

Sunsprite upsets favourites to lift NBB Cup

Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club hosts thrilling race card with seven National Bank of Bahrain Cups won

● Jockey Husain Makki claims impressive hat-trick of victories, while also finishing as runner-up in two other races

● Hesham Al Haddad-trained challengers triumph in three races, take second twice and claim third place two other times

TDT | Manama

Sunsprite raced to an upset victory yesterday to lift the National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) Cup in the day's feature event at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Riffa.

The five-year-old, 79-rated victor, competing for Al Afoo Racing Stable and Mohammed Saeed with jockey Abdulla Faisal in the saddle, triumphed in the six-furlong race for imported horses in a time of one minute 13.570 seconds.

Sunsprite stunned his higher-rated opposition to claim the lion's share of the BD5,000 total prize.

The pre-race favourites included Buffer Zone and Dark Shadow, who were a narrow second and third, respectively. Both finished just a half-length behind, with Buffer Zone competing for Victorious, Hesham



Winners with officials during an awarding

Al Haddad and Husain Maki; and Dark Shadow representing Al Mohamediya Racing, Osama Hashim and George Wood.

All of yesterday's seven races had an NBB Cup to be won.

In the day's sixth event, Medal Winner triumphed for Al Mohamediya Racing and trainer Hussain Aldailami, while saddled by Paddy Mathers.

The five-year-old, 96-rated horse won the nine-furlong, BD3,000 event for imported horses in 1:48.597.

A pair of Victorious-owned, Hesham Al Haddad-trained horses followed, with Jazeel as the runner-up four lengths behind, ridden by Husain Makki. Macaque, saddled by Marcialis Jaures, came third.

Al Mukhtar Star won the af-



Two of yesterday's winning horses were competing for the trio of owner Abdulla Fawzi Nass, trainer Hesham Al Haddad and jockey Husain Makki

ternoon's fifth race, held over a distance of seven furlongs with a BD3,000 prize for imported contenders.

The Al Afoo Racing Stable victor won for Mohammed Saeed and ridden by Daisuke Fukumoto in 1:24.483. What a Business was a neck behind in second for Jawad Abdulwahab, Jaffar Radhi and Abdulla Faisal; while Fifth Fleet came third for MKAR Racing, Haider Ebrahim and Paddy Mathers.

Epic took first place in race four for locally bred horses with a BD3,000 prize. The three-year-old completed the seven-furlong race distance for Abdulla Fawzi Nass and Hesham Al Haddad in 1:27.656, with Husain Makki in the saddle.

Shaddad followed for Al Bastaki Racing, Salahuddin Al Bastaki and Ebrahim Nader; while Batmobile completed the top three for Victorious, Allan



Action from one of the races

Smith and Abdulrahim Jasim.

The Nass-Al Haddad-Makki triumvirate also triumphed in the day's third race with Living Art. The event was held over 10 furlongs with a BD2,000 prize for local challengers, and Living Art won in 2:10.785.

A length-and-a-half behind was Al Mukhtar for Ali Abdul Hadi Mursili, Abdulla Haji and Ahmed Maki; while Huda came third for Nass and Al Haddad, steered by jockey Marcialis Jaures.

In yesterday's second race, Hayel competing for Al Nuwayef Racing, Abdulla Kuwaiti and Seamus Cronin was the winner to claim the lion's share of the BD2,000 prize.

The five-year-old raced to the finish in the six-furlong straight

in 1:17.253, to beat a competitive field of nine horses that saw Nardeen and Wahaaj in second and third, respectively. Nardeen was representing Feras Sami Hashem Al Meshqab, Osama Hashim and Ebrahim Nader; while Wahaaj was competing for Al Nuwayef Racing, Allan Smith and Abdulrahim Jasim.

In race one over six furlongs with a BD2,000 prize, Al Ma'anaghieh 1789 triumphed in 1:27.325 for KHK Racing, Hesham Al Haddad and Husain Makki. The four-year-old won in 1:27.325.

Al Krush 1751 was the runner-up a short head behind for Al Sakhir, Jaffar Marzooq and Abdulla Faisal; while Al Musannah 1724 for Al Riffa, Yousif Alboainain and Ebrahim Nader.

Pant's ton puts India on top in fourth Test

AFP | Ahmedabad

Rishabh Pant hit a defiant 101 to put India in control of the fourth and final Test against England on Friday.

India reached 294 for seven at the end of the second day in response to England's 205. Washington Sundar was at the crease on 60 with Axar Patel on 11.

India, leading 2-1 in the series, struggled to make runs and lost crucial wickets early in the day, including skipper Virat Kohli who failed to score.

But Pant put on 113 for the seventh wicket with Sundar to hit back after the England bowlers reduced India to 146 for six at one stage.

"I like to play the situation and I just see the ball and react - that's the unique selling point of my game," said Pant.

"The team plan was to get to 206, pass the England total and then get as many runs as possible." India made it work again in the Ahmedabad stadium where they crushed England in two days in the third Test.

James Anderson claimed three wickets while fellow pace bowler Ben Stokes and spinner Jack Leach took two each and England seemed to be in contention for much of the day.

But left-handed wicketkeeper batsman Pant made light of the tough conditions and reached his third Test hundred



India's Rishabh Pant plays a shot

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RISHABH PANT

with a six off Joe Root's spin.

Pant, who smacked Anderson for his 13th boundary with an audacious reverse hit over the slips, finally fell to the veteran quick and walked off to a standing ovation.

"In my opinion it was one of his finest knocks and it came under pressure as well. We weren't in a good position when he came to bat," said Rohit Sharma, who made 49.

"He was quite cautious at the beginning and then he flourished the way we know Rishabh Pant and put the team into a good position."

Pant, who made 91 in the first Test, has a reputation of throwing away his wicket after a good start due to his attacking style.

Sharma said Pant is "more than ready" to fill the void created by former captain and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's retirement from international cricket last year.

"He seems to be doing the job for us," he said.

Australia beat New Zealand to force T20 series decider

AFP | Wellington

Australia crushed New Zealand by 50 runs in a low-scoring fourth Twenty20 international in Wellington Friday to level the series at 2-2.

The result sets up a winner-takes-all blockbuster in the final match at the same venue on Sunday, with Australia in red-hot form after struggling early in the series.

The Australians scored 156 for six in their 20 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat.

In reply, New Zealand were all out for 106 after 18.5 overs.

Captain Aaron Finch anchored the tourists' innings with a gritty 79, making him Australia's most prolific T20 international run scorer on 2,310, ahead of David Warner's 2,265.

Finch chiselled out his 14th T20 half-century off 55 balls before cutting loose with four sixes in the final over, in which Kyle Jamieson conceded 26 runs.

But he struggled for partners as the Black Caps pinned back Australia's batters with accurate bowling and a steady flow of wickets.

Despite his man-of-the-match batting performance, Finch singled out his bowling



Australia's captain Aaron Finch plays a shot

2,310

T20 international runs have been scored by Aaron Finch making him Australia's most prolific run scorer, ahead of David Warner's 2,265

attack for praise, saying they were outstanding on a wicket that did not play as expected.

"I thought we adapted really well, it was a really polished performance with the ball," he said.

Paceman Kyle Richardson ended with the best figures of three for 19, but spinners Asht-

on Agar, Adam Zampa and Glenn Maxwell all contributed with two wickets each.

Leg-spinner Ish Sodhi was the pick of the New Zealand bowlers, claiming three for 32.

The Black Caps made a slow start, with openers Martin Gup-till and Tim Seifert managing just one boundary apiece in the opening three overs on a spin-friendly wicket.

Guptill departed cheaply for seven but it was only the beginning of New Zealand's woes as they lost a further six wickets for 30 runs.

The collapse effectively ended the contest, despite some tail-end resistance from Jamieson, who top-scored for the Black Caps with 30.