

SHA TIN SELECTIONS

(Sunday, February 16, 2020)

Race 1: #2 Happy Alumni, #8 Sparkling Star, #13 Simply Fluke, #3 Melbourne Hall

Race 2: #13 All Times Grateful, #3 Ka Ying Excellent, #4 Ping Hai Bravo, #5 Jade Phoenix

Race 3: #6 Shadow Breaker, #4 Cheerful Leader, #7 Telecom Rocket, #9 Destin

Race 4: #2 Mighty Giant, #3 Triple Triple, #7 My Winner, #11 Yes We Can

Race 5: #1 Exultant, #2 Southern Legend, #11 Glorious Dragon, #7 Time Warp

Race 6: #8 Private Rocket, #6 Take What You Need, #1 Mongolian King, #5 Southern Superstar

Race 7: #4 Thanks Forever, #2 Beat The Clock, #1 Beauty Generation, #5 Rattan

Race 8: #4 Valiant Dream, #13 Fantasy, #1 Snap Fit, #3 Team Spirit

Race 9: #14 Wellington, #1 Harmony Spirit, #2 Ballistic King, #5 Be Ready

Race 10: #6 Uncle Steve, #5 Star Performance, #4 Happy Fun, #8 Joyful Union

Race 1: Citi Mobile Banking Handicap

#2 Happy Alumni is racing well this term albeit without a win. He's still a maiden from nine attempts but he has shown of late that a win is just around the corner. Last start he closed strongly for Zac Purton over 1000m down the straight and as a two-time runner-up over 1200m, he's expected to relish getting back up in trip and around a bend. #8 Sparkling Star has done nothing but impress across his short three-start career in Hong Kong, finishing third twice over this course and distance. Although Purton hops off him, he still rates as a leading player off his last run and if he can replicate that performance here under Tony Piccone, he's going to be competitive. Dennis Yip and Alexis Badel combined on Wednesday night at Happy Valley with Bulb Elite and the pair team up again on Sunday in the opener with #13 Simply Fluke. Although he's winless across eight starts, he has placed in his last two and if he can overcome the awkward gate he won't be too far away. Premiership leading jockey Joao Moreira takes over riding duties on #3 Melbourne Hall. Suspect he's ready to go close after a slashing third last time out.

Race 2: Citi Priority Handicap

#13 All Times Grateful steps out for Dennis Yip and Zac Purton. He disappointed as joint-favourite last time out but with only four Hong Kong starts under his belt, he can easily be forgiven, especially as he was forced to do a stack of work early from the wide draw. Since then, Purton's been partnering him in trackwork and breaking now from an inside gate, should afford the pair every possible chance to go on with it. #3 Ka Ying Excellent has placed in his last two appearances. He's another who is winless but does come out of a very strong form race behind Wellington and if he can replicate that run here, then he's going to find himself in the thick of things. #4 Ping Hai Bravo has finished runner-up in both of his Hong Kong outings. He looked a tad one-paced last time out which is a concern but still, he has a lot to learn and with race-experience under his belt he remains a top three contender. Joao Moreira retains the ride aboard #5 Jade Phoenix after the debutants competitive debut. He warrants respect from the inside gate with Hong Kong's premiership leading jockey up.

Race 3: Citigold Handicap

#6 Shadow Breaker performed admirably first-up over 1400m to finish seventh after rattling home from the rear of the field. He's done a lot right across his short career and he might just be ready to take the next step here as he gets up in distance to a mile. Hard to knock #4 Cheerful Leader who has placed in his last three runs. He steps out for premiership leading trainer Ricky Yiu and with Joao Moreira retaining the ride he's likely to be very well fancied in the mark, so he could be worth opposing here if he finds himself too short. #7 Telecom Rocket has been consistent all season, placing in all but three of his seven runs this term which does include a win. He can figure again with the right run from Grant van Niekerk, who from his last four rides for the Me Tsui stable, is striking at 50% having ridden two winners. #9 Destin's best is up to this and if he can overcome the wide gate he's every chance to recapture it, especially as a winner already this term.

Race 4: Citigold Private Client Handicap

#2 Mighty Giant has turned his form around the last three runs, placing twice and winning the other. He's really hit his straps and although he's drawn a touch awkward, he still rates as a leading player, especially with Hong Kong's champion jockey Zac Purton getting the leg up. #3 Triple Triple is another who following his unplaced debut, turned his form around to twice finish inside the money as well as snatch a win. He'll find himself up on the pace early for Joao Moreira and he should get every chance to hang around at the finish from there. #7 My Winner dashed home to win first-up over this course and distance. He might find a few of these too slick but with race-experience on his side and a probable fast pace, he can figure from the rear. #11 Yes We Can's last run is worth forgiving. He covered a stack of ground throughout and with a softer run in transit here from the inside gate, he should be able to bounce back.

Race 5: Citi Hong Kong Gold Cup (G1)

#1 Exultant won this race last year and his form leading in again suggests that he's going to be hard to beat. He grinded home for a tough win last start in the G3 Centenary Vase (1800m) and now stepping up in trip, against a similar field, it's hard to see how any of these are going to turn the tables on him. He's Hong Kong's premier stayer and he will be favoured to go back-to-back for Zac Purton and Tony Cruz. #2 Southern Legend rounded out the one-two behind Exultant in this race last year and he appears on a similar trajectory here. Admittedly he's a better miler, but, his sole run this term over 2000m saw him relinquish a game third to Exultant and since then he's still appeared to hold his condition well. #11 Glorious Dragon has won two out of his last three starts. Tony Millard's grey is in spectacular form and his first run at Pattern level last start saw him finish runner-up to Exultant, though in his favour that day was that he carried 20lb less than Exultant who shouldered top-weight. Now at level weights it's hard to see how he turns the tables on Exultant, still, a game run against this bunch is expected. #7 Time Warp can roll forward as he usually does, this time doing so under Joao Moreira. He was found to be lame last start, although since then has trialled well and proven that he has moved past the issue. If he can perform on race day, he'll be thereabouts.

Race 6: Citi Ultima Card Handicap

#8 Private Rocket might be winless this term but he's still racing in consistent enough form to warrant respect. He's been well fancied each time in the market lately suggesting there is an outside opinion of him and with the right run under Karis Teetan, he could prove difficult to catch, especially as a course and distance winner in the past. #6 Take What You Need has taken to Hong Kong well since his arrival from Australia where he was a two-time winner. He's drawn to get the gun run for Blake Shinn and although he's coming off a relatively disappointing performance last start, his form prior was solid and he's a leading player if he manages to bounce back. #1 Mongolian King is looking to snap a streak of two runner-up efforts. He'll need a fast tempo set if he is to come from the tail of the field but if he gets it, he's not without a hope of ending a winless streak that stretches back to September, 2017. #5 Southern Superstar is a quality South African import who placed twice in both of his only outings last term. He returns from yet another tendon injury which is always difficult, but if he can show just a little bit of the class he displayed in his first campaign, he's not without a competitive hope.

Race 7: Queen's Silver Jubilee Cup (G1)

#4 Thanks Forever turned in a career-best last start to snatch second in the G1 Centenary Sprint Cup (1200m). He's always shown glimpses of brilliance across his 11-start career and although his sole performance over 1400m was poor, he is in arguably the best form of his life following his last three runs and he might just be ready to step back up in trip now. #2 Beat The Clock is Hong Kong's champion sprinter as a four-time G1 winner, including at his last two outings. He's yet to finish outside of the top three across his 24-start career, which includes 10 wins, one of which came earlier over this course and distance. He'll be running on from the tail of the field and admittedly he is going to prove difficult to beat, though, he will likely be under the odds to do so. #1 Beauty Generation is Hong Kong's all-time career prize money earner with an astonishing HK\$92,300,00 next to his name from 16 wins and eight minor placings. He's dominated the mile ranks for the past two seasons and is looking to defend his crown after winning this race last year. He held on for second last start behind in the G1 Stewards' Cup and now intriguingly enough dropping back to 1400m might not be what he is after, especially with his rising age he might be ready to step up in trip as opposed to coming back. #5 Rattan's sprinting career might be all but over but prior to his G2 six-furlong score, he was winning over both 1400m and 1600m. He can figure with the right run and he's versatile enough to come from the rear or make all from the rail draw.

Race 8: Citi Wealth Management Services Handicap

#4 Valiant Dream has gone to a new level this term, twice winning from his last three attempts which includes a narrow neck defeat to Hong Kong Win who on Wednesday at the Valley, finished second to Stronger who lowered the 1000m track record. That form is excellent and if Valiant Dream has held his condition, he's going to prove tough to beat. #13 Fantasy is a horse on the up as a debut winner which he followed up with two game runner-up efforts. He gets a nice pull in the weights with only 118lb on his back and this race does appear suitable. #1 Snap Fit is looking to snap a run of two minor placings after winning his first three starts in Hong Kong. He faces Sha Tin for the first time which is a test on it's own, although, he appears to have held his condition and the inside gate will afford him every opportunity. #3 Team Spirit has race-experience on his side and he should be around the mark again.

Race 9: Citi Insurance Services Handicap

#14 Wellington couldn't have been more impressive on debut when winning by three lengths and off that performance he remains the leading chance here. He steps up to Class 3 which is never easy, especially at your second start but, his debut win was full of merit and a repeat of that is expected. #1 Harmony Spirit steps out on debut following a five-start career in Great Britain for William Haggas which saw him bag two wins, the latest at Ascot. He's looked sound in his trials and warrants plenty of respect for Douglas Whyte. #2 Ballistic King has been consistent as ever all season, finishing no worse than a length and a quarter off the winner in each of six starts, which does include a win for himself. He's racing well and is capable of figuring here. #5 Be Ready has shown glimpses of ability and if he can piece it all together, he's not without a hope, especially with Zac Purton doing the steering.

Race 10: Citi Mortgage Services Handicap

#6 Uncle Steve is a serious talent on the rise. He's a winner of two of his last three outings and although he's raced sparingly, his blistering best last time out defeat a classier field than this and with a clean run turning for home he could prove tough to reel in. #5 Star Performance has largely gone off the boil since his debut win. Still, this is a slight step back regarding the talent in this race based on their ratings, so if he does manage to put his best foot forward then he's in with a winning chance. #4 Happy Fun is a winner already this season, Danny Shum's charge made all at his second start this term and since then he has been racing well, placing in three out of his last four starts. #8 Joyful Union got off the mark this term two starts ago. He makes his Sha Tin debut which isn't easy but his form of late warrants respect as he doesn't look like he's about to take a backward step.