

Arrogate wins Dubai thriller

Jockey Mike Smith (2nd-R) rides Arrogate to win the Dubai World Cup race in the Meydan Racecourse



Dubai

Overwhelming favourite Arrogate won the \$10 million Dubai World Cup yesterday, overcoming a poor start to become the sport's biggest earning horse with \$17 million to its name.

The Bob Baffert trained colt with 51-year-old jockey Mike Smith in the saddle came home ahead of Gun Runner in second and Neolithic who took third place.

Four-year-old Arrogate went into the race as the

odds-on favourite after an impressive win in the Breeders' Cup Classic but after a slow start out of the stalls, Smith had to weave his way through the field.

Gun Runner was ahead at the turn but Smith and Arrogate stepped up their final push down the straight at Meydan as Baffert claimed a third win in the race.

Baffert admitted that he feared the worst for his horse after the sloppy start.

"That was 'Plan F'," said

Baffert. "But that's the best I've ever seen in my life, it's unbelievable"

"I guess he knew where he was but it just goes to show you how great this horse is, he's just a great horse. Mike did a great job, he didn't panic."

Gun Runner battled hard to keep out Neolithic at the head of the chasing pack but the night belonged to Arrogate who now has seven wins from eight starts.

Smith admitted he had

been caught by surprise at the start.

"I missed the break completely because he's used to having a man in the gate with him, but things happen for a reason," he told reporters.

"This horse can do anything, he can win in the lead, he can come from dead last, he hasn't even taken a breath.

"I get a lot of the glory, but there's a big team who deserve a lot of credit." (AFP)

Qatar MotoGP: Vinales on pole

Doha

Torrential rain forced qualifying at the season-opening Qatar MotoGP to be cancelled yesterday leaving Yamaha's Maverick Vinales to start Sunday's race from pole position.

The entire practice and qualifying schedule for MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3 under the floodlights of the Losail track was postponed as storms lashed the desert venue leaving the circuit dotted with pools of standing water.

There will be no qualifying session on Sunday with starting grid positions based instead on combined practice times.

Vinales, 22, who dominated Thursday and Friday practice in Qatar after also sweeping the board at winter testing, will start from pole ahead of Andrea Iannone on a Suzuki and world champion Marc



Maverick Vinales of SAG Team

Marquez on a Honda.

"It's been very strange, and strange that it rains in Qatar," said flying Spaniard Vinales

who backed the decision to cancel the day's action.

"It was difficult today, it wasn't ok for wet tyres or dry

tyres -- it was too risky to go out. For me it's safety first and it's tricky conditions."

Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi, however, is down in 10th place on a Yamaha after being completely overshadowed by teammate Vinales, 16 years his junior.

Jorge Lorenzo, another former world champion, will start in 12th place on a Ducati.

Riders had feared that racing on a wet track under lights would be too dangerous and that such conditions would compromise visibility.

"When it rains here, there is also a strong wind and a lot of sand on the track," said Rossi, a four-time winner at the desert track.

More storms are forecast for Saturday night, raising the prospect that the race could even take place on Monday, as was the case in 2009.

Hamilton grabs pole



Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (C), teammate Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas (L) and Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel (R) pose together

Melbourne

Triple world champion Lewis Hamilton fought off late bids from Sebastian Vettel and team-mate Valtteri Bottas to seize pole position in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Saturday.

Hamilton in a Mercedes clocked a record lap of one minute 22.188 seconds to claim his 62nd career pole and his sixth in Australia into Sunday's race in Melbourne.

Ferrari's Vettel made a valiant late bid to snatch pole off Hamilton but finished just 0.268secs down, although fractionally quicker than Bottas.

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen took fourth ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen, while Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo crashed out in the final Q3 session.

It was dominant Hamilton's fourth successive pole in Melbourne and his fifth in his last six Australian GPs.

"It's been a fantastic weekend so far. I'm incredibly proud of my team," Hamilton said.

Hamilton will be chasing his third win in Melbourne.

Vettel gave promise of fighting for Ferrari's first win

in Melbourne since Kimi Raikkonen's victory in 2007, with his bold showing.

"I lost a bit in turn one and in turn nine I tried a bit too much, but I don't think it would have been enough," said Vettel, who claimed Ferrari's first front row since Singapore in 2015.

Hamilton's pole time was 1.7 seconds quicker than his qualifying time last year.

Australia's big hope Ricciardo crashed his Red Bull at turn 14 looking to post a good time in Q3 and will start 10th off the grid.

Sergio Perez, Nico Hulkenberg, Fernando Alonso, Esteban Ocon and Marcus Ericsson all failed to make it through the top 10 shootout.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen had a lock-up into turn six on ultrasoft tyres before he posted a time to stay alive into Q2.

McLaren's Stoffel Vandoorne had a fuel-flow issue which sent the Belgian to the pits and knocked out in Q1.

Vandoorne was joined by Antonio Giovinazzi, Kevin Magnussen, Lance Stroll and Jolyon Palmer to be eliminated in the first session of qualifying.

FOOTBALL

2018 World Cup qualifying, European zone:

Group A --

Luxembourg 1	-	France 3
Bulgaria	-	Netherlands (1945)
Sweden 4	-	Belarus 0

Group B --

Andorra 0	-	Faroe Islands 0
Switzerland	v	Latvia (1945)
Portugal	v	Hungary (1945)

Group H --

Bosnia and Herzegovina 5	-	Gibraltar 0
Cyprus 0	-	Estonia 0
Belgium	v	Greece (1945)

Scores as of closing