

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS



by *Ron Nicoletti*

FIRST RACE:

1 EON jumps off the page in the opener when he plunges to the \$25,000 level, and turns back to a 1-turn mile, after dueling for the lead and tiring to finish a distant third, as the favorite, in a mile & 70-yard maiden special weight test at Calder. Trainer Nick Zito has Joe Bravo in the saddle. **4 MORTAL TIGER** is stretching out to a mile after encountering trouble at the start (took up) and finished fourth vs. similar at 6 furlongs. Trainer Mario Morales has Alan Garcia negotiating the added real estate. **8 COVE STAR** drops in for a quarter on the dirt after encountering trouble at the start and finishing sixth - beaten 7 lengths - vs. special weight competition on the Calder turf. Trainer Barry Croft has Eduardo Nunez in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 1-4-8

SECOND RACE:

5 HEY BYRN, 4-3-0-0 at Gulfstream, which includes a fourth place finish behind Big Brown in the Grade 1 Florida Derby, and a victory in the Grade 3 Holy Bull, hopes to rekindle the horse-for-course status after breaking slowly and finishing a distant ninth in the 9-furlong Grade 3 Fred Hooper Handicap. **4 MR. UNSTOPPABLE**, 4 for 4 in the money at a mile, turns back after posting the best-last Beyer (85) when defeating \$40,000 allowance optional claimers at Calder. Trainer Phil Gleaves tabs Jermaine Bridgmohan to ride. **3 IMAWILDANDCRAZYGUY** is expected to improve after returning from a layoff to finish a respectable fifth in the 9-furlong Fred Hooper. The leading money winner in the field (\$569K) has Javier Castellano in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 5-4-3

THIRD RACE:

10 TIDY UP is turning back to 7 ½ furlongs after a sharp performance across town in which the gelded son of Lil's Lad pressed the pace and yielded late to get beat a neck vs. \$12,500 starter allowance competition at a mile and a sixteenth. Trainer Francine Faraci-Walder has John Velazquez named to ride. **8 VERISMO**, a 4-time turf winner, returns to the grass after closing to finish second vs. four rivals in a \$16,000 allowance optional claimer moved from the turf to a fast main track. **6 JOEY BLUEYES**, who has made more starts than my 1972 Pinto, steps up after winning for the 14th time in 84 races when drew away to score vs. \$12,500 claimers at a mile. The hard-knocking gelding should sit a dream trip behind the abundance of speed in the race. **3 QUALIFIED TO KILL** will try to make it two in a row at the distance after setting the pace along the rail and holding on to defeat \$16,000 'three-lifetime' claimers. Trainer George Weaver has Eibar Coa in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 10-8-6-3

FOURTH RACE:

2 PICK OFF has his maiden tag carved in half in the first start since setting the pace and tiring to finish third in front of a pair of next-out winners in a \$30,000 maiden test at Churchill (Nov. 23). Trainer Nick Zito has Julien Leparoux in the saddle again. **3 GRAEME PLACE**, a half-brother to Grade 3 Bayshore winner Bill Place, debuts for trainer Wayne Catalano, who boasts a 47% win average with his 19 previous first-time starters. The colt starts his campaign with Lasix and Jose Lezcano added to the mix. **7 INTRUSIVE** is turning back to three-quarters of a mile after a game effort vs. \$12,500 maidens at 6 ½ furlongs, in which he was beaten a nose. **9 KING'S FLEET** drops to the \$15,000 level after showing some early interest and fading vs. \$25,000 maidens at the distance. Trainer Steve Standridge teams with jockey Ray Fuentes.

SELECTIONS: 2-3-7-9

FIFTH RACE:

12 WARM SHOWER is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth again after following her neck defeat at this distance on the Belmont turf with a fourth place finish - beaten a neck as the odds-on choice - at a mile on the Aqueduct turf. Trainer Angel Penna Jr. has John Velazquez atop the \$700K daughter of Dynaformer. **10 SEAQUOIA BLUE**, a daughter of Forestry, makes her career debut for trainer Kiaran McLaughlin, who has a 25% win average with his first-time starters. Alan Garcia rides. **2 PARADISE BOUND** debuts locally after a couple of sharp turf outings at the distance in which she was beaten a head at the Meadowlands, and finished second, as the favorite, in a 'key' maiden special weight test at Calder that has already produced a pair of next-out winners. **7 MISS CATALYST**, a promising third sprinting on the grass at Belmont in October, returns to the lawn after dueling for the lead and tiring to finish fourth in a 1-mile maiden special weight event moved from the turf to 'good' Aqueduct main track.

SELECTIONS: 12-10-2-7

SIXTH RACE:

7 LINCOLN'S BULLET is turning back to 6 furlongs after surrendering a late lead to finish second vs. similar quality in a 7-furlong sprint across town. Trainer Harry Benson has Eibar Coa named to ride. **5 METAL JACKET** makes his local debut for trainer Peter Walder after rallying late to break his maiden, as the favorite, vs. \$16,000 types at Laurel (Nov. 7). Trainer Walder, 19% with the 61-180 day layoff, has John Velazquez in the saddle. **1 COMPRISE**, the first horse to run twice at the meeting, cuts back to a sprint after finishing a 3-wide second vs. similar at a mile on opening day. **3 CAR THIEF** drops into a competitive spot after skipping a condition and facing 'three-lifetime' claimers in the first start after breaking his maiden for a \$10,000 tag at the Meadowlands. Alan Garcia rides for trainer Eddie Broome.

SELECTIONS: 7-5-1-3

SEVENTH RACE:

4 PROUD ALY, who became the only entrant in the race to win on the turf when he drew away to defeat \$32,000 maidens at Calder on Nov. 11, shows six works over the track, which includes a couple of bullets, in preparation for his date vs. winners. **8 GRACE'S SPIRIT**, who finished second in his only previous turf race, returns to the lawn after failing to show much when facing productive entry-level allowance runners on the Calder main track. Trainer Bill White has John Velazquez handling the surface switch. **9 CLEVER MARTINI** will shift his focus to the turf after following his \$50,000 maiden win vs. New York-breds with a troubled fourth place finish (bobbled, bumped start) vs. state-bred allowance runners on a 'good' Aqueduct main track. Trainer Barclay Tagg has Alan Garcia handling the surface switch. **2 HE'S LONG GONE** drops, and debuts on the grass, after following his hard-fought \$30,000 maiden victory with an interesting outing vs. entry-level allowance runners at a mile on the Churchill main track in which made a bold 5-wide move before fading to finish 10th - beaten 5 lengths.

SELECTIONS: 4-8-9-2

EIGHTH RACE:

5 CAPTIVATING CAT, who runs well fresh, makes his 2009 debut the first start since an eventful outing at Aqueduct on Nov. 15 in which he bobbled at the break, set the pace in the center of the track, and was beaten a head vs. 'two-lifetime' allowance runners on a sealed 'muddy' track. Trainer Bill Mott has Alan Garcia atop the son of Storm Cat. **2 JOCKEY RIDGE**, who broke his maiden here at the distance when returning from a layoff last January, will try to repeat that fete when he makes his first start since finishing third in the Grade 3 Bayshore at Aqueduct last April. Trainer Barclay Tagg has the 4-year-old son of Broken Vow training forwardly for this performance. **7 AUSTIN LAVIVA BABY**, the only 4-time winner in the field (12-4-3-2), stretches out to 6 ½ furlongs after his recent 2-race win streak ended when he finished second vs. entry-level allowance competition at 6 furlongs on the Aqueduct inner track. **6 CLEANSE**, a lightly raced talented son of Tale Of The Cat, shifts back to a traditional dirt track after returning from a lengthy layoff to break his maiden at 6 ½ furlongs, and come within a neck of defeating 'two-lifetime' allowance competition at 7 furlongs on the Keeneland Polytrack.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-7-6

NINTH RACE THE MARSHUA'S RIVER:

4 GINGER BREW, 3-2-1-0 on the turf, which includes an allowance score here, and a victory in the 2008 Calder Oaks, shifts back to the turf after winning 2 of 3 stakes on the Woodbine Polytrack. Trainer Brian Lynch, 11 for 22 (50%) with the 61-180 day layoff has Javier Castellano atop the daughter of Milwaukee Brew. **3 JEUX DE DANSE** is turning back to a mile and a sixteenth after her impressive 2-race win streak ended when she finished a weakened fourth - beaten 1-½ lengths - in the 9-furlong Grade 3 My Charmer Handicap. Trainer Marty

Wolfson has Jermaine Bridgmohan in the saddle. **12 REMARKABLE REMY**, a model of consistency on the New York turf circuit, makes her first start since breaking from Post 11 and rallying nicely to finish second in the Rare Blend at Aqueduct. Trainer John Kimmel teams with Eibar Coa. **11 MUSHKA** adds blinkers when she turns back to a mile and a sixteenth after drawing clear to defeat money-allowance competition at a mile and three-sixteenths on the Keeneland turf. It's Mott and Desormeaux.

SELECTIONS: 4-3-12-11

TENTH RACE:

6 SCHRADER RULES drops, and turns back to a sprint on the dirt, after an eventful outing on the turf vs. \$40,000 maidens in which she broke slowly, was rushed up to contend, then encountered traffic in the stretch (tight quarters). Trainer Dave Fawkes, 22% with the 61-180 day layoff, finds an ideal spot for the daughter of Peace Rules. **1 CHRISTMAS EVE** is stretching out without blinkers after finishing a troubled fifth (steadied start) in her career debut with the shades added. Trainer Anthony Pecoraro has Alan Garcia handling the inside post. **2 LAURA'S LUCK**, second vs. \$25,000 maidens at Calder this summer, merits consideration in the nightcap when she makes her first start since finishing fourth vs. \$16,000 types on Sept. 18. Trainer Gerald Procino, 1 for 4 with the 61-180 day layoff, has Herb McCauley in the saddle. **4 TIZNULA**, a daughter of Tizbud, makes her career debut for trainer Tim Ritvo with Lasix and jockey Eibar Coa added to the mix. The tote action should help point you in the right direction.

SELECTIONS: 6-1-2-4

MINEBENDER BEST BET: RACE 5 - 12 WARM SHOWER

LONG SHOT: RACE 9 - 2 - WAQUOIT'S LOVE

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