

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS



by *Ron Nicoletti*

FIRST RACE:

2 MISS MECKE MOUSE moved to the Wesley Ward barn via the \$35,000 claim, drops to the \$6,250 level on the dirt, and cuts back to 5 ½ furlongs, after bumping hard at the start, stalking the pace, and getting beat 2 ¾ lengths vs. much tougher at a mile on the lawn. Note that trainer Ward is 30% with the turf-to-dirt move. **6 HOLY TROUBLE** returns to her most accomplished level after losing all chance when she broke very poorly at the start of a \$10,000 claimer at a mile. Trainer Billy Croll has Carlos Marquez Jr. atop the daughter of Holy Bull. **3 FAPPIES PET** makes her first start since finishing a willing fourth behind Holy Trouble when they competed at this level at Calder on Dec. 13th. Trainer Manny Tortora has 7-pound bug Ares Campos handling the return.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-3

SECOND RACE:

2 OSCEOLA PRINCE is dropping into this \$10,000 'three-lifetime' claimer on the dirt after encountering trouble at the start (lunged) of a \$35,000 'three-lifetime' claimer on the turf. Trainer Wesley Ward is poised to win both halves of the early double with turf-to-dirt class droppers. **1 OSTINS BAY** moved to the Antonio Cioffi barn via the claim after making a 4-wide bid and fading to finish fourth vs. similar at 6 ½ furlongs (Jan. 29th). The turnback to 6 furlongs looks like the right move. **6 PREMIER EVENT** drops to the \$10,000 level, and races without blinkers, after racing wide and getting beat 4 ¾ lengths vs. \$16,000 'three-lifetime' claimers at Tampa. Dave Vivian Jr. takes over the training and has Manoel Cruz named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 2-1-6

THIRD RACE:

8 PICK OFF, the beaten favorite in back-to-back races at this level, stretches out to a mile again hoping the added real estate will repair his reputation as a chalk burner. The Zito/Leparoux collaboration finds an ideal spot to get back to the winner's circle. **10 ALONE AT THE WALL** is hoping to get away from the gate trouble free after getting forced in and steadied at the start vs. similar at the distance last out. Trainer Barry Croft has Eduardo Nunez named to ride.

1 RAYO DE LUZ has his claiming tag sliced in half after stalk-

ing the pace and fading to finish fourth vs. \$20,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at 9 furlongs. Trainer Ernesto Medina has Juan Leyva handling the turnback. **5 OUT OF AFRICA** is stretching out to a mile after coming up empty when facing similar in his local return at 6 ½ furlongs. Trainer Donna Green has Pedro Monterrey Jr. named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 8-10-1-5

FOURTH RACE:

6 CATCHING is dropping a notch on the claiming scale after finishing second in a \$25,000 claimer that produced three next-out winners, including repeat winner Black Mink, who won again on Friday. Trainer Scott Lake has Jermaine Bridgmohan in the saddle. **7 EXCLUSIVE HOPPER** is hoping to save just a little more for the stretch drive after yielding late to finish second - beaten three-quarters of a length - at this level and distance last out. **2 GIRL SLEUTH** will tussle with \$20,000 claimers after posting the best last-race Beyer (80) when finishing fifth in a 'key' \$16,000 starter allowance race that produced a pair of next-out local winners. **3 LADY TROPICANA** is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after rallying to finish a well-meant third vs. similar at a mile. Trainer Alan Benning tabs Manoel Cruz to ride.

SELECTIONS: 6-7-2-3

FIFTH RACE:

2 LIZZIE GREY drops, and races without blinkers, after opening a relinquishing an early 2-length lead before faltering to get beat double-digit lengths vs. \$35,000 maidens at a mile. Trainer Nick Zito has Julien Leparoux penciled in for the return assignment. **3 THIS GAL IS MINE** wheels back at the same level and distance after surrendering a late lead to finish second - beaten a length - as the favorite last out. **1 WALKERS BEACH** gets second-time Lasix after bumping hard at the start and finishing a distant second at this level and distance last out. Trainer Tony Reinstedler has Carlos Marquez Jr. handling the inside post. **11 FRISKY PJS** is plunging to the bottom on the dirt after losing her best chance when she broke poorly vs. \$45,000 maidens on the turf. Trainer Ron Spatz has Jeffrey Sanchez handling the surface switch.

SELECTIONS: 2-3-1-11

SIXTH RACE:

11 GONE MINING gets some immediate class relief, and races with blinkers, after breaking poorly in a 'key' \$80,000 maiden test here on Jan. 18th that produced a pair of next-out winners. Trainer Barclay Tagg has Eibar Coa atop the son of Double Honor. **10 GALLOPING THUNDER**, beaten a length here on the turf at the \$40,000 level on Jan. 8th, returns to the grass with John Velazquez at the controls, after a chase-and-fade performance on the main track.

1 THUNDERBEAR drops a notch on the claiming scale in the first start since he rallied late to finish a well-meant fourth vs. \$40,000 maidens at 7 ½ furlongs. Trainer Read Baker has Jamie McAleney named to ride. **12 NEW YORK BOBBY** moved to the Diane Alvarado barn via the claim after coming up empty, as the favorite, in a 7 ½-furlong \$40,000 maiden test on Jan. 8th. The new connections tab E T Baird to ride.

SELECTIONS: 11-10-1-12

SEVENTH RACE:

6 THENPUTITBACK, a popular sort, claimed in consecutive races, turns back to 6 ½ furlongs, for new trainer Wesley Ward, after making a mid-race bid and finishing third when facing similar quality at 7 ½ furlongs. Trainer Ward, 27% with new claims, adds second-time Lasix, and first-time E T Baird for this assignment. **11 HICKORY GRAY** couldn't have been more impressive when she responded to a drop in competition with a commanding 15 ¼-length score vs. \$15,000 maidens. Trainer Henry Collazo has Wilmer Galviz penciled in for the return riding assignment.

7 YES I AM AMERICAN is facing winners after returning from a 4 ½-month layoff to defeat bottom level maidens here at three-quarters of a mile. Trainer David Fawkes, 22% with horses winning consecutive races, has Eibar Coa in the saddle. **10 PERPETUITY** is stretching out an additional furlong after recovering from a lunging, stumbling start to defeat \$15,000 maidens at first asking.

SELECTIONS: 6-11-7-10

EIGHTH RACE:

11 CELESTIAL COMET drops in for a \$50,000 tag after following a second place finish behind stakes-caliber repeat winner Furthest Land on opening day (Jan. 3rd) with a fifth place showing - beaten 3 lengths - vs. \$62,500 optional claimers at 9 furlongs on Feb. 12th. Trainer Bill Mott spots him perfectly in his third race at the session. **8 BALLAST** is another dropping into a winning spot after following a well meant third here vs. \$75,000 allowance optional claimers with a chase-and-fade eighth place finish behind Celestial

Comet last out. **9 MURCH** is turning back to a mile after a ground saving trip produced a second place finish vs. similar at 9 furlongs. Trainer Mark Hennig tabs Jose Lezcano to ride. **5 WOOD BE WILLING**, who was facing stakes competition before the 9-month plus layoff, has trained consistently enough to be a factor. Trainer Allen Jerkens tabs Manoel Cruz to ride.

SELECTIONS: 11-8-9-5

NINTH RACE:

3 JOY OF COMPOUNDING, a \$300K daughter of Saarland debuts for a \$50,000 tag, for trainer Todd Pletcher, who has turned winning the last race of the day with a first-time starter a key handicapping angle. Pletcher, who has two in the nightcap (Great Doxology), tabs John Velazquez to ride. **9 STOLLIN IN PARIS**, who was a good second in her \$25,000 career debut at the distance, drops and turns back, after bumping at the start and failing to get untracked vs. maiden special weight runners at a mile. Trainer Dave Kassen has Rene Douglas in the saddle. **2 MINDBENDER** gets some class relief after breaking slowly and finishing fifth in her \$80,000 career debut at the distance. Trainer Allen Jerkens has Manny Aguilar named to ride.

10 LONGLEGGED ALI drops into a competitive situation after losing all chance when she stumbled and bumped at the start of her \$80,000 career debut. Trainer Steve Standridge has Jose Lezcano at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 3-9-2-10

BEST BET: RACE 4 - 6 CATCHING

LONG SHOT: RACE 8 - 7 MAN ABOVE