

RACING

LUCKY MAGIC GAINS THE VERDICT IN SELANGOR MILE

Trainer Cheng has no doubt star 4YO can keep the win despite objection

Sharon Zhang

Dual Group 1 winner Lucky Magic had to survive a protest before he was established as the winner in the RM1 million (\$302,000) Selangor Mile (1,600m) at Sungai Besi on July 20, but trainer Winson Cheng Han Yong was unperturbed.

The Mendelssohn four-year-old – who won the Group 1 Penang Gold Cup (2,000m) in December 2024 and the Group 1 Perak Derby (2,000m) in March – was one of the favourites lining up in Malaysia's richest four-year-old race in history after he last took out the Special Rapid Stakes A race (1,300m) in easy fashion at Penang's farewell meeting on May 31.

After breaking well from barrier 5, Lucky Magic (Shafiq Rizuan) settled in midfield early as the front runner Stop The Water (Laercio de Souza) spearheaded the field of 16, while Red Dragonfly (Khaw Choon Kit) and War Star (Akmazani Mazuki) followed in close attendance.

As the field made their run around the bend, Shafiq was also seen making inroads on Lucky Magic. It was a well-timed run by the former two-time Singapore champion apprentice jockey as the pair found the front upon swinging for home, albeit six wide.

Stop The Water was soon engulfed at the 300m with Platinum Glory (Troy See) and Eruption (Clint Johnston-Porter) hot on his heels, while Lucky Magic was also



Lucky Magic (Shafiq Rizuan) holding off Good Star (Uzair Sharudin) to prevail by a neck in the Selangor Mile (1,600m) feature at Sungai Besi on July 20. PHOTO: SLTC

looming large under Shafiq's urging.

By the 150m, Lucky Magic (\$11) was pulling away from most, but not the Mahadi Taib-trained Good Star (Uzair Sharudin), who was making good ground on the outside. The son of Shalaa had initially tried to dive through between Lucky Magic and Eruption at the 300m, but the gap closed after Eruption hung out, so he had to be angled out to make the dash to the line.

Good Star came up short by a neck in the end, while the 2024 Group 1 Selangor Gold Cup

BRIMMING WITH CONFIDENCE

I left it to Shafiq how he wants to ride him, but I just told him 'the horse will bring you home'.



WINSON CHENG, trainer, on Lucky Magic's winning chances in the Selangor Mile (1,600m).

(1,600m) winner Antipodean (Bernardo Pinheiro) rushed home too late and had to settle for third, another 2½ lengths away.

The winning time was 1min 34.4sec for the 1,600m on the long course.

Good Star's connections raised an objection against the winner after the race, but stewards dismissed it after deliberation.

Cheng, too, was of the opinion that Lucky Magic won the race fair and square.

"I was not worried at all. We saw the video in the stewards' room and it was clear Eruption was the

one who hung out," said the Penang-born conditioner.

"We had a good draw, good ground and Shafiq knows the horse very well. He's a good horse and I was very confident before the race.

"I left it to Shafiq how he wants to ride him, but I just told him 'the horse will bring you home'."

Cheng has had plans to run the Happy Baby Stable-owned galloper overseas after his second Group 1 victory in the Perak Derby. With Lucky Magic's eighth and latest success in Malaysia, Cheng is now keen to take things to the next level in the Land of the Morning Calm.

"I will call Fin Powrie (racing adviser and senior steward at Korea Racing Authority) tomorrow and see if he (Lucky Magic) has a chance to run in Korea, maybe in the Korea Sprint," said Cheng.

"I believe he can run very well, even if it's the sand track."

Open to both South Korea-based and overseas runners, the international Group 3 Korea Sprint (1,200m) will be held at Seoul racecourse on Sept 7, together with the international Group 3 Korea Cup (1,800m) at the same meeting.

Shafiq, who bagged a treble with Master Player (\$288) and Cheerful Baby (\$69) for trainer Jerome Tan earlier, also gave the thumbs-up after Lucky Magic's win.

"He's good. I was a bit worried (about the protest) but he's very strong to the line," he said.

Cheng's Graphjet Express surprised at big odds of \$127 to score in the other open contest for four-year-olds, the RM100,000 A Plus Selangor Silver (1,300m).

Under a heady ride from Andre da Silva, the son of Belardo overcame the widest barrier 13 and flew home from near last to come out tops, finishing ¾ length ahead of the Simon Dunderdale-trained Thunderous (Ryan Curatolo). Big Union (Pinheiro) ran third. The winning time was 1:16.06 for the 1,300m on the long course.

Cheng revealed Graphjet Express was nominated for the Selangor Mile, but he thought the 1,300m trip in the second feature suited the New Zealand-bred better.

"I actually entered him for the Selangor Mile, but to me, the 1,600m might be too long, so I discussed with the owner and we decided to run him in the 1,300m race instead," he said.

"I quite like the horse, but draw 13 is not good, so I wasn't confident of his chances.

"But Andre rode him very well. To me, he's the best jockey here.

"He (Graphjet Express) is a good horse owned by Selangor Turf Club's chairman, Tan Sri Datuk Richard Cham. A big thank you to him.

"I also want to thank all the owners for supporting me, my team for a great job, and the racing fans who messaged me today."

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