

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS



by *Ron Nicoletti*

FIRST RACE:

1 BARLEY SUGAR moved to the Peter Walder barn via the claim, and stretches out to 9 furlongs, after stalking the pace and faltering to finish fourth vs. similar at Calder. Trainer Walder, 29% with new claims, and 27% with the 31-60 day layoff, has John Velazquez in the saddle. **9 HELLO MECKE**, who defeated Barley Sugar on Nov. 24, stretches out after coming up empty in a 'key' 1-mile \$10,000 claimer across town that produced next-out claiming winners Flint Mountain and Gonna Blow. **5 NOTICE ME NOW**, 3-1-1-1 locally, returns after finishing a ground saving third vs. \$16,000 allowance optional claimers at Calder. Trainer Terri Pompay spots him perfectly in the opener. **4 MR CONOVER**, a previous winner at the distance, stretches out after finishing second and being placed first in a 1-mile \$7,500 claimer at Laurel. Productive trainer Dale Capuano, who won 20% of his races last year, has A Stephen named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 1-9-5-4

SECOND RACE:

3 TIFFANY'S RODEO, now in the Pat Reynolds barn, drops to the \$6,250 level after bumping at the start, stalking the pace, and finishing third in a strong "key" \$10,000 claimer at Belmont that has produced three next-out winners.

10 LAUGHING MATTERS drops a dime on the claiming scale after finishing third and second, respectively, in a pair of \$7,500 claimers at Philadelphia Park. Note that the trainer/jock combo of Walder and Velazquez wins races at Gulfstream at a 34% clip. **12 HOLY TROUBLE** drops a notch on the claiming scale after her 3-race win streak ended when she finished a game third vs. \$8,000 claimers at Calder. The big concern for the daughter of Holy Bull is the demanding outside post (12). **5 FAPPIE'S PET**, who won her only previous race here last January, stretches out after finishing a willing fourth behind Holy Trouble when they hooked up in a 5 ½-furlong sprint test at Calder on Dec. 13. Apprentice Jose Ortiz will be in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 3-10-12-5

THIRD RACE:

12 NEW YORK BOBBY drops to the \$40,000 level hoping the class relief repairs his reputation as a chalk burner. The son of Spanish Steps, favored in his three previous races, has top turf connections in trainer Bill Mott and jockey Kent Desormeaux. **1 BIZZIE LIGHT** will depart from the rail stalking early and closing late to finish second vs. similar at a mile and a sixteenth on the Calder sod. The turnback to 7 ½ furlongs can be key for trainer Henry Collazo and jockey Jorge Chavez. **10 BENGAL RIDGE** is turning back after disputing the pace and weakening to finish fourth behind Bizzie Light in their recent clash at a mile and a sixteenth.

Trainer Dave Braddy has Jermaine Bridgmohan penciled in for the return assignment. **7 LAKESIDE RUN** drops into the selling ranks after breaking slowly and finishing fourth in his maiden special weight debut on the Tampa turf. Trainer Christophe Clement, 17% with horses making their second start, has Elvis Trujillo atop the beautifully bred son of Dynaformer.

SELECTIONS: 12-1-10-7

FOURTH RACE:

6 NOLAN'S TERRITORY drops into this \$10,000 'three-lifetime' claimer after making what looked like a winning move and settling for second - beaten 1 ¾ lengths - vs. \$30,000 'three-lifetime' types on the Turfway Polytrack. Note that trainer Mike Maker and jockey Julien Leparoux are winning races together at whopping 33% rate. **8 ACCESS CODE** moved to the Wayne Catalano barn via the claim after winning 2 of 5 recent races vs. similar quality in Kentucky. Trainer Catalano, 41% with new claims - that's right 41% - has Jose Lezcano in the saddle. **7 MOUNTAIN MYTH** drops a notch, and returns to the main track, after getting parked wide and showing some late interest vs. \$16,000 'three-lifetime' claimers on the turf. Trainer David Fawkes has Eibar Coa handling the surface switch. **3 BONNISTAR** is stepping up, and stretching out, after surviving a protracted speed duel to defeat \$10,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at 7 furlongs. Trainer Bill White has Elvis Trujillo going for two in a row.

SELECTIONS: 6-8-7-3

FIFTH RACE:

2 BROOKLYN BOY, beaten less than 2 lengths here in the '08 Appleton (G3), plunges into this conditioned claimer after finishing sixth in a pair vs. stakes caliber competition in New York during April and May. Trainer Allen Jerkens has Cornelio Velasquez trying to jumpstart the 5-year-olds back class. **5 BROAD RIVER**, 2 for 3 'in the money' on the Gulfstream turf, returns to face 'three-lifetime' claimers after hitting the board in 4 of 8 races vs. better up north. Trainer Graham Motion has Julien Leparoux handling the son of Broad Brush. **10 WOOD BE ME**, 3-2-0-0 on the turf, debuts locally after talking the overland route and finishing a 5-wide third vs. \$40,000 'three-lifetime' types on the Woodbine Polytrack. Trainer Mike Pino has Alan Garcia at the controls. **8 RUBIDIUM**, a consistent son of Rubiyat, who has hit the board in four of his last eight races, makes his first start since finishing third vs. similar on the Aqueduct turf (Nov. 7). Trainer Dale Capuano, 33% with the 61-180 day layoff, has Edgar Prado in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 2-5-10-8

SIXTH RACE:

4 ATOMIC RAIN will face allowance competition after an ambitious return from an almost 6-month layoff in which he finished a ground saving second, albeit a distant second, in the 9-furlong Grade 2 Remsen at Aqueduct on Nov. 29. Trainer Kelly Breen has the son of Smart Strike training beautifully over the track. **8 STORMALORY** is stretching out to a mile and an eighth after following a neck defeat to Beethoven in a first-level mile and a sixteenth allowance with a somewhat disappointing performance behind Beethoven in the Grade 2 Kentucky Cup. Trainer Bill Mott has Cornelio Velasquez atop the beautifully bred son of Storm Cat as Kent Desormeaux sticks with **1 FREE COUNTRY**. The son of Big Country breaks from the advantageous inside post when he stretches out to 9 panels after closing impressively to break his maiden at 6 furlongs on a sealed 'sloppy' track. Trainer Ken McPeek is 28% with horses making their second start, and 20% with the stretchout move. **7 PRESSURE POINT**, a \$200K son of Point Given, stretches out for the ultra dangerous tandem of Maker and Leparoux. The added distance shouldn't pose a problem.

SELECTIONS: 4-8-1-7

SEVENTH RACE:

5 JAMALUDIN is turning back to a mile and a sixteenth (5-2-1-0) after dueling early and drawing clear late to defeat money-allowance competition at 9 furlongs. The winner of 2 of 3 races since he returned from the layoff has Julien Leparoux in the saddle. **6 JUST AS WELL** debuts locally after following a couple of sharp efforts vs. money-allowance runners on the Keeneland turf with a late-closing fifth - beaten 2 ¾ lengths - in the Grade 3 River City Handicap at Churchill. Trainer Jonathan Sheppard has John Velazquez in the saddle. **7 BALLAST** should be able to flaunt his class when he competes for the \$75,000 tag in this optional claimer after getting beat only 2 ¼ lengths in the Grade 3 Tropical Turf Handicap at Calder. Graham Motion has Alan Garcia atop the 8-year-old. **3 TASTEFULLY SMART**, a consistent 9 for 11 'in the money' last year, makes his first start since defeating \$50,000 allowance optional claimers on a 'yielding' Meadowlands turf.

SELECTIONS: 5-6-7-3

EIGHTH RACE:

1 IDOL MAKER, fourth behind sixth-race participant Atomic Rain in the 9-furlong Grade 2 Remsen, drops into the allowance ranks to get the call for trainer Todd Pletcher and jockey Eibar Coa, a tandem that is 5 for 11 (45%) when try hook up at Gulfstream. **2 DANGER TO SOCIETY** is stretching out to 9 furlongs after successful career debut in which he rallied 3-wide to break his maiden at a mile. Jockey Robby Albarado sticks with this half of the Ken McPeek uncoupled entry as Kent Desormeaux rides **7 THEREGOESJOJO**. The son of Brahms tries a distance of ground after following his 5-furlong debut maiden victory with a troubled fourth place finish in the 6-furlong Grade 3 Bashford Manor (July 5). Note

the sharp works both here and at Palm Meadows. **6 BRUCE N AUTUMN** will shift back to the dirt after rallying 4-wide to break his maiden on a 'good' Churchill Downs turf. Edgar Prado handles the surface switch for trainer Dale Romans.

SELECTIONS: 1-2-7-6

NINTH RACE:

9 RUMORED HEART debuts locally for trainer Wayne Catalano after a sharp performance in a 'key' \$25,000 1-mile claimer on the Hawthorne turf that has already produced three next-out winners. Note that trainer Catalano has a 48% win average with the 61-180 day layoff. **6 STRIKE IT RITZ**, 3-1-0-1 on the lawn, returns to the turf after a useful tune up on the Aqueduct inner track in which he dueled for the lead and finished third. Trainer Christophe Clement is 30% with horses making the second start after a 45-180 day layoff. **4 YAROSLAV** gets some class relief after facing productive allowance level competition in consecutive races, which includes the troubled outing last out (in tight start). It's Pletcher and Velazquez on the drop! **5 WORKINONTHRAILROAD** will shift tracks and try the turf after following a couple of strong efforts on the Turfway Polytrack with a fourth place finish vs. this level of competition in a 'key' first-level allowance on the Churchill main track that has produced a pair of next-out winners.

SELECTIONS: 9-6-4-5

MINEBENDER BEST BET: RACE 9 - 9 RUMORED HEART

LONG SHOT: RACE 5 - 4 OFFICER'SGENTLEMAN

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