

## GULFSTREAM ANALYSIS

By MIKE WELSCH



**BEST BET: Arson Squad (9th race)**

### **First Race: 1. Sincero 2. Well Positioned 3. Take the Points**

SINCERO broke slow, made a mid-race run around the second turn, flattened out stretching to nine furlongs here earlier this month and eligible to improve from the effort especially if away running from advantageous inside post. WELL POSITIONED highly regarded following well graded maiden win. Could be special. TAKE THE POINTS and Masala return for Pletcher off maiden wins and demand respect if able to repeat those performances off the bench.

### **Second Race: 1. Bang Bang Bang 2. High Ceiling 3. Don'twait Toolong**

BANG BANG BANG has shown big improvement since switching to the lawn. Ended 3yo campaign on high note and had that last win flattered when second and third finishers both returned to win their next starts. Has not missed a beat since shipping to Palm Meadows. Steps up against open company for the first time but sharp enough to take another. HIGH CEILING drops to more suitable spot after being hung wide, fading badly against much stronger in his local bow. Repeat of either previous two at Calder puts him right in the thick of this race throughout. DON'TWAIT TOOLONG must not wait too long to make his late bid in this bulky lineup. Drops to weakest level yet but those 10 second place finishes and outside post make him tough to take for anything other than a minor share again.

### **Third Race: 1. Mighty Score 2. Galligan Road 3. Jazz Hands**

MIGHTY SCORE turned in a promising debut when having misfortune to draw tough inside post. Broke slow, rushed up along what was arguably a dead rail then did well to persevere to finish fourth behind runaway winner and next out grad. Blew out a freakishly fast three-eighths for his second start. Expect big improvement if he leaves with the others. GALLIGAN ROAD outlasted preferred choice for third money despite being buried along the rail in that same, well graded Checklist race. Outside post should have him away and winging with the leaders throughout. JAZZ HANDS the third member of this field to exit the Checklist dash and he too should improve from the experience. Kin to a pair of stakes winners including STraight Faced. Presto Change O and Have One More both working very well for their debuts.

### **Fourth Race: 1. Choosing 2. Tiger With a T 3. Yippety Yip**

CHOOSING comes off a game effort when outfinish under similar conditions in his local bow. Ready to score if able to secure good early position from tough outside gate. TIGER WITH A T was cruising on the lead when rider's saddle slipped earlier this month. Like the fact Coa signs back on for a filly who has improved quite a bit since switching to grass. YIPPETY YIP gets some serious class relief after being overmatched in all recent tries. Expect her to be really rolling at the end.

### **Fifth Race: 1. Variant 2. Raymundo 3. Shone**

VARIANT back to conventional dirt following disappointing '08 finale on the Poly. Comes up big now and then when properly spotted against mid-level claiming types and this is just such a spot for high percentage barn. Back to winner's circle if away to good position from tough post. RAYMUNDO yet to finish out of the exacta in four starts at the distance and continues to hold his form extremely well. Should handle the slight hike. SHONE comes up tagged for the first time off a couple of dull efforts at the end of '08. Loves the distance. Hard to deny if near his best.

### **Sixth Race: 1. Paul's Ace 2. Braciolo 3. Dancin' Deacon**

PAUL'S ACE gets shaky nod in a toughie. Looks quickest of the experienced ones if he leaves running and his best effort to date came over the sod in N.Y. BRACIOLE has failed to run to his decent grass breeding in two previous starts but note the near bullet half mile drill for his 3yo bow. Might outrun his price. DANCIN' DEACON could be best of the new faces. Kin to a six time turf winner and respect that sharp grass drill on 1/19.

### **Seventh Race: 1. Danger to Society 2. Bruce N Autumn 3. Idol Maker**

With the favorites stuck on the outside and carrying a lot of weight, we'll look inside for the winner of the Holy Bull. DANGER TO SOCIETY perfect in two starts and quite impressive winning his N1X condition in his local bow. Should get a nice trip once again from post 2. BRUCE N AUTUMN never got into good position from an outside post while disappointing in his 3yo bow but has since come back with a very sharp work and inside draw should enhance his chances. Prado shows confidence by signing on again and another getting an eight pound pull from the favorites. Could surprise at big balloons. IDOL MAKER no match for Danger in Society in their first meeting but did get shuffled back some from the rail. Another who could improve with cleaner sailing.

### **Eighth Race: 1. Dubinsky 2. Big Flirt 3. Nicanor**

DUBINSKY had the misfortune to catch a potential monster in Alma d'Oro while finishing a pole in front of the others when stretched to a mile for the first time and not likely to be catching that kind in here. One more chance. BIG FLIRT working lights out for his return. Well bred sort eligible to wake up over local surface. Barbaro's baby brother NICANOR has been all the rage preparing for his debut and will likely be grossly overbet because of all the publicity. Barn has been on fire and he did work in company with stablemate Rockland who went a race earlier in the Holy Bull.

### **Ninth Race: 1. Arson Squad 2. Bullsbay 3. Anak Nakal**

ARSON SQUAD, the day's best, likely would have won the Cigar Mile if not forced to alter course on the final turn and he's trained superbly since shipping to south Fla. Appears to be in peak form at the present time. Should be along if getting a legit pace to shoot at. BULLSBAY was shuffled far back midway through the Hal's Hope, did well to finish second and an improving sort who figures to offer some value against the big guns in this spot. ANAK NAKAL rallied belatedly following a slow start in the Hal's Hope and was good enough to be second best to preferred one in the Meadowlands Cup. Another who may be somewhat overlooked in here. Albertus Maximus exits three straight triple digit Beyer efforts but all those came over the artificial stuff out west and perhaps somewhat of a question at a short price on conventional dirt. Einstein poorly drawn outside and may have a lot to overcome while also offering little in value at the windows.

### **Tenth Race: 1. Witty Woman 2. For Sally 3. Kiss the Ring**

WITTY WOMAN was hung wide around both turns when nipped in her turf bow last month at Calder. Daughter of five time grass winner Valid Leader should trip out cleaner here. Merits top billing with any racing luck. FOR SALLY was steadied sharply while attempting to rally near the three eighths pole, recovered to finish third in her local bow and looms the main danger if she draws in. KISS THE RING back to what figures to be her favorite surface for hot barn while switching to top jock for the outing. Baby sis Fast Act already a winner on grass. Jan. 19 near bullet drill at PM suggests an improved performance is forthcoming.