



# 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 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish going 5 furlongs with a 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> vs \$12,500 '2-lifetime' claimers going 6 furlongs. **9 SHOOTIST** is wheeling back after finishing a distant 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> vs similar going 5 ½ furlongs last out. **5 KING WILDCAT**, a well-meant 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> when facing \$10,000 optional claimers in her last start. **6 RORAIMA** is turning back to a sprint distance after back-to-back 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> - 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 1<sup>st</sup>-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 2<sup>nd</sup> at this level and distance last out. **2 ISOLATED** is stretching out around 2-turns after chasing the pace and finishing an even 4<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> – 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> – 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 6<sup>th</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> (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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Mr. Pinocchio when going 8 furlongs last out.

**12 WANNABEPLAYER** is stretching out after back-to-back 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**