



JASON BLEWITT'S

Race Analysis

Sunday, July 8, 2018

RACE 1: 4 – 8 – 3 – 2

RACE 2: 3 – 5 – 7 – 8

RACE 3: 7 – 1 – 2 – 3

RACE 4: 6 – 5 – 4 – 7

RACE 5: 1 – 3 – 6 – 5

RACE 6: 3 – 2 – 4 – 8

RACE 7: 1 – 8 – 4 – 2

RACE 8: 6 – 1 – 2 – 5

RACE 9: 8 – 4 – 1 – 3

RACE 10: 1 – 5 – 3 – 6

RACE 11: 9 – 10 – 3 – 11

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Sunday's BBB: Count me in as a fan of stakes action on a Sunday – especially during the summer racing season here at Gulfstream Park. Yes, this July 8th GP program is anchored by race 5 (of 11 on the day) the 75k Mecke Stakes on turf. Of course, I'll be walking down memory lane alongside Mecke (a Florida-bred beast of a turf horse from the mid-90s) in a few moments. But I'm getting ahead of myself just a bit. First, it's all about the Blewitt Best Bet (BBB) in Sunday's 10th race. And no, it's not the \$1 million Todd Pletcher-trained colt with Tyler Gaffalione. I really, really like **Front Loaded** in the 10th race (despite his crummy inside post position.) Front Loaded could not have done things any better (despite the tough and narrow neck defeat in his seasonal debut back in May. He really ran well as an outside, chasing speed. In the end, he was beaten narrowly by the winning favorite, Reason to Soar. The good news is that Reason to Soar returned off that May 10th race to win again. And since then, recently finished second (prior to a disqualification for interference) behind powerhouse sprinter, X Y Jet, in the Grade 3 Smile Sprint. I admit Front Loaded's most recent race, a fifth-place finish as a huge 4/5 favorite, will turn some players off Sunday. I'm arguing however, that Front Loaded had an excuse for that speed-and-fade effort. Pace and early speed types had a really tough go of it over the main track here on Saturday, June 9th. One pace after another hit the dirt and seemingly fell apart on a day that belonged to mid-pack stalkers and late moving closers. Here's hoping Front Loaded had a bit of a bias-compromised trip and can make amends Sunday beneath Edgard Zayas. **Ruler of the Nile** and the two-race winning **Weisser** are the other major players in race 10.

Mecke Memories: It doesn't feel that long ago when I was a young (enraptured and obsessed, I might add) student of the Thoroughbred racing game. Yes, that first fateful trip to Belmont Park in the summer of 1993 changed my life forever. Looking back, the timing was pretty darn good on my part because great horses were the norm in the mid-to-late 1990s. Holy Bull, Cigar, Skip Away, Sky Beauty...I got to see each of these champions strut their stuff; they are four of my favorite horses of all time and will never be eclipsed in my heart and soul. Mecke, who has his own stakes race Sunday at Gulfstream, was another terrific talent. It was impossible to not respect this Florida-bred son of Maudlin if you were around then. He was trained by Emanuel "Manny" Tortora and seemingly ran like clockwork for four consecutive seasons between 1994 and 1997. His Grade 1 victories included the Super Derby, Early Times Turf Classic and Arlington Million. Mecke, who was as tough as nails, retired with 12 wins from 40 starts and earnings of nearly \$2.5 million. Turf monster.