

GULFSTREAM ANALYSIS

By MIKE WELSCH



BEST BET: Nicanor (5th race)

First Race: 1. Just Ben 2. Mighty Score 3. Bear Onamission

JUST BEN showed promise at first asking following a slow start and wide trip. Raced a bit greenly through midstretch in a race which graded out very well. Need only move forward to give likely favorite MIGHTY SCORE a run for his money at the end. The latter a logical choice off game showing behind Captain Rio on 1/31 although a bit concerned by the fact he's had only two published works since that outing eight weeks ago. BEAR ONAMISSON demands some attention off a series of very fast works in preparation for his bow. A half brother to Bear Holiday who won all three of his career starts including a pair of stakes, each of those victories coming during his 2yo campaign. Barn still looking to get off the "duck" for the meet.

Second Race: 1. Santana Six 2. Pressure Point 3. Stomp

SANTANA SIX turned in a very game performance winning his debut but may have to alter tactics to handle jump to the next level with Stomp and Cinnamon Road both expected to show high early speed. Promising looking colt taken to score right back with careful rating. PRESSURE POINT may not have relished the artificial surface at OBS in his last after turning in a decent enough two turn and 3yo bow early in the meet. Worked a bullet half since his last, expecting big improvement off his last. STOMP in new hands off the claim but yet to run a poor one. Must avoid potentially suicidal duel with Cinnamon Road.

Third Race: 1. Senor Leche 2. Tre Alpha 3. Nos Man

SEÑOR LECHE returns to the main after getting involved in silly pace duel stretching around two turns on the turf. Turned in promising debut when second best behind R Little Nugget who came right back to back N2L \$20K rivals in his next start. TRE ALPHA launches career off a steady diet of works including a couple from the Calder gate. Showed some speed earlier this winter with a pair of bullet 3/8's on the resume. Wouldn't have to be much to win at first asking with these. NOS MAN also gets some much needed class relief. Showed enough in his bow on the turf to consider among the key contenders with these.

Fourth Race: 1. Soul Spirit 2. Hedgefund Investor 3. Yaroslav

SOUL SPIRIT drops into conditioned claimer for the first time after holding his own against much tougher allowance company earlier in the meet. Worked a solid six furlongs subsequent to his last start, his 1:13.40 clocking matching that of stablemate Ginger Brew who goes Sunday in the Rampart. HEDGEFUND INVESTOR got a much needed race under his belt and test on grass when sent five furlongs off an 11 month layoff earlier in the meet. Continues to work forwardly for stretch around two turns, will stand some catching if able to relax long enough on top. YAROSLAV was hung wide throughout, could not kick late with rail skimming winner under similar conditions four weeks earlier but must again overcome tough post at a short price.

Fifth Race: 1. Nicanor 2. In My Prayers 3. Big Top

NICANOR, the day's best, disappointed following an unlucky beginning when debuting on 1/31 but ran to expectations at second asking taking a couple of runs at odds on Custom for Carlos before settling for second money. STRETCHES back to a mile and need only repeat last to earn the first of what figures to be many victories to come for Barbaro's promising baby brother. IN MY PRAYERS exits a much needed bow when allowed to settle well back following an unlucky start before passing several rivals at the end. Full brother to stakes winner Lemon Maid adds blinkers after posting sharp five furlong gate drill eight days ago. Looking for big improvement at a fair price with these. BIG TOP made a run along the inside into the turn, flattened out while finishing well behind Nicanor in his debut but another likely to improve from the experience. Kin to multiple graded stakes winners Whywhywhy and Spellbinder should have little problem handling the added distance if able to break clean from tough inside post.

Sixth Race: 1. Big Al 2. Bold Abbott 3. Rubaiyat

BIG AL could be ready for best yet making third start of his current form cycle. A modus operandi which led to his maiden win last summer in N Y Was fanned extremely wide off the final turn before settling late under similar conditions while racing on short rest in his last. BOLD ABBOTT another who makes his third start following a lengthy vacation. Outlasted preferred choice after breaking from outside gate in pair's previous meeting and unfortunately saddled with the same unlucky post (barring scratches) once again. RUBAIYAT exploded to beat softer in both previous tries at Tampa now returns to the big leagues but capable of taking another in his current form.

Seventh Race: 1. Vitruvius 2. Motovato 3. Admiralty

Plenty of question marks in this lineup the biggest of which may be VITRUVIUS coming off yet another long layoff. Showed much promise right off the bat but unable to run to expectations following his first two starts. Like the fact he's already won over this oval and that he's a proven commodity off the bench. Working extremely well. Good enough to handle this bunch if at his best off the pine. MOTOVATO got involved in an early speed duel, may have needed a race exiting an eight month layoff and expecting better things with that one under his belt. ADMIRALTY flattened out from good position when stretching to a mile off sharp six furlong return earlier in the meet. Beyer pattern suggest best yet to come. Cannot ignore.

Eighth Race: 1. Rogue Victory 2. Big Stick 3. Bujagali

ROGUE VICTORY one of many potential contenders in this very wide open turf test. Returns to more suitable spot after having little chance to make up significant ground through a final furlong completed in :22 and change in the Canadian Turf a race from which runnerup Buddy's Humor has already returned to win a graded stakes. Has been unable to avoid traffic in several previous tries but with enough potential to merit top billing with a clean trip. BIG STICK another late running type who could not close into a :46.60 final quarter in his last. Missed a length with this same kind five weeks earlier despite a horrendous trip. Must overcome tough post. BUJAGALI forced the pace for nearly six furlongs before fading late in the Canadian and like the preferred choice will benefit from return to allowance co.

Ninth Race: 1. Brave Victory 2. Big Drama 3. This Ones for Phil

Enough question marks surrounding logical favorites BIG DRAMA and THIS ONES FOR PHIL in this one to perhaps look elsewhere for some value. BRAVE VICTORY has not missed a beat in the a.m. since launching 3yo campaign by overcoming trouble to beat a decent bunch on Jan. 30. Drilled a bullet half in :46 and change on 3/14. Might trip out nicely from off what could be a torrid pace. Big Drama obviously the class of this field but has been away since Dec. 5 while missing a little training time to boot. Strictly the one to fear. This One's For Phil could not reproduce that 116 Beyer he earned in the Sunshine Millions after setting a fast pace going a mile in the Fountain of Youth. Another who has missed some training time recently and poorly posted on the rail. Does lure Gomez and must respect this barn. Mixed signals here.

Tenth Race: 1. Dunkirk 2. Quality Road 3. Theregoesjojo

This year's Fla. Derby as intriguing as they come even though on paper it's arguably a three horse race. Will give DUNKIRK the nod in lieu of the fact he's the only one of the top contenders to have been the distance or gone two turns. Overcame much trouble to beat a decent group of allowance rivals in his last and looked good in his final prep last weekend at Palm Meadows. QUALITY ROAD could be any kind but there is still the question of how this big dude will negotiate a second turn or rate his abundant speed. Pick up eight pounds off well graded FOY win. Theregoesjojo another who faces the two turn question and grabbing some added weight but very talented himself and capable of springing the upset with another

forward move.

Eleventh Race: 1. Vanquisher 2. Bold Start 3. Passager

VANQUISHER gets the shakiest of calls in this extremely wide open test. Did well to finish fourth in the Canadian Turf considering the relatively pedestrian early pace and fast final split posted by the leaders. Always a concern trying to work way through traffic but couldn't be sharper and a good fit at this distance. BOLD START more accomplished on dirt than turf but has won two of four on grass and the distance should also suit him well. Figures forwardly throughout. Eligible to spring what might be considered a minor upset. PASSAGER took a little run at the leaders, flattened out through fast final furlong of his U.S. debut and with a couple of bullets on the resume' since that outing. Should logically move forward off that effort and would be a key contender if he does.

Twelfth Race: 1. River's Honor 2. Street Talk'n Man 3. Jacoby's Run

RIVER'S HONOR has stopped badly in both previous starts but the first came over Poly at Keeneland and the second after chasing very fast pace in much needed 3yo bow. Should be able to control this one from the outset, might get brave at a square price if allowed to relax long enough on the lead. Kin to two turn, stakes caliber runners The River's Groom and Marina De Chevron. STREET TALK'N MAN showed some late interest after fanning very wide off the final turn, steadying briefly near midstretch in his debut. Well bred sort from hot barn expected to show much better with that one under his belt. JACOBY'S RUN returns to MSW level, stretches out to a mile off improved showing in his last. Third time could prove a charm with these.