

GULFSTREAM ANALYSIS

By BYRON KING



BEST BET: Ballast (8th race)

First Race: 1. This Gal Is Mine 2. Dancingfordiamonds 3. Sweet City Baby

THIS GAL IS MINE broke poorly at Tampa recently, which contributed to her running sixth. Toss that race out and she was previously on the board in two starts against maiden \$25,000 company. Narrow edge in this bottom-level maiden \$15,000 claimer. DANCINGFORDIAMONDS rallied to be third after a slow start when debuting against maiden \$12,500 claimers. A candidate to improve second time out. SWEET CITY BABY looms a factor if she draws in from the also-eligible list. She finished third s. similar here Jan. 25.

Second Race: 1. Frozen Prospect 2. Brooklyn Boy 3. Rubidium

FROZEN PROSPECT should fire fresh for trainer Linda Rice, who excels with short-distance turf runners. She already has a pair of wins this meet with comebacking 5f turf horses. This one, a mare matched against males, already beat the boys in August at Saratoga and i at her best on a firm course, something she is likely to catch Thursday. BROOKLYN BOY is classy and owns quality Beyers, but he is cut back in distance and has a tendency to habit of breaking slowly. Still a major threat. RUBIDIUM also moves from a route to sprint. He finished sixth at this level going long but acts more effective sprinting on turf than racing long on the grass.

Third Race: 1. Masterwork 2. Squires Wingman 3. Heath's Star

MASTERWORK is aggressively dropped in class by Dutrow from 35K to 10K company after fading to fourth in his latest. Shorter distance should suit him, and even more so, the company. SQUIRES WINGMAN is returned on short rest after showing speed and fading to third in a \$16,000 N2L claimer at Tampa Feb. 5. He has never raced for this cheap of a tag but has a history of tiring. HEATH'S STAR has not run better than fifth in three starts since breaking his maiden, but all three starts came against classier opposition. Poised to contend.

Fourth Race: 1. Miss Mecke Mouse 2. House Quest 3. Acquired Cat

MISS MECKE MOUSE was claimed by a winning owner in Frank Calabrese Jan. 22 and moves into the barn of Larry Rivelli, a trainer known for doing well with turf sprinters. Expect this one to step up her game with the cut back in distance from a turf route to a turf sprint. Value play at 8-1 on the morning line. HOUSE QUEST ran a close eighth despite trouble in a two-turn race Jan. 22. Although that race came going long, this one has shown a liking for turf sprints. Looks tough, but figures to take heavy action. ACQUIRED CAT faded to sixth against a classier group of \$50,000 claimers Jan. 16 and should improve second time off the bench, particularly with a class drop. She ran second and third for this price in New York previously.

Fifth Race: 1. Bribon 2. Fearless Vision 3. It's Never to Late

BRIBON disappointed in fading to 10th in the G3 Hal's Hope following a close third in the Grade 1 Cigar Mile. He loves one-turn mile races and should return to form with the drop back into an allowance. FEARLESS VISION outran the top one in the Hal's Hope when fifth, which followed two wins at a mile in allowances at Aqu. He is 6-4-1-0 at the mile distance. IT'S NEVER TO LATE enters this race in top form - having won two of his last three starts - but faces much tougher opposition than he has in recent starts.

Sixth Race: 1. Nickel Pickle 2. Motion Play 3. Ode to Revolution

NICKEL PICKLE gets blinkers added after finishing fourth at this level Jan. 4. Trainer Mike Maker has great stats with horses adding blinkers, and jockey Julien Leparoux has won at over a 30-percent clip at GP over the past two weeks. Expect an improved effort from NICKEL PICKLE, who twice ran well on the grass at CD last fall. MOTION PLAY owns the top recent Beyers and is dropped down from the allowance ranks after finishing third here Jan. 7. Likely favorite. ODE TO REVOLUTION finished second for this tag Jan. 4, outperforming the top choice, but is just 1 for 14 over his career, with the victory coming in a turf sprint, not a route.

Seventh Race: 1. Macumbira 2. Nola Star 3. Fivehailmarys

Class dropper MACUMBIRA plunges from \$35,000 N2L company on turf into a \$10,000 N2L claimer on dirt. Although her top Beyer came on turf two back, she is a winner on dirt, going 10-1-3-2 on the surface. Quick return is a positive sign, and at 12-1 on the morning line, the price is right. NOLA STAR takes a similar class drop, though from a dirt race, after finishing fifth in her first start in a year and a half. Once a classy filly, she starts for the red-hot tandem of trainer Kenny McPeck and Kent Desormeaux. FIVEHAILMARYS showed talent earlier in her career but has not raced for almost a year and may need a race to regain peak fitness. Blinkers added for her return.

Eighth Race: 1. Ballast 2. Bujagali 3. March to Victory

In second level allowances with claiming conditions, particularly on turf, it is often the claiming horses that hold the edge. That looks to be the case in this specific race. BALLAST, starting for a \$62,500 tag, looms the class of the race. A graded winner with earnings of over \$454,000, he enters this race off four straight Beyers of 91 or higher, all when matched against better. BUJAGALI weakened to fifth after taking the lead against similar Jan. 24 when returning from a long layoff. He should be fitter for this race, and starts for winning connections. MARCH TO VICTORY hasn't started since October when third at the Meadowlands. He is capable of running Beyers in the upper 80s, low 90s, and adds blinkers for his return.

Ninth Race: 1. Dobra 2. Threetimesawonder 3. Romacaca

DOBRA closed with a flourish to just miss in a similar maiden \$50,000 claiming race at Churchill last fall. She shows a steady foundation of works, though they have been slow, and returns for a good comebacking barn. THREETIMESAWONDER is dropped in class after a fourth in straight maiden company at Calder and a fourth here against maiden \$80,000 opponents. She looks like a good fit for maiden \$50,000 and has more speed than the top choice. ROMACACA overcame a slow start to run second against maiden \$40,000 stock here Jan. 18. She is stepped up a notch in class but encouragingly shows two works since her last start.