



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

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RACE 1:

4 VIOLENT FIGHT is dropping to rumble with \$12,500 maidens, and stretching out to 9 furlongs, after rallying to finish 3rd in a 'key' \$25,000 turf sprint that has produced 3-next-out winners from 6 starters. Trainer Oscar Gonzalez claimed him last out, and has Edgard Zayas atop the son of Violence, who is bred to love the distance. **8 SWEET GIANT** is stretching out to a mile and an eighth after tracking the pace and finishing 2nd in back turf outings going a mile. Trainer Juan Avila has Angel Rodriguez in the saddle again.

7 BEACH TRAFFIC is going back to the turf after following a couple of solid performances on the grass with a narrow defeat going a mile and a sixteenth vs \$14,000 maidens in the slop.

SELECTIONS: 4-8-7

RACE 2:

6 MYSTERY BANK is returning to the claiming ranks after following a 3rd place finish at this level and distance 2 starts back with set-the-pace 3rd vs special weight runners going a mile and a sixteenth on a 'good' turf. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Paco Lopez in the saddle. **9 JOE BENJAMIN** is stepping up, and turning back, after the hard-fought duel for the lead 2nd vs \$32,000 maidens going 8 ½ furlongs. Trainer Murat Sancal has Emisael Jaramillo returning on the son of Hard Spun. **1 MAVERICK KITTEN** is dropping to the \$50,000 level after returning the 2-month freshening to finish a screw-tightening 5th vs \$65,000 maidens. Trainer Mike Maker has Samy Camacho handling the dropdown.

SELECTIONS: 6-9-1

RACE 3:

6 WAR GIANT is dropping to the \$6,250 level after showing speed and fading late vs \$25,000 and \$50,000 optional claimers, respectively, at this mile and a sixteenth distance. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Emisael Jaramillo handling the big drop.

5 SENSATIONAL RIDE is stretching out to one of his better distances (8-3-2-2) after returning from the layoff to finish a chug-a-long 4th going a mile last out. Trainer Oscar Gonzalez has Leonel Reyes in the irons.

3 TWO STEP SLEW is dropping a notch, and stretching out an additional 16th of a mile, hoping both karma changes produce positive results. Trainer Rohan Crichton has Cristian Torres up.

SELECTIONS: 6-5-3

RACE 4:

7 CLASSY OF COURSE is making her local return, and stretching out to her best distance (3-2-0-0), after setting the pace and getting caught late vs similar quality in back-to-back races going a mile on the Tampa turf. Trainer Monica McGoey has Samy Camacho named to ride. **11 BREAKFAST POND** is debuting locally for trainer Jeff Engler after ending her turf campaign at the Fair Grounds with a solid 2nd place finish vs \$15,000 '3-lifetime' claimers going a mile; Victor Lebron rides. **6 DANA GRACE** is stretching out to 8 ½ furlongs after making a middle move to get the lead before weakening to finish 3rd vs this caliber of competition going a mile. Trainer Kathy Ritvo has Luca Panici named to handle the usually fruitful 3rd start back from a layoff.

SELECTIONS: 7-11-6

RACE 5:

3 CAMELLIA GAL has her claiming tag carved in half, and slices back to 5 furlongs, in the first start since showing speed and weakening to finish 4th vs \$50,000 maidens going a mile here during late February. Trainer Christophe Clement has a 27% win-average with horses turning back in distance. **2 SEMIALAUGH** is debuting on the turf after responding to the dropdown to this level with an improved 3rd place finish going 6 furlongs on the main track. The daughter of Twirling Candy is bred on both sides of the family tree to love both the surface and the distance.

7 FLOWZANO is turning back to five-eighths of a mile after returning from the layoff to track the pace and fade vs \$16,000 maidens going a 2-turn mile on the turf. Trainer Jane Cibelli has Paco Lopez quarterbacking the turnback in distance.

SELECTIONS: 3-2-7

RACE 6:

1 CHILL HAZE is plunging to the \$16,000 level after losing all chance when he reared at the start of a \$50,000 maiden sprint going 6 furlongs in the slop. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Paco Lopez handling the significant class drop. **4 BRIDOLOGIST** is another dropping to this level after showing some early speed and fading to finish a distant 3rd in his \$50,000 career debut at the distance. Trainer Terri Pompay has a solid 20%-win average with maidens making their 2nd start. **2 MOZANO** is turning back to a sprint distance on the main track after making a middle move to get the lead before fading to finish 4th vs \$16,000 maidens going a mile and an eighth on the Tampa turf. Trainer Kent Sweezy has Samy Camacho handling the combo surface switch/turnback move.

SELECTIONS: 1-4-2

RACE 7:

9 PATRIOT DRIVE is returning locally for trainer Mike Maker, and dropping to the \$25,000 level, after facing tougher before the layoff, which includes the poor showing in the Grade 3 J B Connolly at Houston. Paco Lopez handles the class relief.

11 BATTLE OF BLENHEIM moved to the Dave Braddy barn via the claim, and stretches out to a mile and a sixteenth (5-3-1-0 after surviving a late to duel to defeat this level of competition going a mile. The winner of 3 of his last 4 turf races has Miguel Vazquez in the saddle. **1 NEW YEAR** is stepping up the competition after cruising through his claiming conditions in winning fashion. The red-hot 4-year-old will have Santiago Gonzalez handling the inside draw.

SELECTIONS: 9-11-1

RACE 8:

4 COUNTRY SINGER, now in the Terri Pompay barn, the 4-year-old drops to the \$30,000 level after showing speed vs better before going to the sidelines in December. Trainer Pompay, 22% with new additions to the barn, has Miguel Vazquez named to ride.

1 QUIJOTE is dropping a notch after dueling for the lead and finishing 3rd vs \$35,000 conditioned claimers going 6 furlongs on a sealed 'sloppy' track. Trainer Georgina Baxter has Emisael Jaramillo named to ride.

6 POSEIDEN is stepping up the competition after following his hard-fought \$30,000 maiden victory with a \$16,000 '2-lifetime' claiming score going 6 furlongs on a 'good' main track. Trainer Jose Pinchin adds 2nd-time blinkers for this class check.

SELECTIONS: 4-1-6

RACE 9:

3 CRYOGENIC is returning what is definitely his best surface after failing to fire when facing this level of competition going 6 furlongs on the main track. Trainer Mike Maker has Paco Lopez named on the 4-time turf winner, which includes 3 wins at this distance (9-3-2-1). **8 TRUE HEIRESS** will try to make it 2 in a row after stalking early, and drawing clear late, to win at this level and distance. Trainer Julio Cartagena has apprentice Joseph Trejos named to ride. **2 R MERCEDES BOY** is trying the turf for the first time after a couple of 'in the money' finishes vs similar quality going 6 furlongs on the main track. Trainer Georgina Baxter has Emisael Jaramillo handling the cut back to 5 furlongs.

SELECTIONS: 3-8-2

RACE 10:

9 TONY SMALL, now in the Saffie Joseph Jr barn, drops to the bottom in the first start since finishing 3rd and 2nd, respectively, vs \$20,000 maidens at Aqueduct. The new connections tab Miguel Vazquez to ride.

12 KHATTAF is dropping another notch on the maiden scale, and turning back to 6 ½ furlongs, after breaking from an outside post, setting the pace, and weakening to finish 3rd vs \$12,500 maidens going a 1-turn mile in the slop. Trainer Ralph Nicks has Emisael Jaramillo handling the turnback. **6 SIGNIFIED**, listed a gelding, plunges to the \$10,000 level after facing New York state-bred maiden special weight competition at Aqueduct while in the Todd Pletcher barn. New trainer Kathy Ritvo has Luca Panici named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 9-12-6

BEST BET: RACE 8 – 4 COUNTRY SINGER

LONGSHOT: RACE 4 – 7 CLASSY OF COURSE