

27/04/2013

## APQEII Cup track notes – Saturday

### Eishin Flash tests the turf once more

Eishin Flash enjoyed an eve of race spin on the turf at Sha Tin Racecourse this morning as the four overseas contenders for tomorrow's HK\$14 million G1 AudemarsPiguet Queen Elizabeth II Cup went through their final preparations.

Japan's big hope, who added last year's G1 Tenno Sho (Autumn) to his previous top-flight win in the 2010 Japanese Derby, went a half gallop under the watch of his trainer, Hideaki Fujiwara. The athletic six-year-old covered the final 800m in 56.6 seconds (24.4 seconds for the last 400m).

"We wanted to confirm the track condition on turf once more this morning. He was very settled and seemed to be ready for tomorrow's big event mentally as well. He is full of beans and is in great order," said Fujiwara.

"The fact that jockey Mirco Demuro will be on board encourages us as he rode the horse in last year's TennoSho, which he won – hopefully we can make the same story. I understand there are many top runners in the field including the very good horses from Hong Kong, so it will be difficult, but I trust him and hope he can show his best performance tomorrow."

Under the supervision of trainer Saeed bin Suroor, Godolphin's G1 Dubai Duty Free heroine Sajjhaa went for a steady canter on the all-weather track, with the clock showing 33.0s for the final 400m. Meanwhile, Mike de Kock's pair, South Africa's champion mare Igugu and stablemate Treasure Beach, each cantered for a lap.

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26/4/2013

## APQEII Cup track notes – Friday

### Ambitious Dragon primed for APQEII Cup

The 2011 winner **Ambitious Dragon** and top rated four-year-old Akeed Mofeed head the home team attack on Sunday's G1 Audemars Piguet QEII Cup and both go into the race in good shape according to their respective trainers.

"He went very nicely this morning – it was exactly what we wanted," Tony Millard said of Ambitious Dragon who breezed up 400m in 25.1 seconds. "The rain we've had was good, it meant the grass was beautiful. I'm pleased with him going into the race and hopefully everything goes according to plan. We just need a bit of luck now."

Ambitious Dragon is also entered for the following Sunday's Champions Mile but in reference to that race, Millard said: 'Right now we're just focused on this Sunday's event.'

**AkeedMofeed** aims to become just the third horse to complete the Hong Kong Derby - APQEII double in the same season and trainer Richard Gibson is optimistic. "I know it's a new test and not an easy one but my gut feeling is that I have a good horse who's in great shape. With those two things in place, they generally run well and this horse is the ultimate professional."

Japan's **Eishin Flash** may well be the best-fancied of the four-pronged overseas challenge and looks a realistic chance to follow compatriot **Rulership** who won the race last year.

Eishin Flash did everything right again on the track this morning, looking a ball of muscle through steady work on the all-weather track and then ably handling some starting gate practice as he twice went in and out of the barriers with trainer Hideaki Fujiwara acting as barrier attendant.

Fujiwara arrived in Hong Kong last night and is pleased with his horse's condition. "As I saw him this morning for the first time in Hong Kong, everything looks like it has been controlled well so far with his work and condition. Before he flew in, we gave him a strong workout and he had been almost set up for the race at home, so any strong and tough work would not be needed here.

"I walked with him and got him in the gate because he might be surprised with the stall handler without any practice. He did not have any problem. About the draw 13, an inside gate would have been much preferred, but we will make a strategy with the jockey Mirco Demuro about how give him his best opportunity," Fujiwara said.

Godolphin's **Sajjhaa** was again fractious as she came on to the track this morning, baulking at the television cameras and an array of umbrellas as light rain began to fall.

"Umbrellas down please," asked Godolphin assistant Tommy Burns. The waiting media obliged and the Dubai Duty Free winner then made her way on to the all-weather where she did little more than stretch her legs. "She's OK. She's always a bit like that. We might be more concerned if she was too relaxed," Burns said.

Mike De Kock's pair **Igugu** and **Treasure Beach** worked on the turf. Igugu breezed over 400m in 28.9s while Treasure Beach had a leisurely 800m gallop, coming home his last 400m in 28.6s.

Steven Jell, assistant to de Kock, remains confident that the South African Horse of the Year Igugu is on the up. "Maybe some thought she was disappointing in Dubai but she arrived there with so much hype and, as I've said, we were on the back foot from the start after her long period of quarantine," he said.