

Dubai Duty Free wraps up Spring Trials Weekend at Newbury Racecourse



From left: Dubai Duty Free Executive Vice Chairman & CEO Colm McLoughlin, Senior VP Marketing Lead Sinead El Sibai, Supervisor Marketing & Events Noel Parial and Grand Alliance's owner and breeder Susan Roy and Mickey Roy

The connections of winner Grand Alliance with the trophies for the Dubai Duty Free Finest Surprise Stakes at Newbury. Dubai Duty Free Executive Vice Chairman & CEO Colm McLoughlin (second right), Senior VP Marketing Sinead El Sibai and Supervisor Marketing & Events Noel Parial present the awards to (left to right) Grand Alliance's owner and breeder Susan Roy, Mickey Roy, Charlie Fellowes, James Doyle and groom Mikkel Motterson.

The 2023 [Dubai Duty Free Spring Trials Weekend](#) at Newbury Racecourse concluded on Saturday, April 22 with a "sensational" day of racing.

"Dubai Duty Free's long-standing relationship with Newbury Racecourse and British racing is now in its 27th year," notes the organization.

"The lovely relationship we have with Newbury is why we continue the association," said Dubai Duty Free's Executive Vice Chairman and CEO Colm McLoughlin. "This is our fortieth year in business and it is the friends that we have made, the experience shared, that make it all worthwhile."

Familiar faces were involved in a formidable reunion for the opening event on a seven-race card, the £70,000 (US\$87,223) Group 3 Dubai Duty Free Finest Surprise Stakes run over 12 furlongs.

"It was packed with stars. Godolphin's St Leger and Dubai Duty Free Irish Derby winner of two years ago, Hurricane Lane, was meeting Mojo Star, runner up in the Doncaster Classic and in the Ascot Gold Cup, for a fourth time and the betting said the race was apparently between the pair.

"But both have had absences from the track and when battle commenced in the final furlong neither were able to stand their ground. Outsiders featured in the finish led by Grand Alliance. He hadn't won for a year and in his last race of 2022, at Newbury, Grand Alliance could only finish third to Max Vega. This time it was Max Vega who filled the same minor placing."

"We hadn't thought past today about his future," said trainer Charlie Fellowes. "He's not the most beautiful horse in the world and he can act like a naughty school child. He can switch on and off and be hard work."

James Doyle was ready for Grand Alliance's wayward maneuvers driving his mount out to a memorable success on the rider's 35th birthday.

The fillies and colts Classic trials at Newmarket earlier in the week had gone to a new force in British AmO Racing. They would have had high hopes of Magic Sunset in the £70,000 Dubai Duty Free Stakes Group 3 fillies Classic Trial. But Magic Sunset didn't feature as victory went to Remarquee on her seasonal debut for local trainer Ralph Beckett.

The £90,000 (US\$112,144) Watership Down Stud Too Darn Hot Group 3 Greenham Stakes over the same seven furlong trip as that for the fillies, looked ready made for unbeaten favorite Chaldean. But disaster struck at the start when jockey Frankie Dettori was dropped almost immediately the gates opened.

The race was left wide open though those with memories of the winner Isaac Shelby's debut victory at Newbury last year in similar soft ground would have profited. Shelby wore the famous green and blue colors of the late Robert Sangster and the colt is trained at the famous Manton Stables he modernized.

The concluding £12,500 (US\$15,570) Dubai Duty Free Millennium Millionaire handicap over ten furlongs had its usual competitive big field. And it appeared that the succession of big prize winners would be sustained as 100-1 Time Interval bowled along in front. In the dying strides though the outsider was caught by the strongly fancied second favorite Mustazeed. The lightly-raced Shadwell-bred five-year-old was having his first run for young Newmarket trainer Harry Eustace.

"Chris Wall trained Mustazeed and when he retired at the end of last year, he was kind enough to recommend the owners, the Newmarket Racing Club, transfer him to me," said Eustace. "They are a great bunch of people."

Alongside top-class action on the track, racegoers attending the Dubai Duty Free Spring Trials Weekend were treated to Dubaian hospitality in the Dubai Duty Free Marquee where complimentary Arabic Coffee and dates were served, and the Wheel of Fortune offered the chance to win instant prizes including free entry into the Dubai Duty Free Millennium Millionaire and Finest Surprise prize draws.