belmont. He’s sound, happy and healthy and that is what you want.”

Including his victories in the \$10 million Dubai World Cup of 2018 and \$12 million edition this year, he has won or placed in 12 Grade/Group 1 races from 1400m (seven furlongs) to 2000m (1¼ miles) and in five countries—France, Ireland, UAE, UK and USA—but has yet to win in America in his three completed races, including a second and two thirds.

In Dubai, the charismatic winner of eight of 24 lifetime has never finished worse than second in eight appearances over the last three seasons. In addition to his aforementioned famous victories, he conquered the \$2 million UAE Derby (G2) of 2017—the first of three consecutive Dubai World Cup night wins—as well as the UAE 2000 Guineas (G3) over subsequent Grade 1 winner **Bee Jersey**. He also placed in the

last two editions of the Al Maktoum Challenge Round 3 (G1) on the Dubai World Cup Carnival's Super Saturday card.

Last year, he confirmed his global form with a good second in the Jockey Club Gold Cup before a solid third in the Breeders' Cup Classic after attending a break-neck pace. In similar fashion, he was third in the Metropolitan last out after showing good speed against some of the top dirt sprinters and milers in the world. A stretch out to the 1800m (nine furlongs) of the Whitney could well be in his favour. While he has never raced at the distance, he is 2-fo-2 over 1900m (1 3/16 miles), including the Al Maktoum Challenge Round 2 (G2) of 2018 over three Group 1 winners, **North America**, **Eragon** and **Furia Cruzada**, as well as two Godolphin Mile (G2) winners, **Heavy Metal** and **Second Summer**.

"He ran a big race over the mile at Belmont," Bin Suroor said. "He really needed that race and had not run since the World Cup, so I was very happy with him. He will be ready for the Whitney because of that and the nine furlongs will suit him better than the mile. He showed plenty of speed, even for a mile, but he had Group 1 wins at a mile and seven furlongs, so he has always had speed. He will be more settled in the Whitney, but he will also have to be handy in the race."

Running a big race could lead to even more history making for the earner of \$16,511,476—the highest of any active Thoroughbred. He is currently third on the all-time prize money list, just over \$900,000 behind fellow Dubai World Cup winner **Arrogate** and less than \$2 million astern Australian wonder-mare **Winx**.



Bin Suroor confirmed that the son of Helmet has shipped to New York again (clearing quarantine on Wednesday morning, July 24), but it will likely not be the last time he does so over the next few months. While the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) at California's Santa Anita Park on Nov. 2 is the ultimate goal for the latter half of 2019—where he will try to make history and become the first horse ever to win the Dubai World Cup and Classic in the same year—the winner of four Group 1s will likely keep shipping into New York from his Newmarket, UK, base as he prepares.

"The horse will ship back after the run and prepare for his next race," he said. "It could be again at Saratoga (in the Grade 1 Woodward on Aug. 31) or Belmont in the Jockey Club Gold Cup (on Sept. 28). He will come back and we will decide what he does.

"He has a very good mind," he continued. "He is a straight-forward horse and I am pleased with him. I am happier with this kind of race and hope he can win. He will try hard. He's tough and will always try hard."



Dubai Racing Club | Andrew Watkins

The nine-time Dubai World Cup-winning conditioner also touched on Godolphin's star middle distance turf horse **Benbatl** (above), winner of the 2018 \$6 million Dubai Turf sponsored by DP World (G1) who has not resurfaced since finishing second to Winx in Australia's Cox Plate (G1) on Oct. 27. The run was his ninth of 2018 amid a season that included four races in Dubai and competing at the top level on three continents—including Group 1 wins in UAE, Australia and Germany.

“He’s doing good and he is back to work,” Bin Suroor said. “We gave him a break and let him take his time after a hard season. Right now, we are looking for a race maybe in September. It could be in Germany or America or Canada—there are options for him and he will run when he is ready.”

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