

GULFSTREAM ANALYSIS

By BYRON KING



BEST BET: Connecticut Yankee (8th race)

First Race: 1. Salute the Count 2. Caesar Beware 3. Chihulykee

Stakes winner SALUTE THE COUNT is the obvious class, dropping into a \$50,000 claimer after finishing a close sixth in the \$1M Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint. Given his age (9) and his tendency to spend time on the sidelines, the plunge to \$50,000 isn't a red flag. CAESAR BEWARE consistently performed well in turf sprints in New York last year, though he has never raced as short as five furlongs. CHIHULYKEE lost his rider in his latest at Churchill but has otherwise been in top form in turf sprints of late.

Second Race: 1. Squires Wingman 2. Oistins Bay 3. Jim Jack N Johnnie

SQUIRES WINGMAN has run well in two starts for these connections, running second at the Meadowlands in a claimer and third at Calder in an allowance. He has blazing speed and won his lone race going today's distance of 5.5 furlongs. OISTINS BAY finished a respectable fourth in an open 25K claimer at CD Nov. 23, and moves into a much easier N2L spot. He broke his maiden over this track earlier in his career. JIM JACK N JOHNNIE has done the bulk of his running on turf, and faded to seventh in his lone dirt effort, but has a dirt pedigree and may appreciate being cut back in distance from a route to a sprint.

Third Race: 1. No Detour 2. Alma d'Oro 3. Dubinsky

NO DETOUR, second in two straight, exits a fast maiden race at Turfway Park and is confidently shipped south by winning connections. ALMA D'ORO joins Dutrow after a promising fourth in his debut at Churchill Downs in November. Training quickly and likely to improve. DUBINSKY adds blinkers after finishing fourth as the favorite in his second start. Previously, he had been second in his debut behind Taqarub, a next-out allowance winner at Aqueduct.

Fourth Race: 1. Camara Oculta 2. Pious Ashley 3. Be Glorious

CAMARA OCULTA, a G3 winner in Argentina, ran third in a third-level allowance at Calder Nov. 15 and should outclass these with the drop into a second-level allowance. She won a similar race at Calder in September. PIOUS ASHLEY ran quickly at Calder two back when sprinting before regressing in her subsequent start when sixth in a route. She seems best racing one turn. BE GLORIOUS splashed her way to an easy victory in a first-level allowance in the slop after running well on turf and synthetic tracks on the west coast. Her trainer, Bobby Frankel, is dangerous with layoff types like this one.

Fifth Race: 1. Brazilianbombshell 2. Wild Tigress 3. Entertaining

BRAZILIANBOMBSHELL finished well to be second in a similar N2L claimer at Calder. Toss out her losses in stakes and this filly looks like a good fit for a 35K tag. WILD TIGRESS set a fast opening quarter in her latest and tired late to finish fourth, 3.75 lengths behind the top choice at Calder. She has run well in all of her turf starts and should prove a threat from the start. ENTERTAINING has no experience routing, but is dropped in class from allowances, races in which she closed well in five-furlong turf dashes. Blinkers on.

Sixth Race: 1. Malibu Prayer 2. Maraschino Red 3. Golden Mystery

MALIBU PRAYER, a daughter of Malibu Moon owned by Ed Evans, made her way into the Pletcher stable - a signal she likely has talent. She certainly has a pedigree, being out of stakes winner Grand Prayer. MARASCHINO RED ran fourth in a highly-rated race at Aqueduct in the mud, and has the benefit of two races. Many of her foes, in contrast, are first timers. GOLDEN MYSTERY has trained forwardly toward her debut, and has strong sire lines in her pedigree, being by Awesome Again out of a winning Saint Ballado mare.

Seventh Race: 1. Obsequious 2. Tailbytherail 3. Connie Mac

OBSEQUIOUS was good enough to win at first asking at Saratoga. Although not better than fourth in three subsequent starts, she can be forgiven for those efforts. She twice raced in graded company, and last time caught a wet course in her turf debut. She adds blinkers and looks ready to move forward. TAILBYTHERAIL has twice run second in as many starts on turf, including in a stake in late November at Calder. CONNIE MAC, an Irish invader, adds Lasix in her first start in the states for McLaughlin. She ran third in a 17-filly G2 stake at Ascot in June, but has not raced beyond six furlongs and is stretching out to 1 1/16 miles.

Eighth Race: 1. Connecticut Yankee 2. Hyphen 3. Vincero

CONNECTICUT YANKEE ran a deceptively good fifth at Aqu recently in the mud, after losing his two prior starts over off tracks by 10 lengths or more. Expect him to move forward on a fast surface. He won on a fast track at Belmont in October and was even a respectable fourth on a firm turf course in a stake. HYPHEN finished fifth in stakes company after winning his first two starts easily. He likely gained a great deal of experience from that test, and should fire fresh for a barn dangerous with comebackers. VINCERO, an import from Uruguay, was purchased privately by Shadwell and turned over to McLaughlin after winning two of four starts earlier this year. Shadwell and McLaughlin have a favorable history with imports from there (Invasor, etc).

Ninth Race: 1. Kim D 2. Jelly Roll 3. Valkim

KIM D owns good numbers and has good turf form. She finished a close fifth in a key straight maiden race at Churchill Downs in which the 2-3-4 horses returned to immediately win. Edge despite the 12 hole in this maiden 40K claimer. JELLY ROLL has been second or third in seven of 10 starts in maiden special weight races and should relish the opportunity to compete in maiden claiming company. VALKIM has not run as well as the top two, but makes her second start off a layoff and is well drawn on the inside.