

THE HK WINNING FACTOR REVIEW
SHA TIN, Sunday, September 6, 2020
A rail, track good

Not an opening day to remember with a total sweepout and our best results a couple of teases with Telecom Missile in the second race and Allied Agility in the C3 down the straight, both results that would have greatly softened a tough afternoon but they didn't quite make it.

The bottom line was that most of the winners were very findable but the pattern all day was that they were just under or right on where we had them assessed – e.g. Joy Master, Moneymore, Winston's Lad, Bright Kid, Leap Of Faith, Prince Of Gems, Metro Warrior, Excellent Proposal - so they weren't bets and 2 of the last 3 races we had mapped completely different to how they turned out so we got them wrong.

The track played well and fair and just a touch faster than average on the circle but much quicker down the straight course.

The highlight for us was the win of Excellent Proposal who looks headed for the 4yo classics while we came away from the Chief Executive's Cup unimpressed and suspicious of the form.

HEAT MAP LEGEND	
FAST 2 Len+ fast	
FASTER THAN AVERAGE (1-2 Len)	
AVERAGE	
SLOWER THAN AVERAGE (1-2 Len)	
SLOW 2 Len+ slow	

			+2.8 L	+4.1 L	-4.4 L	-0.7 L			
001	C5	1600m	25.07	23.87	23.34	23.61			

This was the walking race we anticipated early, speed picking up quick a fair way out, though, with the leaders using themselves from the 800-400m and that allowed the finishers to make ground and Joy Master, who does have a better change of gears than many C5 horses, was able to take advantage of a good race shape for his second win in 31 starts. The leaders Art Of Raw and Who's Horse both battled on well enough with The Full Bloom, from behind the leader, so the front runners certainly had their chances and just didn't have the pick up. The eye catching run in the race was Green Generation, making up a fair bit of ground from near the rear. He has only had 3 runs now in C5 and had excuses in them all. Others needed more pace on than they got and Great Smart got caught wide and didn't finish off.

			-1.6 L	-0.3 L	+1.2 L			
002	C5	1200m	23.56	22.53	23.64			

Moneymore had trialed very well in slow times since joining Hayes, was clearly ready to go and got the ideal map for a horse running on from behind midfield. This race shape has become something of a pattern with this C5 1200m to open the season, with the winner coming from the back half for most of the last 14 runnings and Moneymore had the perfect trip and the weight pull. He ran close to the best we've had for him here so he may hold this form but wouldn't be any good thing to win again. Telecom Missile was a very interesting class drop with Purton on, had his chance and went well and he has still had only 6 starts now. Adonis had won this race 12 months ago with 12 pounds less and ran right to his best closing into third. There may be a race in the offing for him but he doesn't have a lot to spare at the top of the C5 handicap. Fox Cheunger was every chance, raced well and isn't far away either. Others worth noting were Speedy Dragon running on from the rear – he has been jumping better but gate 13 was no help and if he gets a better draw shortly he looks a threat in C5 as a dual C4 winner in the past – Fantastic Fabio had a tough run outside the pace and pulled up with a cut on his off front pastern so he's a forgive and Jimson The Dragon didn't get the best of room at times in the straight. E Generation seemed well fancied and should have done more, though note both he and Adonis are entered to back up a week later.

			+0.5 L	+1.0 L	-1.4 L			
003	C4	1200m	23.96	22.89	22.75			

Just a steadily-run race here so Winston's Lad did a good job to outrun them from back in the field but, although a 9yo, he is still racing well and that was his edge over a field of inexperienced horses and non-winners. He rated here as well as he has ever rated in his life even as a younger horse and certainly wouldn't say it's beyond him to arrive again next time in C3. A couple of horses overraced in the soft pace – including the leader Diamond Pegasus and surprise favourite All Joyful, who was also held up briefly in the straight – and Noble Man and Golden Mission both raced wide into the breeze, so perhaps there are some excuses but Golden Mission still managed to run a place after being 4 wide so that dampens the form of the others. When All Joyful did get clear in the final 150m he was washed up anyway. Every chance Hero Star and Super Red Dragon and Colonel continues to look a horse with problems that just have not been reported yet. The horse we liked a lot at a big price, Sam's Love, travelled very well 3 back on the fence and looked Likely to be in the finish at the home turn but after being slightly baulked in the straight he ran out of puff and perhaps HN Wong was on him for good reason. Eligere was down in C4 for the first time and ran his best race yet in HK – not a horse we've got much of an opinion of but he looks likely to win soon in this grade. Vigor Champ was a winner at the of last season, he needs a fair bit to go right as he has no tactical abilities and the outside gate was too big a hurdle here but he raced ok.

			-0.9 L	-1.2 L	+1.0 L			
004	C4	1200m	23.71	22.51	23.18			

There was a big wrap on the debutant Untold Riches, despite being from a stable that is not noted for debut winners, and he did a decent enough job here though beaten and did pull up lame the following morning. As the sectionals show, Interstellar pressing forward to his outside made sure there was no loafing in the lead and that left the leaders vulnerable late in the race. Bright Kid had started with Chris So in C3, failed to get the job done with Douglas Whyte most of last season then returned to So in March and has not looked back with 2 wins and 2 seconds from 4 starts. Our conclusion is simply that it took him a long time to acclimatize because his rating now with us is back to type of performances he arrived with from Australia and, while he now returns to C3, he looks up to it. Breeze Of Spring was well bet at odds – including by our subscribers – and ran on well enough for second and in line with his form. He is a known quantity who can win a race at his current mark. One of those who caught the eye was Fortune Master at huge odds in fourth. He was caught wide his only other run in July but had been sent out only 16.0 in the betting so there was some opinion of him. He got every chance here, ran well enough to be a chance in something. The real disappointments here were Judy's Star, who ran like he needed the outing, Happy Tango who will also benefit for it and More Than Enough, who we didn't like off modest form last prep but he ran even well below that. War Lord was caught wide and can do better – he has drifted down in the handicaps now to a dangerous mark – and Day Day Rich, well-bet at long odds, overraced again when restrained behind the pace.

			-0 L	+2.2 L	-1.4 L	-0.8 L		
005	C4	1400m	13.48	22.21	23.23	23.33		

The danger pre-race here, in what looked a relatively average two-horse contest between Angel Of My Eyes and Sumstreetsumwhere, was that a slow pace was certainly against Sumstreetsumwhere and not even ideal for Angel Of My Eyes. Both look like they want a truly-run race and that's what brought them undone here and assisted Leap Of Faith. He looked caught wide on paper and that was how it worked out but Moreira made the smart, winning move in the slow second section. He could have pulled back, looking for cover, but he wouldn't have won giving a start and the low pressure first half meant that he could sit wide and win if he was close enough. It was a dash from the 700m and the first 3 were in the first 4 all the way and drew away from the others. Leap Of Faith now has a record of 7 starts 2 wins & 2 seconds and he is capable of winning again next time in C3 but he has his limitations and doubt he will ever escape that grade. Likewise, Angel Of My Eyes is only lightly-raced but handy and should handle 1600m ok while Sumstreetsumwhere is in great form since joining Hall and this defeat shouldn't be held against him. All 3 will be better for a truer tempo. Not a great deal to say about the ones behind, although Hang's Decision was very wide towards the rear and made some ground and is still capable despite his advanced years. Ezra was 3 wide trailing the winner early but outrun when it got serious. He is capable in C4 and probably at the bottom of C3 but needs an inside draw and needs a bit to go his way too. Kelmimi Wins was a transfer from Moore to Ferraris and a different animal – he was ridden positively, didn't cope and pulled hard and dropped right out. He might be back in C5 again soon and perhaps a chance again there.

			-0.6 L	+0.1 L	-0 L			
006	C4	1000m	12.96	20.50	22.47			

Tony Millard is the king of transfer horses in Hong Kong racing – there is a living to be made for a patient punter who just waits for him to get horses with ability off other trainers because they are almost always ready to go first time and Prince Of Gems, coming off a bleed last December and other problems thereafter was another case. He had won his race debut for Yip and always had talent and his 3 runs last season were fair but below his best. Millard had him back in form and he won well here from gate 1, not an advantage down the straight. He is capable on his ratings in C3 as well. First starter Pegasus Glory tried hard with every chance, as did the favourite United We Stand and this looked sound form, from both the good even speed and what seemed a general lack of interference in the race. Dublin Star is an interesting horse this season for us and returned at the top of his game in fourth. Although all his form so far has been in sprints and mostly down the straight, his breeding suggests he will handle and maybe even prove better over further in time. He has the dash to sprint so he might be an improver if he gets out in trip as his campaign goes on. Most had their chance here but the exception was Hayes-trained Helaku Knight, who was well fancied to run well first-up but got a check out of the gates, settled at the rear and then had to look for a way through the field towards the centre. His run was a forgive and he might be better suited around a turn over a little further too.

			-0.8 L	-0.1 L	+1.1 L			
007	C3	1000m	12.86	20.34	22.58			

Moneymore had already scored for Hayes on his first day back but Metro Warrior looked the best of his chances and Purton got everything right to scramble home on him. The winning move was Purton bounding from the gates and using up Metro Warrior just enough to ensure that Allied Agility couldn't cross him to the outside fence without going too quick. Had Purton allowed the other leader to cross him, he likely wouldn't have made up the ground to score. That two-horse battle in front led to a disappointing final 400m sectional so it's fair to say that those chasing had their chance to come late and get them but nothing was good enough. Take What You Need looked too one paced and kept wearing away for third. War Of Courage raced out towards the centre of the course off the pace and beaten by just after halfway. He may improve in fitness but there were a couple of runs last season that suggest he could be around his mark. Ka Ying Master had throat surgery in the off season and was expected to improve and he was another who raced out towards the centre before failing. He was again reported as a roarer, so the surgery doesn't seem to have worked, although we've never had a great opinion of him anyway. Chancheng Prince was facing a much tougher assignment than the modest griffin races he won at

the finish of 2019-20, missed the jump then crossed over behind the speed and didn't find the line. He did improve with racing last campaign so he may be worth another chance but he is hardly a star. Trust Me was ok over in the centre ground, though we'd like to see him down in C4 again, while there was a decent run from first starter Telecom Jac, albeit flattered by the race shape. He won up to 1710m in Australia, got a bump at the start here and was a long way back then was making ground late and getting on heels near the line. He didn't rate all that well but it was a pointer to better prospects as he gets out in trip.

			-2.7 L	-0.5 L	+3.0 L			
008	C1	1200m	23.37	21.98	23.07			

This is one of the races we got the map completely wrong. We thought that Amazing Star would find the front easily here without having to break a sweat but Computer Patch came out running to make him work a little and surprisingly so did Champion's Way. By the time he got to a clear lead, Amazing Star was fired up and it was a task to steady him midrace. So too Champion's Way, who pulled hard, and back in the field Wishful Thinker overraced at his first run for CH Yip. The feel of the race is that it went to the horse who was most wound up, Perfect Match, who did overcome a wide trip but looked too tough on the day in a race where the final 400m was poor for the class. While the HK Sprint was identified as his target, Perfect Match would have to find a lot on this race or anything else we have seen from him to be up to the G1 sprinters. Jolly Banner was back and wide with cover behind the winner and got home steadily on the back of the final split and Rattan followed him home, while Victoriann was slow to jump and also worked home as the leaders fell apart without doing anything special. It looks unreliable form going forward, there was little to recommend any runner but the winner and we'll be forgiving many of these beaten efforts next time. Computer Patch is better than this but raced like he was short of a run and Champion's Way gave himself no chance with his antics and will get fitter.

			-0.2 L	+0.8 L	-2.0 L	+0.7 L		
009	C3	1400m	13.43	21.92	22.96	23.34		

It isn't that often that we get a hint of 4yo classic form on opening day, although Golden Sixty had started His unbeaten run last season on this day off a rating of 75 in Class 3, and Excellent Proposal certainly looks headed in that direction. In terms of our performance ratings, he advanced only 1 point on his 91 figure first-up in July over 1200m, but both runs have been in the right ball park for a Classic Mile, even if he probably needs to lift that to win one. The key point of the race for Excellent Proposal was the section from 800-400m. Following on an even speed for the first half of the race, with Hong Kong Great and Top Score keeping each other bobbing, the pace went up a notch on the circle as Cordyceps worked up to them 3 wide while Excellent Proposal sat in midfield covered up and his only real moments of worry were as Moreira waited for Alcari to take him into the race and Alcari fell apart ahead of him after chasing the frontrunners to the turn. It cost Excellent Proposal a length at a vital time and would have been an excuse had he been beaten but the overall race pan helped him to look spectacular in winning as the leaders went up and down like corks in the ocean late. Two of his main chances, Cordyceps and Perfect Pair, had very tough wide runs, so they were out of the equation, and he beat Star Performance, a horse who is probably around his level at the top of C3/bottom of C2 and Great Treasure, a grand old horse who runs well every time and was well suited by the good speed under a light weight. The ones to take from this were the winner, who should win again in C2 with a lighter weight, the unlucky wide runners who should be forgiven (Cordyceps was also lame the next day) but also Top Score, who gave a good kick despite working much of the race and could be a surprise at odds if he finds a race where he gets control.

			-1.2 L	-6.1 L	+2.4 L	+2.5 L		
010	C2	1400m	13.29	20.80	23.63	23.40		

This could not have been much more different from the way we saw it pre-race. Purton (Happy Fun) and Moreira (Beauty Applause) looked the leaders and we didn't imagine the two top jockeys would be involved in a war like two claiming apprentices but throw in Alexis Badel on Super Wealthy and you had 3 of riders tipped to run in the top 5 this season lengths clear of the field and giving their horses no chance. The first section was warm enough but Super Wealthy, fresh after a 6-month break and knee surgery, took control of Badel in the second section and ran it 6 lengths faster than normal and he took Purton and Moreira with him. Had they been juniors, the stewards would have thought about a suspension somewhere here, it was not a good look. With the queries on Super Wealthy's fitness, the market made Beauty Applause ultimately favourite and he was beaten just over 4 lengths in adverse circumstances, Super Wealthy probably was ok less than 2 lengths behind him and Happy Fun finished tailed out. Third favourite Mongolian King has been an infrequent winner but found it all fell in his lap here as the leaders carved each other up, he held his form from the tail of last season and closed well from the rear, as he does, to win the same race he won 3 years ago and beat Ballistic King, from past midfield, and Star Shine, who also came from the rear. A race not to be trusted.