



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by Ron Nicoletti

Friday, January 17, 2020

RACE 1:

7 SWIRLING CANDY is dropping to the \$25,000 level, and returning from the layoff, after failing to fire when facing maiden special weight competition in her 5 ½ furlong debut at Saratoga. Trainer George Weaver has the sophomore training consistently at Palm Beach Downs. **12 DROP A HINT** is dropping into the maiden claiming ranks, and debuting on the turf, after facing special weight competition on the dirt throughout her freshman campaign. The daughter of Into Mischief, who is bred to love the turf, has Irad Ortiz Jr handling the tough outside post.

6 KAYLA'S TUNE will give the turf a try at the \$25,000 level after the inconsistent campaign sprinting on the dirt; Tyler Gaffalione rides for Joe Orseno.

SELECTIONS: 7-12-6

RACE 2:

3 HILLTOP HARMONY, a winner at the distance 2 starts back, stretches out after just getting nailed at the wire when finishing 2nd going a mile here vs a notch tougher competition. **4 MISS HELEN** is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth, and dropping to the \$8,000 level, after failing to fire when facing \$25,000 claimers going 5 ½ furlongs at Tampa. Trainer Harold Schultz has Emisael Jaramillo named to ride. **5 MYFRANCESCA**, 2nd at the distance on the GP West main track, is back on the dirt after getting mugged at the 3/8th pole (checked) when finishing 7th on the turf here last out; Richard Mitchell rides.

SELECTIONS: 3-4-5

RACE 3:

6 SUMMER SANGRIA is dropping to the \$50,000 level, turning back to 5 furlongs, and removing the blinkers, after following a pair of 2nd-place finishes sprinting on the Saratoga turf with a stalk-and-fade outing going 6 furlongs on the Aqueduct turf.

Trainer Wesley Ward, 26% with the blinkers off angle, has John Velazquez in the saddle.

1 JADES GELLY moved to the Jorge Navarro barn via the claim, and adds blinkers, after rallying 4-wide to finish 2nd in her local debut at this level and distance; Javier Castellano rides.

3 MANE ATTRACTION is eligible to show more after responding to the dropdown in competition with a rallying 3rd place finish behind Jades Gelly. Jockey Edgar Prado makes it the 3rd Hall of Fame jockey named to handle my selections.

SELECTIONS: 6-1-3

RACE 4:

6 RISK FOR REWARD is sitting on a winning performance after returning from GP West to finish 2nd at this level and distance. Trainer Ralph Nicks tabs Victor Lebron to ride.

5 BLESSD BY THE BEST moved to the Jorge Delgado barn via the claim, and makes his first start since finishing 3rd – as the favorite – in a \$10,000 maiden test going 6 ½ furlongs on a ‘muddy’ GP West main track; Tyler Gaffalione rides.

7 WAR ACT is dropping to the \$12,500 level with blinkers added after rallying 5-wide to finish 4th, at the distance, vs \$25,000 maidens.

SELECTIONS: 6-5-7

RACE 5:

3 DRAMA IN DIXIE, placed 1st via a steward's decision vs \$50,000 maidens on the GP West turf, is back on the grass after losing his best chance when he ducked out at the start of a \$50,000 starter optional claimer going a mile on the dirt.

1 VERDICT IS IN will depart from the rail after following a trio of solid turf performances on the GP West turf with a chase-and-fade outing here vs \$35,000 starter optional claimers. Trainer Ed Plesa Jr has Joe Bravo named to ride.

4 HE'S SUPER LUCKY is stepping up to face winners after rallying to defeat \$25,000 maidens with a perfectly timed ride by Luis Saez.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-4

RACE 6:

4 BETTERTMENT, a well-meant 2nd at this distance on the Belmont turf, is shifting back to the grass after stalking the pace and fading going 9-furlongs on the Aqueduct main track. Trainer Mark Hennig has Luis Saez handling the surface switch.

10 STARE DECISIS, 1 of 2 in the field for trainer Chad Brown (Rakeez), is debuting locally after finishing a late-closing 4th behind Betterment when they hooked up on the turf at Belmont during October; Irad Ortiz Jr guides this half of the Brown uncoupled entry. **2 OPUS NORTH** is making his 4-year-old debut after threatening to break his maiden on the Woodbine turf, which includes the neck defeat – as the favorite – at this distance in his last start; John Velazquez rides for Roger Attfield.

SELECTIONS: 4-10-2

RACE 7:

4 DRAGUNOV is dropping to the \$8,000 level on the main track after facing tougher on the turf with limited results. Trainer Armando De La Cerda has Irad Ortiz Jr trying to right the ship on the dirt. **3 SI ES GOYA** moved to the Don Hunt barn via the claim after tracking the pace and finishing 2nd vs this level of competition going a mile last out. The new connections have Tracy Herbert named to ride.

1 ONE FINE RIDE will depart from the rail after breaking from the outside (Post 10) and making a 6-wide charge to finish 3rd vs similar quality last out; Rajiv Maragh rides.

SELECTIONS: 4-3-1

RACE 8:

6 CHICLET'S DREAM is dropping to the \$16,000 level after ending her turf campaign in New York with a 2nd place finish vs \$30,000 'non-winners of 2-lifetime' competition going 6 furlongs on the Aqueduct turf. Trainer Chad Brown has Javier Castellano handling the stretchout to a mile.

8 REGAL ROMANCE has been knocking on the door in both recent races at this level and distance, and just needs a little assistance from Lady Luck to end up in the winner's circle. Trainer Lilli Kurtinecz has Irad Ortiz Jr in the saddle again.

10 ZODIAC PRINCESS is making her local return after setting the pace and weakening late when facing similar quality in back-to-back races on the Tampa turf. Trainer Laura Cazares has strong front running jock Emisael Jaramillo at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 6-8-10

RACE 9:

4 HIDDEN SCROLL, who displayed tons of promise in his sophomore campaign, which includes a 4th place finish in the Grade 2 Fountain of Youth, returns for trainer Bill Mott with a series of sharp workouts showing on the Payson Park training track.

7 SNIPER SHOT is making the first start since getting beat a nose by next-out stake winner Pole Sitter in a \$75,000 optional claimer going 6 ½ furlongs on a sealed 'sloppy' track at Keeneland. Trainer Todd Pletcher has the new gelding training forwardly at Palm Beach Downs.

3 CAJUN FIRECRACKER is turning back to three-quarters of a mile after rallying to finish 2nd vs state-bred runners in the Marion County Stakes. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Tyler Gaffalione in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 4-7-3

RACE 10:

9 ALGODONAL will try to make it 3 in a row after following her \$20,000 maiden score at GP West with front running victory here, over a pair of next-out winners, in a \$16,000 '2-lifetime' claimer at the distance. **4 YAKO** is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after rallying to finish a strong 2nd vs this caliber of competition going a mile. Trainer Antonio Sano has Tyler Gaffalione named to ride.

10 LIBERALE (FR), 5 for 10 'in the money' on the course, albeit with only 1 victory (10-1-1-3), returns for trainer Mary Eppler after finishing 3rd at this level and distance on the Laurel turf; Jose Ortiz rides.

SELECTIONS: 9-4-10

BEST BET: RACE 3 – 6 SUMMER SANGRIA

LONGSHOT: RACE 7 – 4 DRAGUNOV