

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS



by *Ron Nicoletti*

FIRST RACE:

8 TOUCH TOO MUCH is cutting back slightly to three-quarters of a mile after surrendering a late lead to finish second - beaten a neck - vs. maiden special weight competition at 6 ½ furlongs on a 'good' Aqueduct main track. **7 ASH** will race with blinkers after dueling for the lead and just getting nipped at the wire, as the favorite, vs. similar at Calder. Trainer Frank Brothers hopes the change in scenery will help cure the current case of seconditis (5-0-4-0). **5 BROOKE'S VALENTINE** hasn't been in action since May 17, 2007 at Belmont in a race where she stumbled soon after the start, set the pace, and was nipped at the wire, as the odds-on choice. Trainer Todd Pletcher has the 4-year-old daughter of Fusaichi Pegasus training forwardly at Palm Meadows. **2 KEEPIN COMPANY**, a daughter of Mineshaft, will be treated with Lasix in the first start since hitting the board in 1 of 3 sprints at Belmont last summer. Trainer Allen Jerkens has Javier Castellano handling the return.

SELECTIONS: 8-7-5-2

SECOND RACE:

1 FAVORITE FLASHBACK, in an entry with **1A COUNTRY MONARCH**, stretches out to a mile after posting back-to-back sprint victories at Calder. Trainer Dave Vivian, 23% with horses stretching out in distance, has Eduardo Nunez atop the son of B L's Appeal, who is bred to absolutely love a mile. **3 IRISH SPORT** is turning back to a 1-turn mile after posting by far the best last-race Beyer (85) when leading a group of \$25,000 starter allowance runners from start-to-finish. Carlos Olivero rides. **4 HOPEFORTHEBEST** returns to the main track after rallying to finish third vs. entry-level allowance competition in a pair of turf races on the New Jersey circuit. Trainer Eddie Plesa Jr., 19% with the grass-to-dirt move, spots the sophomore perfectly for a \$35,000 tag.

SELECTIONS: 1-3-4

THIRD RACE:

7 OUR TIA DIA will try a 1-turn mile after dueling for the lead and weakening late to finish second vs. similar, as the odds-on choice, in a 2-turn mile at Calder. Trainer Larry Pilotti has Elvis Trujillo in the saddle. **3 IT'S A MIRACLE** is hoping to find a little more for the stretch drive after stalking early and fading late when finishing third behind Our Tia Dia in their across town tussle around 2-turns. Trainer Luke Poulos has Cornelio Velasquez named to handle the rematch. **6 WILD ONES EVENT**, who beat Our Tia Dia by a nose in a \$16,000 maiden test at the distance here last April 7, is back in

South Florida, and back in the Joe Orseno barn, after hitting the board in 5 of 9 races vs. similar in her summer/fall campaign up north. Carlos Marquez Jr. rides.

SELECTIONS: 7-3-6

FOURTH RACE:

5 DEVILINAREDDRESS drops in for a \$40,000 tag after finishing second behind repeat winner Fulfilling, and in front of next-out winners Wild Tigress and Mischievous in a monster 'key' turf race at Calder on Nov. 6. Trainer Stan Gold teams with jockey Elvis Trujillo. **2 PUTTINGONTHEMIST**, a speedy daughter of Put It Back, drops, and turns back to 7 ½ furlongs, after showing lots of early interest before fading late vs. better on the New York grass circuit. Cornelio Velasquez rides. **9 ELEGANT KINDNESS** is turning back to 7 ½ furlongs after making what looked like and winning move at the 1/8th pole before leveling off to finish third at a mile and a sixteenth. Trainer Kathleen O'Connell has Pedro Monterrey Jr. at the controls. **6 CRITICAL** will give the turf a try after posting speed figures good enough to defeat this caliber of competition in a series of dirt sprints vs. better up north. Trainer Rick Dutrow Jr. has a 21% win average with the dirt-to-turf move.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-9-6

FIFTH RACE:

3 FLIGHT TO EDEN, who made an incredible 25 starts last year, drops into a competitive spot, and lures the services of jockey Eibar Coa, after showing some early interest and fading in a pair vs. better at Calder. **5 CHICKEN WING**, a model of consistency on the New Jersey circuit vs. \$5,000 conditioned claimers, finds a nice spot to get his first victory of the New Year. Trainer Ed Plesa Jr., 20% with horses winning back-to-back races, always spots them where they can win. **6 TAKING OVER**, a speedy son of Forest Wildcat, will try to live up to his name after dueling from the onset of his last race and holding on to defeat \$10,000 'three-lifetime' claimers at 5 ½ furlongs. **8 FREEDOM ISNT FREE** merits serious consideration on the ticket after posting the best last-race Beyer (70) when he rebounded from trouble at the start (pinched back) to defeat \$6,250 'three-lifetime' claimers at Calder.

SELECTIONS: 3-5-6-8

SIXTH RACE:

10 CHOOSING, a solid winner on the turf vs. \$35,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at Belmont on Oct. 25, returns to the grass after showing speed and tiring vs. this caliber of competition in a race moved to a sealed 'muddy' track at Aqueduct. Trainer Bill Mott, 23% with the dirt-to-turf angle, has Julien Leparoux in the saddle. **8 TIGER WITH A T** will step up to the next logical level after defeating a pair of next-out winners in a mile and a sixteenth \$25,000 'two-lifetime' claimer on the Calder turf. Trainer Dave Fawkes has Eibar Coa atop the daughter of Tiger Ridge. **9 MILICAT**, beaten a head at the distance by Tiger With a T on Nov. 10, is stretching out after closing from 12 lengths back to defeat \$25,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at 7 ½ furlongs on the Calder turf. Elvis Trujillo will handle the rematch. **3 FLORIDA STRAITS**, who skipped a condition to defeat \$12,500 'three-lifetime' claimers at Calder last out, will try to win for the first time on the local turf (4-0-0-0). Trainer Steve Standridge has Carlos Marquez Jr. in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 10-8-9-3

SEVENTH RACE:

12 SCONSET has her claiming tag sliced in half after rebounding from a troubled start (bumped, steadied) to finish fourth vs. \$40,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at a mile on the Calder turf. Trainer Dave Braddy has Eibar Coa handling the surface switch. **1 L P'S TIGER** drops into this conditioned claimer after running into a trio of next-out winners in a 'key' \$16,000 starter allowance at Calder. Trainer Barry Croft finds a nice spot for the daughter of Tiger Ridge. **4 START QUACK'N** is stretching out to a 1-turn mile after threatening to notch this condition when finishing second in a \$25,000 'two-lifetime' claimer contested at 6 furlongs on sealed 'sloppy' track at Delaware (Nov. 8). Trainer Ferris Allen has Cornelio Velasquez in the saddle. **10 NORMANS-BIRDIE** is turning back to a 1-turn mile after closing to finish third vs. open competition in a \$16,000 2-turn mile at Calder.

SELECTIONS: 12-1-4-10

EIGHTH RACE:

5 STORMY MIRAGE, now in the Angel Penna Jr. barn, turns back to a mile after rallying to get beat 2 ¼ lengths vs. entry-level allowance competition at 9 furlongs on a 'good' Aqueduct turf. **7 RADICAL SABBATICAL** is cutting back to 8 furlongs after setting the pace and weakening in the final 1/8th of a mile to finish fifth behind Stormy Mirage last out. The rematch sets up another clash between speed and closer. **4 ROGUE VICTORY**, who was impressive on the turf at Saratoga last summer, is hoping for a little racing luck after getting mugged at the 16th pole (shut off, steadied) at Aqueduct on Nov. 23. Trainer George Weaver teams with

Eibar Coa. **8 LES ANTIQUES** will race with blinkers in the first start since swerving in the stretch but still holding on to break his maiden at Belmont last June. The beautifully bred son of Kingmambo has always looked like a future stakes performer.

SELECTIONS: 5-7-4-8

NINTH RACE:

1 MAS MUCHO will depart from the advantageous inside post after encountering trouble on the first turn (steadied) to get beat a neck in a 2-turn mile at Calder. The son of Macho Uno should have no problem with the additional 1/8th of a mile. **10 HEADACHE** breaks from a demanding outside post (10) when he stretches out to a route after finishing third in a 6 ½-furlong sprint at Aqueduct. The son of Tapit, from the Nick Zito barn, should have no problem with the added real estate. **7 SARATOGA SINNER** will make his sophomore debut the first start since closing to be third in a 1-mile maiden special test at Churchill on Nov. 18. Trainer Eddie Kenneally has the son of Harlan's Holiday training smartly at Palm Meadows. **9 MIRO** has trained consistently over the deep stamina enhancing Payson Park track in preparation for the first start since finishing a distant second in a 1-mile maiden test at Aqueduct. Trainer Bill Mott has Edgar Prado atop the son of Fusaichi Pegasus.

SELECTIONS: 1-10-7-9

MINEBENDER BEST BET: RACE 6 - CHOOSING

LONG SHOT: RACE 8 - 6 WHITLEY

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