



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by Ron Nicoletti

Saturday, February 22, 2020

RACE 1:

5 UNION COLONEL was sharp in defeat when shipping in from Woodbine and finishing 2nd – in front of a pair of next-out winners – when beaten a head at this level and distance. **3 AMERICAN GODDESS** is expected to show more after rallying 4-wide to finish 4th in her career debut vs the girls at this level and distance. Trainer Wesley Ward has John Velazquez atop the daughter of American Pharoah. **2 UNCLE GEORGE** is a \$300,000 son of Uncle Mo debuting for trainer Christophe Clement with Lasix, and a solid work tab showing at Payson Park; Irad Ortiz Jr rides.

SELECTIONS: 5-3-2

RACE 2:

4 JUST A BIT SASSY, who was impressive breaking her maiden in her career debut going a mile on the turf, is going back to the grass after moving to the Mary Eppler barn via the claim and finishing a distant 2nd going a 1-turn mile on the dirt vs \$35,000 optional claimers.

9 HARTLING moved to the Mike Pino barn via the claim after posting her 2nd consecutive victory when she defeated \$20,000 claimers at this distance on the turf. The only 3-time winner in the field has Tyler Gaffalione handling the outside draw. **5 JOYOUS TIMES** is stepping up to face winners at 8 furlongs after rallying to win her \$25,000 career debut going a mile and a sixteenth on the turf. Trainer Steve Klesaris has Jose Ortiz atop the daughter of Kitten's Joy.

SELECTIONS: 4-9-5

RACE 3:

4 LIAM'S POINT is a son of Liam's Map, and a half-brother to Grade 1 winner Sam's Sister, debuting for trainer Todd Pletcher with a string of solid workouts showing at Palm Beach Downs; Irad Ortiz Jr rides.

7 ELLIS ISLAND, another from the Todd Pletcher juggernaut, the son of Will Take Charge debuts with Lasix, and has Hall of Fame jock John Velazquez at the controls. **8 CENTERED** is a son of Speightstown, a half-brother to Grade 2 Royal Delta winner Penwith, debuting for trainer Tom Albertrani with Lasix, and Tyler Gaffalione named on the Godolphin homebred.

SELECTIONS: 4-7-8

RACE 4:

10 VOODOO ZIP is turning back to a mile with blinkers added after debuting locally and finishing 2nd - in front of a pair of next-out winners – when beaten a nose at a mile and a sixteenth. **9 VINTAGE PRINT**, a \$1.8 million-dollar son of Curlin, is debuting on the turf, and racing without the blinkers, after failing to show much on the pair of dirt races in New York. Trainer Chad Brown has Javier Castellano handling the surface switch.

3 U S ARMY CORPS, a son of War Front, is making his sophomore debut the first start since the inconsistent 3-race turf campaign on the New York turf circuit. Trainer Shug McGaughey has John Velazquez named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 10-9-3

RACE 5:

3 VINCERO moved to the Kelly Breen barn via the claim, and is stretching out to one of his most accomplished distances (6-3-1-1), after his 2-race win streak ended when he was 4th going 6 furlongs vs \$35,000 optional claimers. **6 ALLURSTRA** is stretching out to a mile for the first time after the consistent sprint campaign in the optional claiming ranks. Trainer Terri Pompay has Miguel Vazquez handling the added distance. **4 BLUE BLUFF** is stepping up the competition after responding to the surface switch from turf to dirt with a \$12,500 '2-lifetime' victory contested at 6 furlongs.

SELECTIONS: 3-6-4

RACE 6:

11 THE MIGHTY JUDGE moved to the Mike Maker barn via the claim, and stretches out to 8 ½ furlongs, after rallying to come within three-quarters of a length of notching this claiming condition at a mile. **7 LET'S GO MICK**, now in the Danny Gargan barn, the gelding debuts locally, and returns to his best surface, in the first start since finishing 3rd vs \$32,000 optional claimers going a mile & 70 yards on the Hawthorne main track. The barn, 25% with new additions to the shedrow, has Irad Ortiz Jr named to ride. **5 IM THE CAPTAIN NOW** is dropping to the \$16,000 level, and turning back, after failing to show much in his local return going 9 furlongs vs \$35,000 optional claimers. Trainer Barclay Tagg has Paco Lopez named on this interesting proposition.

SELECTIONS: 11-7-5

RACE 7:

1 LEADING WEST, beaten a head at this distance with a clean trip 2 starts back, departs from the rail after getting caught in a traffic jam when finishing 6th at this level and distance last out. Trainer Jason Servis has Luis Saez named to ride. **9 PRICING EXERCISE** is a \$270,000 son of Palace Malice debuting for trainer Chad Brown, and that should be more than enough to pique your interest. The colt gets Lasix, and has Irad at the controls.

4 BATTALION is turning back to a mile after setting the pace and finishing 3rd in his career turf debut going a mile and a sixteenth. Trainer Bill Mott has Edgard Zayas at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 1-9-4**RACE 8:**

3 COST BASIS is debuting locally for trainer Chad Brown after rallying to defeat 4 next-out winners in what has turned out to be a monster 'key-race' going a mile on the Aqueduct main track; Irad Ortiz Jr handles the turnback to 7 furlongs. **7 SILVER RATIO** is stretching out to seven-eighths of a mile after the impressive debut victory going 6 furlongs. Trainer Todd Pletcher has John Velazquez returning on the \$320,000 son of Liam's Map.

8 VIOLENT CITY is stepping up, and stretching out, after drawing clear to win his 6-furlong career debut by 4 widening lengths. Trainer Ian Wilkes has Julien Lejaroux returning on the \$330,000 son of Violence.

SELECTIONS: 3-7-8**RACE 9: THE WORLD OF TROUBLE SPRINT (G3)**

2 LASTING LEGACY is turning back to three-quarters of a mile (7-4-0-0) after rallying to finish 2nd – beaten a length here – in the 7-furlong Grade 3 Mr Prospector. Trainer Jason Servis reunites the 6-year-old with Paco Lopez, who rode him to 3 consecutive victories at Monmouth last summer. **8 YORKTON** is making only his 2nd career start on a dirt surface after the impressive, and consistent, campaign vs graded stakes competition on both the synthetic and turf surfaces at Woodbine. Note that 6-year-old is firing bullets on the Palm Meadows dirt surface.

6 FAST PASS leaves little doubt that he'll be uncorking his impressive late run trying to spring the mini upset. Trainer Peter Walder has Cristian Torres atop the 11-time winner.

SELECTIONS: 2-8-6**RACE 10:**

7 MUSTAAQEEM (AUS) should be primed and ready to score after returning from the layoff to get beat a head when finishing 2nd at this level and distance. Trainer Kiaran McLaughlin has Julien Lejaroux in the saddle.

10 LARGENT, a lightly raced \$460,000 gelded son of Into Mischief, is stepping up the competition after keeping his record on the Gulfstream turf unblemished when he returned from the 8-month layoff to defeat allowance runners at a mile and a sixteenth. Trainer Todd Pletcher has Luis Saez going for 2 in a row. **5 KROY**, now in the Danny Gargan barn, the hard-knocking 4-time local turf winner will be trying to flaunt his speed, and take this group from start to finish. Leading jock Irad Ortiz Jr is the man you want at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 7-10-5**RACE 11: THE ANY LIMIT**

5 FRANK'S ROCKETTE, a multiple Grade 1 stakes-placed daughter of Into Mischief, is turning back to three-quarters of a mile after ending her impressive freshman campaign with a 2nd place finish in the 1-mile Grade 2 Frizette at Belmont. Trainer Bill Mott has her training sharply at Payson Park. **2 SOUND MACHINE** is cutting back to three-quarters of a mile after putting it all together when she drew clear to win the 6 ½-furlong Glitter Woman here last out. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Tyler Gaffalione going for 2 in a row. **7 FUJAIRAH** is turning back to 6 furlongs after stalking the pace and finishing 4th behind impressive winner Tonalist's Shape in the 7-furlong Grade 3 Forward Gal. Trainer Carlos David has Irad named on the daughter of Ghostzapper.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-7**RACE 12:**

5 BLEWITT should be primed and ready to offer more after returning from the layoff and finishing a fading 5th at this level and distance. Trainer Todd Pletcher has the 6-year-old training forwardly in preparation for this assignment. **10 DINAR** is stepping up to face winners after the impressive maiden victory at Churchill in which he drew clear at this distance to win by almost 4 lengths. Trainer Cherie DeVaux has Tyler Gaffalione atop the son of Union Rags. **4 ALMASHRIG**, a \$200,000 son of War Front, makes his North American debut for trainer Kiaran McLaughlin after winning 1 of 2 races on the synthetic surfaces in Great Britain. The 4-year-old gets Lasix, and has Luis Saez at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 5-10-4**BEST BET: RACE 8 – 3 COST BASIS****LONGSHOT: RACE 10 – 7 MUSTAAQEEM (AUS)**