

GULFSTREAM ANALYSIS

By BYRON KING



BEST BET: Swinging Bernie (8th race)

First Race: 1. Prince Alphonse 2. Mount Wilton 3. Forty Zip

PRINCE ALPHONSE, a 12-time winner with earnings of over \$378,000, looms the class of the opener after winning a similar race Jan. 9 and following that up with a runner-up finish in a \$20,000 race Feb. 8. Winning connections in his corner. MOUNT WILTON won easily with the plunge to the \$6,250 level, and is now stepped up sharply in class. He managed a second for \$14,000 in January, suggesting he can threaten here. FORTY ZIP hit the brakes in his latest when matched against much better allowance foes, but should rebound with a quality effort against this level of competition. He is two-for-three when starting for a claiming tag.

Second Race: 1. Myroslaw 2. Bidham 3. Put It Back Twenty

MYROSLAW ran well in his first three starts before finishing seventh behind the talented Silver City in his most recent start Nov. 29. He returns for a skilled comebacking barn that has been on fire this meet. He should relish the opportunity to face Florida-breds for the first time. BIDHAM finished a close third in stakes company at Ocala last month, which followed a distant third in allowance company here. He sometimes throws in the towel late but is capable of a strong performance with his best effort. PUT IT BACK TWENTY, third in a \$75,000 claiming race on dirt Feb. 19, has never been worse than fourth outside of stakes company. He handles dirt but seems a bit more effective sprinting on grass.

Third Race: 1. Bella Bella 2. Bianco 3. Cinque Terre

BELLA BELLA rates a narrow edge in this \$20,000 claimer on the basis of her fine overall record (8-3-1-2), and recent 78 Beyer Speed Figure. She also appears to have a fitness edge over some in the field, whom are returning from layoffs. The stakes placed BIANCO ran a respectable fifth in a turf sprint Feb. 12 for \$35,000 and should appreciate a return to the main track. She ran second in a \$25,000 claimer on dirt here Feb. 1 and has plenty of back class. CINQUE TERRE finished fourth in that same \$25,000 claiming race, running 5.75 lengths behind Bianco. She prefers more distance but looks capable of rallying for a share of the purse.

Fourth Race: 1. Ski Sky 2. Halfbetterthannone 3. Miss Fleetfoot

SKI SKY, making her third start off a layoff, comes off a close fourth against straight \$25,000 claimers. She rates a narrow edge against \$20,000 N3L stock, even from her outside post. At 8-1 on the morning line, she could end up the value of the race. HALFBETTERTHANNONE dusted \$25,000 N2L competition two back before a close fifth against \$35,000 opposition Jan. 22. She didn't work for nearly a month after that race, however, and now returns following a two-month layoff. MISS FLEETFOOT ran well at GP and Crc last year, earning some quality Beyer's, but is unraced since June. May need a race before she returns to peak form.

Fifth Race: 1. He's Appealing 2. Silver Power 3. Wise Vision

HE'S APPEALING set the pace in a maiden \$50,000 race recently before fading to fifth in the final sixteenth of a six-furlong race. He has questionable stamina but should show more staying power against maiden \$30,000 stock going 5.5 furlongs. SILVER POWER is returned to dirt racing after running competitively and quickly on grass. He has the speed and class to adapt to this dirt sprint. WISE VISION comes off three straight top-three finishes, including a second here Feb. 28 when returning from a layoff.

Sixth Race: 1. Unstoppable Force 2. Mask and Wig 3. Right of Way

UNSTOPPABLE FORCE, entered for the main track only, rates as the choice if this race comes off the turf. He has good form over traditional dirt tracks and comes off a fourth here in straight maiden company. MASK AND WIG is the choice for turf. This marks his first start for a tag, and he ran respectably to be sixth here in a maiden special weight contest when encountering a troubled trip Jan. 14. RIGHT OF WAY ran a close fifth on dirt against maiden \$80,000 stock, and is now returned to the grass. He ran a fast-closing third on turf in his only start on grass last fall at Belmont.

Seventh Race: 1. Le Grand Cru 2. Book of Z 3. The Roundhouse

LE GRAND CRU won a maiden race in fast time here last March, and then returned nearly a year later to run second in a quick race here Feb. 27. He acts like a talented colt and should prove tough to stop in his second start off the bench. BOOK OF Z is a price horse to throw on the bottom of the exotics. He was well regarded last fall at Churchill Downs, and broke his maiden with style in his second start. THE ROUNDHOUSE, third Feb. 13 in his first start since the fall of 2007, has loads of back class. He lacks speed but packs a strong closing kick.

Eighth Race: 1. Swinging Bernie 2. Conservative 3. Appalachian Trail

SWINGING BERNIE is returned to the grass after finishing a respectable third in Ocala in a stakes race over the synthetic surface there. He is at his best on the grass, as he showed in winning a maiden race last fall at Aqueduct. He benefits from catching a number of horses coming off layoffs or facing winners for the first time. CONSERVATIVE, one of those facing winners for the first time, has performed well in two starts on grass - running second in his turf bow and then winning Feb. 8. His closing style fits the profile for this course. APPALACHIAN TRAIL showed quality last year in finishing third in the Cradle Stakes before being freshened after an 11th-place finish in the Bourbon. He may not be as fit as his counterparts, not having raced since October.

Ninth Race: 1. Brewman 2. Hez Gonna B Famous 3. Golden Rush

BREWMAN closed for second in his debut and was claimed out of the race by a high-percentage claiming trainer in Peter Walder. This one is aggressively returned at the same level and looks ready to break his maiden. HEZ GONNA B FAMOUS similarly ran second in his lone start when racing at this level, though he wasn't claimed. He needs to draw in from the also-eligible list to compete, as does GOLDEN RUSH. The latter showed improvement in his first start on dirt Mar. 5, setting the pace and holding on to be a close third.