

## BEST SOLUTION RETURNS TO ACTION; THUNDER SNOW ON HOLD



Godolphin's **Best Solution** is set to make his comeback after a long break from racing, per trainer Saeed bin Suroor. The son of Kodiak was crowned 'Best Horse' at the 2019 His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Horseracing Excellence Awards on the merits of a 2018 season that saw him win multiple Group 1 affairs.

"He's entered this Saturday," Bin Suroor confirmed. "He had a hard season last year and we took our time bringing him back. He got a nice break and now he's back and has trained well. He's in good form."

The bay 5-year-old is the early favourite for Kempton Park's September Stakes (G3), the same race the great Enable used as a prep for a second victory in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (G1) at Longchamp. Early plans may not be so ambitious for the globetrotting Irish-bred.

"We will see how he runs before making any plans," Bin Suroor said. "We'll see how he looks after and we hope he runs well."

Commencing 2018 with four consecutive Meydan races, including a handicap victory during the Dubai World Cup Carnival and a respectable fifth in the \$6 million Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1), the 12-furlong specialist then went on to win a quartet of consecutive races, including the Princess of Wales's Stakes (G2) at Newmarket, a pair of Group 1s in Germany and the prestigious Caulfield Cup (G1) in Australia. He finished his nine-run season with a valiant eighth in the Melbourne Cup (G1) over 3200m after missing the break by five lengths. Best Solution has won Group stakes for three consecutive seasons, dating back to Newmarket's Autumn Stakes (G3) in October 2016 as a juvenile.



Bin Suroor also touched on stable star **Thunder Snow**, who has not been seen since scratching from the Whitney Handicap (G1) in New York and heading back to his Newmarket base. Future aspirations, which have always included the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) at Santa Anita as a year-end goal, are currently in the balance.

"He had a temperature in New York," he said. "He's getting a small break and there's no plan for him yet."

## HIT THE BID HEADS TO FLYING FIVE WITH BREEDERS' CUP AMBITIONS



Straight to Victory Syndicate's multiple Group 3-winning Irish charge **Hit the Bid**, who has been a regular competitor during the last two Dubai World Cup Carnivals, has come out of his return last week in top order and will head to Group 1 company next out. Out of competition for nearly five months, the Darren

Bunyan-trained 5-year-old son of Exceed and Excel returned on Aug. 29 in the Listed Abergwaun Stakes at Tipperary, finishing sixth after showing early pace.

“He came out of the race excellent and honestly I could not be happier,” Bunyan said. “He was very much behind fitness-wise going into the race and (jockey) Chris (Hayes) said the same thing afterward. We were very happy he ran as well as he did and he came out of the race better than he’s ever looked. He’s the kind of horse who needs that first run back and I was very impressed.”

In 2018, the seven-time Meydan runner was second in the same Tipperary fixture before finishing a close fourth 17 days later, beaten 1¼ lengths, in the Group 1 Flying Five Stakes at The Curragh. The five-furlong (1000m) turf sprint specialist then brushed off a hard-luck run in Prix de l’Abbaye (G1) at Longchamp on Arc Day with a resounding victory in Dundalk’s Mercury Stakes (G3) just 12 days later. Earlier in the season, he had clashed with the world’s top in said division, including a third in the Meydan Sprint (G2) astern Ertijaal and Blue Point.

In 2019, he has raced four times, including a pair of runner-up efforts at Meydan and an unplaced effort behind Blue Point in the Nad Al Sheba Turf Sprint (G3) over a 1200m trip beyond his scope.

“If the rain hadn’t come last year in the Flying Five, I believe we could have won the race,” Bunyan continued. “The ground was too easy for him on the day, but he still ran a very good race to finish that close. We can’t change yesterday, though, and this year we’re going in with a much better horse. There will be improvement to come again for him after this race, but he won’t be too far away from his best run.”

The Flying Five is a part of the ‘Win and You’re In’ program for the \$1 million Breeders’ Cup Turf Sprint (G1) in early November, guaranteeing the victor a spot in the gate and fees paid. The 1000m American race has been won the last two years by Stormy Liberal, who has finished third and second in the last two editions of Meydan’s \$2 million Al Quoz Sprint sponsored by Azizi Developments.

“There are no easy Group 1s,” Bunyan said. “One of the reasons we had the extra break was to try to get to this race and then if he wins, we will go to the Breeders’ Cup and then hopefully back to Dubai.

“He’s faced the world’s best and done well. Ertijaal was a complete legend and he put it up to him. He was only a couple lengths off Blue Point and he went on to be the best sprinter in the world. He’s had his excuses, but I’d rather be going into (the Flying Five) with him than trying to beat him.”

## ALMOND EYE POINTS TO TENNO SHO



Per Japanese officials, \$6 million Dubai Turf sponsored by DP World (G1) winner **Almond Eye** is on course to return to the races this fall, following a break over the summer. The brilliant 4-year-old filly will be pointed toward the \$3 million Tenno Sho (Autumn), a Group 1 over 2000m better known as the Emperor's Cup.

Scheduled for Sunday, October 27, the prestigious race could serve as a launch pad for various other Group 1 races, including the Hong Kong Cup (G1) and a defence of the Japan Cup (G1). Also possible down the line is a return to Dubai, but no concrete plans are in place.

In other Japanese news, the Dubai Turf is firmly on the radar for Group 1 Yushun Himba (Japanese Oaks) winner **Loves Only You**, a full-sister to 2016 Dubai Turf winner **Real Steal**. The 3-year-old daughter of recently deceased supersire Deep Impact is undefeated in four starts, including her race record-setting aforementioned score.



**IN BRIEF:** Godolphin's Dubai Gold Cup sponsored by Al Tayer Motors (G2) winner **Cross Counter** is pointing toward the Group 1 Irish St Leger on Sept 15 at The Curragh as a launching point for a defence of the Melbourne Cup in early November... Godolphin's Saeed bin Suroor-trained DWC Carnival winner **Desert Fire** returned to form in a big way on Wednesday evening at Chelmsford Racecourse in the UK, defeating heavy favourite and highly regarded 3-year-old Dubai Warrior in handicap company. The win was the emblazoned 4-year-old son of Cape Cross's first since landing Meydan's Azizi Mina Handicap on Jan. 17... Aforementioned **Stormy Liberal** will have his second start since a second consecutive placing in the Al Quoz Sprint when he runs in Saturday's \$700,000 Runhappy Turf Sprint (G3) at Kentucky Downs. The two-time Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint winner and America's reigning champion turf horse was third in the Green Flash Handicap (G3) on Aug. 17 for trainer Peter Miller and owners Rockingham Ranch and David Bernsen. Speaking of Peter Miller, his UAE Derby (G2) runner-up **Gray Magician** was a valiant second in the Smarty Jones (G3) on Sept. 2, completing a trio of good 'Derby' efforts this summer that started with a second in the Indiana Derby (G3) and then a win in the Listed Ellis Park Derby... On Sunday in South Korea, Curlin Handicap winner and Dubai World Cup alumnus **Dolkong** is favoured in the Keeneland Korea Cup at Seoul Racecourse and has drawn stall 10 of 11 in the 1800m race. The swift **Ace Korea**, also a DWC Carnival runner, lines up in the Korea Sprint, having drawn 14 of 16... In Canada, **Old Persian**, winner of the \$6 million Longines Dubai Sheema Classic (G1) for trainer Charlie Appleby and Godolphin, is being pointed toward the Northern Dancer Stakes (G1) on Sept. 14. Appleby has also reported that Group 1 winner **Barney Roy** will point toward the DWC Carnival for Godolphin. The 2017 St James's Palace (G1) winner and 2017 Coral-Eclipse (G1) runner-up is likely to aim for the Jebel Hatta (G1) on Super Saturday as an early goal... Two-time top-4 Dubai Turf finisher **Deirdre**, a crowd-pleasing winner of the Nassau Stakes (G1) at Goodwood in July, is being pointed toward the Irish Champion (G1) against Europe's top middle-distance runners on Sept. 14. **Advertise**, owned by Dubai-based Phoenix Thoroughbreds, is slated to run Saturday in the Haydock Sprint Cup (G1) in the UK. Granted he remains in training in 2020, the 3-year-old colt is being pointed toward the Al Quoz Sprint, per ownership principal Amer Abdulaziz. **Forever in Dreams**, second to Advertise in the Coronation Cup (G1) in June for femme-counterpart Phoenix Ladies Syndicate, has also circled the 1200m Meydan dash after Saturday's race... In France, UAE 1000 Guineas (Listed) winner **Silva** returned to form for trainer Pia Brandt with an excellent fourth by one length in the Prix de Lieurey (G3) at Deauville on Aug. 15—her first run since a pair of poor

efforts in the UAE Oaks (G3) and Poule d'Essai des Pouliches (G1) (French 1,000 Guineas) in February and May.

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