



3.35pm Coral Stewards' Cup (Heritage Handicap)

Evening Saigon shows willing attitude in Coral Stewards' Cup

Evening Saigon (16/1) crowned a fine festival week for Wathnan Racing and James Doyle with a tenacious display in the six-furlong Coral Stewards' Cup.

Seventh in the Wokingham at Royal Ascot on his previous start, Hamad Al Jehani's sprinter emerged alongside Stratusnine on the far side approaching the final furlong, with a host of runners in contention nearer the stands.

Following a sustained battle, Evening Saigon gained the upper hand on Stratusnine (25/1) and won by a head. Mitbaahy (14/1), Completely Random (7/1) and Toca Madera (25/1) closed strongly from the rear to fill the minor places.

Doyle said: "It has been great. Obviously, we were very deflated last year with just one winner during the week. We were really frustrated by that, so the message was that we needed to do better, and that applied to everyone, including me. We have done a lot of work this week looking at different tactics, track position and things like that. All the guys back home in the office, and these guys here, have played their part.

"Hamad has done an unbelievable job with this horse. He is not an easy conveyance. I do not know if you saw, but when the stalls opened, he was feeling so well in himself that he tried to get rid of me in the first few strides. If he gets the start right, which he did today, he is pretty good. Craig Witheford and his team have also done a great job with him and we got that part right.

"We just had the perfect set-up. I did not think they went that mad for a Stewards' Cup, so I was happy to pull him out before the two-furlong marker and set sail for home. I knew the second horse, I won on him the other day at York, and he is a pretty decent horse too, so it was a good tussle all the way to the line."

Al Jehani said: "I am very happy for Evening Saigon and very happy for the team. He performed very well at Royal Ascot, and it was the right decision from the management to keep him for the Stewards' Cup. It is really important for us and a really important race for the season. I am very happy, and thanks to James for giving the horse a great ride.

"It is not easy to be competitive with the best trainers in the world, but we try our best. I think we are building in a very good way, with great help from the management. Hopefully, we will improve year by year and can get Wathnan into the winner's enclosure more and more."

Richard Brown of Wathnan Racing said: "James had a bit of a hard choice, but he was pretty firm on riding this lad in the end. Hamad has turned up and won two of the hardest handicaps to win all year. We plot these and work as a team, and when these results come off, it is just fantastic for Wathnan and what Wathnan is all about.

"If you look at Hamad's statistics since he started training, they match up with the best trainers in the country. He is a phenomenal horseman and was a very good rider himself. He is very modest about it, but he showjumped to a good level. He is a great horseman and has formed a great team. We all work very closely together and to pull this off is huge for everybody involved."

Hugo Palmer said of Stratusnine: "He has run with plenty of credit. I do not know what we do differently, but he is going to win more handicaps. We will go to York. The other horse Dubai Bling missed the break, so we will do some remedial training with him."

Stratusnine's jockey David Probert said: "He got into a nice, even rhythm behind the pace. Luckily enough, the pace held up on the far side, which helped us get a nice tow into the race. Credit to the horse, he only ran a week ago. I did not think he would handle Goodwood at all, but he seemed to handle the track quite smoothly and obviously handles fast ground very well. I was just saying to Hugo that he is probably masquerading as a handicapper at the minute and it feels as though Group company will not be an issue for him."

Mitbaahy's trainer Charlie Hills said: "I am delighted with him. He has been pretty lightly raced over the last couple of years. He had a few problems that set him back, but I think he is nearly back to his best now. That was a huge run. He is in the Maurice de Gheest. He is obviously a Group Two winner, so I think he is up to that sort of level."

Saffie Osborne said of Toca Madera: “He has run an absolute cracker. He is obviously a horse who likes to front-run, but over six furlongs I was keen to get some cover into him. He settled beautifully, got into a lovely rhythm and I probably had to wait slightly too long for a run, but he hit the line really well. That opens up plenty of options for him in these kinds of races for the rest of the season.”

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- 1 Evening Saigon (Wathan Racing) Hamad Al Jehani 4-9-00 James Doyle 16/1
 - 2 Stratusnine (Stratus9 Consulting Limited) Hugo Palmer 4-9-05 David Probert 25/1
 - 3 Mitbaahy (Fitri Hay) Charles Hills 7-9-08 Jamie Spencer 14/1
 - 4 Completely Random (Paul Inglett & Beckhampton) Harry Charlton 5-9-06 Ryan Moore 7/1
 - 5 Toca Madera (L Bond & Sheikh Aymen Jawad Al Hamandi) David O’Meara 5-9-00 Saffie Osborne 25/1
- 27 ran 11/2 fav Two Tribes (27th)

Hamad Al Jehani – 3rd Qatar Goodwood Festival winner

James Doyle – 26th Qatar Goodwood Festival winner

Ends