



# RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by Ron Nicoletti

**Monday, February 17, 2020**

**RACE 1: THE LITTLE MAGICIAN**

**3 TIGER BLOOD**, absolutely one of the best local turf sprinters, is stretching out to a mile for the first time with designs of leading this group from start to finish; Edgard Zaya rides for Steve Klesaris.

**1 HIGH NOON RIDER** is turning back to a mile after solid score going a mile and a sixteenth in which he cruised through the lane to defeat \$16,000 optional claimers. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Tyler Gaffalione handling the inside post. **5 ICE TEA** will try to make it 2 in row after shipping in for trainer Marry Eppler to defeat \$62,500 optional claimers by a hard-fought head; Paco Lopez rides.

**SELECTIONS: 3-1-5**

**RACE 2: THE TRUST BUSTER**

**2 WHO'S OUT** is making the usually fruitful 3<sup>rd</sup> start back from the layoff after dueling for the lead and finishing a game 2<sup>nd</sup> vs a salty group of \$35,000 optional claimers. Trainer Jorge Navarro has Luis Saez in the irons. **6 TAKE CHARGE DUDE** can do just that in this spot because of his ability to go to the lead and never look back. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has leading jock Irad Ortiz Jr named on the speedy 5-year-old.

**3 WHYRUAWESOME** has shown in the past that he can sit off the speed and defeat stakes caliber competition when he won the 6-furlong \$100,000 Mr Prospector at Monmouth last September. Trainer Liz Dobles has Jose Ortiz in the saddle.

**SELECTIONS: 2-6-3**

**RACE 3: THE MARY TODD**

**6 DYNATAIL**, a previous stakes winner at the distance, ships down from Tampa for trainer Mike Dini after setting the pace and finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in competitive \$100,000 optional claimer; Luis Saez rides.

**3 BAREEQA** is hoping to finally get a clean trip after getting stuck in traffic when finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Claiming Crown Tiara 2 starts back, and getting stuck behind horses in the stretch in an allowance test at the distance last out. Trainer Danny Gargan tabs Irad Ortiz Jr to ride.

**7 LUCKY LONG**, who defeated Bareeqa in the Tiara, turns back to a mile and a sixteenth after making a move for the lead prior to fading in the mile and three-sixteenth Via Borghese last out.

**SELECTIONS: 6-3-7**

**RACE 4: THE LADY BIRD**

**1 LIZA STAR** drops into a competitive situation after following her victory in the 1-mile Claiming Crown Glass Slipper with a duel-and-fade outing behind repeat stakes winner Pink Sands in the 7-furlong Grade 2 Inside Information. The only concern for the 8-time local winner is the zero-for-6 record at 7 furlongs.

**4 I'LL TAKE THE CAKE** moved to the Saffie Joseph Jr barn via the claim, and debuts locally, after setting the pace and finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> behind next-out stakes' winner Vault in a \$25,000 optional claimer at Penn National. Tyler Gaffalione rides the previous winner at the distance. **6 DISTINCTIVE LADY**, a 2-time winner at the distance (4-2-1-0), steps up the competition after responding in the first race after the claim by Dominic Schettino with a \$12,500 starter optional claiming victory going 5 ½ furlongs.

**SELECTIONS: 1-4-6**

**RACE 5: THE MRS. PRESIDENTRESS**

**7 QUEEN OF GOD**, now in the Mike Maker barn, the daughter of Paynter cuts back to a mile after setting the pace and finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in a \$50,000 optional claimer going a mile and a sixteenth; Santiago Gonzalez rides.

**8 RISING BELLA** moved to the Steve Klesaris barn via the claim after drawing clear to defeat \$35,000 starter optional claimers at the distance. The new connections tab Irad to ride. **2 RICHIES GREAT GIRL** is stretching out to a mile for trainer Larry Rivelli after following a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish sprinting on the turf here with a rousing 9-length plus victory going 6 furlongs on the Tampa main track.

**SELECTIONS: 7-8-2**

**RACE 6:**

**3 CAJUN CASANOVA**, a stakes winner sprinting on the grass here as a 2-year-old, is going back to the turf after drawing clear to crush a field of \$50,000 starter optional claimers going 5 panels on a 'good' main track. Trainer Mike Pino claimed him last out, and keeps Miguel Vazquez at the controls.

**5 AYE AYE SIR**, stakes-placed sprinting on the Woodbine turf during his freshman season, makes his 3-year-old debut for trainer Wesley Ward with a series of sharp workouts showing on the Palm Meadows turf.

**2 ZAINO BOYZ**, who broke his maiden sprinting on the GP West turf, is shifting back to the lawn after winning 1 of 2 stakes races going 6 furlongs on the dirt. Trainer Bobby Dibona has Emisael Jaramillo handling the surface switch.

**SELECTIONS: 3-5-2****RACE 7: THE ROUGH AND READY**

**2 YODEL E. A. WHO** seems to back on track after following back-to-back victories with a troubled starting performance in the Claiming Crown Rapid Transit. The solid 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish last out, with Edgard Zayas at the controls, was good enough to win here. **3 QUENANE** has certainly turned his fortunes around when recently posting back-to-back victories for trainer Tammy Levy. Leading jock Irad Ortiz Jr is back aboard.

**8 SYCAMORE LANE**, a perfect 2 for 2 at this distance on the main track, returns to the dirt for trainer Mike Dini after the 2-race win streak ended when he came up empty on the Tampa turf last out.

**SELECTIONS: 2-3-8****RACE 8: THE AMERICAN FABIUS**

**5 DISK JOCKEY** is turning back to 7 furlongs after keeping his record unblemished when he followed his debut victory vs \$35,000 maidens with a much-the-best score going a mile vs \$50,000 starter optional claimers. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr, who claimed him 2 starts back, has Irad in the saddle again. **3 BLOOD MOON** moved to the Danny Gargan barn via the claim, and steps up to face winners, after using his speed to defeat \$50,000 maidens going a 1-turn mile. Trainer Gargan, 50% with recent claims, has Luis Saez named to ride. **1 CAPTAIN D**, another from Saffie Joseph Jr, cuts back to 7 furlongs on the dirt after a solid campaign going long on the turf. Tyler Gaffalione handles my favorite turf-to-dirt angle.

**SELECTIONS: 5-3-1****RACE 9: THE SAGE OF MONTICELLO**

**9 MONFORTE** is going back to his best surface after highlighting his versatility when he followed back-to-back turf victories with a \$50,000 optional claiming score going 7 furlongs on the main track.

**7 UNCORK THE BOTTLE**, a solid winner on the Tampa turf 2 starts back, is going back to the grass after tilting windmills when fading on the dirt in the Grade 3 Holy Bull Stakes.

**10 JUSTINTHENICKOFTIME** is stepping up to face winners after dueling throughout and holding sway to defeat \$50,000 maidens going a mile and a sixteenth. Trainer Jane Cibelli has Irad named on the gelded son of Justin Phillip.

**SELECTIONS: 9-7-10****RACE 10: THE RAIL SPLITTER**

**2 COLOUR GUARD** will try to make it 2 in a row at the distance after a 4-wide bid produced the victory vs \$62,500 optional claimers. Trainer Jorge Navarro has Edgard Zayas returning 1 of his 3 entrants in the field.

**6 BENEFACOR** moved to the Terri Pompay barn via the claim after just getting nipped at the wire by Colour Guard at the distance last out. The new connections tab Irad to handle the rematch. **8 EARLY ENTRY**, another entry from Jorge Navarro, is turning back to 6 ½ furlongs after dueling throughout and getting beat a neck when finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> vs this familiar competition going 7 furlongs; Luis Saez rides.

**SELECTIONS: 2-6-8****RACE 11: THE OLD MAN ELOQUENT**

**8 MUGGSAMATIC** has been ultra-sharp since returning from the layoff. The gelding rallied to win the Claiming Crown Emerald in his first race back from a 4-month layoff, and backed that up with a well-meant 2<sup>nd</sup> in the \$150,000 Sunshine Millions Turf.

**1 APRECIADO**, 2<sup>nd</sup> to Muggsamatic in the Emerald, turns back to a mile and a sixteenth after rallying to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 12-furlong Grade 3 McKnight in his last. Trainer Mike Maker has Tyler Gaffalione named to ride.

**6 AQUAPHOBIA** moved to the Mike Maker barn via the claim, and stretches out to his best distance (14-3-4-4), after rallying to finish 4<sup>th</sup> vs \$62,500 optional claimers going 7 ½ furlongs. He can close, and light up the tote board, if the speed in the field gets cooked on the front end; Paco Lopez rides the longshot special.

**SELECTIONS: 8-1-6****BEST BET: RACE 9 – 9 MONFORTE****LONGSHOT: RACE 11 – 6 AQUAPHOBIA**