

**THE HK WINNING FACTOR REVIEW**  
**SHA TIN, Sunday, October 20, 2019**  
**A rail, track good R1 good to firm R2-10**

Two elements collided to make this a bloodbath for subscribers – an unusually high outlay of 91.5 units for a meeting at which we've posted a loss for the past 4 years – with only Golden Sixty's impressive entry to Class 2 saving the day from a complete sweep out.

We finished with our worst defeat in more than five years and all we can do is move on and bounce back.

On the track, Sha Tin Trophy day has long been a day of shock results, especially in the main event – which went 23 years without a favourite winning between 1990 and 2013 – and Beauty Generation's first defeat in 18 months filled that bill, but there were also short-priced crashes for Full Of Beauty and previously unbeaten Classic Unicorn.

The track was as quick as it has been in recent weeks, with a southerly breeze in play once again to push them home down the straight and it showed up as about a one length impact in the sectional times returned.

HEAT MAP LEGEND	
FAST 2 Len+ fast	
FASTER THAN AVERAGE (1-2 Len)	
AVERAGE	
SLOWER THAN AVERAGE (1-2 Len)	
SLOW 2 Len+ slow	

			+0.2 L	-0.2 L	+1.3 L	-0.6 L		
1	C5	1400m	13.51	21.70	23.68	22.98		

This was jockey Umby Rispoli's overdue first win for the new season but well deserved after a lovely ride that allowed Blazing Partners to overcome what looked a really problematic barrier draw. We had seen Blazing Partners ridden close from good draws at his last 2 starts but Rispoli took him back here, found the rail then threaded through the field to cut the corner on straightening and the 6yo finally landed a HK win. He has found his form after dropping to the bottom grade but now he has clicked, he may not be hopeless going back to C4 if he strikes the right company and the right trip. All in all, standard C5 form, plenty who had their chances and were not good enough today but ran all right, like Blooming Spirit, Majestic Endeavour, Big Bully and Kwai Chung Elite. Their turn will come. Two runners bled – Flying Noble and Harbour Century – but the ones to be forgiving on are Everyone's Elite and Supreme Witness. Firstly, Supreme Witness, who was inexplicably ridden back. Yes he had a wide gate but he has won his races this grade by pressing forward and setting a strong pace that proved beyond his rivals. The tactics here took him out of the game. Everyone's Elite has a different story. He is not without ability, running a couple of decent races early on but he has had big problems and this was only the 5yo's sixth start and his first in C5. He was squeezed at the start, got back in the field and was held up for room in the straight before closing well into third and he does have a win or two in his future if he can remain sound.

			+1.0 L	-2.4 L	+0.1 L		
2	C4	1200m	23.84	22.17	22.45		

The standout aspect of this race was the over-aggressive manners of Quadruple Double that cost him a defeat after he was a heavily-bet favourite but that should not detract from the race overall as we look forward. Big Fortune had two 3yo Group race performances in Melbourne that he has never got anywhere near in Hong Kong - until now. Maybe he has just been waiting for a race run the right way? After 17 starts in HK, we thought his level was pretty well nailed down but he lifted it significantly here and won't have any trouble competing up in C3. This C4 was much faster than the farcically-run G2 that followed 30 minutes later and considerably faster than the moderately run C3 later in the day and rated well above average for the class. The times were set up by Quadruple Double overracing through the fast midrace section, after sliding to the lead with a minimum of fuss, but he still ran to his best and dominated the remainder of the field. His turn should come shortly. First starter Super Alliances came into this off some useful trials, had a nice run and put up a very nice figure for a 3yo debutant. He looks a typical Size 52-rater with a decent future. Winston's Lad was expected to be a player again here with the drop in grade and, while he looked to have his chance running fifth, he did rate close to his best of recent times and lived up to expectations in that sense. Master Albert was sound after managing to get into a striking position for a change, instead of being stuck out the back coming from the rear, and he is well handicapped at the moment if he can continue that tactic. Judy's Star looked handy as a griffin, was gelded in the summer and ran a new personal best here after making a horrible mess of the start and should be competitive when he next steps out. Target Finder was caught wide, while Super Eighteen missed the start, which is not unusual, but then followed the field meekly and was eased down, looking to have problems.

			+6.6 L	+1.9 L	-0.9 L		
3	G2	1200m	24.63	22.46	21.74		

Danny Shum has done a good job remaking Seasons Bloom, a one-time Stewards Cup winner but with chronic internal issues, into a sprinter. He did it to avoid Beauty Generation but it probably helps him to train the horse for shorter assignments and he has had the benefits of the Conghua training centre in China. Seasons Bloom goes there the day after racing and comes back to HK only a few days before he runs again so he spends virtually all of his time in the quieter, more relaxed environment at Conghua and maybe that helps with his internal issues. Shum has also been spacing his runs and that might also be helping. That said, like the Chief Executive's Cup second he ran first-up this season, this race looks terribly unreliable as a form guide. A ridiculously slow early speed reduced this to a 400m race and Seasons Bloom has always had a great turn of foot, which was a winning talent in this scenario, and Wishful Thinker also was able to use his strong short burst to good effect, but how this turns out when they all have to run the whole way around is another matter altogether. A better effort from Rattan, Pakistan Star had his chance and was being held when

checked late and Ivictory overraced at the rear in his first start for 9 months and didn't raise much of a finish under top weight. Any or all can be expected to run better in a better tempo and with this race under the belt. Full Of Beauty was in the right spot, had the right circumstances and had no excuses and we continue to have a niggling doubt about whether he is up to the really top sprinters. While you must respect his career line of 10 starts 6 wins and 3 seconds, his performance figures have not been A grade yet and his easy tasks under handicaps are now at an end. Looking towards the HK Sprint, whether this is the critical form is a big query. Only Ivictory has legitimate claims to being a top class short course horse here, and Beat The Clock, Mr Stunning, Hot King Prawn and Regency Legend were all at home in their boxes.

			-0.4 L	+0 L	+0 L		
4	C3	1000m	12.95	20.42	22.10		

After two wins down the straight in his only two appearances, in fast times, Classic Unicorn was the right short priced favourite and put up a poor, meek showing without any excuse. He simply failed. Zac Purton reported the horse was not comfortable being between horses instead of being out on his running times so perhaps the tactics will be different going forward but that's all we can take away from this as a reason to forgive. Instead, a very thin-looking race for chances was left to Mr Lumieres, an honest if limited sort in the right place right time, and Meridian Genius, who had his chance and might have more rating points in him but isn't going to the top. Highly Proactive, unbeaten in two low grade races in New Zealand's South Island scene, was ok in third but beaten a fair margin after every chance. Others were hampered by low draws, Shining Gem worked to the line fairly, but overall this doesn't look a race to take a lot from. First starter Helaku Knight has had leg problems, back and front, since he arrived and pulled up lame here at his first HK run.

			-0.7 L	-1.4 L	+1.4 L	+ 1.6 L	
5	C4	1600m	24.23	22.81	24.20	23.14	

The draw won the day for Purton and Such A Happiness, as he wasn't beset by the tactical trials that were too much for some other runners and there were many forgive runs here, not so many to get excited about. It won't surprise to see Such A Happiness win in C3 but that's about his limit. Key to the outcome here was the smart early pace then a mild anchor drop midrace on the circle by leaders California Legend and Phenomenal, stacking the field behind and forcing horses like Blastoise and London Hall to have to roll forward around the field at the 700m. It was a plodding finish down the home straight, and nothing really stood out. Blastoise did improve a little here despite being wide all of the way and London Hall's first-up run was sound, given that he will be better over further and with more racing, but others battled to run to form. Moreira's ride on Savvy Seven deserved a better fate. Taken back from a wide draw to find the inside, Savvy Seven was a beneficiary of the slowing midrace as he was able to get closer to the leaders without really doing much then worked to the line all right to be right there. He is going ok and definitely well enough to win a C5, although he is competitive with the light weights in this grade. He just needs it all to go right for him and others have a similar rap sheet: Villa Fionn and Little General are going well enough to win a race but need all favours. The One pulled too hard and Witness Hunter again looked out of sorts.

			-0.8 L	-0.9 L	+3.5 L	+0.2 L	
6	C4	1400m	13.26	21.48	24.01	22.92	

When Emerald Spur made his racing debut the season before last, he set up a nice career with an opening rating well above average in C4 but it has been a long road back there. Ricky Yiu managed to get only 3 starts into him last season, but he seems sounder now, with 2 runs in a month now, and this wasn't far south of that early promising level. A good ride helped. Grant van Niekerk was left without many options when Emerald Spur began awkwardly from the outside gate but the execution was excellent, finding the rail, moving two off on the circle then coming wider in the straight. He covered a minimum of ground in the race and Emerald Spur responded to win with some authority. Overpowering Sunshine Warrior, who had a very different trip, caught 3 wide into the breeze and did a good job. Telecom Rocket had good betting support from a better barrier but had his chance and wasn't able to capitalize and Golden Mission likewise had a nice run, loomed and battled on. Hardly a field of progressive horses: some look capable of wins, one or two will win in C3 but none looks genuinely progressive so they will take their turns, dictated by draws and tempos. As for favourite Falcon Turbo, Purton gave him his chance, he disappointed and by and large has been that way for most of his time in HK. Momentum Happy overraced ridden more aggressively, while Seventy Seventy pulled up with a leg problem the day after racing.

			+3.3 L	+0.2 L	-0.3 L		
7	C3	1200m	24.18	22.39	22.24		

The commonly-held view that finishers only benefit from a fast pace simply was not true here with a soft tempo paving the way for Aerohappiness to make a winning return. This horse was a frequently-beaten favourite in his early days when he also had issues with mucus but he came solid late in his 4yo season and now has a very handy looking formline of 16 starts 4 wins and 8 other first 4 finishes. He will win again in C2 with a light weight but circumstances will have a bit to do with that. From an inside draw here, with no pace early, he was able to stay much closer in running than we often see him. Moreira was able to turn for home only 2 lengths from the leaders instead of the usual 4 or 5 lengths and Aerohappiness was able to use his nice turn of acceleration to put the race away. Perhaps the surprise was his odds – he was the \$4 favourite in pre-meeting betting and Mr Croissant \$6 but they switched around near race time and he was over the odds then. The soft pace didn't help his obvious main rival Mr Croissant, who had a nice enough run 3 wide with cover but did get a little keen at times before closing ok. Saying that, he ran to his best and has now returned the same figure at his last 3 starts and he might benefit from getting a couple of points from the handicapper to put him into C2 with a light weight next time. Blake Shinn did a good job on third-placed Lone Eagle after electing to take up the running early when the job was vacant. Lone Eagle has useful talent but he really doesn't give his riders much help – again he wanted to turn left all the race and wouldn't go down to the fence. He was only a beaten under a length so you have to wonder how much his manners are costing him. If he starts to get it right, he will be another to go into C2 competitively but he can't keep making these mistakes if he is to win races. Valiant Dream was wide, New Asia Sunrise was very wide while Jumbo Prize and Grade One probably ran to their form. The eye catchers were further back, with Monica, Ambitious Heart and E Star all

finding the line well. They are all the types on the cusp of C4 and C3 – they would be hard to beat in the lower grade but capable in this class with the right run under a light weight.

			+1.5 L	+3.8 L	-1.0 L	-1.2 L		
8	G2	1600m	24.54	23.45	22.87	21.96		

Beauty Generation's first defeat in 18 months also coincided with a certain set of circumstances which has seen him beaten the last 4 times he has encountered it. The gelding has been a powerhouse when in the clear throughout and able to impress his preferences on races, but he has now been beaten four times in his last 18 runs and each time when he did not lead or sit outside the lead. Even in his remarkable win in the Jockey Club Mile last year, when he was back early then circled the field in brutal mid-race sectionals to run his rivals ragged, Beauty Generation was the conductor, he was in charge of the race. But when he has sat in behind and been dictated to, he has not been the same horse, even if it looked as though he had his chance afterwards – as it looked on Sunday. Four times is looking a pattern and expect rivals to try to take advantage of this in future but was this their last chance? Under the handicaps here, with Beauty Generation conceding big pounds everywhere, even if he thought leading was a priority, Purton probably was wary of overusing the gelding to hold the lead. Watching the race, his plan was clear – repeat the Celebration Cup tactics of letting Ka Ying Star cross then come up outside him in the lead. Purton stayed in the 2-lane after the start with that in mind but Glorious Forever got in front of him, then Southern Legend pressured him on the outside to push him into the rails path and covered up. Under kinder set weight conditions though going forward, Purton might be more willing to turn on the pressure early to ensure the front and he is still the one to beat in the Jockey Club Mile and HK Mile. Take nothing from Rise High though. He arrived in HK with strong form as an Irish 2yo, winning 2 from 2, but spent most of his first 12 months in HK unsettled, overracing and clearly not acclimatized. He got better with racing but it was really in the back half of last season the penny really dropped and he ran ratings in his last 2 starts of the season – second to Exultant in the Champions & Chater and winning an 1800m G3 – that suggested he is right up to the A-graders and, assisted by a 14-pound weight pull on the favourite, he asserted that view here. Waikuku was solid again in second with a light weight – he looked the best of his age amongst the Derby horses last season and that may prove out as a 5yo but whether he is up winning these races under less favourable terms as we now switch to set weights remains to be seen and the same is true of Ka Ying Star, who was probably best suited by the style of the race and could run only fourth but is a trier. Southern Legend is very honest and ran to his form in fifth after playing that key role in dictating to the favourite in running, although the dual Kranji Mile hero has not won in HK since March last year. Looking elsewhere, Glorious Forever ran very fresh and will improve greatly for this, Nothinglikemore should have done more and is going to need lesser assignments to win again.

			+0.7 L	+0.5 L	-1.6 L	-1.1 L		
9	C2	1400m	13.54	21.83	22.75	22.17		

The only blot on Golden Sixty's impressive formline was his defeat the last time he tackled 1400m, when he was ridden too warmly, overraced and didn't finish off. Vincent Ho was more aware of that here, happily sitting back in midfield, the horse is more mature now in any case and he quickened here strongly off a steady pace to win with some authority. He rated well below his first-up win at 1200m in C3 but much of that was to do with him dropping 14 pounds in the weights with the class change. In fact, take the weights out of the equation and Golden Sixty ran faster here than he did first-up. Connections have the Classic Mile earmarked for him and, with the extra 200m his query, Golden Sixty looks well up to that target. His task was made a little easier when his major rival, Hesthewonforus, was caught wide, and the other horse in the market, Flying Thunder, was lacklustre at his first run for the season after looking to have his chance. Encouraging returned well after leading for the apprentice, although, he has a ceiling on what we've seen so far and will remain vulnerable to these types of progressive lightweights. The talking points after the race were the winner and his fellow 4yos, The Hulk and Columbus County, who made their HK debuts on a Derby path in good style. Neither rated particularly highly in third and fourth but they raced well, have clearly settled in quickly and have good scope to improve on this.

			-1.0 L	-0.4 L	-0.2 L	+0.3 L		
10	C3	1400m	13.21	21.58	23.18	22.65		

The Ricky Yiu stable has had the best start to a season in recent memory and Preciousship finally got back to the form he brought from Ireland, in what was a surprisingly high-rating race. Hours before this, Kew Gardens turned over big name stayer Stradivarius at Ascot and Preciousship finished only a length behind Kew Gardens in a Group race as a 2yo, so the win seemed timely. Preciousship did run one or two good races last season in C2 without putting it all together and has drifted down the ratings as a result. Better for one run back this season, his win here was up with his Irish form, and if he holds this, he should be able to win again in C3 and into the bottom of C2 before the handicapper starts to get his measure. Happy Fun, as we suspected, was not ridden as positively here with a couple of other leaders engaged, and he responded with a new personal best under top weight. This horse has been something of a surprise packet as he looked handy off his 2 runs in NZ but is much better than that. He has had only 8 runs in HK, so there may still be some improvement, but he won't need to improve at all to win in the bottom half of C2. Beauty Loyal got a good positive ride here from a tricky gate and raced well – he has won only once in 19 starts in HK but is capable of his current mark. Favourite Ezra had an awkward draw and that was how it played out – he lacks real tactical weapons so a draw looks important to him at this stage – finishing well back after a wide trip, Happy Force failed but will be fitter and Super Wise can do better than this when he settles but doesn't look any luxury off a mark of 80 anyway. Looking further back, Everyone's Joy had his chance first-up after an injury, but ran well and will come on for this, Charizard was a surprise early favourite and just got too far back from the outside draw and the admirable 8yo Great Treasure just keeps putting in but is another whose lack of tactical abilities works against him. One interesting run came from Laos Enlightenment, although he finished last here. As a 2yo, he was 3rd in the G2 Beresford in Ireland behind multiple G1 winner Japan, and relegating another subsequent G1 winner Sovereign into fourth. He was bought as a HK Derby horse and arrived last season unready to show much and an unsuitable 1000m race down the straight meant little. Here he should enough speed to sit midfield on the rail and when the pressure was on in the straight he held his position until the 200m, before his fitness drained away and he dropped out. The rating he ran here was a galaxy below Derby dreams but he will gain in fitness, might be more of an eye-catcher in one or two more starts and is in the right hands with John Moore.