



RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

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RACE 1:

5 EL PLAYON has been knocking on the door in consecutive races at this level, which includes the 2nd place at this 1-mile distance. Leonel Reyes rides for trainer Antonio Sano. **3 VIN FOR THE WIN** is dropping to the \$12,500 level on the main track after failing to get untracked vs \$20,000 maidens going a mile and a sixteenth on the turf. Trainer Elizabeth Dobles has leading jock Irad Ortiz Jr handling the surface switch. **7 ZULIANO** drops to the bottom with blinkers added hoping to spark a wakeup call.

SELECTIONS: 5-3-7

RACE 2:

1 MAXIMUM SECURITY is stretching out to 7 furlongs after taking no prisoners in back-to-back open-length victories contested at three-quarters of a mile. Trainer Jason Servis has Irad Ortiz Jr named on the son of New Year's Day. **4 STAR PLAYER** is turning back to a sprint distance after responding in the first race after the claim by leading trainer Jorge Navarro with a set-the-pace 2nd vs this caliber of competition going a 1-turn mile.

3 FIRST AND THREE is another cutting back to seven-eighths of a mile after stalking the pace and finishing a hard-fought 2nd going a mile on December 28; Tyler Gaffalione rides for David Fawkes.

SELECTIONS: 1-4-3

RACE 3:

1 MEETMEONLINE, a half-sister to Grade 2 winner Bucchero, is cutting back to 5 furlongs after setting the pace and weakening late to finish 5th – beaten 2 lengths – at a mile. Trainer Steve Klesaris is 31% with the route-to-sprint angle. **2 DADDY'S MELODY**, who finished 3rd sprinting on the Belmont turf, is turning back to 5 furlongs, after a useful local debut going a mile. Trainer Brian Lynch has Javier Castellano in the irons. **7 CUCCIDATI**, a 4-year-old daughter of Street Cry is making her first start since finishing a troubled 6th (bumped hard at the start) at Belmont during the summer of 2017. Trainer Christophe Clement sweetens the deal with Irad Ortiz Jr named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 1-2-7

RACE 4:

4 POSITIVIST is dropping into this \$30,000 '2-lifetime' claimer after shipping in from Laurel, for trainer Clyde Martin, Jr to show speed and fade vs a solid group of entry-level allowance runners. **1 BENJAMIN** is stepping up to face winners after blowing the doors off the competition when he drew clear to defeat \$10,000 maidens at GP West by 11-plus lengths. The recent gelding, trained by Dane Kobiskie, has Emisael Jaramillo handling the first race since mid-November. **2 PORTAL** is making his local return for trainer Ian Wilkes after tracking the pace and finishing 2nd vs \$16,000 optional claimers going a mile & 40 yards at Tampa. His current speed figures point him out as the 'one to beat' at a 1-turn mile.

SELECTIONS: 4-1-2

RACE 5:

3 HONOLULU EXPRESS moved to the Benny Cadahia barn via the claim after posting his 2nd consecutive victory when defeating this familiar competition at this level and distance. The new connections tab Irad Ortiz Jr to ride the consistent gelding (6-4-0-0). **1 MARCELINO** will break from the rail after departing from the outside (Post 7), dueling for the lead, and finishing 3rd behind Honolulu Express last out; Angel Rodriguez rides.

5 HOLLYWOOD OVERDOGS is returning to what looks like his best surface after following the 3rd place finish behind Honolulu Express on December 26 with a troubled starting 6th (clipped heels, bobbed) going 5 furlongs on a wet track listed as 'good'.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-5

RACE 6:

1 THE MIGHTY JUDGE is dropping to the \$12,500 level after shipping in from Belmont for trainer George Weaver, pressing the pace, and finishing 2nd – as the 3-to-5 favorite – vs \$20,000 maidens. The \$240,000 son of Curlin gets 2nd-time blinkers, and 1st time Tyler Gaffalione. **2 TROPICAL TAPISTRY** is stretching out to a mile for the first time after rallying to 'hit the board' is a trio of sprints vs this caliber of competition. Trainer Tammy Levy has Irad Ortiz Jr handling the added distance.

6 DAZZLING PROSE is hoping to make amends after crossing the wire first but getting disqualified and place 2nd for drifting inward at the start.

SELECTIONS: 1-2-6

RACE 7:

2 FALSE INFO is dropping to the \$50,000 level after following his \$50,000 maiden victory at this distance with a track-the-pace 5th going a mile vs \$75,000 optional claimers. Trainer Chad Brown has Javier Castellano named to ride. **7 WILLING TO SPEED**, 2nd at this level 2 starts back, drops after breaking slowly and finishing 6th behind False Info last out. Trainer John Kimmel, 6 for 24 (25%) at the meeting, has Jose Ortiz named to ride.

6 CHAMPAGNEONME, in for the \$50,000 tag, makes it a trio dropping out of that \$75,000 optional claimer after setting the pace and fading to finish 7th behind the top two. Trainer Carlos David has Joe Bravo named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 2-7-6

RACE 8:

9 LA CHAUFFEUR is a daughter of Cairo Prince making her turf debut after returning from the 4-month layoff to break from an outside post and finish 3rd going 6 furlongs on a wet track listed as 'good'. Trainer Norm Casse has Julien Leparoux named to ride the nicely bred sophomore.

4 BEAUTIFUL LOVER should be primed and ready for the picture ceremony after making a middle move to get the lead and settling for 4th in her career debut at this level and distance. Trainer Chad Brown is 28% with maidens making their 2nd start.

1 ANDREA'S PRIDE is making her 3-year-debut, and her first journey around 2 turns, after the trio of turf sprints during her freshman campaign. Trainer Christophe Clement adds Lasix, and has Brian Hernandez Jr handling the daughter of Gio Ponti.

SELECTIONS: 9-4-1

RACE 9:

5 DUNK is turning back to 6 furlongs (4-0-2-0) after dueling for the lead and finishing 3rd – as the favorite – when going a mile in the first start after the claim by Aubrey Maragh. Note the trainer/jock combo of A Maragh & T Maragh win together at a 24% rate.

9 VALDOCCO is dropping to the \$12,500 level after returning from a layoff at Churchill to show brief speed and fade vs \$50,000 '2-lifetime' claimers. Note the 5-year-old ran well here last winter.

4 QUENLENNY is stepping up to the next logical level after drawing clear to defeat \$12,500 maidens here by 8 widening lengths. Trainer Dale Romans has Robby Albarado returning on this intriguing possibility.

SELECTIONS: 5-9-4

RACE 10:

10 BAND OF ANGELS is going back to the grass after following a sharp victory at this level and distance on the GP West turf with a troubled trip (clipped heels) vs \$25,000 optional claimers in her next start, and a chase-the-pace 4th in a rained out sprint last out.. **9 SALT POND** is going back to the lawn after pressing the pace and finishing 2nd in front of Band of Angels in the slop. Trainer Mike Trombetta, who claimed her 2 starts back, has Irad Ortiz Jr up.

4 ALL ABOUT STELLA, 1 of 2 in the field for Jena Antonucci (Glittering Judy), has been knocking on the door in consecutive races at this level, and merits a spot on the ticket; Jose Ortiz rides.

SELECTIONS: 10-9-4

RACE 11:

5 TWISTED LICORICE, who ran well vs tougher in his 2 previous turf sprints as a 2-year-old, is going back to the turf for trainer David Fawkes after stalking the pace and finishing 4th vs \$25,000 maidens on the main track. **8 COME ON VENEZUELA** is another returning to the turf after a solid effort on a sloppy track in which he finished a 5-wide 2nd. The son of Kantharos is long overdue for the maiden victory.

4 JAMMIN JIMTOWN, 3rd in his only previous turf sprint, goes back to the grass after rallying to finish 3rd behind Come on Venezuela. Trainer Jorge Navarro has Emisael Jaramillo in the irons.

SELECTIONS: 5-8-4

BEST BET: RACE 11 – 5 TWISTED LICORICE

LONGSHOT: RACE 8 – 9 LA CHAUFFER