

Loughnane set for flying visit to Bahrain

Teenage sensation teams up with Boughey and Baker for first rides outside Europe in Bahrain Turf Series

● **Billy Loughnane takes time out from UK title-bid to ride on opening day of prestigious 2023/2024 series**

● **Trainer George Boughey confident of a bold show from Thunder Moor in opening sprint division event**

TDI | Manama

Teenage riding sensation Billy Loughnane is taking time out from his bid to win the UK All-Weather Jockeys' Championship to ride in Bahrain on the opening day of the Bahrain Turf Series today.

After a typically busy day yesterday with four rides at Chelmsford City, the 17-year-old will jump on an overnight flight to Bahrain for what will be his first ride outside of Europe, having previously ridden in the UK and Italy, when competing



Billy Loughnane...set for Bahrain debut in two races in the Bahrain Turf Series, where each race is worth \$80,000.

This time last year, Loughnane was reflecting on riding his first career winner on 28 November at Wolverhampton. He went on to ride over 100 winners in the 2023 season and was crowned UK champion apprentice.

In May, he became the youngest jockey since Lester Piggott to ride in a British Classic when

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BILLY LOUGHNANE

partnering Sweet Harmony in the Group 1 1000 Guineas at Newmarket.

Currently leading the All-Weather Jockeys' Championship with 22 winners, closely pursued by Rossa Ryan and Oisín Murphy, Loughnane will forego an eight-race winter floodlit meeting at Newcastle for the warmer climes of Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club. He then flies back to the UK to ride at Wolverhampton on Saturday evening.

Loughnane said: "It will be my first ride in the Middle East and I am really looking forward to it. I have been to Dubai on holiday but riding in Bahrain will be a



Intense competition at REHC last week

new experience."

Loughnane has been booked to ride the three-year-old Thunder Moor for trainer George Boughey, the source of more winners to Loughnane than any other trainer, in the Al Manama Cup, which is the first race in the sprint division of the Bahrain Turf Series.

Loughnane and Thunder Moor are one of ten international contenders in the 18-strong field racing over 1,000m (5f).

Boughey, trainer of Thunder Moor, said: "We have had this

the October Tattersalls Horses-in-Training sale for £135,000 and joining George Baker.

Today's events will be the gelding's first start for his new handler and Baker once again has brought a strong team of horses to campaign in Bahrain. In all, 14 go to post for the Al Muharrag Cup, nine of which are international contenders.

Running from December through to February, the Bahrain Turf Series provides opportunities for internationally trained runners (rated 85-100) to compete against local Bahrain based horses across 10 races. Each race is worth \$80,000 with bonus cash prizes for the horses accumulating most points in the two divisions, sprint and middle distance.

Launched in 2021-22, today marks the start of the third edition of the Bahrain Turf Series.

The series runs alongside the domestic programme in Bahrain with international horses competing in the series also eligible to run in other Bahrain Turf Club races open to imported horses.

Riffa, Ahli through to HM the King's Cup quarters

● **Riffa power past A'ali 5-0, while Al Ahli outclass Um Al Hassam 4-0**

TDI | Manama

Riffa and Al Ahli marched through last night to the quarter-finals of the 2023/2024 His Majesty the King's Cup football tournament.

Riffa booked their berth with a resounding 5-0 victory over A'ali, while Ahli followed suit with a 4-0 triumph against Um Al Hassam.

Riffa will next take on the winner of the other round-of-16 tie between Muharrag and Galali. Ahli, on the other hand, will face the victor of the game between Sitra and Busaiteen in the last eight.

In Riffa's victory yesterday, they opened the scoring in the ninth minute through Hashem Sayed Issa. The national team ace took advantage of some mis-



Al Ahli's Jamal Rashed and Um Al Hassam's Essam Taha Al Haroubi vie for the ball during their match last night

communication between A'ali defender Qassim Saeed Ali and goalkeeper Mohammed Hassan Al Oud and needed only to tap the ball into an empty net.

Hazza Ali then added a scorching second, scoring from more than 20 yards out with a left-footed rocket that flew into the top-left corner of goal. That was enough to give Riffa the

two-goal advantage at the break.

Just five minutes after the restart, Abdulaziz Khaled made it 3-0 with a goal from close range off a brilliant back-healed pass from Issa. Another five minutes later Riffa made it 4-0 with Koma Al Aswad sending the ball home off a cross from the right supplied by Sayed Redha Issa.

Al Aswad then completed his

brace with a 91st minute effort off a brilliantly timed lobbed pass from Jassim Al Shaikh.

In yesterday's other game, Ahli scored all four of their goals against Um Al Hassam in the second half.

The round of 16 continues over the next three days. Tonight, Muharrag and Galali face off while holders Al Hala go up against defending league champions Al Khaldiya. Tomorrow, Al Shabab play Al Ettihad and Sitra take on Busaiteen; while on Sunday, Hidd battle Al Ettifaq and East Riffa go up against Manama.

All matches are scheduled for 7pm kick-offs.

The HM the King's Cup is the richest football competition in the Kingdom, with the winners taking home BD100,000 in prize money and BD50,000 going to the runners-up.

In the 2022/2023 His Majesty the King's Cup, Hala were crowned champions after a heart-stopping 6-5 victory over Al Ahli in a hugely thrilling penalty shootout in the final.

McLean erupts for 50 to lead Ahli in big win

● **American professional posts league's season-high to help lift perennial contenders against Sitra in week six fixture**

TDI | Manama

Unique McLean erupted for 50 points last night to spearhead Al Ahli in a 124-85 rout of Sitra in their week six fixture of the 2023/2024 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

The American professional posted his season-high output in just 27 minutes of action, shooting 23-for-34 from the field for a 67 per cent clip while taking down 13 rebounds.

Ahli led 28-20 at the end of the first quarter and gradually added to their advantage over the course of the game. The perennial title contenders had red-hot second and third periods, where they nearly broke the 40-point mark in each to take a commanding 64-42 lead at the half, which they turned to 102-63 after three.

They then enjoyed their biggest gap of 50 points, 115-65, following a Mahmood Aljassas three-pointer with eight minutes left in the game, and cruised to the finish line from there.

Jamaican import Adrian Uter added 22 markers and also had 13 rebounds for Ahli, while Bahraini guards Ahmed Aldurazi and Maitham Jameel each finished with 12.

Ebrahim Murad Ebrahim had 16 as the top scorer for Sitra, who once again played



Al Ahli's Adrian Uter looks to score in the paint against Sitra last night

without a foreign professional. Ahli extended their lead atop the league standings with their fifth triumph in six tries, while Sitra remained winless after six outings.

League action continues tonight with Al Najma facing Al Hala at 5.30pm, followed by the titanic clash between defending champions Manama and last year's losing finalists Muharrag at 7.30pm.

The Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) announced yesterday that Manama spectators have been banned from attending the team's games until further notice, following the behaviour of some fans in their previous outings. The BBA also imposed a BD5,000 fine to the club.

McTominay urges Man Utd to show consistency

AFP | London

Scott McTominay called on Manchester United to show consistency after they lifted the pressure on under-fire boss Erik ten Hag with a 2-1 win against Chelsea.

McTominay was United's hero with a brace in the vital victory at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

But the Scotland midfielder said the result would only be significant if his sixth placed team produce that kind of performance more regularly.



Scott McTominay (2R) headers the ball to score a goal

United's difficult start to the season had hit a new low last week when they blew the lead in

their Champions League draw at Galatasaray, then slumped to a lacklustre loss against Newcastle.

"We have to find that balance between us where we try and do that every single week," McTominay said.

"I felt like that was a game where we had to come out and show to the fans that we have full focus on this game, we want to play well and give a reaction.

"It has to be like that every week, though, which is something that when I was in the dressing room, there was play-

ers speaking about it.

"It can't just be one game where we need to show a reaction. It has to come out and show that every week."

United's difficult start to the season had put a spotlight on Ten Hag's relationship with his squad amid reports several players had grown disillusioned with his intense training sessions and hardline discipline.

Ten Hag has denied those claims and United's players certainly appeared to be on his side on the evidence of their hard-fought win against Chelsea.