



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

RACE 1:

6 WORDMAN is dropping a notch on the maiden scale after rallying to finish 3rd going 5 furlongs on the turf vs \$32,000 maidens. The \$200,000 son of Bodemeister, trained by Todd Pletcher, should sit in the catbird seat tracking the speed. **7 YOUNG RAYMOND** exits the same race as the top choice, a race where he set the pace and finished 2nd. He'll be mixing it up as soon as the spring the gate latch. **12 PALACE KID** is dropping into the maiden claiming ranks after tracking swift fractions of 20 & 4 and 43 & 1 before fading in his 5-furlong turf debut under special weight conditions. Trainer Mike Trombetta has Javier Castellano handling the speedy sophomore.

SELECTIONS: 6-7-12

RACE 2:

2 BEACH TRAFFIC is dropping to the \$12,500 level on the main track after getting saddled with demanding outside posts in back to back turf outings going a mile vs better competition. Trainer Tim Hills, solid with the grass to dirt angle, has Paco Lopez handling the surface switch. **6 TOOK A CAB** is stretching out to mile after the string of fare performances sprinting vs similar quality. Trainer Dave Braddy has Emisael Jaramillo handling the added distance. **1 ATAKAN** is a son of Morning Line (Tiznow) debuting in an ideal spot for a first-time start to make some noise. Trainer Murat Sancal has Jairo Rendon handling the inside draw.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-1

RACE 3:

4 QUEEN FIELD is dropping back to the \$50,000 level after encountering early trouble prior to finishing 8th in the \$60,000 Mrs. Presidentress. Trainer Antonio Sano has Paco Lopez named on the consistent daughter of Constitution. **2 LIL MISS HOT MESS** is debuting locally in the first start since finishing 2nd vs \$50,000 claimers going 6 furlongs on the Churchill main track, and 2nd vs \$50,000 optional claimers going a mile on the Turfway synthetic surface.

Trainer Ken McPeck has Tyler Gaffalione handling another surface switch. **5 JOYOUS TIMES** is a daughter of Kitten's Joy, who steps up to face winners, after vying for the lead throughout and holding sway to defeat \$25,000 maidens in her career debut contested at a mile and a sixteenth.

SELECTIONS: 4-2-5

RACE 4:

2 BEAU LUMINAIRE is stretching out to a mile after pressing the pace and finishing 2nd to impressive undefeated repeat winner Fearless going 6 furlongs. Trainer Rodolphe Brisset has Julien Leparoux handling the added distance. **7 FELIX THE FOX**, 4 for 6 'in the money' on a fast-main track, is returning to the dirt after ending his 3-year-old season with a close-up 4th place finish going 10 furlongs on the Belmont turf last July. Trainer Shug McGaughey has Javier Castellano named to ride. When last seen **6 ARMANDO R** rallied to finish 2nd to rising superstar Bodexpress in a mile & 70-yard maiden special weight test at GP West. Trainer Agustin Bezara has David Boraco named on this intriguing possibility.

SELECTIONS: 2-7-6

RACE 5:

6 AMALFI QUEEN, now in the Jorge Navarro barn, the daughter of Tapit makes her East Coast debut on the turf after failing to show much in a 'key' race on the dirt in California that produced 4 next-out winners from 8 starters; Edgard Zayas rides the regally bred sophomore. **1 CRYSTALINA** is an \$185,000 daughter of Candy Ride debuting for trainer Todd Pletcher with Lasix, and Javier Castellano named to ride. The sophomore is bred to love both the surface and the distance. **10 UNICORN SALLY**, a well-meant 4th going a mile and a sixteenth on the Aqueduct turf, is shifting back to the grass after finishing a distant 2nd behind much-the-best repeat winner Elusive Molly in a \$32,000 maiden test moved from the turf to the main track.

SELECTIONS: 6-1-10

RACE 6:

7 FARAWAY KITTEN is dropping to the \$40,000 level after facing stakes competition in 7 consecutive races, which includes the recent 2nd place finish here in the \$75,000 Tropical Park Derby. Red-hot trainer Mike Maker has Tyler Gaffalione in the saddle again.

4 HIEROGLYPHICS moved to the Terri Pompay barn via the claim, and turns back to a mile, after dueling for the lead and finishing 6th – beaten 1 ½ lengths – going a mile and a sixteenth for the previous connections. The gelding, 8-3-2-0 at a mile, has Javier Castellano at the controls. **3 SUBLIME APPEAL** is cutting back to a mile after returning from the layoff to set the pace and finish 2nd – at odds of 67-1 – vs similar going 8 ½ furlongs. Trainer Juan Rizo has Rajiv Maragh doling out his speed again.

SELECTIONS: 7-4-3

RACE 7:

5 PASSIONATE HACHI is getting some class relief after showing speed and fading when facing \$8,000 open-claimers in the first race after the claim by trainer Kelly Breen; Paco Lopez rides. **4 VALDOCCO** is plunging into this \$8,000 dated claimer hoping to rekindle some of his back class. Trainer Sandra Matier has apprentice Cristian Torres atop the 6-year-old.

7 DIAMOND MAJESTY is turning back to three-quarters of a mile after chasing the pace and weakening to finish 6th behind a field of hard-knocking \$6,250 open claimers going 7 furlongs.

SELECTIONS: 5-4-7

RACE 8:

8 AVENIDA MANANA will try to make it 3 victories in a row after rallying to defeat a pair of next-out winners at this level and distance last out. Trainer David Fawkes reunites the 4-year-old with Paco Lopez, who rode her to victory 2 starts back.

11 ISADORABLE AIDA, claimed in 3 consecutive races, the daughter of Temple City, who was beaten a head by the top choice on January 15, will try to reverse that outcome for new trainer Jose D'Angelo.

5 BAHAMA KITTEN, 6th behind the top two when they hooked up in January, renews the rivalry after changing running tactics when setting the pace and finishing 2nd – at 27-1 – when going a mile and a sixteenth last out. He's worth a flyer at a price.

SELECTIONS: 8-11-5

RACE 9:

2 BACCARAT FASHION, in for the \$62,500 claiming tag, drops after tilting windmills when facing repeat stakes winner Pink Sands in both the Grade 3 Rampart and the 7-furlong Grade 2 Inside Information. Trainer Peter Walder has Roberto Alvarado Jr named to ride.

4 DAY BY DAY finds an ideal spot to step up the competition when facing 4 rivals after drawing clear to defeat \$25,000 optional claimers at the distance. Trainer Jorge Delgado has Tyler going for 2 in a row.

3 JUST AIN'T RIGHT is making her 4-year-old debut after the star-crossed sophomore campaign in which she was stakes-placed in a pair of sprints before the wheels fell off in the \$75,000 Added Elegance last July. Trainer Rohan Crichton, 5 for 14 (36%) with this type of layoff, has the daughter of Yes It's True working consistently for the return.

SELECTIONS: 2-4-3

RACE 10:

8 CRYPTO GOLD is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after an absolute game performance in which he bumped at the start, encountered traffic, and still closed from 12 lengths off the pace to finish 2nd – beaten a half-length – at a mile.

9 TRAFFIC TROUBLE moved to the Mike Pino barn via the claim after rallying to finish 4th behind Crypto Gold when they hooked up a mile last out; Paco Lopez handles the rematch. **11 FRIENDLY FELLA** was solid in defeat when he broke from Post 12, dueled for the lead, and finished 2nd vs this level of competition going a mile. Trainer Kathleen O'Connell has Jairo Rendon in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 8-9-11

BEST BET: RACE 10 – 8 CRYPTO GOLD

LONGSHOT: RACE 8 – 5 BAHAMA KITTEN

