

# HONG KONG Selections for Saturday, December 21, 2024

(post-time 11:45pm 12/21/24 NY time)

## SHA TIN Selections by LUKE MIDDLEBROOK



香港賽馬會  
The Hong Kong Jockey Club  
同心同步同進 RIDING HIGH TOGETHER

- Race 1: #2 Special Hedge, #6 Casa Legend, #3 Charmander, #9 Chilli Baba
- Race 2: #3 Etalon Or, #2 Juneau Pride, #5 Lucky Statement, #1 Ka Ying Attack
- Race 3: #7 Patch Of Stars, #2 City Thunder, #11 Island Buddy, #1 Super Legends
- Race 4: #1 Roman Crown, #13 Lucky Fionn, #5 Win Speed, #2 Super Goldi
- Race 5: #2 Happy Park, #4 Blazing Wind, #1 Master Trillion, #7 Bling Bling Genius
- Race 6: #8 Jubilation, #1 Charity Gain, #2 Joyful Prosperity, #3 Serangoon
- Race 7: #6 Alsonso, #12 Karate Express, #2 Young Superstar, #8 Aurora Patch
- Race 8: #1 Divano, #13 Lifeline Express, #3 Matters Most, #10 Victory Sky
- Race 9: #3 Johannes Brahms, #11 Glorious Success, #4 Beauty Crescent, #5 Kempes
- Race 10: #10 Bottomuptogether, #2 Wunderbar, #6 Gorgeous Win, #7 Raging Blizzard

### Race 1 - AMARYLLIS HANDICAP

#2 Special Hedge makes his Class 5 debut and finds favourable conditions. A lack of early speed on paper will allow Zac Purton to dictate tactics effectively. Benno Yung's stable is in fine form, and this five-year-old could add to the stable's winning momentum. #6 Casa Legend benefits from a return to his best distance over the mile, which will enhance his chances of bouncing back to good form. #3 Charmander will need to improve his record over 1600m, as his performances have been stronger over 1400m, but he is appealing on the quick 7-day turnaround with James McDonald aboard. #9 Chilli Baba delivered a no-show last time, but it's a run worth forgiving, as he has been edging closer to another win since dropping into Class 5.

### Race 2 - ERICA HANDICAP

#3 Etalon Or is knocking on the door for a win after three narrow defeats this season. Although drawn wide, the step up to 1400m suits his style, and with some luck in running, he can break through in this Class 4 restricted to three-year-olds. #2 Juneau Pride also looks primed for a win after back-to-back seconds. He has the early speed to overcome his wide draw and find a prominent position, giving him every chance. #5 Lucky Statement impressed late in his most recent barrier trial and has the advantage of barrier 1 and Zac Purton aboard adding to his appeal. #1 Ka Ying Attack cannot be overlooked after a last-start win over several of these rivals and appears to have further improvement in him.

### Race 3 - HIBISCUS HANDICAP

#7 Patch Of Stars displayed ability on debut with a closing fifth and has since trialled well in blinkers, which will be worn on race day. Improvement second-up is expected, and he looks capable of breaking through. #2 City Thunder is knocking on the door for a win after a luckless fourth two starts back and a narrow third last time out. Zac Purton takes the reins, and the horse looks ready to capitalise on his recent form. #11 Island Buddy ran a solid race first-up, racing on pace in a fast-run event, finishing second to the promising The Boom Box. #1 Super Legends endured a tough run from a wide draw last start and, though he faded late into fourth, was beaten by less than three lengths. A kinder trip here should see him improve.

### Race 4 - HOLLY HANDICAP

#1 Roman Crown earns top billing thanks to a more favourable draw compared to last start when he conceded too much ground in the early stages. A strong trial between runs and consistent form since dropping to Class 4 indicate a win is imminent. #13 Lucky Fionn resumes after a last-start second to Sky Trust, a solid form reference for this contest. #5 Win Speed must navigate barrier 14, but Hugh Bowman rides. His recent form suggests he has more victories in store for the Mark Newnham stable. #2 Super Goldi found Class 3 beyond him, so the return to Class 4 and an inside draw present a strong opportunity to improve.

### Race 5 - HIBISCUS HANDICAP

#2 Happy Park has a strong chance to make it two wins on the bounce. His early speed allows him to secure a prominent position and he will likely be ahead of key rivals at the turn for home. Hard to run down. #4 Blazing Wind disappointed as an odds-on favourite last time but has a chance to redeem himself if he capitalises on barrier 2 for a favourable run. He will be better betting proposition here. #1 Master Trillion faces another wide draw and will likely race from the rear, but his consistent form and the addition of first-time blinkers could sharpen him up. #7 Bling Bling Genius debuts for Douglas Whyte, having trialled impressively on multiple occasions, and could make his presence felt in the finish.

### Race 6 - IVY HANDICAP

#8 Jubilation benefits from a low draw after starting wide last time, which forced him to settle too far back before finishing strongly into eighth. As demonstrated two starts ago, a better draw allows him to map closer, and he meets Joyful Prosperity on improved terms after finishing a narrow second to him. #1 Charity Gain, with James McDonald aboard, possesses the ability to clear Class 4 level in time. He has been impressively consistent and may justify his likely short-priced favouritism. #2 Joyful Prosperity is chasing a hat-trick of wins and has clearly found his stride after taking time to discover his niche. #3 Serangoon will drop back from a wide gate but is capable of delivering a trademark flashing late run. If the pace is overly strong up front, he can capitalise.

### Race 7 - THE POK OI CUP (HANDICAP)

#6 Alsonso endured a tough trip from a wide draw last time but shaped up well in the straight before fading late, finishing just over five lengths away in tenth. His prior form suggests he's close to a breakthrough local win, and he looks better placed here. #12 Karate Express, from the Francis Lui stable, is a progressive type who showed promise in Griffin races last season and looks ready to make an impact in Class 3. #2 Young Superstar is a tenacious front-runner who is drawn to advantage in barrier 2. He commands respect after a game third to Divano despite jumping from a wide gate. #8 Aurora Patch, a debutant for the Pierre Ng yard, has impressed in his trials and could be a surprise package in this race.

### Race 8 - TULIP HANDICAP

#1 Divano returned to winning ways last start, claiming his third victory from just eight outings. With the advantage of pole position, he looks capable of adding to his tally. #13 Lifeline Express attracted plenty of market support last time but blew his chances with a slow start, leaving himself with too much to do. He only finished fairly but deserves another opportunity from a more favourable inside gate. #3 Matters Most showed promise on debut over 1000m, running a solid race despite needing the experience. The step up in trip second-up should suit, and improvement is expected. #10 Victory Sky had to contend with a wide draw last start and pressed forward in a strongly run race, fading late. A more forgiving race shape could see him figure in the finish.

#### Race 9 - SPRUCE HANDICAP

#3 Johannes Brahms endured a troubled run last time when second-up in Hong Kong, checked early and facing traffic issues at the top of the straight. Despite this, his fourth-place finish held merit, and he looks poised to claim his first local win here, especially with a perfect barrier in gate 2. #11 Glorious Success impressed on debut, finishing a length second to Charming Legend. With an ideal low draw, he's one to watch for the David Eustace yard on his second local attempt. #4 Beauty Crescent remains a long-standing maiden but consistently finishes in the placings, and he again looks set to be competitive. #5 Kempes, now third-up locally, has shown progressive improvement with each run and should be ready to deliver a strong performance after a close-up sixth first-up for the season.

#### Race 10 - POINSETTIA HANDICAP

#10 Bottomuptogether put up a determined effort two starts ago when narrowly beaten by Wunderbar. He then stepped up to 1400m but pulled up with blood in the trachea, which explains his below-par performance. Back at 1200m and with an inside gate, he can turn the tables on Wunderbar, who has drawn wide this time. #2 Wunderbar returns to his winning trip of 1200m after a last-start defeat over 1000m to Magic Control, a rising star. #6 Gorgeous Win has had two forgivable runs at Happy Valley and should find conditions more favourable back at Sha Tin. One to improve. #7 Raging Blizzard didn't seem to handle the all-weather last time according to his rider. Returning to turf and with a likely fast pace to suit, he's capable of causing a boilover.