



RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS

by *Ron Nicoletti*

Sunday, February 11, 2018

RACE 1:

1 ABBOT will depart from the rail after proving he could handle this distance when he followed a 3rd place finish going 5 furlongs with a 2nd place showing at 7 ½ furlongs last out. Trainer Christophe Clement has Tyler Gaffalione in the saddle. **10 OURS AGAIN** is sitting on a winning effort after following his 2-lifetime' score at the distance with a neck defeat at this 'non-winners of 3-lifetime' level last out. Trainer Mike Maker has Jose Ortiz in the saddle. **8 ERASMO'S DREAM** is plunging to the \$16,000 level after facing stakes competition in 3 consecutive races before the 7-month layoff. Trainer Armando De la Cerda has Javier Castellano named to ride.

SELECTIONS: 1-10-8

RACE 2:

5 LUMINARY FLIGHT is dropping to the \$6,250 level, and stretching out to a 1-turn mile, after returning from the freshening to finish a distant 4th vs \$12,500 '2-lifetime' claimers going 6 furlongs. **9 SHOOTIST** is wheeling back after finishing a distant 2nd to 'much the best' winner *Midnightonbroadway* at this level and distance in his last. **1 ALTRUISM** is dropping to the \$6,250 level on the main track, and adding the blinkers back, after failing to show any early interest prior to finishing 9th vs \$16,000 types on the turf. Trainer Jorge Navarro, 36% with the turf-to-dirt angle, has apprentice *Aby Medina* handling the surface switch.

SELECTIONS: 5-9-1

RACE 3:

9 INVERTED is dropping to the \$12,500 level after dueling for the lead and settling for 3rd in his 6-furlong debut at the \$25,000 level. Trainer Eddie Kenneally has Jose Ortiz handling the stretchout out to 6 ½ furlongs. **4 PEKIN** is stretching out an additional furlong after chasing the pace and finishing 2nd vs similar going 5 ½ furlongs last out. **5 KING WILDCAT**, a well-meant 2nd when sprinting at this level 2 starts back, will shorten up to 6 ½ furlongs after the chase-and-fade outing vs \$25,000 maidens going a 1-turn mile.

SELECTIONS: 9-4-5

RACE 4:

8 FIRST DISTINCTION is stretching out to 6 ½ furlongs after setting the pace throughout when defeating similar - as the 4-to-5 favorite - going 5 ½ furlongs. Trainer Saffie Joseph Jr has Luis Saez named to ride.

5 COQUIVACOA, claimed by Pedro Castillo out of a victory at this level and distance 2 starts back, stretches out after setting the pace and finishing 2nd when facing \$10,000 optional claimers in her last start. **6 RORAIMA** is turning back to a sprint distance after back-to-back 3rd place finishes vs similar going a mile; Emisael Jaramillo rides.

SELECTIONS: 8-5-6

RACE 5:

1 YOU'RE TO BLAME is making his first start since rallying to finish 3rd - beaten only a head - at this level and distance here on December 26. Trainer Todd Pletcher has Javier Castellano in the saddle.

2 CARLINO will try to make it two in a row at the distance after shipping in from Aqueduct for the hot Mark Hennig barn and closing to defeat 1st-level allowance runners by a length; Jose Lezcano rides. **3 FAYEQ** is making his 4-year-old debut after the solid sophomore campaign in which he followed a pair of impressive victories, which includes defeating allowance runners at Saratoga by open-lengths, with a troubled outing in the Grade 1 Travers in which he bumped hard at the break and was eased. Trainer Kieran McLaughlin has the \$800,000 son of Malibu Moon training forwardly for the return.

SELECTIONS: 1-2-3

RACE 6:

4 FUNNY DUCK was game in defeat when he shipped in from Kentucky to come within a ½-length of exiting the maiden ranks when 2nd at this level and distance last out. **2 ISOLATED** is stretching out around 2-turns after chasing the pace and finishing an even 4th in his 5-furlong debut. He should be part of the pace when stretching out around 2-turns today. **1 DIVIDE** is \$300,000 son of Flatter debuting for trainer Todd Pletcher with Lasix, and Javier Castellano named to handle always-adventurous inside post.

SELECTIONS: 4-2-1

RACE 7:

6 HAPPY HOME shows a bullet half-mile drill on the Palm Meadows turf in preparation for the first start since finishing 4th in her career debut at this level and distance. Trainer Alan Goldberg has Luis Saez named to ride. **4 REALLY PROUD** proved she could compete at this specialized 5-furlong distance when she turned back from a trio of route races to finish 2nd – from a tough outside post (12) – at this level and distance last out.

2 AMAZING BELLE, a half-sister to G1 Breeders' Cup Ladies Classic winner Unrivaled Belle, is returning to the turf after following a 3rd place finish going 6 furlongs on the Belmont turf with a chase-and-fade out on the dirt last July. Trainer Mark Casse has her training sharply for the return.

SELECTIONS: 6-4-2**RACE 8:**

4 ICONIC is sitting on a winning effort after shipping in from Churchill and finishing in a dead heat for 2nd when beaten a length in an allowance race at the distance. Trainer Dale Romans has Luis Saez in the saddle.

5 HEDGE FUND, a multiple Grade 3 stakes-placed son of Super Saver, is making his 4-year-old debut the first start since finishing 4th in the \$100,000 Sir Barton at Pimlico last May. Trainer Todd Pletcher has the WinStar Farm homebred working well for the return.

1 BIG DOLLAR BILL is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after rallying to finish 2nd – beaten a neck – going a mile here under allowance conditions.

SELECTIONS: 4-5-1**RACE 9:**

3 WE TAKE CHECKS is dropping to the \$20,000 level after the promising \$35,000 debut going 5 furlongs in which he tracked the pace and faded to finish 6th. Trainer Jorge Navarro has go-jock Emisael Jaramillo in the saddle again. **11 PACO ENSACO** is cutting back to 7 ½ furlongs after returning from the layoff to dispute the pace and finish 2nd vs this level of competition going a mile. The only knock is the tough outside post (11).

10 CHRISTMAS TREAT is a son of Sidney's Candy debuting for trainer Mike Maker with Lasix, and jockey Irad Ortiz Jr named to ride. The tote action should help point us in the right direction.

SELECTIONS: 3-11-10**RACE 10:**

4 LUCULLAN is making his 4-year-old debut the first start since he rallied to come within a neck of winning the Grade 3 Hill Prince at Belmont last October. Trainer Kiaran McLaughlin has Irad Ortiz Jr atop the son of Hard Spun.

5 CLASSIC COVEY should be primed and ready to offer more after returning from a 2-month freshening to finish a late-closing wide 3rd vs this level of competition going a mile and a sixteenth. The stretchout to 9 furlongs can be the 'key' for the son of Spring At Last. **2 BLACK SEA**, in for the \$50,000 tag in this optional claimer, is dropping to this level after coming within a length of winning when finishing in a dead heat for 2nd in a \$62,500 optional claimer at Aqueduct. Trainer Chad Brown has Javier Castellano returning on the son Dubai Destination.

SELECTIONS: 4-5-2**RACE 11:**

7 RING WEEKEND is making his 2018 debut after ending the year with a couple of well-meant performances vs graded stakes competition. Trainer Graham Motion has the classy son of Tapit training well for the return. **5 BRASS COMPASS** is turning back to a mile (4-2-0-0) after shipping in from Woodbine and finishing a troubled 4th (lacked room, bumped) when beaten 1 ½ lengths going a mile and a sixteenth for trainer Reade Baker. **1 SAHAM** is turning back to a mile after a pair of solid efforts vs stakes competition at the Fair Grounds, which includes the 3rd place finish going a mile and a sixteenth on 'soft' turf last out. Trainer Brendan Walsh has Javier Castellano handling the local return. **8 PROFITEER** will be outfitted with blinkers after rallying to finish 3rd here in the mile and a sixteenth Tropical Park Derby. Trainer Shug McGaughey has Irad Ortiz Jr in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 7-5-1-8**RACE 12:**

1 MR. PINOCCHIO is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after responding to a dropdown to this level with a 2nd place finish going a mile. The gelding has strong finisher Julien Leparoux in the saddle.

4 COSMIC THUNDER is another stretching out after stalking the pace and finishing 3rd behind Mr. Pinocchio when going 8 furlongs last out.

12 WANNABEPLAYER is stretching out after back-to-back 2nd place finishes vs \$16,000 '2-lifetime' claimers going 7 ½ furlongs. Trainer Peter Walder, who claimed him 2 starts back, has leading jock Luis Saez handling the outside post.

SELECTIONS: 1-4-12**BEST BET: RACE 10 – 4 LUCULLAN****LONGSHOT: RACE 11 – 5 BRASS COMPASS**