



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

Sunday, January 5, 2020

RACE 1:

9 COLMAN JOSEPH (IRE) is dropping to the \$16,000 level after returning from a layoff to dispute the pace before weakening to finish 6th vs \$35,000 maidens going 5 furlongs on a 'good' turf. Trainer Jorge Navarro has Luca Panici named to ride. **3 R BOY EVENS**, 2nd vs similar quality when sprinting on the turf in his career debut at GP West, is going back to the grass after setting a pressured pace and weakening to finish 3rd vs \$12,500 maidens going 6 furlongs on the main track. Trainer Georgina Baxter has Jose Ortiz in the irons.

4 FRIENDLY FELLA is dropping to this level on the turf after showing speed and fading late when finishing 3rd sprinting on the dirt at the \$25,000 to \$20,000 levels, respectively.

SELECTIONS: 9-3-4

RACE 2:

3 BROTHER AARON is dropping to the \$50,000 level, and turning back to three-quarters of a mile, after the inconsistent pair vs special weight company at Churchill in which he was 2nd going 6 furlongs in the slop 2 starts back, and a stalk-and-fade 5th when going 6 ½ furlongs on a fast track. Trainer Dale Romans has Luis Saez named to ride. **4 COMPANY STORE** has been knocking on the door in back-to-back races at this level and distance, and the 3rd start back from the layoff can be the charm. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Tyler Gaffalione trying to get the son of Flashback out of 2nd gear. **1 PARKLAND STRONG** is eligible to take a winning step forward after returning from a layoff to finish 3rd behind Company Store last out; Jose Ortiz rides.

SELECTIONS: 3-4-1

RACE 3:

4 BATTLE OF BLENHEIM is stepping up, and stretching out, after a strong local return in which he led from start to finish when defeating \$35,000 claimers by 3 widening lengths. Trainer Mike Maker has Jose Ortiz going for 2 in a row.

2 SCHOLAR ATHLETE is debuting locally for trainer Graham Motion after facing a notch tougher up north with inconsistent results. The gelding defeated \$40,000 optional claimers at Colonial, and then posted back-to-back 4th place finishes vs allowance level competition before getting some time off. **6 ZULU** will try to turn the tables on the top choice at a mile and a sixteenth after rallying to finish 3rd behind him when they hooked up at a mile last out.

SELECTIONS: 4-2-6

RACE 4:

2 ANIMA D'OR is a son of Fast Anna debuting for trainer Jorge Navarro with Lasix, and solid work tab showing over the GP West training surface; Luis Saez rides. **4 PURECRAZITUDE** is stretching out to 5 ½ furlongs after making a middle move before weakening late when facing similar going 5 furlongs on a wet track listed as 'good'. Trainer Jena Antonucci has Jeffrey Sanchez named to ride. **6 SCARTO** is dropping to the \$30,000 level in the first start since showing speed and finishing 2nd vs maiden special weight company here last June. Tab the tote action for more clues about his readiness when coming off the bench.

SELECTIONS: 2-4-6

RACE 5:

1 ANDI'S KITTEN is dropping to the \$16,000 level, and turning back to a mile, after responding in her local debut, with blinkers added, with a prompt-the-pace 3rd vs \$35,000 maidens going a mile and a sixteenth. The Gargan/Gaffalione collaboration should be odds-on in this spot. **7 TINY TURBO** is back in South Florida after shipping up to Tampa, setting the pace, and fading late vs \$16,000 maidens going a mile on the grass. She can get brave on a course that's been favoring speed this week. **8 BIT COIN QUEEN** is hoping to bounce back after stalking the pace and retreating when facing \$20,000 maidens here going a mile on the grass. Trainer David Brownlee has Jairo Rendon at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 1-7-8

RACE 6:

8 MICAH'S GIRL moved to the Saffie Joseph Jr barn via the claim after dueling throughout and holding sway to defeat \$6,250 claimers going three-quarters of a mile. The new connections keep the status quo with Emisael Jaramillo in the irons. **7 POCKET OF CANDY** moved to the Jane Cibelli barn after the claim, and steps up to the \$8,000 level, after putting it into overdrive at the 1/8th pole and drawing clear to defeat \$6,250 claimers at this 5 ½-furlong distance; Paco Lopez stays aboard. **1 SUZ** will face \$8,000 claimers locally after flashing speed in a string of optional claimers in the Midwest. The mare has speed from the rail, with Luis Saez named to ride. Need we say more?

SELECTIONS: 8-7-1

RACE 7:

2 PAY ANY PRICE, the track record holder at the distance, is making his long-awaited return after ending his 2019 campaign with one of his patented 'come and get me' victories in the \$75,000 Crystal River during May. The 14-time local winner is training well for the return. **6 FIG JELLY** is making his local return for trainer Jason Servis the first start since tracking the pace and fading to 4th – beaten a length – going 6 furlongs on the Aqueduct turf. The obvious concern is his penchant for finishing 2nd at 5 or 5 ½ furlongs on the turf (8-0-7-0). **5 EXPLORATIONIST**, who has the oh so important recent race over the course at the distance, will try to defeat the top choice after setting fractions of 21 flat and 42 & 4 before settling for 2nd vs \$62,500 optional claimers.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-5

RACE 8:

5 LEMNISCATE will face state-bred competition on the main track after a solid campaign last summer in which he was 2nd vs \$75,000 optional claimers going 6 ½ furlongs at Churchill, was a non-factor in the Grade 2 Amsterdam at the Spa, and 5th vs allowance runners going 6 ½ furlongs on the Kentucky Downs turf.

2 HE IZ GONE is stepping up, and stretching out, after rallying to finish 2nd vs \$12,500 state-bred foes going 5 ½ furlongs. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Tyler Gaffalione in the saddle again. **6 ALLURSTRA** is a late-running type who returns locally after the pair of solid efforts at GP West, which includes the recent 2nd, at the distance, behind hard-knocking repeat winner Vincero.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-6

RACE 9:

2 HIDDEN FACTS is making her local return for trainer Brian Lynch after her 2-race win streak sprinting on the grass ended when she finished a late-closing 5th in the 5 ½-furlong \$75,000 Richard Scherer Memorial at the Fair Grounds. **6 KITTEN'S COVERGIRL** is wheeling back after responding in the first race under the tutelage of trainer Jose Gallegos with a solid 3rd at this level and distance; Paco Lopez rides. **7 SPEED STAR**, a sharp allowance winner at this 5-furlong distance 2 starts back, turns back after the track-and-retreat last-place finish in the 7 ½-furlong Sunshine Millions Turf Preview. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Luis Saez handling the 3-time winner at the distance (8-3-1-2).

SELECTIONS: 2-6-7

RACE 10:

7 FANCY FOX, who was competitive sprinting on the grass vs allowance competition last spring, moved to the Eddie Kenneally barn via the claim, and returns to the turf, with the tactical speed needed to spring an upset in the nightcap. **10 HIGH JINGO** will break from the outside, and cut back to 5 furlongs (2-2-0-0), after prompting the pace and weakening to finish 4th vs \$40,000 New York-bred optional claimers going 6 furlongs on the Aqueduct turf. Trainer Jason Servis has Paco handling the outside draw. **2 BAND OF ANGELS** is dropping to the \$16,000 level after following the \$8,000 score on the Meadowlands turf with a stalk-and-fade 8th in the Claiming Crown Distaff Dash. Trainer Jorge Navarro has Luis Saez in the saddle.

6 BRIGHT VENEZUELAN is making her first start since making a 5-wide charge to defeat \$12,500 claimers here going 5 furlongs last April. Trainer Steve Klesaris has Edgard Zayas handling the return.

SELECTIONS: 7-10-2-6

BEST BET: RACE 9 – 2 HIDDEN FACTS

LONGSHOT: RACE 10 – 7 FANCY FOX

