

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS



by *Ron Nicoletti*

FIRST RACE:

9 ALL THE BASES is turning back to 6 furlongs after a sharp local debut vs. similar in which he encountered traffic entering the turn and was beaten only a neck at 6 ½ furlongs. Trainer Allen Jerkens, 23% with horses making the second start after a 45-180 day layoff, has Cornelio Velasquez atop the \$250K son of Grand Slam. **2 VALID NAME** is a son of Whywhywhy who is burning up track in preparation for his career debut. Trainer Rick Dutrow Jr. has Javier Castellano named to ride. **4 GUAM TYPHOON**, a half to Grade 2 Arkansas Derby winner Sir Cherokee and stakes winner Miss Isella, debuts for trainer Ian Wilkes with a series of sharp Palm Meadows workouts showing. Julien Lejaroux is named on the son of Distorted Humor. **6 SNAP SHOP** makes his first-ever start on a traditional dirt track after showing speed in a pair of sprints on California synthetic surfaces, including the fifth place finish behind a pair of next-out winners in 'key' 5 ½-furlong dash at Santa Anita on Jan. 3rd. Trainer Bill Mott has the son of Awesome Again firing bullets at Payson Park in preparation for this assignment.

SELECTIONS: 9-2-4-6

SECOND RACE:

4 BET THE LIMIT was game in defeat when he returned from the 3-month vacation to duel for the lead and get beat a head in his local debut at this level and distance. Trainer Shug McGaughey has Edgar Prado atop the regally bred son of Storm Cat. **6 U S TREASURY** will race with blinkers after being checked between rivals and finishing fifth behind Bet The Limit last out. Trainer Marty Wolfson, 1 for 3 with first-time blinkers, has Julien Lejaroux in the saddle. **3 EMPIRIOR** is another wearing blinkers after stalking the pace and finishing third behind Bet The Limit last out. Trainer John Kimmel, 3 for 9 with first-time shades, has Eibar Coa in the irons.

SELECTIONS: 4-6-3

THIRD RACE:

3 NER GAL makes his first start since ending his 2008 campaign with a close-up third place finish behind recent Ft. Lauderdale Handicap winner Kiss The Kid in the Grade 3 Cliff Hanger at the Meadowlands on Oct. 10th, and a third place finish behind Grade 3 Canadian Turf participant Buddy's Humor in the Four Bases at Aqueduct on Nov. 19th. Trainer Christophe Clement, 25% with the 61-180 day layoff, has Rene Douglas in the saddle. **1 PICKAPOCKET** is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after a useful local return in the 1-mile Tallahassee in which he rallied to get beat 1-¼ lengths. Trainer Bill Mott teams with Joe Bravo. **7 A. P. ARROW**, a winner of \$1.2-million dollars, makes his career turf debut after he was eased on the main track in the Grade 1 Donn Handicap. Leading trainer Ken McPeck reunites the 7-year-old with jockey Kent Desormeaux, who was at the helm in the Donn. **2 MUSKETIER** will be treated with Lasix after finishing third in his North American debut in Grade 2 Red Smith Handicap about 15 months ago. Trainer Roger Attfield has Edgar Prado atop this intriguing possibility.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-7-2

FOURTH RACE:

7 BOLD VINDICATION drops to the \$30,000 level on the dirt, and turns back to 6 furlongs, after stalking the pace and tiring to finish fifth vs. \$40,000 maidens at a mile and a sixteenth on the turf. Trainer Stan Hough has Edgar Prado atop the \$120K son of Vindication. **9 TROUBLE TODAY** drops on the main track after opening a relinquishing a 3-length lead to finish a distant tenth vs. \$80,000 maidens on the turf. Trainer Read Baker, 22% with turf-to-dirt move, removes the blinkers for this assignment. **5 ANOTHER SUCCESS** plunges to the \$30,000 level, and cuts back to three-quarters of a mile, after failing to muster a late response in back-to-back sprints here vs. better. Trainer John Kimmel has Javier Castellano in the saddle. **8 OUTTA SPACE**, never out of the money on a 'fast' dirt surface, returns to the main track after encountering early trouble (steadied 1st turn) and finishing eighth vs. \$30,000 maidens on the grass.

SELECTIONS: 7-9-5-8

FIFTH RACE:

6 UNBRIDLED PRAYER should be ready to score after recovering from a slow start to finish second - beaten 1 ¾ lengths - at this level and distance. Trainer Christophe Clement has Alan Garcia penciled in for the return assignment. **9 CASSIE'S BOOT** drops into this high priced claimer after dueling for the lead and finishing second vs. maiden special weight competition at 5 furlongs. Trainer Jose Pinchin has Cornelio Velasquez handling the stretchout. **5 CAN'T STOP LOVIN** is stretching out an additional furlong after stumbling at the start and finishing fourth behind Cassie's Boot in their recent clash at 5 furlongs. **1 OFF SHE GOES** is a daughter of El Corredor who is training forwardly in preparation for her career debut. Trainer Eddie Kenneally has Julien Lejaroux in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 6-9-5-1

SIXTH RACE:

12 BIG STICK is stretching out to his most accomplished distance (5-3-0-1) after a strong local return at a mile in which he was edged late to get beat three-quarters of a length. Trainer Kiaran McLaughlin has Alan Garcia in the saddle. **9 BALETTI**, second to Big Stick at Saratoga last August, makes his first start since taking the overland route to defeat entry-level allowance runners at Aqueduct on Halloween. Trainer Angel Penna Jr., 5 for 10 (50%) with the 61-180 day layoff, has Cornelio Velasquez handling the rematch. **2 EXPANSION**, another from trainer Kiaran McLaughlin, cuts back to a mile and a sixteenth after holding on gamely to win a 12-furlong allowance test here on Jan. 10th. Note that the last time the gelding turned back from a marathon distance, albeit 11 furlongs to a mile and a sixteenth, he won (Sept. 17th). **4 CELESTIAL COMET**, second at the distance to red-hot three-peat winner Furthest Land on opening day, turns back after finishing fifth - beaten 3 ¼ lengths - vs. \$62,000 allowance optional claimers at 9 furlongs.

SELECTIONS: 12-9-2-4

SEVENTH RACE:

1 BRAVE VICTORY and **1A DA' TARA** are a solid tandem from trainer Nick Zito. The former stretches out to 7 furlongs after recovering from double-trouble (bumped, steadied) to defeat allowance competition at three-quarters of a mile while the latter, the 2008 front running Grade 1 Belmont Stakes winner, makes his 4-year-old debut with the speed needed to lead this group on a merry chase. **6 MOTOVATO** makes his first start since a monster performance at Calder last April in which he drew off like an international good thing to defeat first-level allowance competition - and get 111 Beyer for his effort. Trainer Marty Wolfson readied the colt for his anticipated return with a bullet half-mile drill at Calder in :48 &1.

5 DREAM MAESTRO, second at this level here on Jan. 14th, drops and turns back, after stalking the pace and finishing fourth in 9-furlong \$1-million dollar Sunshine Millions Classic. He classes up beautifully in this spot. **4 FREEDOM BAY** makes his first start since showing tons of promise when breaking his maiden at first asking (Dec. '07), finishing second in an allowance test here last January, and defeating 'two-lifetime' allowance competition at Saratoga on Aug. 30th.

SELECTIONS: 1-1A-6-5-4

EIGHTH RACE: THE CANADIAN TURF (G3)

8 JUST AS WELL is turning back to a mile after rallying to finish second here to Breeders' Cup winner Kip Deville in the Grade 1 Gulfstream Park Turf Handicap. Trainer Jonathan Sheppard has Julien Leparoux returning on the previous winner at the distance. **9 TWILIGHT METEOR**, a multiple Grade 3 stakes-placed performer, turns back after a solid local return at 9 furlongs in which he attended the pace and finished fourth - beaten 1 3/4 lengths. **7 VANQUISHER** is back vs. open competition after closing with a rush to defeat state-bred competition in the 1-mile \$75,000 Tallahassee. Trainer Greg Griffith reunites the 5-year-old with jockey Alan Garcia. **5 DELIGHTFUL KISS**, 6-1-0-1 on the turf, shifts back to the lawn after following his come-from-behind victory in the 1-mile Grade 3 Hal's Hope with a late-closing third, from an exceptionally tough post (12), in the 9-furlong Sunshine Millions Classic.

SELECTIONS: 8-9-7-5

NINTH RACE: THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH (G2)

9 CAPT. CANDYMAN CAN is stretching out to a mile again (2-1-0-0) after making a successful 4-wide charge to win the 7-furlong Grade 2 Hutcheson here last out. Trainer Ian Wilkes reunites the son of Candy Ride with jockey Julien Leparoux.

12 THIS ONES FOR PHIL shook up the speed figure world when he recovered from a stumbling start to win the 6-furlong Sunshine Millions Dash - and get a 116 Beyer for his performance. Trainer Rick Dutrow Jr., who is pleased with the gelding's outside post (12), has Edgar Prado handling the previous winner at a mile, albeit a 2-turn event at Calder (Sept. 6).

10 TAQARUB is stretching out to a mile after an undefeated

sprint campaign at Aqueduct in which he broke his maiden at first asking on the sealed 'sloppy' main track, and followed that with consecutive victories on the winterized inner track. Trainer Kieran McLaughlin has the \$300K son of Aldebaran training sharply at Palm Meadows. **3 NOTONTHEPAGE** is stretching out after drawing off on opening day to win the 6-furlong Spectacular Bid by 8-plus lengths - and get a 114 Beyer for his effort.

SELECTIONS: 9-12-10-3

TENTH RACE:

2 MISTY OAK is a son of Lemon Drop Kid debuting for the strong first-out trainer Marty Wolfson (42%). The colt, bred to love the grass, starts his campaign with Lasix and jockey Julien Leparoux added to the equation. **7 CARDIOLOGIST**, a son of Lion Heart, makes his career debut for leading trainer Ken McPeck, who has a 23% win average with his debut turf runners. The colt starts his career with Lasix and jockey Kent Desormeaux named to ride. **10 LAUREATE CONDUCTOR** is a son of Bernstein, out of the Rubiano mare Lavender Baby, debuting for the always dangerous Christophe Clement barn. The colt, working consistently at Payson Park, gets Lasix and Rene Douglas. **8 AFFIRMATI** is a beautifully bred son of Unbridled's Song debuting for trainer Todd Pletcher with a series useful Palm Meadows workouts showing, on both turf and dirt, in preparation for the debut. The colt kicks off his career with Lasix and Chris DeCarlo named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 2-7-10-8

BEST BET: RACE 1 - 9 ALL THE BASES

LONG SHOT: RACE 9 - 7 BEETHOVEN

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