

TEAM HHH, 2026

International Racing Tip Sheet I

January 23rd, 2026

Meydan

It is great to provide the first tip sheet of the new Team HHH 2026 season. (I'd like to take a mulligan for my King's Plate bonus offerings two weeks ago in Cape Town.) It is the biggest meet of the UAE season thus far, with two G1s and the G3 UAE Guineas, a race that could throw up at Kentucky Derby contender with points available equal to that offer in the Withers, Holy Bull, the Southwest, the Sam F Davis and Robert B Lewis. It could be a chalky day, so bet accordingly.

R2 09:05 EST, G3 Firebreak 1 Mile Dirt

Some of you may remember **2 (6) Commissioner King 11/10** winning the Saudi Derby beating a Baffert Hot Pot and a prepping Derma Sotogake two years ago at Riyadh. Now trained in Dubai by Bhupat Seemar, he'll likely be Fav for this with UAE champion jockey Tagdh O'Shea up. He had a nice prep. when 2nd to Imperial Emperor in the G2 Al Maktoum over a mile last month. I have tried to convince myself that 4 (5) Meshtri's back form made him a contender and that his 21 length 9th last time was just a prep., but he was scrubbed along too early, while Commissioner King went at it with Imperial Emperor (2nd Fav for the Al Maktoum Challenge later in the card) down the lane. If you think that race cooked Commissioner King, then swerve this, but he'll be probably a worthy low priced Fav in this seven horse field. I can't find anything to beat him.

R3 09:40 EST, G2 Al Fahidi Fort 7 Furlongs Turf

15 go to post in this 7 furlong G2. It is a race I almost skipped. The easy, lazy route would be put up the likely Godolphin Fav, 3 (10) Mysterious Night or side with in form Sylvester de Sousa who pops up on likely 2nd Fav 2 (15) Marbaan for Michael Costa. However, the Al Maktoums are not always the only game in town during the carnival and given their tough, wide draws, it is logical to look for value alternatives. I found **7 (4) Chicago Critic 10/1**. He has a sweet draw in (4), back class at Royal Ascot with G1 horses (finishing an 80/1 3rd in bunch of four behind Haarlem and Kikkuli, who were well of the rest of the 17 horse field in the 2024 Jersey Stakes) and is now 3rd up here after a close 2 length 6th place finish over a mile three weeks ago when he was finishing the strongest against better opposition — such as Quddwah and Aomori City — than he faces here. The Johnny Murtagh trained horse has had a little percentage change in ownership since his last race and is now exclusively with Anthony Smurfit. If one of the Smurfits (one of Ireland's wealthiest families) are happy to be all in, then so am I. He is 10/1 in early markets. Ireland's Ben Coen rides. He is my best value of the day. There is not much juice elsewhere on the card.

R4 10:15 EST, G3 Al Shindagha 6F Dirt

US players will remember the winner of Vosburgh and Mr Prospector, the former Chilean champion, **3 (1) Mufasa 3/1**. He looked great last time and I bet him on looks alone when I saw him behind the gate. He loomed up the winner down the stretch, but then ran out of gasolina. The horse has a wicked kick. It is just a matter of pressing the button at the right time. This is a six horse race, with 2 (3) El Nasseeb 7/4 who spanked Mufasa by 3 lengths last time the likely Fav. He has also changed ownership and he's the one to beat, but Mufasa 3/1 will be fitter and is better value in early markets. I am betting on O'Shea to press button on Mufasa a little later than he did last time. He's my bet. Drew's Gold was impressive 6 length winner of a local handicap back in December and will have his backers with Buick riding Seemar's 2nd string. The 1 (2) Dark Saffron is no mug and can be bet at 13/2. There will be takers for him, but it's Mufasa for me.

R5 10:50 EST, G3 Blue Point Turf

West Acre has won his last two big field 5 furlong sprints at Meydan. He is the cosy 2/1 Fav. However, he missed his local prep when the ground was yielding. They occasionally get rain in the Gulf. For that reason, I am siding with **2 (10) Cover Up 5/2**, who is fitter, drawn better in 10 (Meydan 5F course tends to favour high draws), and gets Buick. He is currently the 5/2 2nd Fav. Nothing else interests me. The Czech sprinter Ponntos is always fast away, but his best days seem behind him.

R6 11:25 EST, The G1 Al Maktoum Challenge Round 2, 9 1/2 F Dirt

An early local prep for the Dubai World Cup and last year's winner 10 (6) Walk of Stars with his 4th place —2 lengths back of 3rd place Forever Young in the Dubai World Cup — is the best form on offer. However, 3 (2) Heart of Honour turned over Walk of Stars a few weeks ago and has plucky staying on performances at both Pimlico and Saratoga last summer. He can be right in this. There is also the other Seemar horse, Juddmonte's Artorious who split the said main contenders last time at Meydan. Frankly I can't split them and won't be offering up a WIN bet. The value bet is Wathnam's former US galloper 4 (7) Tumbaramba. He is not a *Bone fide* G1 animal, but nor are these. He has never been more than a mile, but he was closing fairly well on Nysos and Citizen Bull in last year's Breeders Cup Dirt Mile. I can't put him up as a WIN, but he is currently 20/1 and if he remains that or drifts higher, he could grind his way home to a piece of this, if a couple of the main contenders cut each other's throats.

R7 12:00 EST, Jebel Hatta G1 9F Turf

You can safely Bet The Farm on **1 (3) Opera Ballo 1/3** for Charlie Appleby and William Buick, if a 33% return appeals. He's opened at 1/3 and will only tighten. No bet race for most of us.

R8 12:35 EST, G3 UAE 2000 Guineas, 1 Mile Dirt

16 go to post. The top three in the market Six Speed, Legalaised (ARG), and Devon Island are drawn 8, 9 & 10 respectively. The Argentine bred has to lump 10 lbs more than his rivals. That normally rules the Southern Hemisphere 3 year olds out when taking on their 6 month younger cousins. But don't sleep on the impeccably bred Argentine. He has Curlin up top and AP Indy down below among his grand sires. He is relentless galloper and will be right there and if he goes down, he'll still be punching. That leaves **4 (8) Six Speed** with Barzalona up and 5 (10) Devon Island with Buick up as the short priced obvious selections. Of the two I prefer Six Speed. Buick sneaked him through on the rail last time to grab Legalaised in the 7 furlongs UAE 2000 Trial. He can eat dirt. He has been sold since that win. They know. I am not sure Devon Island who is by the 6F specialist Practical Joke will get the distance. I may also decide to take a swing at a bigger price with one from my shortlist of three: That would be the 13 (5) Awesome Fleet for Salem bin Ghadayer with Bernardo Pinheiro up. He could easily run into a place. He closed well last from wide draw. He is better drawn now. The 12 (11) Yasup won impressively up the steep hill at the local ghetto Dubai track, Jebel Ali. He is by Yaupon so the mile may be a stretch, but given how he handled the hill, he might be in this for a long way. Sam James rides. 9 (13) Raajehh who impressed me a lot when winning his maiden. He came from the clouds in a slowly run race, ears pricked to run down a highly touted stablemate. Michael Costa turns to the capable Ray Dawson. Raajehh has dirt breeding with most notably Holy Bull underneath. The bet is 4 (8) Six Speed, but I will finding ways to include the said longer shots in a Tri, especially Awesome Fleet and Raajehh.

R9 13:10 EST, G3 Al Khalil, 14 Furlongs Turf

1 (4) Meydaan is the 6/5 Fav in the finale. The horse ran with great credit in pursuit of the Melbourne Cup last year. He returned from the Southern Hemisphere to romp home in a conditions race over the same 1 Mile 6 Furlongs in early January. The plan has to be Dubai Gold Cup over 2 miles, a race he'd be a real live chance in. This is a US\$100,000 race and he should be collecting this pot.

For the purposes of TIP SHEET WIN ROI the following are my advised plays

R3 7 (4) Chicago Critic 10/1

R4 3 (1) Mufasa 3/1

R5 2 (10) Cover Up 5/2

R8 4 (8) Six Speed 11/4

R9 1 (4) Meydaan 11/8