

Race	Top Selection	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice
Godolphin Mile	#7 North America (2/1)	#6 Sharp Azteca (9/5)	#13 Kafuji Take (15/1)	#5 Second Summer (15/1)
Kahayla Classic	#8 Af Mathmoon (7/2)	#1 Faucon Du Loup (5/1)	#5 Tm Thunder Struck (10/1)	#7 Rb Burn A (5/1)
Gold Cup	#4 Wall of Fire (20/1)	#3 Vazirabad (9/5)	#12 Heartbreak City (6/1)	#1 Sheikhzayedroad (8/1)
UAE Derby	#10 Epicharis (5/1)	#3 Lancaster Bomber (7/1)	#6 Fawree (8/1)	#9 Fly At Dawn (15/1)
Al Quoz Sprint	#6 Ertijaal (9/5)	#1 Amazing Kids (10/1)	#11 Limato (5/2)	#12 Baccarat (15/1)
Golden Shaheen	#12 Reynaldothewizard (8/1)	#10 Not Listenin'Tome (20/1)	#11 St. Joe Bay (4/1)	#1 Stallwalkin' Dude (12/1)
Dubai Turf	#6 Mutakayyef (4/1)	#2 Zarek (2/1)	#12 Deauville (15/1)	#1 Ribchester (5/2)
Sheema Classic	#3 Highland Reel (4/1)	#7 Postponed (3/2)	#4 Sounds of Earth (15/1)	#2 Jack Hobbs (4/1)
Dubai World Cup	#9 Arrogate (1/3)	#12 Hoppertunity (15/1)	#5 Gun Runner (8/1)	#4 Lani (60/1)

Race 1: Godolphin Mile Post Time 6:45 AM

The Godolphin Mile kicks off the card with a field of 13. One American in Sharp Azteca has shipped over to run. A former American graded stakes winner Second Summer is also in the field. This race this year has a number of horses coming from different races with a number of question marks surrounding them. My picks are 7-6-13-5.

Picks

7. North America has won all four of his career dirt starts since switching barns to Sateesh Seemar and moving to Dubai. He has risen through the ranks with four impressive wins. This will be the toughest assignment for this son of Dubawi. He has good tactical speed and it is hard to fault his recent form. Odds 2/1

6. Sharp Azteca is the favourite and lone American invader in the field. He owns blazing early speed for the high percentage Jorge Navarro barn and he comes off an impressive open lengths win at Gulfstream Park. The distance, combined with the presence of other speed makes him vulnerable, but his best race wins this. Odds 9/5

13. Kafuji Take is a deep closer from Japan who has been running against a number of horses who will be seen in the World Cup itself. He will go right to the back and come with one big run; if the pace melts down he will be flying at the end. Odds 15/1.

5. Second Summer was moved to the UAE in the latter half of 2016 after a win in the Californian Stakes at Santa Anita. He ran a superb race in the second round of the Maktoum Challenge and could have bounced when compromised by the track bias last time; he's worth giving another chance to as he drops in class. Odds 15/1

Ticket: \$1 Triactor 6,7/5,6,7,13/2,5,6,7,8,13 \$24

Important Race Replay: Mina Hamriya Stakes from January 12th at Meydan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khZOGT6MWkQ> (#4 is North America, #8 is Heavy Metal)

Race 2: Dubai Kahayla Classic 7:15 AM

The Kahayla Classic for Arabians moves from its traditional first race slot into this one. This race brings a field of Arabians to post, including one in Rb Madymoisse who last ran at Lone Star Park in November. The defending champion Af Mathmoon should be the heavy favourite and horse to beat. My picks are 8-1-5-7.

Picks

8. Af Mathmoon is the defending champion of this race and is a lifetime 10 for 13. He has blitzed the competition in his last two starts winning by open lengths after a troubled trip back in December. It's his race to lose. Odds 7/2.

1. Faucon Du Loup was the winner of the second round of the Maktoum Challenge as he won by 11 lengths in impressive fashion. He has drawn well for this race and should be able to save ground and get an up close position as the logical alternative to my top selection. *Odds 5/1*

5. Tm Thunder Struck was the runner-up in last year's race. He comes off back to back wins on the grass at Doha in Qatar. He might be better over less distance, but a form reversal would certainly make him a major player once again. *Odds 10/1*.

7. Rb Burn was second behind Af Mathmoon in the Maktoum Challenge round one and came back with a win at Abu Dhabi, albeit it on the grass. He ran a good race to hold onto a piece against Mathmoon and could get a piece today as well. *Odds 5/1*

Ticket: \$10 Win/Place #8 Af Mathmoon.

Important Race Replay: Al Maktoum Challenge Round 1 from January 5th at Meydan.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqfViyj3eE> (#2 is Mathmoon, #6 is Burn))

Race 3: Dubai Gold Cup Post Time 7:50 AM

The Gold Cup is a tremendous field of stayers from around the globe. The locals meet up with a tremendous European group who are well travelled. This race even boasts a horse that last ran over the hurdles in Ireland in Heartbreak City. A challenging race at 2 miles it should be one of the highlights of the day. My Selections are 4-3-12-1.

Picks

4. Wall of Fire is a young colt who seems to be an improving sort. He has never seen the likes of these, but the ambitious placing by Hugo Palmer suggests he continues to improve. His last two races over long distances have been tremendous with his closing with a furious run to win. His kick has been visually impressive and now he should get a good setup in front of him to boot. *Odds 20/1*.

3. Vazirabad is the 9/5 favourite and defending champion of this race. He was second in his return to the races last month at Meydan where Beautiful Romance just got the jump on him. He has tremendous form at long distances; he should move forward off the last race and will be a major factor. *Odds 9/5*.

12. Heartbreak City was last seen in a two mile hurdle race in January in Ireland. His last race before that was a second in the Melbourne Cup where he was beaten a head after a tremendous performance. He obviously loves the distance and he could jump his way to victory in the Gold Cup. *Odds 6/1*.

1. Sheikhzayedroad is a veteran who has been one of the top stayers in England in recent years. He won the Long Distance Cup at the end of last year at Ascot. He came back with a solid third in his local prep and has every right to move forward off that race. *Odds 8/1*

Ticket: \$1 Ex Wheel 4/ALL, ALL/4 \$26.

Important Race Replay: Nad Al Sheba Trophy from February 23rd at Meydan.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXOI975iJHg> (Basateen is #1, Vazirabad is #4, Sheikhzayedroad is #5, Beautiful Romance is #6))

Race 4: The UAE Derby Post Time 8:25 AM

The UAE Derby features an international field for a spot in the Kentucky Derby as well as a \$2 million purse. The field is international, in many ways untested and highly competitive. My selections are 10-3-6-9.

Picks

10. Epicharis is the undefeated Japanese colt who has already earned a spot into the Kentucky Derby field. He was highly professional in a win in the Hyacinth Stakes at Tokyo in February where he sat behind a wall of horses before getting out and running down Adirato. In four career starts he has shown great talent and this is the next test for him. *Odds 5/1*.

3. Lancaster Bomber is an Aiden O'Brien trained colt who is by War Front and comes off a very good second in the Breeders Cup Juvenile Turf. This is his first start on dirt, but he has connections that have

won this race before and merit respect. I expect him to be forwardly placed and he does notably hold a victory over Thunder Snow in the Dubai Dewhurst. *Odds 7/1.*

6. Fawree is a Candy Ride colt who reared at the break last time and dropped his rider. His maiden breaking victory over Bee Jersey was impressive as he made a three wide move and took over without much asking. He is lightly raced but the talent is obvious. *Odds 8/1*

9. Fly At Dawn is one of a number of Godolphin entries and he has the best form on dirt. Fly At Dawn won the 2000 Guineas Trial and now will have to negotiate the extra distance but offers solid value in a wide open race. *Odds 15/1.*

Ticket: \$1 Pick 3 2,3,6,8,9,10,13/8/10,11,12 \$21

Important Race Replay: Hyacinth Stakes on February 19th at Tokyo.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggH4drMd8ZM> (#2 is Epicharis and #7 is Adirato).

Race 5: The Al Quoz Sprint Post Time 9:00 AM

The Al Quoz Sprint for this year has been lengthened to six furlongs now down the straightaway. The field is less international than in previous years and also is not as heavy with speed types. The big question for many is that last furlong. My picks are 6-1-11-12.

Picks

6. Ertijaal is really the controlling speed of the race. He was second in this race last year and came back in 2017 with two relatively easy victories. If he doesn't have to go crazy early in the race it would really help him through the last furlong which will be the big question mark for him. *Odds 9/5.*

1. Amazing Kids is the lone Hong Kong invader for this race and he comes off a fourth last time out in a tough group 2. Amazing Kids did win on a straightaway course in January as he beat some talented local sprinters including Peniaphobia. He has a furious late kick and if Ertijaal is getting leg weary this could be the one getting him late. *Odds 10/1.*

11. Limato was the beaten favourite in the 2016 Breeders Cup Mile. He was too close to a fast pace at a distance that is too far for him. Limato now gets to cut back to six furlongs and has a major shot, but this is his first race of the campaign. *Odds 5/2.*

12. Baccarat is part of the Godolphin team and he has had troubles away from the gate in his most recent two races before closing with a rush. If he can get dragged into the race by Limato he does have a good closing kick that is useful over six furlongs. The price is also right. *Odds 15/1.*

Ticket: \$1 Tri 6/1,11,12/1,11,12 \$6

Important Race Replay: Nad Al Sheba Turf Sprint on March 4th at Meydan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2iNMr6gYbA> (Baccarat is #1, Final Venture is #4, Jungle Cat is #7, The Right Man is #13)

Race 6: The Dubai Golden Shaheen Post Time 9:45 AM

The Golden Shaheen draws a full field of 14. The favourite Mind Your Biscuits from the United States drew the dreaded post 14. The local sprinters in my opinion are not nearly as strong as in recent years, making this race quite tricky. My Selections are 12-10-11-1.

Picks

12. Reynaldothewizard the old boy ran the best race of any sprinter in Dubai in his victory in the Dubawi Stakes in January. He's been off since then but he runs well fresh and if he can get a fast pace and save some ground wouldn't this be a story at the age of 11. *Odds 8/1.*

10. Not Listenin'Tome is a Hong Kong invader for the very sharp John Moore. This horse has competed at the top levels sprinting on the grass and now tries the dirt for the first time. He has trialed very well over the dirt in Hong Kong and the trainer seems to be confident in a horse that certainly has the talent. *Odds 20/1.*

11. St. Joe Bay will be the main speed of the race out of the Peter Miller barn. He has dashed out to wins in his last three starts in California. This race will be a tougher race for him but if he gets to the front it will take some running to catch him. *Odds 4/1.*

1. Stallwalkin' Dude has drawn the rail and will look to save ground and rally. The horse knows how to win with 17 career wins and he always brings a top notch effort. If he gets the right trip, he certainly could be a factor. *Odds 12/1.*

Ticket: \$2 Exactor 10,12/1,6,10,11,12 \$16

Important Race Replay: Mahab Al Shimaal on March 4th at Meydan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On5XFw0K3uU> (#1 is Wild Dude, #2 is Dundonnell, #3 is Cool Cowboy, #4 is High on Life, #7 is Morawij, #8 is Comicas, #9 is Muarrab and #10 is Dios Corrida)

Race 7: The Dubai Turf Post Time 10:30 AM

The Dubai Turf is a top notch affair this year with a number of high level European middle distance horses. The race should set up for a horse to come with a blinding run to win. My selections are 6-2-12-1.

Picks

6. Mutkayyef was third behind Tepin last time out in the Woodbine Mile. He was away slowly from the gate before making a wide move and lugging in down the lane as the super filly just held him off. The race prior to that was a very good third in traffic against top level horses. Mutkayyef always seems to be coming with a run and at the end of the year; last year he certainly looked like an emerging star. *Odds 4/1.*

2. Zarek is a French invader who prepped at Meydan in the recent Dubai Millennium Stakes. It was said after the race that he wasn't too tight for that race and would only go forward off the race. This now 4-year-old colt was very competitive against Almanzor last year and has great form heading into the race. *Odds 2/1.*

12. Deauville is another lightly raced colt who has shown big talent. Ryan Moore shows up to ride off a third place finish against older horses in the Arlington Million. The race before that he was a good winner of the Belmont Derby. This colt is very tactical and I could certainly see him coming with a big effort at a price. *Odds 15/1*

1. Ribchester is another lightly raced but highly talented colt that should be highly competitive in this field. This is his first race of the year as well but his 2016 form fits in here. *Odds 5/2.*

Ticket: \$1 Triactor 2,6/1,2,6,12/1,2,6,12 \$12

Important Race Replay: Prix Dollar run October 1st at Chantilly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiNGTsP8oXk> (#2 is Heshem, #7 is Zarek)

Race 8: The Dubai Sheema Classic Post Time 11:05 AM

The Sheema Classic at 12 furlongs offers a compact field with international superstars butting heads. This race is a rematch between two rivals Highland Reel and Postponed who have taken turns beating each other on the world's biggest stages. My selections are 3-7-4-2.

Picks

3. Highland Reel is a tough Irish globetrotter who has won on three continents in his lifetime. He has run three great races in a row including a win in the Breeders Cup Turf where he took the field from gate to wire. His race in the Hong Kong Vase was as good a defeat as you will ever see. He should be able to make the lead comfortably in this field and then dictate when the running starts. *Odds 4/1.*

7. Postponed did not look like himself last time out where he misbehaved behind the gate and then got into lots of traffic trouble down the lane before getting out to run second. The 2016 champion will have to revert back to the races from last year to find his way back into the winner's enclosure. *Odds 3/2.*

4. Sounds of Earth was a late closing second in the Japan Cup back in November. The Japanese are always competitive in these races and Sounds of Earth should like the firm going and he is the one longshot with a reasonable chance of having a say in the outcome. *Odds 15/1.*

2. Jack Hobbs has been third in the last two Champion Stakes. The lightly raced now 5-year-old won the Irish Derby in 2015 and on his best day he is as good as anyone in the world. This is his first race since October but he certainly wouldn't surprise to get a big piece.

Ticket: \$5 Ex Box 3,7 \$10

Important Race Replay: Dubai City of Gold run March 4th at Meydan.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd1bvL3VGw> (Prize Money is #4, #10 is Postponed)

Race 9: The Dubai World Cup Post Time 11:45 AM

The Dubai World Cup in 2017 looks to be the coronation of Arrogate as the top racehorse on the planet. This race will also make him the highest earning racehorse of all time with \$17 million after his Pegasus and Breeders Cup Classic wins. This superstar for Bob Baffert will be a prohibitive favourite and deservingly so. My selections are 9-12-5-4.

Picks

9. Arrogate is the dominant dirt horse in the world. No one has seen a horse put up numbers like this since Ghostzapper. His recent wins in the Pegasus, the Breeders Cup Classic and the Travers have all been scintillating. He worked great over the surface and Bob Baffert has won the World Cup before so he knows what it takes. He's a superstar and will be a joy to watch. *Odds 1/3.*

12. Hoppertunity the other half of the Bob Baffert team was a good winner of the San Antonio Handicap last month. I thought Hoppertunity was hampered by a troubled trip in this race last year and if he can save some ground and get a good pace to run at I could see him running well down the lane and getting a big cheque once again. *Odds 15/1.*

5. Gun Runner has been ultra-impressive in his last two wins with the Razorback and Clark Handicaps. I would look for him to run another good race, but I do not think his best distance is 10 furlongs. If he can stay the trip he could certainly be a factor but for the underneath spots more so. *Odds 8/1.*

4. Lani is an eccentric nut who at times doesn't want to train or run. His race last time in the Maktoum Challenge was pitiful but Ryan Moore saw enough to stay with him and he has trained incredibly well in the mornings of late. He draws well, the distance won't be a factor and the talent is present -- when it comes out. I know he could be last all the way around but he could also get in the mix at a massive price. *Odds 60/1.*

Ticket: \$5 Triactor 9/5,12/4,5,12 \$20

Important Race Replay: Pegasus World Cup run January 28th at Gulfstream Park.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2j89WkDhAMQ> (#1 is Arrogate, #3 is Neolithic and #9 is Keen Ice)

Things to Remember: It's a long day of racing Saturday and the international fields are competitive and the day of racing is fun. The Meydan carnival has been formful but also very speed-biased and rail-biased. This was true last year as well but on World Cup night winners came from all over. The Godolphin Mile and UAE Derby will give a good view of how the track will be playing for the World Cup itself. The forecast calls for rain Friday in Dubai but clear skies on Saturday and in that climate rain does not take long to evaporate. The nine races kick off bright and early with the Godolphin Mile at 6:45 am.

Enjoy the Dubai World Cup and its card. I hope you have lots of luck. See you bright and early Saturday!