GULFSTREAM PARK

Friday, February 27 By Brian Nadeau (check @Brian_J_Nadeau for OFF turf updates)

Championship Meet Statistics (through 2/22):

Race 1: A switch to Gaffalione and a return to turf could bring a breakthrough for **2 JENN'S BELIEFS**, as she ran well on the grass two-back and doesn't meet anyone to be scared of. A stretch to two turns makes **9 ROYAL RETINUE** the one to catch off her sprint speed, and if they let her go early, they may never see her late. The price will be right on **4 SOVEREIGN GRACE**, who improved a ton stretchout out last time.

SELECTIONS: 2-9-4-1

Race 2: Giving another chanced to **6 SOFTLY DREAMING** after breaking last from the rail in her debut and didn't do much running, and it's good to see Zayas stick too. A meek field of proven runners means **5 SWEETCITY** is the one to beat in her debut, especially since her AM works (on XBTV) were solid. Expecting improvement from **2 MAJESTIC LUCIA**, who broke last in her debut but passed a few and now goes to Barboza.

SELECTIONS: 6-5-2-1

Race 3: It's Best Bet time with 3 CAPTAIN EDDIE, who drops from Tapeta and turf, has speed, and meets a very dicey group. Both 1 IMAPEPPA and 6 EL GUTY make sense, but neither inspire or have much upside either.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-6-5

Race 4: Irad, a good post, and a return to Tapeta says **4 ON THE PAYROLL** will be tough, as he won at the level two-back and has the speed to be close early. The rail isn't ideal, but **1 SPLIT STRIKE** comes in off a strong win, so if he can work out a trip, and doesn't bounce, he's a threat right back. Fading **5 THREE ZERO**, as David has been ice-cold, and this 6yo will be overbet too.

SELECTIONS: 4-1-5-2

Race 5: It's Longshot time with **4 BOOTSONTHEGROUND**, who was closing strongly in his sprint debut, stretches out, and meets a field there for the taking. Lasix and blinkers could put **5 LEMON'S LAW** over the top after three solid runs at 2, though value will lie elsewhere. It's a guess with **7 MUNNY PROBLEM**, who didn't work over turf in advance of his debut, but did impress in his 2/8 dirt drill (viewed online).

SELECTIONS: 4-5-7-3

Race 6: At the risk of calling this a match race, it sure looks like **5 DOMINO VITALI** and **3 BLUEBERRY HILL** have this field over a barrel, with the latter owning a big post edge, impressing when 2nd in her local bow while facing winners, and seeming to have more upside than 'Hill, who should improve on that 2nd in her return, but is still looking

up at the pick. The gap to the rest, including **6 HEARTBEAT**, feels like a seismic one.

SELECTIONS: 5-3-6-4

Race 7: Can't see them beating **2 AMERICAN SPEED**, who caught a cushy bunch on the slight drop, and would handle these comfortably with anything close to his best. Both **8 ROSCOE PINE**, who is back on quick rest but drops, and **5 WICKED FINN**, a three-time local winner who has been doing the turf thing up north of late, are next up.

SELECTIONS: 2-8-5-6

Race 8: Facing Florida breds, adding Lasix, and entering with just three lifetime starts makes **7 PRINTER'S ALLEY** the play, as he has every right to build on that close 4th at Sar when last seen 9/1. A stiff drop and the potential for an easier race flow makes **5 THEMANUPFRONT** a wire threat, as he hasn't been able to make the front of late, but shouldn't have to work too hard to do so today. They all have to beat **3 WIN WITH FAITH** after a neck 2nd at the level last time, but he won't get a wild pace to rally into today, so he may be vulnerable.

SELECTIONS: 7-5-3-6

Race 9: With **5 LONGBRANCH LOU** getting back on the beam in his last, he figures tough right back, especially since he may get set up off an energetic pace again. Class riser **4 NINJA STAR** has to be respected going OTC for Fakes, which is a wild 38% move, and he's another who will like the expected hot pace. Which leads us to **3 UNCLE JOHN**, who just got fried behind 'Lou and may get nagged up front again.

SELECTIONS: 5-4-3-6

Race 10: Of the four coming out of the 1/29 race, it's **11 SIR GUINNESS** who has the most appeal, as he was running on late in his debut before losing his Egan (who is back to ride him today), will offer value, and should only improve with that behind him. The MSW drop and a cozy draw make **2 XCEL** the one to beat, though it's odd to see him in for a tag after a close 6th with trouble in his bow. Trouble is what **10 URGENCY** found last time, when he was 4th behind a trio of next-out winners, so he's a must-use in a tremendous turf finale.

SELECTIONS: 11-2-10-8

Best Bet: R3: #3 Captain Eddie (2-1)
   * Class drop out of Tapeta/turf races
   * Fresh face in a race begging for one
   * Lone dirt start was in a solid MSW

Longshot: R5: #4 Bootsontheground (12-1)
   * Closed strongly sprinting in debut
   * Bred on both sides for two turns
   * Meets a modest group on paper

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