



RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

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RACE 1:

3 BLUE JEAN KITTEN is dropping to the \$50,000 level after returning the layoff to break slowly from the rail and never get untracked vs maiden special weight competition. Trainer Danny Gargan, 3 for 6 (50%) with similar class drops, has Irad Ortiz Jr named to ride. **2 NOBLE MARIA** is stretching out slightly to a mile after the solid return in which she rallied to finish 2nd – as the even-money favorite – going 7 ½ furlongs; Luis Saez rides for Chuck Simon. **5 ALWAYS LUCKY** is a daughter of First Samurai debuting for trainer George Weaver with Lasix, and a solid workout pattern showing on the Palm Beach Downs turf; John Velazquez rides.

SELECTIONS: 3-2-5

RACE 2:

4 STEADY EARNER is cutting back to three-quarters of a mile after responding to the dropdown in competition with 3rd place finish vs this level of competition going 7 furlongs. Trainer Aubrey Maragh has Luis Saez riding. **2 YODEL E. A. WHO** is cutting back to 6 panels after proving he could compete at this level when he followed a \$12,500 victory at this distance with a 2nd place finish in front of the top choice last out. Note that the colt is the only multiple winner in the field. **6 SMOKER** is stepping up to tussle with winners after holding on gamely to defeat \$35,000 state-bred maidens at the distance; Irad Ortiz Jr. rides.

SELECTIONS: 4-2-6

RACE 3:

8 PADILLA, 18 for 27 on this turf course, the hard-knocking 9-year-old is back on the grass after returning from Laurel to finish a stamina tweaking 2nd going 6 furlongs on the dirt. Trainer Ruben Gracida has Luis Saez handling the outside draw.

3 MODERN TALE is a late-striding type who can show more after getting parked 5-wide when beaten 1 ½ lengths at this distance last out.

2 DIAMOND MAJESTY is dropping into this dated claimer after closing strongly to finish 2nd vs \$16,000 'non-winners of 3-lifetime' claimers.

SELECTIONS: 8-3-2

RACE 4:

2 EYE'S REWARD is dropping to the \$50,000 level, and stretching out to 7 furlongs, after the pair of solid performances vs maiden special weight competition in which she displayed good early speed. Trainer Yvon Belsoeur has Luis Saez handling the dropdown. **6 SHE'LL DO** is another dropping in to the maiden claiming ranks after shipping up to Tampa, dueling for the lead, and weakening to finish 4th vs special weight runners. Trainer Todd Pletcher has John Velazquez atop the daughter of Hard Spun. **3 SPEED BUMP**, who showed promise when sprinting vs this level of competition here last summer, makes her first start since fading when trying a 2-turn mile at GP West during November. Trainer Danny Gargan is 24% with similar layoffs.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-3

RACE 5:

1 MACHO BLUE moved to the Jose Gallegos barn via the claim after posting his 2nd consecutive turf victory at the distance when crushed a field of \$30,000 '2-lifetime' claimers by 4-plus lengths; Irad Ortiz Jr rides. **4 SWAGGER**, a 7-time turf winner at the distance, was solid in defeat when he dueled throughout and finished 2nd last out. Trainer Jorge Navarro tabs Nik Juarez to ride. **6 GNARLY**, who was competitive vs allowance competition on the dirt before the wheels came off at Aqueduct, debuts on the turf for Fernando Abreu with Luis Saez named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 1-4-6

RACE 6:

4 TRIESTE (BRZ) is cutting back to a sprint distance on the main track after returning from the layoff with blinkers added, dueling for the lead, and fading to finish 5th vs \$35,000 maidens going a mile on the turf. Trainer Ken McPeck, 21% with the turf-to-dirt move, has Brian Hernandez Jr in the saddle.

6 PURPLE GIRL was solid in defeat when she dueled throughout and finish 2nd at this level and distance last out. **7 MY SEBASTIANA** is dropping a notch, and returning to the dirt, after getting mugged early when facing \$25,000 maidens on the grass last out.

SELECTIONS: 4-6-7

RACE 7:

2 CHARLIE THE GREEK is cutting back to 7 furlongs after a couple of sharp efforts in which he finished 2nd and 1st, respectively, going a 1-turn mile. Trainer Joe Catanese has Irad Ortiz Jr handling the turnback. **1 TOMATER GATOR**, who defeated this caliber of competition 2 starts back, drops after losing all chance when he reared at the start of a \$50,000 starter allowance last out. Trainer Jane Cibelli has Javier Castellano named to ride.

5 PASS THE BUTTER is back at a competitive level after tilting windmills when beaten double-digit lengths in the Grade 3 GP Sprint.

SELECTIONS: 2-1-5

RACE 8:

7 MONHEGAN is turning back to a mile and a sixteenth after returning from the 2-month freshening to finish 3rd – beaten a couple of lengths – going 9 furlongs. Trainer Michael Matz has John Velazquez atop the daughter of English Channel.

2 MISS MONK, a half-sister to \$1.9 million earner Wicked Strong, is stretching out around 2-turns after returning from the layoff to finish a screw-tightening 5th going 5 furlongs. Trainer Jorge Duarte Jr has Jairo Rendon handling the added distance.

5 GENTLE RULER is hoping to finally notch the maiden victory after ‘hitting the board’ in 8 of 11 maiden special weight turf races over the last 2 years. Trainer Ian Wilkes has Chris Landeros handling her 4-year-old debut.

SELECTIONS: 7-2-5

RACE 9:

5 BEACH WALTZ should be primed and ready to score after returning from the layoff, stalking the pace, and encountering some late traffic when finishing 3rd – beaten a half-length vs first level allowance competition. Trainer Mike Maker has John Velazquez named to ride. **7 GO ROSE (GER)** is making her North American debut for trainer Christophe Clement with Lasix added after a solid campaign in Germany, which includes a 3rd place finish in the Group 2 German 1000 Guineas.

6 DESIGNING comes off a strong 2nd place finish in front of Beach Waltz in which she was beaten a head at 38-1. Trainer Herman Wilensky has Jeffrey Sanchez in the irons again.

SELECTIONS: 9-7-6

RACE 10:

5 MYBIGITALIANFRIEND will try to make 4 victories in a row when she returns from the freshening for trainer Jason Servis, and steps up to the \$62,500 level; Irad rides. **2 HEIRESSALL**, no slouch in the win department, the daughter of Wildcat Heir makes her first start since her 3-race win streak ended when she finished 3rd in the 7-furlong Sunshine Millions Distaff at GP West.

1 DAY BY DAY will depart from the rail, and make her first start since rallying to finish 2nd behind the top choice in their last. Trainer Armando De La Cerda claimed her last out, and tabs Luis Saez to ride.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-1

RACE 11:

6 ALEXANDRAS JOY is dropping a notch after opening and surrendering an early 5-length lead when fading to 6th vs \$20,000 maidens. She’s the controlling speed again, and can steal it at a price.

5 RATE OF RETURN, who does her best running from a stalk/close position, can reap the spoils if the top choice does another swan dive in the stretch.

8 KONSTANTINOVA is another dropping to the \$16,000 level after tracking the action and finishing an okay 4th – beaten 2 lengths – the \$20,000 level.

SELECTIONS: 6-5-8

BEST BET: RACE 8 – 7 MONHEGAN

LONGSHOT: RACE 11 – 6 ALEXANDRAS JOY