



RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS

BY RON NICOLETTI



Saturday, January 15, 2022

RACE 1:

6 SOLAR TAP is dropping to the \$25,000 level, and returning to the Tapeta with blinkers added, after the even performance vs \$50,000 maiden optional claimers going a mile and a sixteenth on the turf. Mike Stidham has Luis Saez handling the surface switch.

2 MOON AT MIDNIGHT will be treated with Lasix after finishing a late-closing fourth in his career debut at this level and distance. Bill Mott, 21% with first-time Lasix, has Junior Alvarado in the saddle. **4 TRAVEL GUIDE** is dropping to this level, and getting Lasix and blinkers, after facing maiden special weight competition on the dirt in Kentucky with limited success. Trainer Jack Sisterson has red-hot jock Tyler Gaffalione handling the switch to the all-weather surface.

SELECTIONS: 6-2-4

RACE 2:

2 MADAME CLAUDE is dropping to the \$20,000 level, and receiving Lasix, after following the \$25,000 claiming score going six-furlongs on the slop with a chase-and-fade outing vs \$35,000 starter optional claimers going 6 ½ furlongs last out. The turnback to 5 ½ furlongs can be the key to her success. **5 DEL REY DOLLY** is turning back slightly after posting her second victory when she defeated this level of competition going six furlongs on a wet-fast track. Mark Casse adds Lasix, and has Edwin Gonzalez going for two in a row. **3 RESTLESS EYES** is dropping to this level on the main track after bobbling at the start and never getting untracked vs \$35,000 claimers going five furlongs on the Tapeta. The daughter of Midshipman, claimed for \$50,000 two starts back, continues the shaky freefall with leading jock Luis Saez at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 2-5-3

RACE 3:

5 CONGLOMERATE is dropping to the \$16,000 level, and shifting to the Tapeta, after facing maiden special weight runners going longer on the turf with limited success. Chad Brown has Tyler Gaffalione handling the surface switch. **1 MIGHTY TOUGH** is stretching out slightly after rallying to finish second – beaten a neck as the favorite – vs similar going a mile and 70-yards. Tim Hills has Emisael Jaramillo handling the inside post.

8 PERPETUAL CHANGE is turning back to about a mile and a sixteenth after debuting locally and finishing a slow starting third going nine furlongs on the Tapeta last out. Kelly Breen has Paco Lopez up.

SELECTIONS: 5-1-8

RACE 4:

3 P H FACTOR, a seven-time winner on synthetic surfaces (14-7-1-3), debuts locally after winning two of three optional claiming races going around two turns on the Hawthorne main dirt surface. Larry Rivelli has Paco Lopez handling the surface switch. **1 GEMONTEER** is dropping a notch after returning from the layoff to chase the pace and finish second vs \$20,000 open-claimers going this distance on the Tapeta. Jena Antonucci has Luis Saez named to ride. **6 POPPY'S BOYS**, two for three in the money on synthetic tracks, debuts locally for Cheryl Winebaugh after winning two of four turf races in the Midwest. Angel Arroyo handles the surface change.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-6

RACE 5:

8 BENELUX is dropping to the \$35,000 level after debuting locally and failing to fire after getting bumped going into the turn in the Claiming Crown Emerald. Trainer Chris Davis has Javier Castellano handling the four-time turf winner vs this caliber of competition.

6 FREEDOM MATTERS, a four-time local turf winner, is going back to the grass after showing early interest and fading vs \$62,000 optional claimers going a mile and 70-yards on the Tapeta. **5 UNCLE CURLY**, who was solid on the turf in New Jersey during the fall, is returning to the lawn for trainer Peter Walder after getting parked wide and never finding a closing gear when finishing ninth and last on the dirt in the Claiming Crown Iron Horse. Junior Alvarado rides.

SELECTIONS: 8-6-5

RACE 6: THE SUNSHINE CLASSIC

3 SHAMROCKET will try to capitalize on his classy turf form into a victory going nine furlongs on the main track. Trainer Todd Pletcher, 21% with the turf to dirt angle, has Javier Castellano named on the multiple graded stakes-placed five-year-old, who has never tried the dirt in 21 previous races.

7 GLORY OF FLORIDA, who has posted figures on the go-back that certainly indicate he can win here, the concern is handling the nine-furlong distance. The six-year-old, a sharp 2nd in a \$60,000 overnight handicap going a mile two starts back, needs to show more after finishing fourth in the 9-furlong Claiming Crown Jewel last out. **1 SIR OLLIE** is stepping up, and stretching out, after drawing clear to defeat \$12,500 state-bred optional claimers going a one-turn mile last out. Saffie Joseph Jr readied him for this task with a bullet half-mile workout in 47 & 1, which was the best time of 118 workers at the distance.

SELECTIONS: 3-7-1

RACE 7:

2 COPACETIC is debuting on the Tapeta in the first start since returning from a layoff at Keeneland and coming within a neck of breaking her maiden going a mile and a sixteenth on the turf. Chad Brown has Tyler Gaffalione named on the lightly raced daughter of Curlin.

8 FAST AS FLIGHT is another giving the all-weather surface a whirl after debuting locally and finishing second vs special weight runners going a mile on the turf. Trainer Brian Lynch has Junior Alvarado handling the surface change. **7 VENTRILOQUIST**, who showed promise when hitting the board in one of two outings on the Tapeta, is going back to that surface after chasing the pace and weakening to finish fifth behind Fast as Flight in their recent clash on the lawn.

SELECTIONS: 2-8-7

RACE 8:

3 PROVEN STRATEGIES, listed as a gelding, the son of Sky Mesa, who was second to classy Gufo in the 2020 English Channel, and a well-meant fifth in the Sunshine Turf her last January, returns after a sharp summer campaign in which he was second in a Grade 2 at Woodbine, and a set-the-pace second in the Red Bank at Monmouth in September. **1 WINFROMWITHIN**, now in the Jeff Engler barn, the son of Into Mischief makes his first start since stalking the pace and finishing third in the Grade 2 American Turf at Churchill last May when in the Todd Pletcher barn. Note that the four-year-old broke his maiden here at this distance last January.

4 JOURNEYMAN figures on the 'what have you done lately' angle when he debuts locally for trainer Steve Klesaris after hitting the board in two of three recent allowance optional claimers on the New York turf circuit.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-4

RACE 9:

4 VINDICTIVE, a half-brother to three-million earner Stoppingmaria, is cutting back to a mile and a sixteenth in the first race since recovering from a stumbling start to finish third in the nine-furlong \$145,000 Discovery at Aqueduct. Todd Pletcher has Luis Saez atop the son of Uncle Mo. **5 OLYMPIAD** is stretching out an additional sixteenth of a mile after tracking the pace and finishing fourth in the Grade 1 Cigar Mile last out. Bill Mott has Junior Alvarado atop the \$700,000 son of Speightstown. **7 HIGHEST HONORS** is making his six-year-old debut the first start since finishing third vs \$80,000 optional claimers going this distance at Churchill in October. Chad Brown, 25% with this type of layoff, has the son of Tapit firing bullets at Payson Park.

SELECTIONS: 4-5-7

RACE 10: THE SUNSHINE SPRINT

7 LEGAL DEAL is cutting back to three-quarters of a mile after breaking from the outside, jumping out to set the pace, and getting nailed at the wire by hard-knocking Miles Ahead in the seven-furlong Claiming Crown Rapid Transit last out. Carlos David has Edwin Gonzalez handling the 6-time winner at the distance. **2 PUDDING** is cutting back after rallying to finish third behind the top choice in the Rapid Transit. The consistent gelding needs to be on the ticket. **1 COOL QUEST** is stretching out after debuting locally for trainer Brian Lynch and using his speed to defeat \$12,500 state-bred optional claimers going 5 ½ furlongs. Julien Lejaroux rides. **5 GATSBY**, another from Carlos David has been knocking on the door vs this caliber of competition in four consecutive races. Luis Saez guides this half of the uncoupled entry.

SELECTIONS: 7-2-1-5

RACE 11:

5 SKYLANDER will be treated with Lasix after the well-meant local debut in which rallied strongly through the lane to finish second – beaten a half-length at this level and distance. Bill Mott has Junior Alvarado in the saddle again. **8 BORDER WAR** is son of super turf sire War Front debuting for trainer Shug McGaughey with Lasix, and solid local work tab showing. Javier Castellano guides the Joe Allen homebred. **3 DREAM OF A DAY**, 2nd on the turf vs this level of competition at Belmont, is going back to the grass after finishing second – beaten a nose – going a mile and 70-yards on the Tapeta. Trainer Barclay Tagg, a sharp 3 for 7 at the meeting, has Julien Lejaroux in the saddle.

SELECTIONS: 5-8-3

BEST BET: RACE 11 – 5 SKYLANDER

LONGSHOT: RACE 5 – 8 BENELUX