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## **Ambitious Dragon blazes to brilliant win**

Ambitious Dragon was back to his crowd-wooing best at Sha Tin Racecourse today, Sunday 17 March. Hong Kong's champion treated the packed Derby day grandstand to a performance of scintillating brilliance as he clinched the HKG1 Queen's Silver Jubilee Cup under Zac Purton.

The 1400m contest, the final leg of the Hong Kong Speed Series, had been billed as a three-way battle between the two-time Horse of the Year, his old rival Glorious Days and sprint star Lucky Nine. However, the race was all but over as the field of nine straightened for home and careered toward the winning post. Zac Purton was sitting confidently astride Ambitious Dragon while all around him flailing jockeys were cranking their mounts into top gear.

Approaching the 250m, Purton finally shook the reins and the Tony Millard-trained six-year-old unleashed his trademark burst to surge clear of his eight opponents for an easy two and a half-length verdict.

"That was unbelievable," said Purton. "Glorious Days and Lucky Nine are both outstanding horses in their own right. As we've seen today, when Ambitious Dragon is on song and right he's unbeatable – we don't know which one we're going to get until we get to the 200m but when he's right he's unbelievable, he's up there with the best of them."

Ambitious Dragon stopped the clock at 1m 20.63s with a swift final 400m of 21.91s. The John Moore-trained Time After Time ran on to take second while Glorious Days, trapped three wide throughout under Douglas Whyte, was a further length back in third with Lucky Nine fourth.

"I thought the pace of the race was nice enough," added Purton. "I was in the position I wanted to be in and I was more than happy to see Glorious Days wide and working like he was, it really played into my hands."

Ambitious Dragon has now won seven G1/HKG1 races and he will aim for a second triumph in the G1 AudemarsPiguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup over 2000m at Sha Tin on 28 April, having landed that prize back in 2011.

"He'll definitely go for the QEII," said Millard. "As long as I can keep him fresh and train him as I would like, he'll run a big race in the QEII."

"You can disregard his last race, he got a bash around the turn and when he came out of that he didn't want to run so the question of which Dragon turned up, he certainly got a bashing last race and was out of work for a few days, which for him was an issue."

"Today he got the ideal run, the pace was on and he showed us what a champion he is. You can't describe how that feels because a lot goes into it."

Earlier in the day, John Moore celebrated his 63rd birthday with a landmark success in the fifth event on the card, the BMW Performance Race (Handicap). Sterling City gave the trainer his 1300th Hong Kong career victory in the 1200m contest as the gelding scored by a neck under Brett Prebble.