



American Turf

MAGAZINE

April 2017

HORSE OF THE MONTH **UNIQUE BELLA**

Also...

Dubai World Cup Day Preview

Handicap the Derby Preps

Jockey Corey Lanerie

Barry Meadow: Ways to Win



April 2017 / Volume 72 Issue 4

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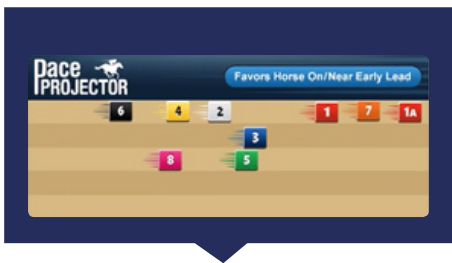
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1st	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	119	124	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138
2nd	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	118	123	126	129	132	135	138	141	144	147	150	153	156	159
3rd	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	117	122	125	128	131	134	137	140	143	146	149	152	155	158

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Rank	Sex	Age	Year	Country	Trainer	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale	Global Scale
1st	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	119	124	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138
2nd	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	118	123	126	129	132	135	138	141	144	147	150	153	156	159
3rd	M	3	2018	USA	J. Rocco	117	122	125	128	131	134	137	140	143	146	149	152	155	158

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Dubai World Cup 2017 Preview

By John Blake

THE 22ND RUNNING OF THE DUBAI World Cup meeting on March 25th brings the three-month International Carnival of racing in the desert to a glittering crescendo. Ahead is a day of stellar action at the imposing Meydan racecourse, culminating in the world's richest race, the 10 furlong Dubai World Cup – expected to be, on all known form, at the mercy of Breeders' Cup Classic winner, ARROGATE.

The sport's biggest payday offers up \$29m; you can add on another \$1m if you include the curtain raiser contested by purebred Arabians. The eight-race card comprises five Group 1 contests and we are likely to see the return of many of the top thoroughbreds that contested their respective divisions last year. And why not, when every one of the 76+ furlongs travelled during the evening is worth about \$380,000 apiece.

Super Saturday – run at Meydan March 4th – is not only a high-class meeting in its own right, but is for many contenders their dress rehearsal for Dubai World Cup night. The connections of leading English hope

POSTPONED will be hoping that his effort at this meet suggests it will be alright on the night, rather than an indication that last year's Dubai Sheema Classic winner has dipped in form at the wrong time.

Undeniably talented, Postponed suffered a set-back by managing only a fast-finishing second in the 12-furlong Group 2 Turf contest that he won on the same card last year as a stepping stone to a commanding victory in the Group 1 Dubai Sheema Classic. The six-year-old was having his first run for five months but, unlike 12 months earlier, the race didn't unfold as jockey Andrea Atzeni, established now as one of the leading riders in Britain, would have hoped. Without the freedom in the critical final quarter mile to make his move, the race was won by the improving four-year-old PRIZE MONEY, owned by the home team of Godolphin.

"He has run a good race against a race fit opponent and will strip fitter in three weeks' time bidding to defend his Sheema Classic crown," said an optimistic Atzeni after the race.

Postponed travels superbly well during a race and if handler Roger Varian can resurrect him to the peak of his powers, then a back-to-back win is a strong possibility, which would be a tenth win from a 20-race career.

JACK HOBBS and HIGHLAND REEL are well-known European big hitters over middle distances but the latter would have to claw back over four lengths of supremacy from Postponed from their match-up in the big race last year. If he takes his chance, however, this well-travelled Breeders' Cup Turf winner is as durable as they come and has only once in his last seven starts finished adrift of gold and silver.

Jack Hobbs is a lightly raced five-year-old who would need to improve on his best form to overcome the favorite, but the Irish Derby hero of 2015 is in the excellent hands of John Gosden and would be another strong representative for Godolphin if allowed to take his chance.

Little such guesswork hangs over the odds-on favorite for the finale, Arrogate, who bids to hand Bob Baffert a third Cup win after a wait of 16 years

since Captain Steve's win when the race was run at the old Nad Al Sheba track. The distinctive grey colt broke the hearts of California Chrome fans in the Breeders' Cup Classic and can follow in the footsteps of that great American champion on the biggest stage of all. He has not looked back since his maiden defeat and if he pulls off his seventh straight win, he will just about double his lifetime earnings. Baffert reports that the son of Unbridled's Song is training well and he will have almost two weeks to acclimatize when arriving in Dubai.

If his opponents are simply chasing place money, then none deserves it more than MUBTAAHIJ. Mike De

Kock's charge has landed all four of his wins at Meydan, including his last - an eight-length demolition of his UAE Derby rivals back in 2015. He saw off some decent types to bag second behind California Chrome in last year's World Cup but it would need a career-high performance and a flop from Arrogate to see him go one better this time around.

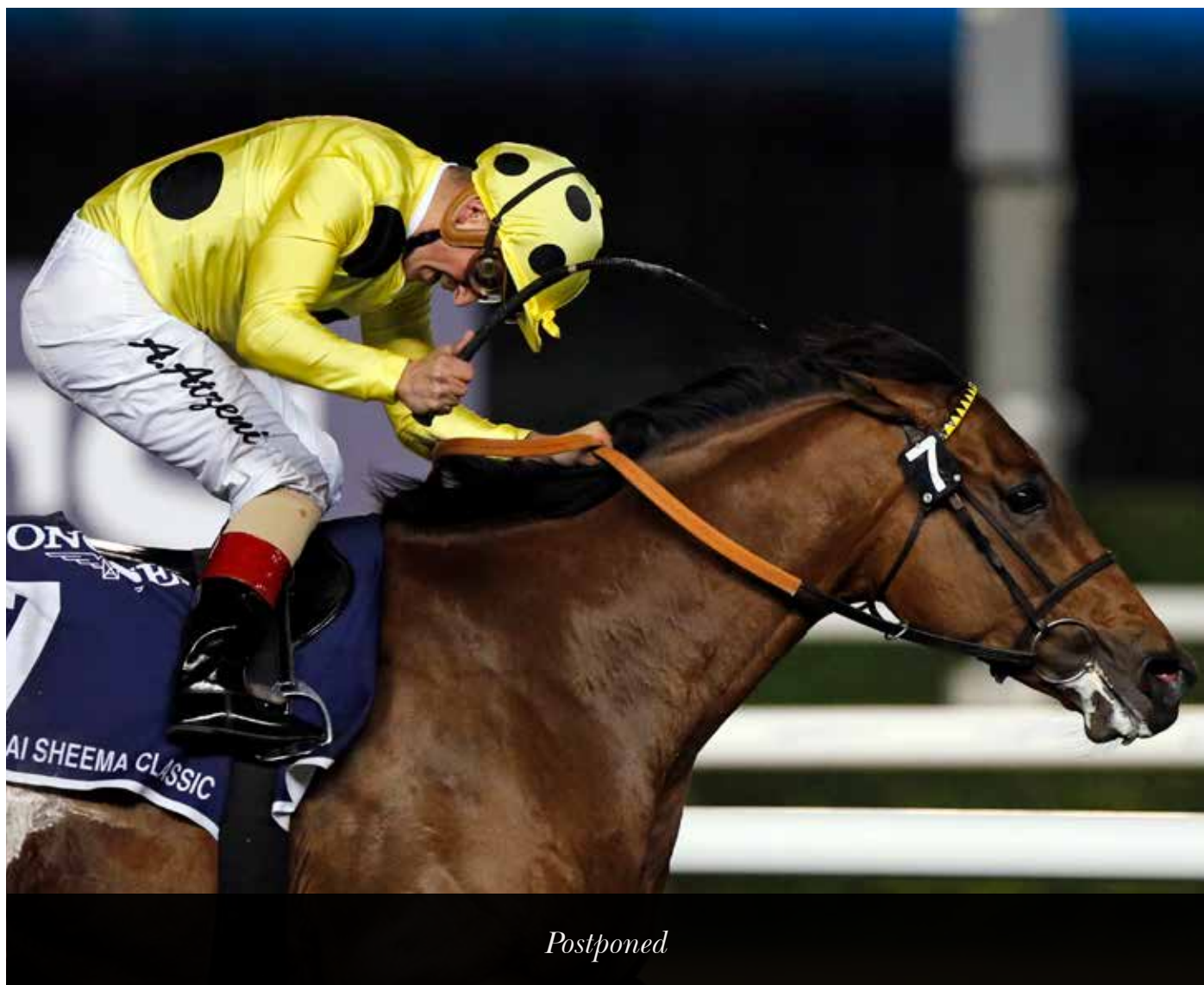
The Group 1 Dubai Turf over nine furlongs is a prize that naturally attracts a strong European contingent. RIBCHESTER is a very smart miler who has the form and profile to be a dominant 4-year-old in that category this year. Another Godolphin representative, he has yet to race outside

of Europe but would be a strong fancy if allowed to take his chance. Older rival MUTAKAYYEF is another British contender who has won at a mile but has not been seen on the track since a decent show behind Tenpin in September's Woodbine Mile. In contrast, the Roger Charlton-trained DECORATED KNIGHT has two wins to his name already this year and showed good tactical speed to manoeuvre his way to the front to land the Super Saturday trail race. He must be short-list material for the big race.

UAE 2,000 Guineas hero THUNDER SNOW is an obvious stand-out for the UAE Derby. He was just behind the best British juveniles last year but



Arrogate is the Horse to Beat in the 2017 Dubai World Cup



Postponed

looked the real deal at Meydan in February and must be seen as Godolphin's banker of the meet. FAWREE is put up as an alternative. He fluffed his lines in the trial race when unseating his rider at the start but this Mike De Kock runner has a progressive profile for a barn that knows the time of day.

The speedsters division looks very hot this year and the in-from pair of ERTIJAAL – the likely favorite – and trial winner JUNGLE CAT look to be the headline acts of the Group 1 Al Quoz Sprint. The former has almost three lengths in hand judged on their duel at the track in February, and a little less on their respective efforts in this big prize last year. It could be that

the younger Jungle Cat could be the value option to redress the balance as he clocked a decent time in his trail win. A word should also go to LIMATO. The Group 1 Newmarket July Cup winner was asked to dig deep into his stamina to tackle last year's Breeders' Cup Mile and ran out of gas to finish in mid-division. A return to sprinting is certain to bring out the best in him and he would be an outsider worth considering.

The Dubai Gold Cup looks another fascinating race to unravel. Reigning champ VAZIRABAD may once again have to fend off the versatile globe-trotter BIG ORANGE as his main challenger. There was just a neck

between these two genuine stayers in last year's two-mile race. In the intervening months both horses have held their form fairly well, although Big Orange drew a blank in both the Group 1 Melbourne Cup and Hong Long Vase at Sha Tin. The French colt Vazirabad blew away the cobwebs with a good placed effort over a shorter trip at Meydan in February and the Alain De Royer Dupre-trained gelding may be better prepared to give the French another reason to cheer when the thoroughbred world congregates once again in Dubai.





4
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Wood Revival?

Will This Be the Year the Wood Memorial Re-Emerges as a Potent Triple Crown Prep?

By Michael Sherack

FOR MOST NEW YORKERS, RACING needs to be strong on the NYRA scene in order to first get spring and Triple Crown fever. Guess it's something like the NBA needing teams like the Knicks and Lakers to be successful as the playoff push begins. Oh well, so much for that.

Aqueduct on March 4 hosted the Grade 3, \$300,000 Gotham Stakes, and with weekend temperatures in the 20s-30s with overnight lows in the teens, the race produced a heavily-beaten favorite who set a legitimate pace but was on empty early. The winner is likely headed to Keeneland's Blue Grass Stakes. So, the post-op made it feel like spring, and Triple Crown-quality racing is further away than we think, and want.

New York racing will get a much needed kick in the pants in April and the Grade 2, \$750,000 Wood Memorial for 3-year-olds at 1 1/8 miles will get

its share of attention. The Saturday, April 8 card on the second weekend of the spring meet will feature the Wood Memorial and offer four additional graded stakes. The G3, \$250,000 Bay Shore Stakes will be run at seven furlongs for 3-year-olds, the G1, \$400,000 Carter is for older horses at the same trip, the G2, \$300,000 features 3-year-old fillies at 1 1/8 miles, and the G3, \$150,000 Excelsior is run at 1 1/4 miles for older horses.

The key questions are how much attention does the Wood Memorial deserve generally speaking, and how important and pertinent will this year's running be with an eye toward the Kentucky Derby?

Numerous horses of high quality have won the Wood Memorial, of course, but it just seems you have to go back too far to find them. Four Triple Crown winners have won the Wood Memorial, the last being Seattle Slew

in 1977 and the others Assault (1946), Count Fleet (1943), and Gallant Fox (1930).

Fusaichi Pegasus won the Wood Memorial in 2000 before winning the Kentucky Derby and finishing second in the Preakness. Congaree, the following year, used the Wood Memorial as a springboard to third-place finishes in the Kentucky Derby and Preakness, and in 2003 Empire Maker followed his win with a second-place Kentucky Derby finish and win in the Belmont Stakes.

Numerous other important horses won the Wood Memorial prior to 2000, and just to go down memory lane a touch, there was Unbridled's Song (1996), Devil His Due (1992), Easy Goer (1989), Slew o' Gold (1983), Pleasant Colony (1981), Damascus (1967), Bold Ruler (1957), and Nashua (1955).

Herein is the problem: since EMPIRE

MAKER's win 14 years ago, the only Wood Memorial winner to even hit the board in any Triple Crown race has been FROSTED, who finished second in the Belmont Stakes in 2015.

Will this year's Wood Memorial renewal, freshly downgraded to Grade 2 status, be a strong race and a Kentucky Derby prep to be taken seriously?

As of this early-March writing, it can be tough to predict field headliners and depth. Much can happen as the race nears with top trainers keeping their runners apart given the many Kentucky Derby preps available.

But, the immediate Gotham Stakes fallout didn't bode well for the Wood Memorial.

Much was made of J BOYS ECHO getting the right trip to win the Gotham Stakes from off the pace, but it seems silly to knock a lightly raced and improving 3-year-old who was making

only his second start of the year, easily ran clear late, and jumped way up the Beyer Speed Figure scale to post a career best 102. But, none of this is likely to matter in New York as J Boys Echo seems most likely headed to the Blue Grass Stakes for his next start.

EL AREEB entered the Gotham Stakes having won his four prior starts by a combined margin of nearly 30 lengths and the heavy favorite at 40 cents on the dollar in a field of seven. He received high marks for his Withers Stakes score, also in New York, in his prior start as he showed the ability to rate behind the pace and finish strongly, something he needed to demonstrate to be taken most seriously as a real Kentucky Derby prospect in the eyes of many.

In the Gotham Stakes, however, El Areeb found himself setting a hot pace under pressure, was in deep trouble

as the field turned for home, and didn't have any answers in the lane as he tired to finish third, beaten 11 lengths. Other than the pace, trainer Cathal Lynch didn't find excuses in the days following the race, and one would think he could possibly be given the chance to rebound in the Wood Memorial.

ONE LINER, who races for a partnership led by WinStar Farm and trainer Todd Pletcher, could be the headliner in the Wood Memorial if his connections choose the spot. It was one of three races being considered for his next start along with the Blue Grass Stakes and Florida Derby. The son of Into Mischief ran his mark to three-for-three with a 3 1/2-length score when tried at a route for the first time in Oaklawn Park's G3 Southwest Stakes in his last start.

MO TOWN, a 2 1/2-length winner



Empire Maker Edges Funny Cide in the 2003 Wood Memorial

of last year's Remsen Stakes at Aqueduct, flopped when a distant fifth as the favorite in his only start since in the G2 Risen Star Stakes at Fair Grounds in February. The lightly-raced son of Uncle Mo would get some attention in the Wood Memorial if trainer Tony

possible Wood Memorial candidates in CLOUD COMPUTING and PRACTICAL JOKE.

Cloud Computing cost \$200,000 as a yearling, that alone a ringing endorsement for a son of Maclean's Music, who commands a stud fee of \$8,500. He

a second-place finish in the Gotham Stakes when asked to tackle both a route of ground and winners in stakes company for the first time – neither an easy task in and of itself. He is out of an A.P. Indy mare and an obvious prospect.

Practical Joke, last year's Champagne Stakes winner, finished second in Gulfstream Park's Fountain of Youth Stakes when making his first start since he was third in last-November's Breeders' Cup Juvenile, and can certainly improve from here.

Whether or not the Wood Memorial can move forward off its recent track record and restore its old luster remains to be seen. Will this be the year?

“Since Empire Maker's win 14 years ago, the only Wood Memorial winner to even hit the board in any Triple Crown race has been Frosted.”

Dutrow decides on the race for the colt's next start.

Trainer Chad Brown has at least two

lived up to favored billing with a win in his six-furlong debut over Aqueduct's inner track and followed it with



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Win Big in the Big 6 Derby Preps

By Noel Michaels

IF YOU ARE PLAYING IN A HANDICAPPING tournament in late March and early April – or just interested in playing the races on big days – you are bound to encounter one or all of the Big 6 Kentucky Derby prep races. They often occupy key spots on the contest wagering menu of any Saturday event. You will invariably need to handicap well in the preps if you hope to win one of the many tournaments and qualifiers on those dates. Even if you are not a tournament player, you will also want to read onward for tips on handicapping some of the biggest races of the season – the Florida Derby, the Louisiana Derby, the Wood Memorial, the Blue Grass, the Santa Anita Derby, and the Arkansas Derby.

Here's a look at some handicapping tips that should point you in the right direction and help you narrow down the choices in the Derby Big 6 Derby preps. Cashing in these races can go a long way to helping you win on some of spring racing's biggest days.

LOUISIANA DERBY, FAIR GROUNDS, SATURDAY, APRIL 1

The profile of a Louisiana Derby winner is a speed/tactical speed horse or deep closer drawn in posts 1-3, exiting a stakes race, trained by either Mike Maker, Steve Asmussen, or Todd Pletcher, and going off in somewhere in the odds range of 3-1 to 6-1.

Here's a closer look:

Fair Grounds Track Profile

Based on the Fair Grounds track profile at the distance of 1 1/8 miles, both early speedsters and pressers and the closers should receive fair trips (except on the day after the track's drying-out day, when Fair Grounds often favors off-the-pace horses). Otherwise, recent Louisiana Derbies have been won with every kind of running style, with the notable exception of mid-pack stalkers. This segment of horses is at the most risk from bad trips in Fair Grounds routes because they could get caught in bad spots wide on the turns if they draw outside posts in big fields. These horses often have to be used too hard to gain position going into the turn, or else end up falling into the FG trap of trying to make middle moves while wide on the turn instead of using the more prudent strategy of waiting until the long straightaway before launching a late bid.

Best Posts

Horses that break from wide posts in big fields can occasionally suffer wide, ground-losing trips, however, post draw is generally not as important at 1 1/8 miles at Fair Grounds as it is at the shorter route distances. Therefore, the only real post position angle for the Louisiana Derby involves speed horses and pressers that draw inside, who can have a big tactical advantage.

Average Odds

The Louisiana Derby featured one of the major upsets in recent prep race

history in 2012 when Hero of Order won and paid \$220.80, so you have to consider all of the contenders in the starting gate for the race – not just the short-priced ones. Aside from Hero of Order, since 2010, the average winning payoff for the Louisiana Derby winner was just under \$10. That means you're ideally looking for a horse in the 4-1 odds range.

The Road to the Louisiana Derby

Most top finishers in the Louisiana Derby exit the local stakes preps for the race – the Lecomte Stakes and/or especially the Risen Star Stakes. Since 2007, 6 of the last 10 winners of the Louisiana Derby exited the Risen Star Stakes. Going back to 2007, nine straight Louisiana Derby winners were coming out of some kind of stakes race in their last outing, so this really isn't a spot to be looking for recent allowance or maiden winners to pop-up and win.

Best Connections

Steve Asmussen won in 2016 with Gun Runner. Otherwise the Louisiana Derby has been mostly the property of trainers Todd Pletcher and Mike Maker since 2010. Mike Maker won the race back-to-back in 2014-2015 with Vicar's In Trouble and International Star. Meanwhile, Todd Pletcher won in 2010 with Mission Impazible and in 2013 with Revolutionary. When Pletcher isn't winning, he's often coming in second. He trained the runners-up in both 2014 and 2015 with Intense Holiday and Stanford. In terms of jockeys, there

has been no preference for either ship-in riders or locally-based Fair Grounds jockeys.

FLOIRDA DERBY, GULFSTREAM PARK, SATURDAY, APRIL 1

The profile of the Florida Derby winner is a front-running, pace pressing, or at least close-up stalking horse exiting a first- or second-place finish in either a local overnight race or the Fountain of Youth, who, if possible, is also ridden by John Velazquez and/or trained by Nick Zito or Todd Pletcher. Look for a horse going off in somewhere in the odds range of 3-1 to 5-1, and the farther inside the horse is drawn, the better. Nyquist broke all the molds in 2016 when he shipped from the West coast and won from post 13.

Here's a closer look:

Gulfstream Track Profile

Speed and especially tactical speed are two very important keys to success on the Gulfstream main track. Deep closers are generally not the best horses to play on the main track at 1 1/8 miles. Stalkers and mid-pack horses sometimes run well, but deep closers are generally not the best plays at Gulfstream Park. The only two recent Florida Derby winning closers were both trained by Nick Zito.

Best Posts

The Florida Derby is likely to have a field of between 8-10 starters. Post has surprisingly not been a big factor in this race recently. That is a surprise, because at the distance of 1 1/8 miles in races other than the Florida Derby, the post position bias against outside posts in two-turn races on Gulfstream's main track has been a solid and reliable handicapping factor for many years. You just can't bet horses from outside posts with

success at Gulfstream at 1 1/8 miles, based on the bad numbers from those starting positions year-in and year-out. With a short run to the first turn at 1 1/8 miles on dirt at Gulfstream, roughly two-thirds of the races at that distance are won from the four inside posts. All other posts have yield low chances of winning, and posts nine and outward have almost zero chance (unless your name is Big Brown). One final note on dirt route posts: The rail post 1 has been great in these races, often winning at a win percentage over 20%.

Average Odds

The Florida Derby promises to be a wide-open race filled with legitimate contenders, so opportunities will be there to catch a winner in this race at a decent price. After the decade of the 2000s saw first- and second-favorites winning the race 8 times out of 10 with only one big longshot, the Florida Derby has recently been a bit more



2016 Wood Memorial winner Outwork

productive in terms of the odds. The five winners between 2011 and 2015 paid an average of \$9.40. That's average winning odds just over 7-2, so let's call the prime odds range somewhere between 3-1 and 5-1.

The Road to the Florida Derby

Unlike the Louisiana Derby, which is dominated by horses with prior stakes experience, the Florida Derby is often just the opposite. The Florida Derby is the place where 3-year-old up-and-comers come to burst onto the scene. The winner of this race is likely to come from one of two categories, 1) horses exiting the Fountain of Youth Stakes, or 2) lightly-raced horses stepping-up after a classy allowance or an overnight stakes win or place in their last race. Ten of the last 11 Florida Derby winners finished first or second in their last race (often the Fountain of Youth).

Best Connections

Except for the rare case of Nyquist, who shipped here to earn a big bonus, the Florida Derby is not a place for shippers. The race has been dominated by locally-based horses for more than a decade. Todd Pletcher won this race in back-to-back years in 2014 (Materiality) and 2015 (Constitution), as did Nick Zito in 2010 (Ice Box) and 2011 (Dialed In). Jockey John Velazquez won the Florida Derby three times since 2009 aboard Quality Road, Orb, and Materiality. Interesting to note, all three of Johnny V's wins came for three different trainers.

WOOD MEMORIAL, AQUEDUCT, SATURDAY, APRIL 8

The profile of the Wood Memorial winner is a horse from post positions 1-4 that is coming from Florida out of either the Fountain of Youth, the Tampa Bay Derby, or a Gulfstream allowance race who is preferably trained by Todd Pletcher or Barclay Tagg, or ridden by John Velazquez, Javier Castellano, or another New York jockey that winters at Gulfstream. Look for the horses with

speed that are the first- or second favorites in the race, or for a late-runner with ideal odds in the 8-1 to 9-1 range.

Here's a closer look:

Aqueduct Track Profile

You'd have to say that this is a difficult prep race in which to go wire-to-wire because no horse since 2005 has won the Wood Memorial on the lead, although Outwork was close last year. Instead of looking for a pure speed horse front-runner type, a better option is finding either a close-to-the-pace presser, or an actual closer from far off the pace. Horses from these two pace categories have won the race eight straight years. When one of the favorites wins, it is likely to be a horse pressing the pace. Every time a price horse has won since 2004, all four times it was a horse that rallied from off the pace.

Best Posts

While the Aqueduct main track, in general, does not possess a big post position bias, there sure seems to be a favoritism toward inside posts in the 1 1/8-mile Wood Memorial. As mentioned before, saving ground on the turns is important on Aqueduct's two-turn main track layout, and it's much easier to save ground from an inside post draw, specifically posts 1-4. Looking at the recent winners of the Wood Memorial, 9 of the last 15 victors benefitted from breaking from posts 1-4. Horses drawn as far out as post 8, including Outwork, have won the race, but the majority of winners have come from the inside posts. Also note that no horse breaking outside post 8 has won the Wood Memorial in the 2000s.

Average Odds

Eight of the last 11 Wood Memorials have been won by the first- or second-favorite, with the chalk winning four times. The other three were won by horses paying between \$19.00 and \$21.40 (8-1 to 9-1 odds). Those results basically give you the guidelines of what you are searching for price-wise

in this race. You could do a heck of a lot worse than narrowing this field down to the first- and second-favorites, plus any late-runner sitting on the tote board in the 8-1 to 9-1 odds range.

The Road to the Wood Memorial

With most of New York's top horses and horsemen wintering at Gulfstream Park, it should come as no surprise that 6 of the 7 Wood Memorial winners from 2010-16 shipped north from Florida to win the Wood, including 5 in a row from 2012-16. That might come as a surprise to some, due to the fact that Aqueduct has its own set of winter Wood Memorial prep races, leading up to the Gotham Stakes in early March. Gotham horses haven't been good bets in the Wood, however, because the last Gotham winner to win the Wood was 2011 3rd-place finisher Toby's Corner (and before that, I Want Revenge in 2009). Despite the fact that the majority of Wood Memorial starters exit the Gotham, every other Wood Memorial winner since 2010 has come from Florida, out of either the Fountain of Youth, the Tampa Bay Derby, or an allowance race at Gulfstream Park. One other interesting note, is that 7 of the 11 Wood Memorial winners from 2006 to 2016 lost their last race.

Best Connections

In the last decade or so, two trainers have been repeat winners of the Wood Memorial, with Barclay Tagg winning twice in 2007 with Nobiz Like Shobiz, and again in 2008 with Tale of Ekati. Todd Pletcher won the race on four different occasions – all with Florida shippers ridden by either John Velazquez or Javier Castellano. These horses win even though they are generally Pletcher's second-stringers. Note that Pletcher has not won with a horse from the Aqueduct (Gotham) route to the Wood, or from out of the Gotham. New York riders based in Florida for the winter have won this race every year since Cornelio Velasquez in 2007. The one exception was Eddie Castro in 2011.

BLUE GRASS STAKES, KEENELAND, SATURDAY, APRIL 8

The profile of the Blue Grass winner is a front-running or pace-pressing horse able to stay within 3 lengths of the lead, and/or breaking from posts 1-6. Look for horses coming out of the Tampa Bay Derby, or other Florida races, in the 3-1 to 5-1 odds range, preferably trained by Kentucky connections such as Ken McPeck, Dale Romans, or Mike Maker.

Here is a closer look:

Keeneland Track Profile

The last seven dirt runnings of the Blue Grass Stakes (2015-16, 2002-06)

have been won by horses of every running style from speed horses to closers. By most accounts, the new Keeneland dirt track seems a lot less speed biased than the old dirt track prior to the Polytrack era. What that really means, however, is that closers have a better chance than they used to. Just ask Brody's Cause. Nevertheless, that still does not mean they have as good of a chance at the speedsters and pace pressers overall. In Keeneland routes, you're looking for a horse on the lead or within less than 3 lengths of the lead at the half-mile call. Those horses statistically win the majority of Keeneland's two-turn dirt races.

Best Posts

Since switching back to dirt a few

years ago, Keeneland's route races, including the races at the Blue Grass distance of 1 1/8 miles, have been dominated by horses breaking from the six inside posts. If you don't have a post 1-6 in a Keeneland 1 1/8-mile race, you could be in trouble.

Average Odds

It is not realistic to expect the kind of outrageous win prices commonly offered in this race during the Polytrack era. The four winners of the years 2012-15 paid an average win price of \$9.40. Brody's Cause was right in that range in 2016 paying \$10.40 in an overflow field. Therefore it is reasonable to look for horses in the 3-1 to 5-1 odds range as picks to win the Blue Grass.



Danza was the longshot winner of the 2014 Arkansas Derby

The Road to the Blue Grass

There has been a good connection lately between the Blue Grass Stakes and the Tampa Bay Derby, with 4 of the last 8 Blue Grass winners exiting the Tampa Bay Derby (not necessarily the winner, Brody's Cause, for example, was seventh at Tampa). Logic would have it that the Fountain of Youth would also be a place where the next Blue Grass winner might emerge from, now that the Blue Grass Stakes is back on the dirt. Similar to the Wood Memorial, the main theme when looking for a Blue Grass winner or exotics horse would be to look for horses that spent the winter in Florida, either at Gulfstream or Tampa. Even though many horses come into the Blue Grass from earlier preps in Kentucky, California, Oaklawn, or Fair Grounds, 8 of the last 9 Blue Grass winners spent their winters in Florida.

Best Connections

It is difficult to assign preference in this race based on the human connections. Bob Baffert, for example, tends to focus on the Santa Anita Derby and Arkansas Derby. Todd Pletcher won in 2015, but his runner in this race will likely be his third-string 3-year-old (his top horses will probably go to the Florida Derby and Wood Memorial). Also, no jockey in more than a decade has scored a repeat win in this race. The best way to go probably is to try to cash-in on Kentucky connections, such as 2016 winner Dale Romans, Ken McPeck, or Mike Maker. Those trainers have scored at least one Blue Grass win over the course of the last several years.

SANTA ANITA DERBY, SANTA ANITA, SATURDAY, APRIL 8

The profile of the Santa Anita Derby winner is to bet a front-runner or pace presser breaking from posts 1-5 who is capable of leading or racing within four lengths of the lead, and who is exiting some kind of win at Santa Anita in his last race. If possible, the

horse preferably should be trained by either Bob Baffert, Doug O'Neill, or Jeff Mullins. If you can find such a horse going off between 4-1 and 10-1, then jump on it.

Here's a closer look:

Santa Anita Track Profile

In SA Derbies run on dirt over the last 21 years (18 runnings), only four horses including last year's Exaggerator have managed to close from further back than four lengths off the pace to win (Tiago, Buddy Gil, and Castledale, who was a stalker and not a true closer). Exaggerator was the only closing winner from the most recent six dirt runnings, and even he raced within 5 lengths of the early lead that day. The SA Derby was won three years in a row by front runners from 2013-15, and the 2011-12 winners were also pressers/stalkers.

Best Posts

As detailed above in the Santa Anita handicapping tips, the main track strongly favors horses drawn on the inside or middle at 1 1/8 miles on the dirt. Recent results of the SA Derby echo that sentiment, with just one winner since 2008 drawn outside posts 1-5 (Midnight Interlude won from post 6 in 2011 – hardly an outside draw). Only two SA Derby winners in the last 16 years started outside post 6, with none since 2007. The Santa Anita Derby often doesn't feature very big fields, with maybe 7-9 horses expected in the starting gate any given year. However, it is still advantage to draw inside in posts 1-5.

Average Odds

Since the Santa Anita Derby switched back to dirt for the 2011 running, the average win price for the victor has been around \$12, with winners running the gamut of prices from the \$3.20 returned by favored Dortmund in 2015, to another Bob Baffert winner, Midnight Interlude, who paid \$29.80 in 2011. In spite of back-to-back chalk horses in 2014-15, it is still noteworthy

that three of the last six SA Derby winners paid over \$10. If you're betting this race with profit in mind you should be looking at horses in the 4-1 to 10-1 odds range.

The Road to the Santa Anita Derby

Eleven straight SA Derby winners exited local prep races, almost always the San Felipe. The recent trend points particularly to horses exiting the San Felipe – the local 1 1/16-mile prep race directly preceding the Santa Anita Derby – with six of the last eight SA Derby winners coming out of that race. Also, seven of the last nine SA Derby winners came into the race off a win in their last start.

Best Connections

Bob Baffert won the Santa Anita Derby three times in seven runnings between 2009 and 2015, but Baffert is certainly not the only game in town because often will not even enter his first-string Ky. Derby contender in this race, instead opting for the Arkansas Derby. The other main barns you also want to watch out for in this race are trainers Doug O'Neill and Jeff Mullins. Doug O'Neill won two of the five most recent runnings of the race with Goldencents in 2013 and I'll Have Another in 2012. Jeff Mullins won three straight Santa Anita Derby runnings from 2003-05. All told, in the last 11 dirt editions of this race, a total of eight were won by three trainers – Baffert, O'Neill, and Mullins.

ARKANSAS DERBY, OAKLAWN, SATURDAY, APRIL 15

The profile of the Arkansas Derby winner is to look for a pace presser or stalker, that is not a locally-based horse, preferably trained by Bob Baffert, Todd Pletcher or Steve Asmussen. The horse can exit the Rebel or any out-of-town race. A contender doesn't have to have won its last start. Bet exotics and use the favorite, who has won his last race, in combination with horses better than 4-1 odds who have lost their last race.

Here is a closer look:

Oaklawn Track Profile

Oaklawn Park is generally a track that favors horses that are able to run in the front half of the field, pace-wise. Recent runnings of the Arkansas Derby, specifically, haven't shown a preference for any one running style, but rather, the results have shown a type certain running styles has had difficulties winning this race. The pace of the race will almost certainly be too fast, and that's why only two horses in the 13 years from 2004 to 2016 won the Arkansas Derby on the front-end the whole way. The Arkansas Derby "sweet spot" from a pace perspective has been to look for pace pressers or stalkers with tactical speed that can race 1-3 lengths off the early pace.

Best Posts

Post position has not been a major handicapping angle in the Arkansas Derby in recent years. At the 1 1/8-mile distance at Oaklawn, horses seem to

have plenty of time during the run up to get into position for the first turn, and saving ground at Oaklawn is not as important as getting a clean trip.

Average Odds

The Arkansas Derby has seen everything from teeny-tiny-priced favorites like American Pharoah (\$2.20 to win in 2015) to mega giant bombs like Danza who paid \$84.60 in 2014. Only two Arkansas Derby winners from 2008 to 2016 had won their last race, so bet the exotics using the favorite who won its last race, along with horses that are exiting losses and sitting at 4-1 or better on the tote board.

The Road to the Arkansas Derby

The Rebel used to be the pre-dominant route to the Arkansas Derby back in the mid-2000s when a murderers row of winners came from the Rebel including racing greats Smarty Jones, Afleet Alex, Lawyer Ron, and Curlin. Since then, it has been all about horses based out-of-town (including American

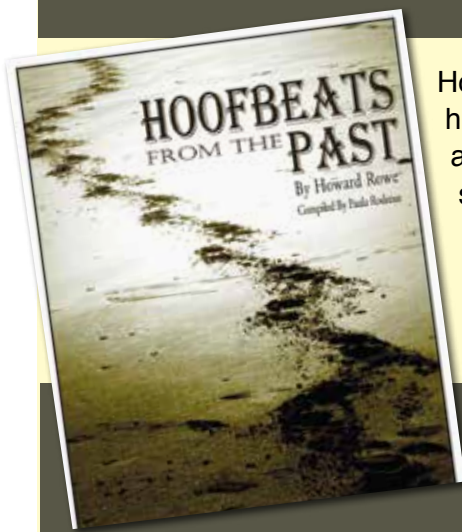
Pharoah, who trained at Santa Anita). Last year's winner Creator joined Archarcharch as the only locally-based Arkansas Derby winners in the nine years from 2008-16.

Best Connections

Heavyweights from the west and east, Bob Baffert and Todd Pletcher, have ruled this race in recent years, accounting for four winners in a row (two each for both trainers) between 2012-15. Baffert in particular really has targeted this race, and the entire series of Oaklawn prep races, more than any other trainer. Even though his stable is not based there, Oaklawn Park is like a second home to one or more of his top horses each and every spring. The other trainer with a national stable with enough ammo to successfully focus on this race would be Steve Asmussen, who won the Arkansas Derby in 2007 with Curlin.



HOOFBEATS FROM THE PAST



Howard Rowe has not only written about thoroughbred racing history, he has lived it. He has devoted most of his life to the sport as a writer and observer. A first-hand knowledge of the sport, a sharp intellect and longevity combined to make him a valuable historian. This collection of his work brings horses, colorful characters, races and racetracks of the late 19th and early 20th century to life and recalls a bygone era. His historical articles are part of thoroughbred racing's legacy.

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William F. Hudgins Jr.'s
NORTH AMERICAN TURF

There have already been some downright professional turf performances this early in the 2017 grass racing season from a bunch of potentially outstanding 3-year-olds who, although not earmarked for the obviously more highlighted and prestigious "Triple Crown Trail" nonetheless certainly – from a serious turf player's standpoint – deserve kudos and respect going forward for what they're accomplishing (and how they're doing it) over the lawn thus far. Here's a short list of some of them, the young turfers I think we'll be hearing from as the season rolls along:

Maurice Miller's Apache Brave appears he has all the makings of a fine infielder going forward as does Hronis Racing's Cistron. I was thoroughly impressed with Joe Turner's Elwood J who, by the way, should relish stretching out in distance as should both Empire Equines' Fifty Five and Warner Thoroughbred's Hot Dad – each of whom already looking the part of genuine runners while competing under stakes conditions. Three Diamonds Farm's Shiraz, Reddam Racing's Tap It All and Burns Racing's Tipo Duro round out a fine sophomore group to definitely keep a close and attentive eye on this year. It's a given that they all may not pan out as "exceptional" grass mammals but you never know – each has proven themselves amongst their peer group thus far and all have more than enough legitimate upside to continue to progress into something special. Good handicapping my friends!

"huds"

North America's Top Fifteen Turf Routers (9-1/2 Furlongs And Longer)

- #1 Da Big Hoss - Continues, for now anyway, as the top dawg on the pile!
- #2 Wake Forest (Ger) - Poised for a rock-solid 2017 campaign.
- #3 Ashleyuvssugar - West coast terror going long over those hard layouts.
- #4 Money Multiplier - Truly a professional stayer; Lots to admire here.
- #5 Kaigun (Can) - Not one to take a back seat to anyone on this elite ledger.
- #6 Bullards Alley - Really talented infielder; Improving, tough and classy.
- #7 Bigger Picture - Already making his claims to fame early into the year.
- #8 World Approval - Probably at his best out west on the firmer footing.
- #9 Deauville (Ire) - European tough guy always to be respected.
- #10 Kasaqui (Arg) - Hanging in there with the toughies listed hereon; Solid.
- #11 Texas Ryano - Love his serious and strong late kick; Big-time player.
- #12 The Pizza Man - Still hoping we see this talented old pro this season.
- #13 Grand Tito - Just when you think he can't he goes out and gets it done!
- #14 Si Sage (Fra) - Far more gifted than it seems on paper; Subtle class.
- #15 Generosidade (Uru) - This one can simply run all damn day long.

Grass Routers To Watch Over North American Courses...

BROKEN KEY - Stakes-placed veteran campaigner still a danger.
CAMERON RULES - Louisiana-bred gelding at his best over the green stuff.
CAVITY - Cibelli-conditioned 5-year-old a snug fit at the \$16k selling level.
CHRISTMAS CABALLO - More than capable of clearing his condition races.
HARDLY HOME - Will continue to get better as he hones his abilities.
HAYABUSA ONE - French-bred horse rolls in from out of the clouds late.
LU RAE'S LUCKY SKY - Very professional looking grasser; Worth watching.
MODERN TALE - BEST BET - Clearly on the improve - can rise through the ranks.
OSCAR NOMINATED - This ones likely to get better as the distances get longer.
PERFECT TAY - Mid-level claimer is genuine and quite consistent.
RAPO - Seems a good fit vs. \$25,000 infield platers.
SPECIAL EYES - Speedy sort still learning but has some skills.
STRIKE MIDNIGHT - Grandson of Mr. Prospector bred to stay a distance of grass.
THETRAILERGUY - Looks like a different mammal since the transition to the turf.
WARD 'N JERRY - LONGSHOT - Stalking style always a big plus!; Tab.

AQUEDUCT

BALAC: Stumbled at the start to begin too far back so his late run could only result in a distant third-place finish. Give him one more try.

BATTERY: Showed up off a long layoff for Pletcher and was immediately claimed by Jacobson out of a second-place finish behind a runaway speed horse. Fits well vs. the local competition.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Came back running off an eight-month layoff, finishing second behind only the 1-3 favorite. Ready to win off the claim by Rudy.

GIANT ENDING: Stumbled and then forced to steady after the start, then rushed up but couldn't catch a wire-to-wire winner that benefitted from this horse's trouble to the tune of an easy solo lead. Can make amends.

JAMIE'S JAMMIN: Leapt up out of the starting gate then rushed up into a three-way duel for the lead and faded to third as a result. Just needs a better break.

METAURUS: Got off to a disastrous break to lose all chance at the start in a race ruled up front on a crawling slow pace. Live overlay.

ON THE FRINGE: The word was out on this first starter from Linda Rice and she delivered at first asking. Should have no trouble repeating at the next level.

SPIRIT LETS HEARIT: Showed speed but got hooked in a four-length-gap speed duel and outlasted the early challenger for second. Ready to roll in return from a three-month layoff.

STORM PETREL: Battled for the lead on a live pace and held on best of the speeds for second after the two early challengers tired to last and next-to-last.

STORY TO TELL: Lost to his lone speed entry-mate after getting off to a rough start from the rail post. Just needs to get off the inside draw.

UNREPENTED: Ran a strange race for second, $\frac{3}{4}$ -lengths behind the perfect-trip 6-5 favorite at the wire after pressing, dropping back to last, and then coming again in the stretch. Don't overlook.

WINGMAN: Broke slow in first race back from a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -month layoff. Just needs a clean start in second race back from the sidelines.

YOUR SECRET'S SAFE: Needed a race off a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -month layoff and never had a chance to catch a loose-on-the-lead runaway winner. His turn next time.

BEST BET: HOLD ON MOMMA: Tough trip second after a poor start and traffic trouble on the turn and again in deep stretch. Better luck next time.

LONGSHOT: SCHOUT BAY: Ran best of the rest when second behind only a loose lone speed runaway favorite. Don't ignore.

GULFSTREAM PARK

BIONDETTI'S CHOICE: First starter made a good move from last in difficult mile turf assignment chasing a lone speed leader getting away with murder on the front end. Finished third and just needs a solid pace to chase to graduate.

COASTED: Lost the 2017 debut after a bad start, but ran big for second and won't be beaten in the next Graded stakes for 3yo turf fillies.

DERBY CHAMPAGNE: Closed well but too late and settled for third, beaten a pair of necks in first race back from a six-month layoff. Looks good in return from the sidelines.

EL MOZO: Missed the break and lost his best chance at the start. Deserves one more chance against maiden claimers.

FEARLESS PRINCESS: Didn't miss by much after breaking slowly and chasing a tepid pace. Finished third behind the two big favorites and can upset with a better pace to chase.

LORI'S STORE: Closed well in good effort off a seven-month layoff but didn't get enough pace to chase to catch the high-class front-runners. Can knock off similar in return from the layoff.

MAI TY ONE ON: Got beat by a runaway 1-2 favorite, but was beat of the rest despite breaking awkwardly and rushing up into a speed duel. His turn next time.

PAST TALK: First starter broke slow when not handling the rail post, then rushed up along the rail and won anyway, just by a neck but nevertheless as much the best. Likely to repeat at the next level.

RED AGUIA: Stumbled at the start and broke poorly, then rushed up into a speed duel and faded due to the early efforts. Too early to give up.

REY ASTRAY: Missed the start to spot the field several lengths at the break and lost all chance at 5 1/2F. Worth one more try.

ZAPTUIT: Wasn't far out of it until lacking room in some traffic late on the turn. Rally fell short as a result in a race where the speed didn't stop.

BEST BET: ABBREVIATE: Unlucky to finish off the board, losing by only a length in a race she could have won if she wasn't boxed-in in the stretch after a hole closed in her. Live overlay in next.

LONGSHOT: MISSCHIEF MAAS: Solid z-pattern effort for third, going for the lead early, falling back in the field, then coming again behind a runaway 3-5 favorite.

GOLDEN GATE

DRESSCODE VIOLATOR: Finished off the board when needing a race off a 10-month layoff, but rallied to lose by less than two lengths. Prepped and ready.

FOXTROT ROMEO: Missed the break and then rushed up to press and set the pace and got leg-weary late due to the early efforts. Ready to win in return from the three-month layoff.

GIANT MARK: Was the only off-the-pace horse to make a dent behind a slow pace but settled for third behind the front-runners. Knocking on the door at present.

LUCK LASTS: Got hooked in a 3 1/2-length-gap speed duel and settled for second behind a perfect-trip stalker. Ready to go all the way up front.

MR. SHOOK: Well-bet first starter pressed a very fast pace and held on for second. Won't remain a maiden for long.

NEWCOMB: Dueled on a blazing fast pace and held best of the speeds for fourth. Still a threat to shake loose up front.

PATTI KINSELLA: Pressed a loose speed 3-5 favorite and nearly caught that one until settling for second, four lengths clear of the third horse. Her turn next time.

QUICK SONG: Ran out of gas late when needing a race off a three-month layoff. Can rebound in return from the sidelines.

SHARKZILLA: Broke last in a 10-horse field in return from nearly a six-month layoff, then rushed up to press and loose leader and faded to third due to the early efforts first off the bench. Too early to give up.

SILVER CHROME: Wiped out when crowded and interfered with in the stretch. Can make amends with clear sailing.

BEST BET: GLOBAL EVENT: Shook loose on the lead, but not before getting hooked in a 10-length-gap speed duel. Paid the price late and settled for second, but looms a speed threat again next time.

LONGSHOT: RAVIZZONE: Never fully recovered after forced to be snatched-up when impeded in the chute. Live overlay based on the sixth-place finish.

SANTA ANITA

A NEW TREND: Got caught in a three-length-gap speed duel and outlasted the early challenger to be third, again. Can shake loose up front and break case of third-itis.

BOY HOWDY: Settled for second, six lengths clear of third when beaten only by the 3-2 favorite in comeback from a six-month layoff. Try again.

CATFISH HUNTER: First starter settled for third behind a wire-to-wire 3-5 favorite after getting stymied in traffic on multiple occasions. Just needs clear sailing to graduate.

CAUTIOUS GIANT: Just missed holding off the 3-5 favorite when second in return from a four-month layoff. Worth another try.

CONQUEST SMARTEE: Closed strong in a turf sprint and just missed in return from a 4 1/2-month layoff. Prepped and ready now.

DANZING CANDY: Broke slow from the bad rail post in the 6 1/2F down the hill Joe Hernandez Stakes, then rushed up to duel and held on best of the speeds for third in a quick time after a blazing third-quarter fraction. Try again off 8 1/2-month layoff.

KOPITAR: First starter drew the tough one post in 6 1/2F downhill career debut but had run in the stretch when stuck down on the rail and finished third, beaten only about a length. Won't be a maiden for long.

LINE: Stumbled badly in first start back from an eight-month layoff and needed the race and couldn't recover. Live overlay needs a clean start.

OH MARVELOUS ME: Settled for second again, this time outlasting an early challenger until losing to a perfect-trip 3-5 favorite. His turn next time.

ROCKETANN: Found her best stride too late in sprint prep return from a four-month layoff. Looks good in return from the sidelines.

SENSE OF GLORY: Battled for the lead and held on for a clear second behind only a perfect set-up 6-5 favorite.

TALLY MO: Set a pressured pace and outran big odds to finish best of the speeds for second behind a nice-looking first starter. Was clear of third, and is set to graduate.

BEST BET: MISS BARTOLAZZO: Hooked in an extended duel for the lead when needing a race in return from an eight-month layoff. Held second in a race otherwise ruled by stalker/closers, and is ready in second off the layoff.

LONGSHOT: GATOR DON'T PLAY: First starter ran mid-pack after breaking slowly and then clipping heels to begin too far back. Too early to give up on him.

PENN NATIONAL

ACTIVELY ENGAGED: Moved out of traffic and rallied to be third in blanket finish most recently; note, mare had turned back from route trip and figures sharper next time, so stay on board.

BEAUZIGGITY: Was hustled to stay in range, dropped back in the lane, and then finished with mild gain for third in acceptable effort most recently; fires bigger shot in upcoming third start of current form cycle.

GOLD CRESCENT: Was squeezed at the break, moved up quickly, shot clear on the pace, and gave out in the lane to finish third; another chance for trainer K. Graci.

JOHNNY JUMP UP: Gained wide from last of eight to finish fast for a narrowly beaten third in his second start back from December-layoff; primed for breakout effort now.

NOONAN ON THURSDAY: Was unhurried early in last of six behind a soft tempo and still finished nicely for third in solid effort; solid for trainer E. McClellan (23% wins last year).

BEST BET: J EDGAR: Was bumped at the break, raced well back early, and gained somewhat before he evened out late and finished sixth; can do more.

LONGSHOT: RHYTHM BLUES: Saved ground when an even fifth in his latest, and has underachieved in four starts since in from WO; give solid B. Kulp barn to figure out way to spring upset, as gelding brings touch of class.

PARX

BLUE SHINE: Didn't have needed late punch and settled for third when in from TAM and seeking repeat on class rise most recently; goes forward for solid K. Nations barn (20% wins last year).

CHECKBOUNCIN BILLY: Chased the pace and weakened to fifth when shooting for second straight score in her latest; can do better for always solid P. Farro barn.

FUNNY SURPRISE: Bobbled at the break and then moved up to chase in second throughout her latest on class drop; next time for filly who has finished on the board in eight of 10 career starts.

LILY'S PEAK: Set the pace and gave out when it counted to finish fifth under 10-pound "bug" D. Haddock most recently; has finished on the board in 26 of 40 career starts, so give another chance.

S.S. MINNOW: Gained from just off the pace and just came up second best in good effort most recently; stay with gelding for trainer M. Vera (26% wins last year).

BEST BET: REMAIN SILENT: Moved out and gained a touch for fourth, but never threatened in his latest; note, gelding was freshened and making his first start on class rise following claim by confident M. Pino barn.

LONGSHOT: JUST A TASTE: Bobbled at the break, moved up to chase, and weakened to finish a distant fourth behind dominant winner in her first start in nearly two months; next time.

TURFWAY / KEENELAND

CABBY JOSHTIN: Showed speed but got caught by a runaway 1-5 favorite. Held second and is dangerous speed vs. cheapies.

ELOQUENT MOMENT: First starter outran 10-1 odds for second behind only a loose lone speed 4-5 favorite. Won't be a maiden for long.

FLATTER CHATTER: Just missed in first race back from an eight-month layoff. Ready to graduate in next vs. the local maiden claimers.

IT'S YOUR NICKEL: Fair Grounds winner for McPeck will be very difficult to beat in the Spiral based on dominant Battaglia win.

THE GORILLA MAN: Wasn't going to beat Tiz Sardonic Joe, but was five-lengths the best of the rest in second and stacks up well back at that level.

THE RIDGE: Clearly second best behind only a runaway winning 2-5 favorite. Worth another shot.

CAPTAIN TYREE: Battled on the pace throughout when second, beaten only a neck, in his latest; gelding has finished in the exacta in 15 of 29 career starts and can maintain sharp form.

FINISHLIKEAPRO: Raced with the pace and responded to pressure to score by a length and has kept solid form through two starts this year; in the exacta in half of his 16 lifetime starts, so stay with him.

GRIDIRON CAT: Hopped at the break, chased, checked late, and weakened to fifth when never able to get his rhythm as odds-on choice in his latest; try again off \$30k-claim by trainer B. Cox (28% wins last year).

MY MAN COLTON: Made up plenty of ground to finish a close third when showing much-needed improvement on noteworthy class drop most recently; trainer M. Munna hit at 25% last year.

TEELFA: Moved wide and gained third when making her second start off two-month break most recently; goes forward for M. Nicks barn.

MORE THAN SHIRL: Moved wide and gained steadily in good effort to pick up third when cut back in distance and moved back to turf for his latest; sharper for experience.

LA REINA ISABEL: Showed improved early interest when she chased the pace and weakened to fifth in her latest; good overall resume, she can jump up in upcoming third start of current form cycle.

BEST BET: MATAR: Invaded from Calder off a four-month layoff and handled the local competition for second. Looks good in return from the sidelines.

LONGSHOT: MELLOW FELLOW: Made a move to a clear lead, but had to go very fast in the middle fractions to get there and still managed to hold on to outrun 25-1 odds for third, four lengths clear of the fourth horse. Don't overlook.

LAUREL PARK

CLUBMAN: Rated just off the pace, moved wide to contention, and weakened in the stretch when third in his latest; lightly raced 3YO capable of more and capable of forward move to leave maiden ranks.

IREDELL: Battled throughout and came up second best, as he often does, most recently; form has been very solid since claimed by J. Rodriguez early this year, so keep him on your tickets.

RECRUITING READY: Shook off pace pressure and drove clear in the lane for one-length score to live up to favored billing with some class relief for his latest; classy colt moves forward now.

TANGO DELTA: Rated, moved wide, and could only finish evenly in the lane when fourth in her latest; note, filly was up in class in first start for trainer M. Reid following claim, and can benefit.

ZIPPIITY ZOOM: Set pace under pressure inside, dropped back, moved between, and came again with rally to fall a neck short in second as odds-on choice most recently; atones.

BEST BET: METALLIC: Raced wide and had some traffic trouble when third in his favored racing debut; 3YO son of Medaglia d'Oro was pricey yearling buy and had trained strongly for bow, so stay tuned.

LONGSHOT: L X SUNRISE: Took class drop and responded with late run for third when making her third start of the year most recently; adds value to your gimmicks.

OAKLAWN

BALANDEEN: Ran a distant third in 6F sprint prep return from a 3 1/2-month layoff. Galloped out seven furlongs and will be ready for second start off the layoff.

LIL MISS BLUE EYES: The only late-runner to make a dent when third in a race where the front runners ran 1-2-4-5. Better than-it-looked effort was just a head out of second behind a runaway odds-on favorite.

MAGICIAN MAN: Had some early traffic inside when needing a race in return from a six-month layoff. Looms large in next vs. the local competition.

MR. RIGHT: Broke last when not handling the rail post, then tried to make headway but was shuffled back into the turn. Closed late but came up 1 1/2-lengths short due to the early troubles. Just needs to get off of the rail draw.

NATURAL WONDER: Closed for second as by far the longest shot on the board in first race back from a five-month layoff in a tough spot. Don't overlook.

P C COWBOY: Broke awkwardly and couldn't recover for better than second due to the tough start. Finished 3+ lengths clear of third and can make amends with a better start.

SASSY OLIVIA ANN: Missed the break to start last in an 11-horse field, yet still managed to outrun 34-1 odds in 6F career debut for a late closing third. Prepped and ready and just needs a clean start.

SUGAR FOOT ANNE: Waited behind horses, squeezed through traffic and ran gamely but settled for second behind a closer with clear sailing. Ready to graduate.

SWEET INVENTION: Showed speed but dueled in comeback from a year layoff, but outran the early challenger and held off the even-money favorite for second. Won't be a maiden much longer.

TIZFUN: Broke near the back of a 10-horse field and then rushed up to press the pace, got floated wide, and managed a dead heat for second. Set to graduate in next off the claim.

BEST BET: DYNAMITE JILL: Got caught in a three-way, three-length-gap speed duel and held on by far the best of the speeds for second behind only the 8-5 favorite in a race where deep closers ran 1-3-4.

LONGSHOT: ARCH ARCH BABY: Pressed a live pace and was the only front runner still around at the finish when fourth in a race where closers finished 1-2-3-5-6. Don't ignore.

FAIR GROUNDS

CAPTAIN TYREE: Battled on the pace throughout when second, beaten only a neck, in his latest; gelding has finished in the exacta in 15 of 29 career starts and can maintain sharp form.

FINISHLIKEAPRO: Raced with the pace and responded to pressure to score by a length and has kept solid form through two starts this year; in the exacta in half of his 16 lifetime starts, so stay with him.

GRIDIRON CAT: Hopped at the break, chased, checked late, and weakened to fifth when never able to get his rhythm as odds-on choice in his latest; try again off \$30k-claim by trainer B. Cox (28% wins last year).

MY MAN COLTON: Made up plenty of ground to finish a close third when showing much-needed improvement on noteworthy class drop most recently; trainer M. Munna hit at 25% last year.

TEELFA: Moved wide and gained third when making her second start off two-month break most recently; goes forward for M. Nicks barn.

MORE THAN SHIRL: Moved wide and gained steadily in good effort to pick up third when cut back in distance and moved back to turf for his latest; sharper for experience.

LA REINA ISABEL: Showed improved early interest when she chased the pace and weakened to fifth in her latest; good overall resume, she can jump up in upcoming third start of current form cycle.

TURF PARADISE

**ANOTHER WHIZ
BRITE RULER
FOR CASH
GETINTHELAMBORGHINI
LEADEM IN KEN**

**ROCK VICTOR
SECRET REVEALED
SEVEN TORRENTS
TON EIGHTY
WOODLANDSWAY**

SUNLAND PARK

**ATILLAS GIFT
BELLA ANATOLA
DEWEY
EKATI WILDCAT
GETTING YOU HOME
INDIAN TIVA
LAST BEST WEST**

**MT VEEDER
NOT MY NOTE
ROHANA
RUNAWAY GHOST
SMACK RIDGE
STREAKS BRO
SUNDAY ROSE**

TAMPA BAY DOWNS

ARTICULATE: Set a pressured pace and held on best of the speeds for third, beaten just a neck and a nose by a pair of in-form stalkers. Remains a threat for new barn off the claim.

KIWANDA: Chased a loose lone speed runaway winning 9-5 favorite in return from a year layoff, but ran a live return for second and fits vs. the local maiden claimers.

LADDIE BOY: Bad start and wide trip en route to a mid-pack finish. Can rebound so don't give up.

LIGHTHOUSE SOUND: Closed well but settled for second again, this time by a head behind a loose lone speed winner. Try again.

R LUCKY CHARM: Got hooked in a two-length-gap duel for the lead and held on to just miss by a nose and a neck when an unlucky third. Worth another chance.

SEEKINGTHEPERFECT: Dueled early, waited in traffic, tried to move, waited, and then railed and still outran 16-1 odds for third. Seeking a better trip in next.

THORNTON: Overcame traffic after getting boxed-in at the quarter pole, but swung around and won anyway. Likely repeater.

TICKER TAPE PARADE: Settled for third after a rough start and a bad trip, eventually getting through on the rail in the stretch but too late.

TIZ SHOPPING: Well-bet but needed a race off a seven-month layoff, finishing third in a race ruled by a loose-on-the-lead favorite. Ready to graduate.

BEST BET: TEREZA Z: Finished a clear third but beaten just a nose and a head in a blanket finish after having the toughest trip when steadied in mid-stretch. Better luck next time.

LONGSHOT: CATSKILL FLYER: Stumbled out of the gate and broke slow and couldn't catch the favored front-runners and just missed third by a neck. Don't overlook.

HAWTHORNE

AHOYMYCAPTAIN: Broke a step slow at 5F in career debut, but make a sustained run for third and just needs a better start to graduate.

ALWAYSMPLEASURE: Broke slowly but gained good ground until traffic in mid-stretch halted his rally when still full of run. Settled for second and worth another try.

BELLA CARMELLA: Got engaged in a seven-length-gap battle for the lead and got caught as a result. Can make amends vs. similar.

COUNTESS ST MICHELE: Got KO'd in a 3 1/2-length-gap speed duel in first start of the meet, but looms a threat to shake loose up front so don't ignore.

LOGI: Started last in first race since December and was the only horse in the race to make a dent from off the pace, getting a brief lead before running out of stream. Try again in return from the sidelines.

MS. TRISH S: Was unprepared for the start, just as the eventual winner got out to a long solo easy lead. Did as well as possible for second and looks good next time.

NET FREE: Broke last, then rushed up into a four-length-gap speed duel and beat the early challenger for second. Just needs a clean start.

TIZAMINT: Rushed to the lead and into a three-length-gap duel and faded when needing a race off nearly a six-month layoff. Fits vs. the local maiden claimers.

YOUNG CORBETT: Percolated into a three-way, six-length-gap speed duel and did best of the speeds for second and is knocking on the door vs. maiden claimers.

BEST BET: LEGENDARY VISION: Oaklawn invader reared at the break to start last and spot the field several lengths, but circled the field and beat the odds-on favorite to win as much the best. Likely repeater.

LONGSHOT: VANDERBOOM RIDGE: Missed the break and finished sixth, but actually finished only 1 1/2 lengths out of second after the troubled beginning and can rebound with a good start.

TURF PARADISE

**ANOTHER WHIZ
BRITE RULER
FOR CASH
GETINTHELAMBORGHINI
LEADEM IN KEN**

**ROCK VICTOR
SECRET REVEALED
SEVEN TORRENTS
TON EIGHTY
WOODLANDSWAY**

WOODBINE

**ARTILLIA
BELLA FIGURA
DEVILISH STYLE
FOR U RUTH
FORESTELLA**

**HAZEL MEADOW
PINK LLOYD
RIVER MAID
SKYLANDER GIRL
WHO'S GOT IT**

CHARLES TOWN

**AARON'S TAP
CHARITABLE BOUND
CUTTIN EDGE TECH
FLOATING BY
GOLDEN MAN
JOKERS TO THE RIGHT**

**OFFICER RIDGE
SASSAFRAS SPRINGS
SENSATIONAL NOTION
SLIP THE CABLE
SMOKIN' SÉANCE
THE SQUIRE**

EMERALD DOWNS

**COMING IN HOT
DADDYALWAYSSAYS
FACE VALUED
ILLUMINATION ROAD
K K'S WONDERWOMAN
KNIFE RIVER**

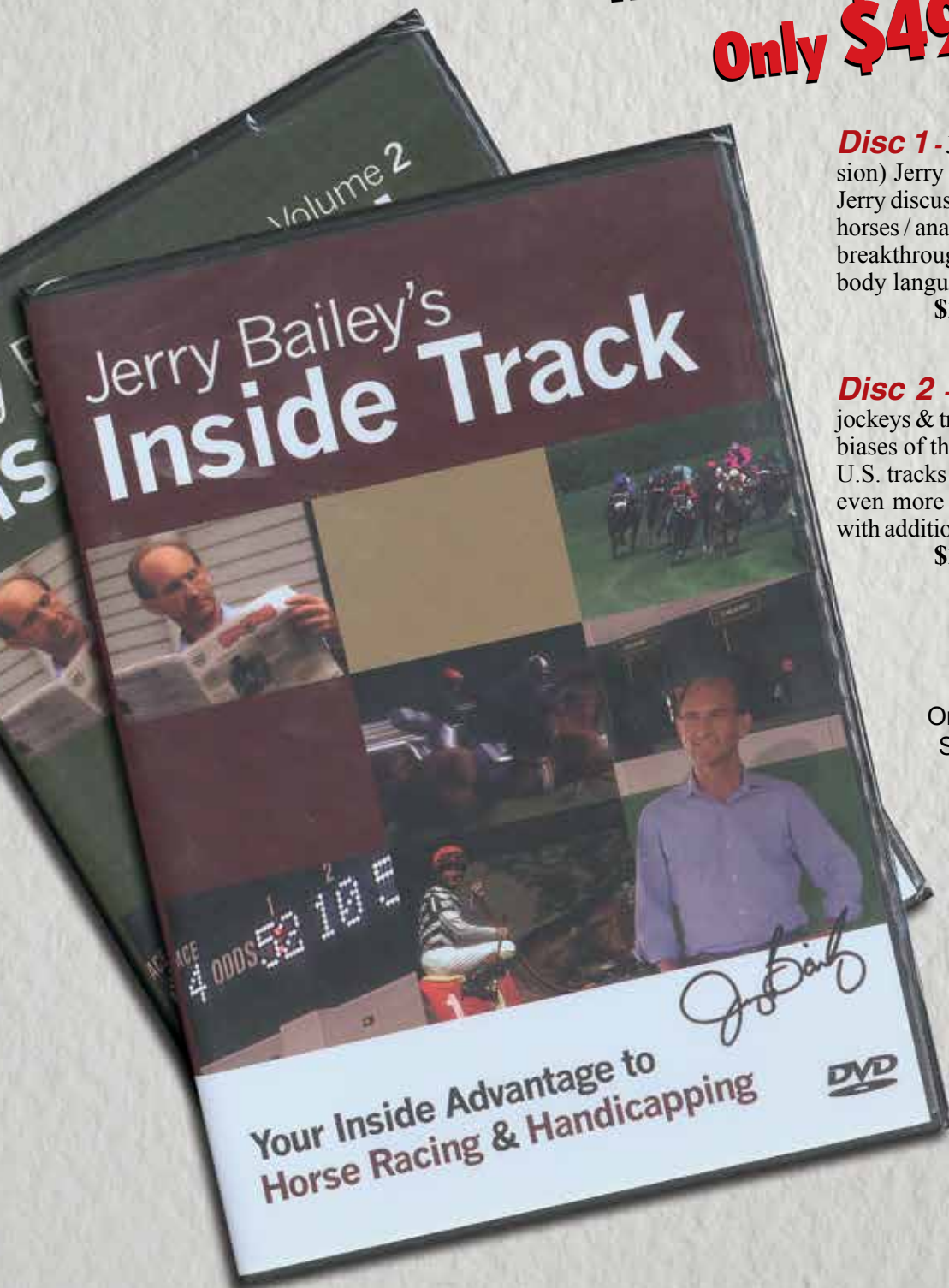
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RISER
SOUTHERN SOLUTION
TIGER SUMMIT
WINE AT NINE**

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SHED ROW

Winning reports from our trackmen at major ovals

OZONE PARK, NY

Ladies and gents:

DYNAMAX PRIME has done little wrong since getting off the grass. JUST GOT OUT is moving up off the claim. ALL ABOUT ASHLEY will be back in the spotlight. DOWNTOWN AT NOON takes it to the house. Brighter days are ahead for CLOUD CONTROL. BENNY BIG BOY has taken a nice step forward this winter. DO SHARE has plenty of upside for trainer Linda Rice. BEAR CLAUSE sneaks into the gimmicks at a big price. TIZ RAE ANNA exceeded expectations in route debut. FEATHER IN MY CAP is better than she looks.

HALLANDALE BEACH, FL

Power to the patrons:

Use GOLDEN MILA in the gimmicks if you're looking for a longshot. AQUA TEEN is coming of age. REASON TO SOAR stamped himself as one to watch with smart debut. VINO BLANCO continues to put in steady efforts without winning. SIGHT READING is worth a closer look. Take a small flyer on MISS REGAL LIGHT. TROYA isn't impossible at \$16k; use underneath. PAWLEYS EXPRESS has a lot to like. BRIDGE OF LUCK sneaks up on the right bunch. CHARLIE THE GREEK takes a trip to the winner's circle.

TAMPA BAY, FL

Greetings:

SAINT LIPSI CHICK continues to elevate her game in 2017. HIGH PITCH brings the heat. FLOWER PUNCH has a solid record over the local lawn. Giving ASIAN MOONLADY one more chance. ATTACK ZONE isn't out there to make any friends. BLEEDING HEART gained a nice education in the debut. QUEENS QUARTERS earned her diploma at fifth asking. You've got to BELIEVE INDEED! NEUQUA does her best work in sprint races. SANDRO is ready to go.

BENSALEM, PA

Fellow horseplayers:

TRUE BOLDNESS looked like a different horse at second asking. GUYANA EXPRESS coming full speed ahead at a price. VALDINA CROSSING runs 'em down late. Late-bloomer EASTERN FRONT is starting to get it. ROCKY THE KID has the eye of the tiger. HIGH MATH can produce some big numbers. Keeping ANOTHER SECRET on the down low. LIL NEDDY is capable of improvement. TALK TO ME backs up our words on the racetrack. BIG TOWN is still going strong at nine.

LEXINGTON, KY

Hello racing fans:

WALL STREET's stock is on the rise. JENNA J has the look of a serious runner. RANGER SAM outran his odds in first start off the bench. COVER BOY gets his picture taken. FANCY JUSTICE regained her form at Turfway. BOBBY V. always seems to show up. THE GREEN COUGAR gets his paws on one. DOLL FACE runs to her good looks. KINETIC ENERGY nearly got it done off an August layoff. NORTH OF EDEN is moving in the right direction.

ARCADIA, CA

Attention ATM readers:

Don't snooze on SLEEPIN N CHEATIN. PAPA MAMBO gets it done versus Cal-breds. COULD BE MAGIC still hasn't delivered her best. Don't let a few bad efforts from FOOLISH TO DECEIVE scare you away. BAR SCENE delivers a top-shelf effort. ALL OF A SUDDEN has shown ability since day one. MUNNY SPUNT pads the bankroll. POWER FOOT shows them his heels. PIONEER LAD, a son of top sire Pioneer on the Nile, is one to watch. GIANIS owns a win at 33-1 on his resume; respect.

STOP WATCH SPECIALS

NEW YORK

ALTESINO: Couldn't be any closer.
CAN CAN BABE: Very popular claimer.
SARATIAGO: Longshot appeal.
TEN TWENTY NINE: It all adds up.

SO. FLORIDA

AVAST MATEY: Very capable when right.
CUNAVICHE: Tab at the basement.
EL GRAN NOEL: A very likely winner.
TRICKITA: Treats her followers.

PHILADELPHIA

BETTER THAN RUBIES: Set for best.
EXCLUSIVE SYMPHONY: Hitting all the right notes.
RUNAWAY MISTRESS: Runs away and hides.
STREET HEAT: Dials it up a notch.

MARYLAND

AFTER THE CUT OFF: Slices through \$5k level.
ANDY'S LOVE: Feel good about this one.
MAGIC HARBOR: Old boy does it again.
VALUE ADDED: Looking for right spot.

KENTUCKY

AVE SKIPPER: Intriguing longshot.
JINGLE ME THIS: Broke his maiden by a pole.
LITL STROLL: Has some sneaky form.
WAR VENTURE: Head to the windows.

LOUISIANA

BITTERS 'N BOURBON: Fitting in well here.
EUROBOSS: Runs like a 'Boss.'
HOT ZAPPER: About to heat up.
WICKED STRIDE: Will be moving like a winner.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

ADMIRAL BOOM: Here it comes!
BREAKAWAY DIXIE: Some bang for your buck.
AMP AND ADRENALIN: Amped up about this guy.
STARTING LINEUP: Take a swing for the fences.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

AGENT NINE T NINE: Breaks through.
CRIMSON AND GOLD: Has us seeing green.
IT GIRL: There's something about her.
PLAY HARD TO GET: He's due.

INDEX TO FIT & READY, SHED ROW AND STOP WATCH

This index can be used to locate horses listed in this month's Fit & Ready, Stop Watch and Shed Row pages. Track abbreviations are as follows:

AQUEDUCT:AQU	PENN NATIONAL:PEN
CHARLES TOWN:CT	SANTA ANITA:SA
FAIR GROUNDS:FG	SUNLAND PARK:Sun
GOLDEN GATE:GG	TAMPA BAY DOWNS:TAM
GULFSTREAM PARK:GP	TURF PARADISE:TUP
HAWTHORNE:HAW	TURF SELECTIONS:Trf
LAUREL PARK:LRL	TURFWAY PARK:TP
MAHONING VALLEY:MVR	TURF SELECTIONS:Trf
OAKLAWN PARK:OP	SHED ROW:SR
PARX:PRX	STOP WATCH:SW

CABBY JOSHTIN:TP	EUROBOSS:SW
CAMERON RULES :TRF	EXCLUSIVE SYMPHONY:SW
CAN CAN BABE:SW	FANCY JUSTICE :SR
CAPTAIN TYREE:FG	FEARLESS PRINCESS:GP
CATFISH HUNTER:SA	FEATHER IN MY CAP:SR
CATSKILL FLYER:TAM	FINISHLIKEAPRO:FG
CAUTIOUS GIANT:SA	FLATTER CHATTER:TP
CAVITY :TRF	FLOATING BY:CT
CHARITABLE BOUND:CT	FLOWER PUNCH :SR
CHARLIE THE GREEK :SR	FOOLISH TO DECEIVE :SR
CHECKBOUNCIN BILLY:PRX	FOR CASH:TUP
CHRISTMAS CABALLO :TRF	FOXTROT ROMEO:GG
CLOUD CONTROL:SR	FUNNY SURPRISE:PRX
CLUBMAN:LRL	GATOR DON'T PLAY:SA
COASTED:GP	GENEROSIDADE:TRF
CONQUEST SMARTEE:SA	GETINTHELAMBORGHINI:TUP
COULD BE MAGIC :SR	GETTING YOU HOME:SUN
COUNTESS ST	GIANIS :SR
MICHELE:HAW	GIANT ENDING:AQU
COVER BOY :SR	GIANT MARK:GG
CRIMSON AND GOLD:SW	GLOBAL EVENT:GG
CUNAVICHE:SW	GOLD CRESCENT:PEN
CUTTIN EDGE TECH:CT	GOLDEN MAN:CT
DA BIG HOSS :TRF	GOLDEN MILA :SR
DANZING CANDY:SA	GRAND TITO :TRF
DEAUVILLE :TRF	GRIDIRON CAT:FG
DEPUTY DANE:MVR	GUYANA EXPRESS :SR
DERBY CHAMPAGNE:GP	HARDLY HOME :TRF
DEWEY:SUN	HAYABUSA ONE :TRF
DO SHARE :SR	HIGH MATH :SR
DOLL FACE :SR	HIGH PITCH :SR
DOWNTOWN AT NOON :SR	HOLD ON MOMMA:AQU
DRESSCODE VIOLATOR:GG	HOT ZAPPER:SW
DUVAL ST:MVR	INDIAN TIVA:SUN
DYNAMITE JILL:OP	IREDELL:LRL
EASTERN FRONT :SR	IT GIRL:SW
EKATI WILDCAT:SUN	IT'S YOUR NICKEL:TP
EL GRAN NOEL:SW	J EDGAR:PEN
EL MOZO:GP	JAMIE'S JAMMIN:AQU
ELOQUENT MOMENT:TP	JENNA J:SR

A NEW TREND:SA	BALAC:AQU
AARON'S TAP:CT	BALANDEEN:OP
ABBREVIATE:GP	BAR SCENE :SR
ACTIVELY ENGAGED:PEN	BATTERY:AQU
ADMIRAL BOOM:SW	BEAUZIGGITY:PEN
AFTER THE CUT OFF:SW	BELIEVE INDEED:SR
AGENT NINE T NINE:SW	BELLA ANATOLA:SUN
AHOYMYCAPTAIN:HAW	BELLA CARMELLA:HAW
ALL OF A SUDDEN :SR	BENNY BIG BOY :SR
ALTESINO:SW	BETTER THAN RUBIES:SW
ALWAYSMPLEASURE:HAW	BETWEEN THE LINES:AQU
AMP AND ADRENALIN:SW	BIG TOWN :SR
ANDY'S LOVE:SW	BIGGER PICTURE :TRF
ANOTHER SECRET :SR	BIONDETTI'S CHOICE:GP
ANOTHER WHIZ:TUP	BITTERS 'N BOURBON:SW
ANSWER QUIETLY:MVR	BLEEDING HEART :SR
AQUA TEEN :SR	BLUE SHINE:PRX
ARCH ARCH BABY:OP	BOBBY V:SR
ARTICULATE:TAM	BOY HOWDY:SA
ASHLEYLUVSSUGAR :TRF	BRAVE ACT:MVR
ASIAN MOONLADY :SR	BREAKAWAY DIXIE:SW
ATILLAS GIFT:SUN	BRIDGE OF LUCK :SR
ATTACK ZONE :SR	BRITE RULER:TUP
AVAST MATEY:SW	BROKEN KEY :TRF
AYE SKIPPER:SW	BULLARDS ALLEY :TRF

INDEX TO FIT & READY, SHED ROW AND STOP WATCH

JINGLE ME THIS:SW
JOHNNY JUMP UP:PEN
JOKERS TO THE RIGHT:CT
JUST A TASTE:PRX
JUST GOT OUT :SR
KAIGUN :TRF
KASAQUI :TRF
KINETIC ENERGY :SR
KIWANDA:TAM
KOPITAR:SA
L X SUNRISE:LRL
LA REINA ISABEL:FG
LADDIE BOY:TAM
LAST BEST WEST:SUN
LEADEM IN KEN:TUP
LEGENDARY VISION:HAW
LIGHTHOUSE SOUND:TAM
LIL MISS BLUE EYES:OP
LIL NEDDY :SR
LILY'S PEAK:PRX
LINE:SA
LITL STROLL:SW
LOGI:HAW
LORI'S STORE:GP
LU RAE'S LUCKY SKY :TRF
LUCK LASTS:GG
LUCKYALLMYLIFE:MVR
MAGIC HARBOR:SW
MAGICIAN MAN:OP
MAI TY ONE ON:GP
MATAR:TP
MELLOW FELLOW:TP
METALLIC:LRL
METAURUS:AQU
MISS BARTOLAZZO:SA
MISS REGAL LIGHT:SR
MISSCHIEF MAAS:GP
MODERN TALE :TRF
MONEY MULTIPLIER :TRF
MORE THAN SHIRL:FG
MR. RIGHT:OP
MS. TRISH S:HAW
MT VEEDER:SUN
MUNNY SPUNT :SR
MY MAN COLTON:FG
NATURAL WONDER:OP
NET FREE:HAW
NEWCOMB:GG
NOONAN ON THURSDAY:PEN
NORTH OF EDEN :SR
NOT MY NOTE:SUN
OFFICER RIDGE:CT
OH MARVELOUS ME:SA
ON THE FRINGE:AQU
OSCAR NOMINATED :TRF
P C COWBOY:OP
PAPA MAMBO :SR
PAST TALK:GP
PATTI KINSELLA:GG
PAWLEYS EXPRESS :SR
PERFECT TAY :TRF
PIONEER LAD:SR
PLAY HARD TO GET:SW
POWER FOOT :SR
QUEENS QUARTERS :SR
QUICK SONG:GG
R LUCKY CHARM:TAM
RANGER SAM :SR
RAPO :TRF
RAVIZZONE:GG
REASON TO SOAR :SR
RECRUITING READY:LRL
RED AGUIA:GP
REMAIN SILENT:PRX
REY ASTRAY:GP
RHYTHM BLUES:PEN
ROCK VICTOR:TUP
ROCKETANN:SA
ROCKY PARADE:MVR
ROCKY THE KID :SR
ROHANA:SUN
RUNAWAY GHOST:SUN
RUNAWAY MISTRESS:SW
S.S. MINNOW:PRX
SAINT LIPSI CHICK :SR
SALSAMON:MVR
SANDRO :SR
SARATIAGO:SW
SASSAFRAS SPRINGS:CT
SASSY OLIVIA ANN:OP
SCHOUT BAY:AQU
SECRET REVEALED:TUP
SEEKINGTHEPERFECT:TAM
SENSATIONAL NOTION:CT
SENSE OF GLORY:SA
SEVEN TORRENTS:TUP
SHARKZILLA:GG
SI SAGE :TRF
SIGHT READING :SR
SILVER CHROME:GG
SLEEPIN N CHEATIN:SR
SLIP THE CABLE:CT
SMACK RIDGE:SUN
SMOKIN' SÉANCE:CT
SPECIALEYES :TRF
SPIRIT LETS HEARIT:AQU
STARTING LINEUP:SW
STORM PETREL:AQU
STORY TO TELL:AQU
STREAKS BRO:SUN
STREET HEAT:SW
STRIKE MIDNIGHT :TRF
SUGAR FOOT ANNE:OP
SUNDAY ROSE:SUN
SWEET INVENTION:OP
TALK TO ME :SR
TALLY MO:SA
TANGO DELTA:LRL
TEELFA:FG
TEN TWENTY NINE:SW
TEREZA Z:TAM
TEXAS RYANO :TRF
THE GORILLA MAN:TP
THE GREEN COUGAR :SR
THE PIZZA MAN :TRF
THE RIDGE:TP
THE SQUIRE:CT
THETRAILERGUY :TRF
THIS DREAM OF MINE:MVR
THORNTON:TAM
TICKER TAPE PARADE:TAM
TIZ RAE ANNA :SR
TIZ SHOPPING:TAM
TIZAMINT:HAW
TIZFUN:OP
TON EIGHTY:TUP
TRICKITA:SW
TROYA :SR
TRUE BOLDNESS:SR
TWICE WITH ICE:MVR
UNREPENTED:AQU
VALDINA CROSSING :SR
VALUE ADDED:SW
VANDERBOOM RIDGE:HAW
VINO BLANCO :SR
WAKE FOREST :TRF
WALL STREET:SR
WAR VENTURE:SW
WARD 'N JERRY :TRF
WICKED STRIDE:SW
WINGMAN:AQU
WOODLANDSWAY:TUP
WORLD APPROVAL :TRF
YO BERBS:MVR
YOUNG CORBETT:HAW
YOUR SECRET'S SAFE:AQU
ZAPTUIT:GP
ZIPPIITY ZOOM:LRL



Corey Lanerie Ready to Dominate

By David Zenner

IF YOU FOLLOWED THE RACING AT Churchill Downs in the 1980s, there was a pretty good chance that Hall of Fame jockey Pat Day would be the meet's leading rider and that dominance carried over into the 90s, when he seemingly split titles with Shane Sellers. Moving forward into the new millennium it was Julien Leparoux whose name was often atop the leader board from the middle of the last decade into the early part of the teens. Now it appears Churchill Downs has become the domain of jockey COREY LANERIE who has captured 12 of the last 14 titles at the Louisville, Kentucky, race course. In fact, his dozen crowns rank second all-time behind Pat Day's 34.

"It's pretty special to be a leading rider at Churchill Downs and especially for so many meets," Lanerie said. "At one time it was a track that I had always been scared to go to and try – I never thought I could make or

was good enough, so to go there and dominate I owe it mostly to my connections, the people who backed me and my agent 'Jaws' (Terry Miller). 'Jaws' does a great job.

"It all boils down to hard work early in the morning, especially when I first got there to establish connections and do a good job, stay on top and to keep everybody happy."

The 42-year-old native of Lafayette, Louisiana's story is not unlike many of his Cajun counterparts including fellow Churchill Downs titlist and three-time Derby-winning jockey Calvin Borel, in that his career began on the bush tracks of his home state as a teenager before graduating to the recognized tracks in the Bayou. Before ascending to the major circuit, Lanerie paid his dues at smaller tracks earning riding titles at all three Texas tracks – Lone Star Park, Sam Houston, and Retama Park. He also rode at the Fair Grounds and after

the Lone Star Meet was over he would catch the last part of the Arlington Park season.

"I didn't ride a whole lot in the bush tracks but I started really young and I got my license to ride professionally when I was 16. I was galloping horses since I was nine," he said. "[Before coming to Kentucky] I was working with [agent] Rick Mocklin. Things had slowed down a bit for us there and we were going to go to Kentucky. Before I made the move, Rick decided he wasn't going to make the move. He was more comfortable staying home.

"So when I got to Kentucky I connected with Jaws and that turned out to be a blessing in disguise," Lanerie continued. "He had his own clientele that I was able to move right in with. Had I gone there with an agent it may have taken me some time to work my way into spots and you never know, things might not have worked out and

I never would have taken off.

“When I got there I don’t think it was one particular barn [I rode for]. I rode for a lot of the small trainers that seemed to win races. When I first got there I didn’t ride much for Dale [Romans] at all the first few years. Eddie Kenneally always rode me. Tony Reinstedler put me on a nice stakes horses, and Frankie Brothers rode me in the Cradle [at the former River Downs] a few times.”

Now firmly established in Kentucky, Lanerie can stay in one place for most of the year making just one move to Florida where he winters at Gulfstream Park. Last year Lanerie plied his summer trade at Ellis Park rather than go to Saratoga on a full-time basis which allowed him to spend more time with family yet still be available for stakes races on the weekends.

“The racing [at Ellis] is getting better and it works out good,” he said. “It’s

a little bit of a working vacation. I can stay home, work the weekends, and freshen my body up.”

Asked what his strengths as a rider are, Lanerie said, “I ride the rail a lot. I like to save ground. I think that means a lot especially in turf races. I just ride my horses rather than try to ride the race to beat the favorite. I think that people like that I ride my horse out to the finish for fourth- and fifth-place money.”

Well respected by his peers, Lanerie won the George Woolf Memorial Award in 2014. “That was something I never thought about coming up. To get nominated was a victory in itself to be thought of that way and then to win it – well I guess some of the guys really do like me.”

Riding the Florida-Kentucky circuit allows Lanerie to get on some pretty good horses and he cites Flat Out as the best he’s ridden, having been

aboard the eventual multiple Grade I stakes winner early in his career.

“I didn’t win any big races on him but I remember the first time I worked him I knew he was something special. Posse was a real sprinter I rode too.”

Lanerie also has Grade I wins with Molly Morgan, Weep No More, Brody’s Cause, and Hooch Why. Like any rider, especially one who makes his living on the Kentucky circuit, Lanerie says eventually winning the Kentucky Derby would be his goal.

“Even being in the race is like a dream come true,” he said. “Growing up and watching the race on TV it’s like a different world and then when I became a jockey and was in the race it’s like you finally got to be where you want to be. You’re on the biggest stage in racing, but now you’ve got to win it.”



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The Ensuing Step

Keying Last-out Maiden Grass Winners

By William F. Hudgins, Jr.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE EASY FOR me to have opted to entitle this article “Exceptional Entry-Level Allowance Spot Plays”. After all, our initial mandate utilizing the forthcoming methodology is that you restrict your selections exclusively to the type of turf heats going a mile or longer. I elected instead to focus on the near ideal candidate that often enters these kind of classy preliminary condition heats, that being young equine athletes who have just won at the maiden special weight level and are now about to take the next logical ensuing step along Thoroughbred racing’s classification ladder.

Lightly-raced last-out maiden special weight winners offer the astute punter an opportunity to evaluate one of my favorite prerequisites for racing class – the “professional performance”. A professional performance is a winning effort in which a turf horse, while traveling a distance of 7 furlongs or longer, reaches the pre-stretch call (most times the quarter pole) in a contending position not on the lead but not more than four-lengths off the leader and shows it accelerated to gain both ground and running position to the stretch call (the eighth pole). Additionally, when looking at the intermediate fractions of this key effort, the time from the half-mile to the 3/4-mile – the third quarter – was run in “racing time”, meaning no more than 24-4/5 seconds. Amongst more seasoned grass runners one may need to go back one, two, or sometimes three races in order to isolate the evaluative professional performance. Not so when

evaluating the last-out maiden special weight winner. Youthful developing Thoroughbreds who can turn in an effort such as this in their most recent race, even against limited competition, are prized commodities when following up such a performance against preliminary allowance competition.

Spotting Well-Placed Last-out Maiden Winners

1. Confine potential selections to entry-level allowance and/or optional claiming allowance for “non-winners of one other than...” in turf races at distances of eight furlongs (one mile) or longer.
2. Dismiss all entrants who show more than ten career starts and who did not win their most recent race while facing maiden special weight competition going seven furlongs or longer over the turf.
3. To remain a viable selection, an analysis of that last-out maiden victory should show the horse under scrutiny raced off the pace but within four lengths of the leader at the pre-stretch call and gained both ground and running position to the stretch call.
4. Finally, the intermediate fraction from the half-mile to the 3/4-mile must have been no more than :24-4/5 seconds in that key last race.

GGG Stables’ Lucy De is an excellent illustration of exactly the sharp, lightly-raced young athlete we love to uncover in a grassy entry-level allowance route. This 4-year-old filly showed up for an

8-1/2 panel jaunt over the Del Mar turf course last November slated to test entry-level allowance distaffers in her sixth career start. Her latest outing personifies a professional performance as she settled early-on, hit the quarter pole in third position just a length off the leaders, responded when asked to move up to second just a head behind, and finished with aplomb to prove a one-length winner. The pace quarter was a respectable :24-3/5 seconds. Well-spotted for her ensuing contest, Lucy De proved her professionalism was no joke – comfortably rating seventh but just 2-3/4 off the pace at the quarter pole, kicked it up when set down to sit fourth just 3/4-length off the pacesetters, then powering home a half-length to the good. Your reward for recognizing this was the logical next step for her was a decent \$13.20 mutuel.

Thoroughbreds, not unlike their human counterparts, learn and develop at different rates. What turf handicappers should look for amongst the younger, lightly-campaigned Thoroughbreds is what can legitimately be deemed a truly professional performance last time out while facing other perceived “quality” young runners over a distance of grass real estate. Provided management opts to place the sharp neophyte in a logical spot in its ensuing race, the likelihood of regression is minimal and the potential for another solid performance is remarkably enhanced. Good handicapping rascals!

Italian Charm \$4.80
Own: Green Hills Farm
Emerald Green And Royal Blue Halves

Dk. bar/c. 3 (Feb)
Sire: Gio Ponti (Tale of the Cat) \$12,500
Dam: Voodoo Dancer (Kingmambo)
Br: Green Hills Farm Inc (Ky)
Tr: Clement Christophe

Life	3	2	0	0	\$23,932	78	D.Fat	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2016	2	2	0	0	\$23,600	78	Wet(366)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	1	M	0	0	\$322	49	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
Prx	0	0	0	0	\$0	-	Turf(280)	3	2	0	0	\$23,932	78
							Dst(307)	1	0	0	0	\$322	49

30Apr16-47am fm 1 @ 23 454 1.137 1.367 OC 20k/wk-N ✓ 78 5/8 21 34 14 13 14 Centeseo D E L118 1.40 87-15 IlioChrm4BigsTgr4UnclJm4 Rail bid, in hand late
 14Feb16-87am fm 1 @ 21 437 1.129 1.384 Md Sp Wt 20k ✓ 72 6/10 49 30 41 31 17 Centeseo D E L120 2.30 85-15 JulianChrm4OceonPond4Shiko Split foal, willingly
 25Sep15-25ar fm 1 1/2 @ 24 481 1.137 1.429 Md Sp Wt 83k 49 9/10 74 65 64 74 814 Ortiz Jr L120 4.30 70-06 HybladSky4WtrOrd4Dong1Msn Reared brk, rank 1/2
WORKS: Oct 9 Sar br 4 ft ht: 50 1/2 B 8 1/2 Oct 2 Sar br 4 ft ht: 50 1/2 B 8 1/2 Sep 18 Sar br 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 B 8 1/2 Sep 10 Sar br 4 ft ht: 37 1/2 B 8 1/2 Sep 3 Sar br 4 ft ht: 52 1/2 B 20 1/2

Ward 'n Jerry \$17.80
Own: Mr & Mrs Larry D Williams
Dark Green, Green Tree Emblem On Tail

Dk. bar/c. 3 (Apr)
Sire: Lucky Palpit (Palpit) \$7,500
Dam: Tamarack Bay (Debers)
Br: Mr & Mrs Larry D Williams (Cal)
Tr: Page Mike

Life	7	2	1	0	\$85,300	81	D.Fat	3	0	0	0	\$3,850	64
2016	5	2	1	0	\$84,800	81	Wet(260)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	2	M	0	0	\$500	52	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
SA	2	1	0	0	\$32,300	81	Turf(270)	4	2	1	0	\$81,520	81
							Dst(246)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-

50Oct16-65A fm 1 @ 23 464 1.137 1.343 3 1/2 OC 20k/wk-N ✓ 81 5/10 55 74 50 31 14 Elliott S L122 b 7.90 87-10 WrdJm4OvrPr4GloryBound4 Bid 3rd str, bid, held
 12Sep16-50ar fm 1 1/2 @ 22 454 1.119 1.43 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 67k ✓ 78 6/8 60 67 64 11 12 Elliott S L120 b 4.40 83-15 WrdJm4ThBgTr4EkhnCr4 5wd into str, gamely
 22July16-80ar fm 1 @ 23 484 1.137 1.37 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 65k 77 11/12 54 42 43 24 49 Elliott S L121 b 13.40 75-27 LrdChj4WrdJm4BrsOnBr4 Bid 3rd 1/2, willingly
 16Jun16-85A fm 1 @ 22 471 1.117 1.394 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 70 2/9 30 34 67 64 94 Prat F L120 b 5.40 73-25 Antn4H4MtrSh4LrdChj Saved ground, weakened
 7May16-25A fm 1 1/2 @ 21 444 1.084 1.34 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 56k 64 5/7 5 74 64 64 49 Elliott S L120 b 38.70 84-12 S4H4T4TpsRsm4LckWt4Y3 Bobbled start, 3rd str
 27Oct15-95A fm 1 1/2 @ 22 461 1.104 1.57 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 52 10/10 7 67 67 74 77 Prat F L122 b 6.10 74-17 Demostyr4TndBlck4Etlr 4wd into lane, no rally
 13Jun16-45A fm 1 1/2 @ 22 454 1.070 1.57 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 56k 37 4/8 4 51 64 64 69 Flores D R L120 b 5.10 85-08 Riis4Hrd4Cris4Dngers4 3rd into lane, weakened
WORKS: Oct 29 SA 5 ft ht: 101 H 26 1/2 Oct 23 SA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 25 1/2 Oct 2 SA 5 ft ht: 101 H 25 1/2 Sep 25 SA 5 ft ht: 101 H 20 1/2 Sep 18 SA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 20 1/2

Lucy De \$13.20
Own: GGG Stables
Stocking Pink, Blue 'Gy'

Dk. bar/c. 4 (Apr)
Sire: Decarchy (Distant View) \$4,500
Dam: Stormin Lucy (Native Storm)
Br: GGG Stables and Magall Farms LLC (Cal)
Tr: Page Mike

Life	7	2	2	1	\$92,600	75	D.Fat	2	0	0	0	\$6,880	53
2016	4	2	2	0	\$85,400	75	Wet(370)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	2	M	0	0	\$2,160	68	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
SA	4	1	2	0	\$54,720	75	Turf(272)	5	2	2	0	\$86,520	75
							Dst(343)	3	1	1	0	\$43,520	75

17Nov16-70ar fm 1 1/2 @ 23 474 1.114 1.424 3 1/2 OC 20k/wk-N ✓ 73 6/8 37 63 79 41 11 Prat F L121 b 5.60 84-20 Lucy De4Mai Tai4Almost Reality4 3rd bid, led, held
 6Oct16-35A fm 1 @ 22 454 1.129 1.35 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 52k ✓ 75 1/7 34 49 31 24 11 Prat F L125 b 1.70 83-14 Lucy De4SouthernDrw4HutSky4 Bid led past 1/8, held
 30Jan16-15A gd 5 1/2 @ 21 44 1.077 1.14 4 1/2 Md Sp Wt 56k 66 1/8 4 34 37 34 41 Quinones A L123 b 1.10 79-15 MidM4M4Alth4H4HrsGr4 Stalked inside, no bid
 17Mar16-45A fm 1 1/2 @ 21 44 1.080 1.154 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 66 5/8 4 34 34 34 24 Prat F L125 b 3.70 75-21 Alghy4Hm4Lucy De4Rbr4Ag4 Bid btwn, led, gamely
 29Feb16-15A fm 1 @ 23 464 1.117 1.367 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 56k 74 4/6 21 21 24 11 24 Gonzales S L123 b 6.20 73-21 AlmostReality4Lucy De4Stylistic4 Bid, led, game, edged
 21Dec15-45A fm 1 @ 23 464 1.117 1.367 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 60 5/8 47 54 47 74 54 Prat F L122 b 4.20 69-23 LK4O4D4H4Order4Alt4R4 Stalked btwn, weakened
 8Nov16-20ar 1st 6 1/2 @ 22 457 1.104 1.17 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 52k 53 5/7 4 47 54 47 54 Baze T C L122 b *2.30 -- WtMid4Moon4Emozon4Dr4 Steadied gap, light 3/8
 18Oct16-6LRC 1st 6 1/2 @ 22 454 1.071 1.094 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 42k 50 3/7 7 47 47 34 37 Baze T C L122 2.80 -- SheerP4r44S4sChm4Lucy De4 Off slow, inside to str

Out Of The Ordinary \$13.00
Own: E-RacingCom Crawford or Lyons Et Al
White, Black 'E' On Front, Jade

Dk. bar/c. 4 (Feb)
Sire: Vrasaky (Danzig) \$4,500
Dam: Finley's Pooh (Solid Badgett)
Br: Old English Ranch & Breeding (Cal)
Tr: Karlene Brian

Life	8	2	2	0	\$117,770	79	D.Fat	1	0	0	0	\$1,300	35
2016	3	2	0	0	\$31,500	79	Wet(329)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	5	M	2	0	\$26,270	71	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
SA	3	0	2	0	\$24,960	71	Turf(313)	7	2	2	0	\$16,470	79
							Dst(358)	2	0	1	0	\$13,750	66

17Aug16-80ar fm 1 1/2 @ 22 47 1.114 1.434 3 1/2 OC 20k/wk-N ✓ 78 2/8 44 44 46 2nd 11 Theriot H J II L124 b 5.50 81-29 O10thOrd4AlstR4JUVW14 2wd into str, bid, clear
 28July16-80ar fm 1 1/2 @ 22 474 1.129 1.43 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 76k ✓ 79 3/10 34 34 37 21 11 Theriot H J II L125 b 9.30 83-21 O40thOrd4CCZapp4Sugry4 3rd into str, gamely
 30Jan16-15A gd 5 1/2 @ 21 44 1.077 1.14 4 1/2 Md Sp Wt 56k 66 1/8 4 34 37 34 41 Quinones A L123 b *1.10 79-15 MidM4M4Alth4H4HrsGr4 Stalked inside, no bid
 31Dec15-45A fm 1 @ 23 464 1.117 1.367 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 71 8/9 21 24 11 11 21 Quinones A L122 b 5.80 74-23 LK4O4D4H4Order4AlmostR4 Bid led, clear, 2nd best
 19Nov16-20ar fm 1 1/2 @ 23 48 1.113 1.423 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 52k 71 7/8 24 21 24 74 49 Valdez F S L122 b 11.70 82-14 Oress4R4AlmostR4Lucy De4R4 Re-bid, led, edged 3rd
 8Oct16-45A fm 1 1/2 @ 21 447 1.087 1.143 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 53k 66 3/10 4 47 47 47 21 Valdez F S L122 b 54.20 78-20 Jrmth4O10thOrd4AlPrLV4 Came out str, late 2nd
 13Sep16-3LRC 1st 1 @ 23 464 1.117 1.364 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 50k 35 2/6 64 64 64 57 57 Valdez F S L119 b 23.70 64-15 MidAmour4AlmostG4R4R4 4wd into str, drift in
 14Aug16-30ar fm 1 @ 23 48 1.12 1.361 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 71k 47 3/10 104 104 97 94 94 Talamo J L119 23.50 67-13 Tricool4Bigs4Sppr4AlmostR4 Off rail, no response
WORKS: Oct 6 LA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 8 1/4 Sep 18 LA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 8 1/2 Sep 8 LA 4 ft ht: 48 H 5 1/2 Aug 11 LA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 5 1/2 July 22 Dmr 5 ft ht: 101 H 20 1/2

Shelbysmile \$6.80
Own: JBL Thoroughbreds LLC and Crystal Lan
Blue, Black 'J' On White Diamonds

B. c. 3 (Apr) KEESPEH \$10,000
Sire: Smart Strike (Mr. Prospector) \$100,000
Dam: Sullana (Storm Cat)
Br: Rhinestone Bloodstock (Ky)
Tr: Walsh Brendan P

Life	3	2	0	0	\$44,800	78	D.Fat	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2016	3	2	0	0	\$44,800	78	Wet(415)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	0	M	0	0	\$0	-	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
KD	0	0	0	0	\$0	-	Turf(363)	3	2	0	0	\$44,800	78
							Dst(317)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-

3Aug16-61nd fm 1 1/2 @ 21 45 1.103 1.14 4 1/2 OC 20k/wk-N ✓ 78 5/8 47 57 37 21 11 Torres F C L120 2.40 78-20 Shlbysm4MhtSk4Jm4Prdct4 3rd into str, bid, clear
 3July16-9EIP fm 1 @ 21 47 1.129 1.351 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 38k ✓ 72 1/12 65 57 34 34 11 Hernandez B Jr L118 4.90 95-08 Shlbysm4Chm4Prdct4 6uth 3/76, cleared
 2May16-61nd fm 1 @ 21 48 1.114 1.171 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 32k 68 5/8 57 37 27 27 49 Goncalves L R L118 10.80 75-16 M4Kw4Prdct4Chm4Prdct4 3-4w, bid 1/4, no match
WORKS: Aug 27 CDT 4 ft ht: 50 B 17 1/2 Aug 16 CDT 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 B 4 1/2 July 26 CDT 5 ft ht: 102 B 2 1/2 July 16 CDT 4 ft ht: 58 B 20 1/2 Jun 25 CDT 4 ft ht: 48 B 17 1/2

Lord of Chaos \$17.20
Own: Dare To Dream Stables LLC
Black, Red And White Emblem, Black

B. g (K.I.S.) 4 (Apr)
Sire: Temple City (Dynaformer) \$25,000
Dam: Princess Madcap (Ocean Crest)
Br: WSP Partners (Cal)
Tr: Karlene Brian

Life	8	2	0	3	\$101,781	82	D.Fat	1	0	0	0	\$900	51
2016	8	2	0	3	\$101,781	82	Wet(286)	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
2015	0	M	0	0	\$0	-	Synth	0	0	0	0	\$0	-
SA	0	0	0	3	\$25,881	78	Turf(302)	7	2	0	3	\$100,881	82
							Dst(304)	3	1	0	1	\$47,880	78

27Aug16-100ar fm 1 1/2 @ 22 47 1.121 1.424 3 1/2 Alc 63725kx ✓ 82 6/10 49 47 47 21 11 Theriot H J II L124 b 7.60 87-17 LordofChs4TempleK4OvrPr4 3rd into str, led 1/16
 22July16-30ar fm 1 @ 23 48 1.139 1.37 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 65k ✓ 78 2/12 67 64 67 21 11 Prat F L125 b *1.70 75-27 LrdChj4WrdJm4BrsOnBr4 3rd into str, led 1/16
 16Jun16-85A fm 1 @ 22 471 1.117 1.354 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 75 8/9 54 74 54 47 24 Pereira T J L125 b *2.20 75-25 Antn4H4MtrSh4LrdChj Steadied 3/8, best rest
 19May16-85A fm 1 1/2 @ 21 440 1.081 1.144 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 73 2/10 6 49 34 34 34 Pereira T J L125 b 13.30 77-19 NicN4M4H4LrdChj Came out str, edged 2nd
 14Apr16-3LRC 1st 6 1/2 @ 22 46 1.081 1.101 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 48k 51 3/5 5 24 24 59 54 Pereira T J L124 b *1.10 82-12 CrJ4Sk4Sp4Sp4WNE4D4 Duled btwn, weakened
 19Mar16-35A fm 1 @ 22 464 1.104 1.354 3 1/2 Md Sp Wt 58k 76 7/12 11 11 11 11 49 Talamo J L125 b 8.90 75-19 CoolGro4InfntLoop4ContryR4 Inside, wkened late
 12Feb16-55A fm 1 1/2 @ 21 47 1.084 1.124 4 1/2 Md Sp Wt 57k 61 4/8 6 64 64 84 77 Talamo J L123 *2.30 78-11 Sedastns4H4C4CountryR4 Bit wshy, no rally
 22Jan16-85A gd 5 1/2 @ 22 451 1.082 1.141 4 1/2 Md Sp Wt 59k 76 6/70 8 11 14 24 37 Talamo J L122 12.00 79-18 FlmFr4CmplMe4LordofChs Bwn foal, 1/8 held 3rd
WORKS: Oct 9 SA 4 ft ht: 50 1/2 H 30 1/2 Oct 2 SA 5 ft ht: 102 H 74 1/2 Sep 24 LA 4 ft ht: 50 H 20 1/2 Sep 16 LA 4 ft ht: 48 H 20 1/2 Sep 9 LA 4 ft ht: 48 1/2 H 20 1/2



Rockingham

Rockingham



18

Q&A: Brian Trump of Rockingham Ranch

By Steve Sherack

BRIAN TRUMP IS THE DIRECTOR OF Operations at Rockingham Ranch, the nom de course of his father-in-law, Gary Hartunian. Rockingham Ranch has campaigned standouts such as the 2015 Grade 1 Woodford Reserve Turf Classic winner Finnegans Wake, last year's G1 Dubai Golden Shaheen runner-up X Y Jet, and the very promising recent stakes winner Conquest Farenheit.

Q: *Just a little about yourself first. Where are you from originally, where did you attend school, and how were you introduced to racing?*

Brian Trump: I'm originally from the Calabasas (Calif.) area. Grew up in the land of Kardashians. Went to high school at a small private school in the L.A. area called Montclair Prep. It is at Montclair Prep where I met my future wife, whose brother was my teammate on the baseball team. After going on a few dates, we remained friends as I went off to play baseball at UC San Diego, and she stayed in L.A. to pursue her professional ice skating career.

We reconnected years later after I got back from college and quickly got

engaged and married. Together, we have a beautiful daughter Skylar, and another daughter on the way. During our dating, she suggested I go down to Del Mar with her father as he had just bought a horse that would be running that day. Having no previous experience with horses or at the racetrack, I thought it would be a good bonding experience with my girlfriend's father. Little did she know that I would catch the bug and horseracing would quickly fill the competitive void that was once filled by baseball.

Q: *What's a typical day for you like with your duties at Rockingham Ranch? Tell us about your role there.*

BT: As Rockingham Ranch has grown, so has my position. When my father-in-law Gary Hartunian had a few horses, I was simply a fan of the sport. However, as the stable grew and we started to venture into breeding, Gary decided there was a need for someone to keep an eye on all the horses and provide him with updates, as well as handle all the paperwork. I remember sitting next to him on the flight back from the Dubai World Cup, where X

Y Jet had just run a very strong second in the Golden Shaheen. We both watched a documentary on the Godolphin operation, from breeding horses, to purchasing horses, to the differences between his UK, UAE, and Australian operations, and finally to re-purposing retired horse. We looked at each other and he said to me, 'Wow, this is who we are up against. We need to be more organized, and have a better plan.'

As soon as we got back to L.A., I took on a full-time role for Rockingham Ranch. My job entails visiting our stable weekly [with trainer Peter Miller] at the San Luis Rey Training Center. I provide Gary with status reports on all 41 of our horses in training there. Daily phone meetings with our racing manager and longtime friend David Lanzman to discuss our New Jersey/Florida trainer Jorge Navarro and to get status updates on our 11 horses with him, and our West Virginia trainer Jeff Runco and our horses with him. Weekly status reports with our broodmares at Taylor Made Farm in Kentucky and Ballena Vista Farm in California, as well as our stallion Finnegans Wake, our weanlings, yearlings, and 2-year-olds, and

our horses rehabilitating from injuries or just getting some needed rest at our rehab facility. And then, all the day-to-day paperwork as far as making sure each horse's papers are at the correct track, making sure our racing licenses are up to date in each state, and writing up contracts on prospective horses to be purchased.

Q: *What's been your favorite moment at the races since you began working for Rockingham Ranch?*

BT: By far, my favorite moment at the races was watching Finnegans Wake in the G1 Woodford Reserve Turf Classic stalk the entire field nine lengths back, come around the final turn wide and close on the entire field to win by a head. It was the most exhilarating feeling.

Q: *How big is the entire stable? Any runners that you're particularly excited about for 2017?*

BT: We are now up to 64 horses of racing age, 10 babies, 12 broodmares, and one stallion. We are very excited about many of our horses this year.

We have a half-brother to Calculator by Overdriven [named Earnhardt], who is a specimen of horse and should be running soon and looks promising. We also have a Tapit 3-year-old that should be debuting shortly that has shown some fight and will be debuting shortly, too.

We are very excited for the return of California Diamond, Chalon, Bobby Abu Dhabi, and Big League. They all got off to nice starts, and with rest, look to be coming back stronger. We are thrilled about Richard's Boy and Stormy Liberal. Both appear to be at the top of their game and we are hoping to get them to Dubai to run in the Al Quoz Sprint on the turf. We couldn't be more excited about Conquest Fahrenheit. After experimenting on the dirt, we were very pleased to see him back to his normal self on the turf in the Baffle Stakes. We are pointing him to the Pasadena Stakes, and from there will see where he takes us this year!

Q: *Favorite way to celebrate a big win at the races?*

BT: Unfortunately, I do not get to spend that much time at the actual races. Most of my time is spent prepping them for the race. When it comes to the weekends, my time is spent with my family. We usually all take a break from what we are doing to catch the race on TVG, either at home or on my iPhone, and when we have a big win, we usually go out for a nice dinner. As my daughter gets older, I will be taking her out to the races more and more.

Q: *Finnegans Wake stands his first season at stud in California in 2017. What's the response to him been like so far?*

BT: He ended his racing career sound, and we kept going back and forth on whether to keep running him, but ultimately felt that he deserved the stallion lifestyle after all the great success and memories he gave us.

The feedback we have gotten has been that of excitement and great hope for his foals. We feel that his ability to run long on the turf will translate well to his foals. Many people forget he finished fourth by only a length and a half to Hard Aces, Hoppertunity, and Catch A Flight in the G1 Santa Anita Gold Cup, and he ran four-wide the entire race. This horse could run on the dirt very well, too, and because of that, we are sending our own dirt mares to him as well in hopes of breeding some two-turn, dirt Cal.-bred horses. We have already locked him up to some very nice mares who have already had some of the top Cal.-bred horses, including Carries a Jewel, dam of 2016 Cal. Bred 2-year-old California Diamond.

Q: *Do you have a favorite racetrack to handicap/wager on?*

BT: I honestly am not a big gambler, but when I do throw some money down, it's usually on our own horses. So, I guess that would mean either Santa Anita or Del Mar as that's where we race the majority of our horses.

Q: *Which speed figures/past performances do you prefer using when analyzing pp's?*

BT: I prefer to use a combination of both Beyer figures and Rags numbers. I think both offer advantages, and I try to make the best decision based on all info provided.

Q: *What do you love most about racing?*

BT: Many people enjoy the thrill of the race, but for me it's everything that leads up to that race. Each one of these horses has their own back story, whether it be being bought at an auction, claimed at the track, or coming off an injury. There is a big team of people that come together and give the best care and attention to each one of their individual needs. Whether it be at the rehabilitation facility, or under the care of Peter Miller and his amazing team, I truly appreciate being a part of getting each horse to reach his/her potential.

Q: *You mentioned earlier that you are a former baseball player. Any other sport(s) that you're a fan of?*

BT: I grew up playing baseball and basketball, so they still have a place in my heart. With the Chargers coming to Los Angeles, I am excited to get into football again.

Q: *Closing thoughts?*

BT: I think it is a very exciting time in horseracing. With the recent success of American Pharoah and California Chrome, horseracing appears to have become more mainstream here in the United States. More and more we see big races being shown on NBC Sports, and I feel a new generation of younger fans are getting into the sport that may not have otherwise without the recent exposure. I am excited to see what the future of the sport brings and love seeing new ideas like the Pegasus Cup. Furthermore, it is fun to see other young men and women get into the sport as ultimately we will become the future of horse racing.

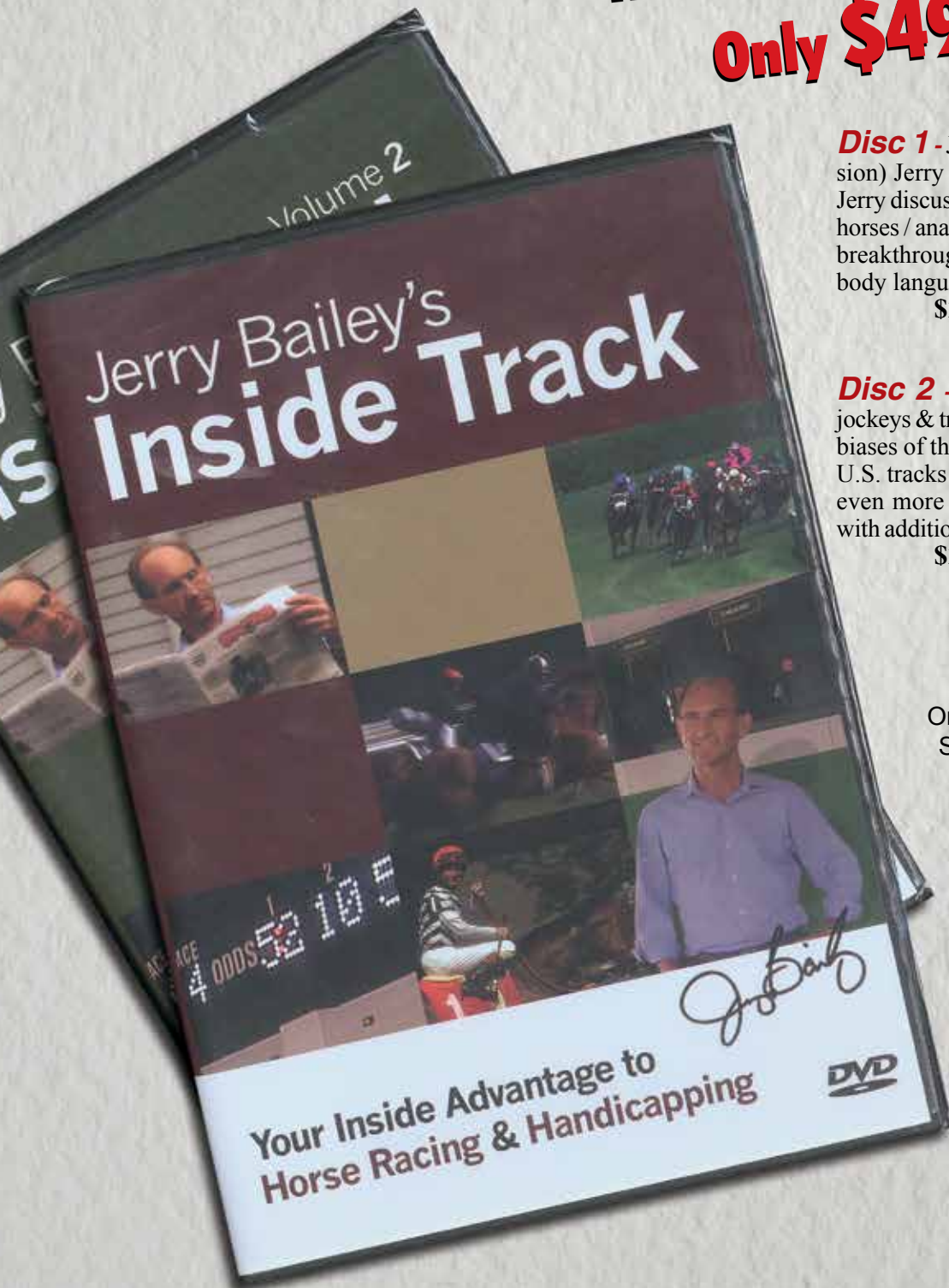


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Ways to Win

By Barry Meadow

EVERY SO OFTEN, I HEAR SOME PLAYER, or read in some handicapping forum, something to this effect: “You can’t win unless you do X.” That X could range from understanding graduate-school-level mathematics to staying away from favorites to watching horses in the paddock.

I say, it’s best not to say you can’t do something. I played the Thoroughbreds full-time for more than 20 years. And certainly, there were some things I could have done better. I rarely watched horses in the paddock, or studied the warmups. I could have kept better bias notes. I bet too many races at fair tracks and bullrings where some horses take to the configuration and others don’t.

Then again, I did a bunch of things right. I studied the replays carefully. I rarely bet unless I felt I had an edge. I took advantage of rebates and promotions.

Winning isn’t easy, particularly since an estimated 20% of today’s handle is bet by computerized robotic wagering teams, whose software spits out frighteningly accurate odds lines and makes optimal bets faster and better

than most individuals can do. But even these teams can’t do everything. “We don’t play perfectly,” says Bill Bentner, head of one of the leading teams. “But we play well enough considering we bet on every track. A lone wolf playing his own circuit may actually do better than us at that track.” That’s because the lone wolf can add such factors as paddock department and accurate race notes (the teams all depend on charts, though some use humans to supplement their trip notes at some tracks). And understand the daily nuances and idiosyncrasies at his home track.

So, what about you? Do you have a winning plan? Let’s look at a number of possibilities (find the one that appeals most to you):

- **Concentrate on one or two tracks and know all the horses, trainers, and jockeys at those tracks.** That means keeping detailed notes on each horse, understanding which jockeys fit which types of horses, studying the replays, knowing the trainers, being able to figure changing biases on the fly, etc.

- **Stick with non-jackpot carryovers, particularly on mandatory payout days.** There’s often more money given out

than is taken in, which gives you a positive expectation. Some of these require major money, so this is not a strategy for desperados.

- **Play turf races only.** These races generally attract a better class of horse, more easily handicapped than the dirt maiden claimers that are so common at so many tracks. Watch replays, and you can see who might have had particularly good or bad trips of late. You can often catch longshots who actually figure in these races.

- **Look to beat vulnerable favorites.** By playing against horses who have no particular edge in speed and pace numbers, or who have no early speed, or who are coming off long layoffs, or who are ridden by 5% jockeys, you’re more likely to catch prices. Learn how to identify horses that will probably be overbet. When you’re right, at least you’ll get paid.

- **Consider trifectas and superfectas.** Unlike the pick 3’s and pick 6’s, you have to be right only once. If you can leave out a favorite or second choice, so much the better. Many tracks offer 10-cent or 20-cent bets in these pools, so don’t be afraid to throw in some

bombs. Take stands – this one must be in the top two, this other one can't be on the ticket at all, etc.

- **Zero-in on trainer specialties and patterns.** Learn the ins and outs of your 20 leading trainers. Know who works his horses fast, who raises his horses in class only when he's confident, who

at Del Mar but 24% at Golden Gate, and those in Kentucky buck a 14% takeout at Kentucky Downs but 22% at Churchill Downs. These are huge differences.

- **Follow small tracks with small handles.** While you can't crush a race at Mahoning Valley as you might at Sara-

- **Whatever you do, stick with these universal strategies:**

Do all you can to get the largest rebates possible. This might mean using more than one ADW, depending on varying rates per track.

Pay attention to promotions and reload bonus offers. Free money always helps your bottom line.

Apply proper money management principles, betting only when you feel you have an advantage.

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“Winning isn't easy, particularly since an estimated 20% of today's handle is bet by computerized robotic wagering teams.”

wins off layoffs, which jockeys each one prefers to use, etc. You're not going to make big money just through speed and pace numbers, but trainer analysis can still land rewards.

- **Specialize in tracks, and bets, with lower takeouts.** Pick 5 players in California, for instance, are charged 14%

toga, you probably won't be facing the same number of sharpies, either. If you specialize in tracks where there's not much out-of-state interest from serious players, you might have an advantage. Some places handle almost nothing on Monday through Wednesday, when many big players don't participate.



Supplement Win Plays with Smart Exotics

By Frank Cotolo

THERE IS A MUNIFICENCE OF EXOTIC wagers on racetrack programs these days. The sheer number of available types of exotics can make one dizzy, especially since their base prices have changed, some now available as little as 10 cents. The question is simple: Which exotics, if any, are worth a play?

Every player I have ever known seems to strive for a particular exotic. For unknown reasons, each player becomes attached to hitting certain exotics and most of the time that can lead to a very expensive challenge. The “fever,” if you will, to hit a Pick 3 or a Pick 4, or a Superfecta, or any exotic, can become pricey, even when the ticket has winners – but not as many needed to cash – if the player has put all of his or her money into hitting the exotic. This is because when cashing one of these single- or multi-race exotics becomes just short of obsessive, the player will pass on great win prices to accommodate a limited bankroll.

There is nothing worse – and I mean nothing – than having a Pick-4 ticket

like this: Leg one is a win at \$15.40; leg two is a win at \$23.00; leg three is a win at \$8.80; leg four is a loss.

The loss of the Pick 4 ticket is devastating with even a minimally teamed ticket. For instance, let’s say it is a 50-cent Pick 4 that reads: 1,2,3 / 4,5 / 6,7,8 / 1,2,4. This is a \$27.00 ticket that returns nothing because 1, 2 or 4 were not winners in the final leg. Passed were three strong-paying winners. At worst (just to make a point because no one should play against themselves in a single race), if \$2.00 were played on each of the horses making up the Pick 4 ticket, it would have cost \$22.00. The return would have been \$47.20. So, even playing poorly, a profit from win bets was possible, while the Pick 4 returned nothing without all legs being won.

This is a great case for playing horses to win and using an exotic as a supplement wager only, if your bankroll can withstand the investment. Ultimately, of course, the win bets will always be more valuable since the odds of needing a single result to cash as opposed

to two, three or more results to cash, are on the side of the bettor. That, of course, goes for multi-race exotics – the “Pick” races and Daily Doubles. The single-race exotics provide an even more complex set of chances, no less passing on a single winner to participate.

Single-Race Rigmarole

The single-race exotic, of course, relies on a single field of horses. It would seem to be easier by comparison to cash an exotic ticket involving competitors in the same race than in a series of races (and fields), where the problems within the individual races have no effect on the other two, three or more races involved, as in Pick bets.

Indeed, the single-race exotic calls for only a single winner and in an exacta, one winner and a loser; and in a trifecta one winner and two losers; and in a superfecta one winner and three losers, etc. Add to that the rule that all losers must finish in the exact order you choose, and you are choosing horses in a world of chaos.

Of course there is the option of boxing numbers. However, that means buying numerous losing combinations and being able only to cash the ticket for a single price. For a \$2.00 base price, for instance, a trifecta box costs \$12.00.

on top, a 2-1 second and a 5-1 third, you won't be making a down payment on a home. In fact, you may have lost money if you bought a ticket with too many combinations or boxed it.

For instance, if you boxed that 4-5,

have keyed the higher odds horse for the win and crisscrossed the other two for second and third, which still cost \$6.00 but you would have been able to cash the trifecta three times. Then, for the \$6.00, you would have collected \$192.00. And, of course, if you had played another \$6.00 to win on your key horse (the 5-1), add \$36.00 and collect \$228.00 on the \$12.00 investment. As well, if you had not played the trifecta at all and played \$12.00 to win on the 5-1, you would have cashed for \$72.00 no matter which horses came in second or third.

Ideally, having two bankrolls, one for wins and one for exotics, is the best possible way to approach the pools, even though the cheap exotics are usually affordable. But if you are selective, you can make a few big scores with a win and an exotic bet, while taking the chance with only the exotic wager can wipe you out in no time. More about exotic play in my next column.

“The 'fever', if you will, to hit a Pick 3 or a Pick 4, or a superfecta, or any exotic, can become pricey.”

There is a lot of waste in ways to purchase any kind of exotic for any price, but it doesn't matter because the return is always reflecting the nature of the horses involved in the winning combination. If you hit a trifecta with a combination (no matter how many combinations you buy) that has a 4-5

2-1 and 5-1 trifecta for \$1.00 (\$6.00 box) and it came in with the 5-1 first, 2-1 second and the 4-5 third, which should be the best paying combo, your trifecta (according to a sample taken from recent race at Charles Town) would pay roughly \$64.00. If, however, you targeted a bigger score, you could





Unique Bella

“The goal is to make her a champion. There will be time later to run against the colts if we choose,” Fernando Diaz-Valdes, advisor to Don Alberto Stable

By Ellen Parker

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GREAT fillies around. Of this one can be certain. Whether we reach into the past to recall a Sceptre or Dahlia, or reminiscence with fondness the recent duo of Rachel Alexandra and Zenyatta, these are history makers.

Yet in recent times, we seem to have had them in ever growing numbers – Azeri, Rags to Riches, Zenyatta, Rachel Alexandra and Beholder all beat the boys. International superstars like Treve and Black Caviar and Goldikova did no less.

Just last year two Americans took their show on the road – Tepin and Lady Aurelia – and they are scheduled to stick around. And now we have another superstar in the making – one that might test the reigning queen, Songbird, who happens to also reside in the barn of trainer Jerry Hollendorfer.

Unique Bella has a cross to bear, however. Not only is she a big, strong

grey but even her name – ‘Bella’ recalls Eight Bells with whom she shares the grey bloodline of Unbridled’s Song. Except that Unique Bella is actually inbred to Unbridled, the 1990 Kentucky Derby winner and excellent sire.

Unbridled is the broodmare sire of her sire, Tapit, and the sire of her broodmare sire, Unbridled’s Song. For all the close in-breeding, she appears bigger and stronger than Eight Bells and one well-known turf writer commented that Unique Bella more closely resembles Kentucky Derby winning filly Winning Colors than her star-crossed relation.

Nevertheless, from the outset comparison would be the key to Unique Bella’s career. For starters not only did she have the pedigree ties to Eight Bells, but the trainer/rider ties of Hollendorfer and Mike Smith to two-time Eclipse award winner Songbird.

As to that pedigree, it fairly sings with class. Her sire, Tapit, has been

leading the sire list for the last three years, her dam won a Breeders’ Cup race of her own (the 2010 Breeders’ Cup Ladies Classic) and sold for \$2.8 million as a broodmare prospect, going to Elizabeth Moran’s Brushwood Stable of Pennsylvania. Unique Bella herself cost a cool \$400,000 as a 2015 Keeneland yearling.

Her buyer was Carlos Heller’s Don Alberto Stables of Chile. She spent her formative years at Creekview Farm near Paris, Kentucky, before being consigned for Brushwood by Eaton Sales. Reiley McDonald, owner of Eaton often checked on the classy miss prior to her debut in the sale ring.

“She has a beautiful head, neck, shoulder profile and was deep through the girth, a hallmark of good horses,” Reiley recalled. Creekview Farm manager Brian Cotter added that she was a very uncomplicated, quick study in her early lessons and that she made no mistakes, something rare with any

young horse.

Since the filly deserved the best, who better than the man who had developed superstar Songbird? The filly made her initial start on June 16, 2016 at Santa Anita and ran second to a rival whose name might become a trivia question –Chalon – beaten 2 ¼ lengths going five furlongs. It was later discovered that she had a minor shin problem, quite common with youngsters and she was given some time off to heal and grow.

Upon her return almost five months to the day of her first race, Unique Bella said “thanks” for the time off with a resounding 10 ¼ length romping win at 6 ½ furlongs at Del Mar. The chart comment, as it would continue to do, read “handily.”

A horse like Unique Bella seldom races through all her conditions and she was immediately placed into graded stakes competition in the G2

Santa Ynez Stakes at seven furlongs at Santa Anita on January 8, 2017. Only four other horses showed up to try her, but it was a good four – all were coming off wins and Shane’s Girlfriend was coming off a victory in the G3 Delta Downs Princess Stakes, which earned her the role as favorite.

Unique Bella had broken her maiden in wire-to-wire style, so when a three-way battle for the lead developed, Mike Smith thought it was a good time to see what would happen with his latest superstar if she was asked to rate.

“Taking hold of her didn’t seem to bother her,” said the Hall of Famer, “When we hit the far turn, it was like she was breathing different air.” Seven and one half lengths of different air to be exact, with a final time of 1:22 1/5 for the seven furlongs.

“Today she showed that she is brilliant,” said Hollendorfer. Brilliant enough it seemed to return rather

quickly, in the Feb. 5 Las Virgenes Stakes, over a flat mile at Santa Anita. This time, only three rivals could be found, but one was champion and Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Fillies winner Champagne Room.

Settling just off the pace, the grey blur flew by her rivals and drew out to a handy 8 ¾-length victory in 1:35 3/5. Said her rider/admirer, “The way she settled, I could have taken her even farther back. At some point you have to let them be who they are, let them do what they’re good at. I just let her do what she wanted to do and she picked it up, and was well within herself.” The man who has handled Zenyatta and Songbird knows a good one when he rides one.

Hollendorfer was the one who was surprised. “You never expect that,” said the veteran trainer. “But I was pretty confident when Mike made his move early.”



Unique Bella and Jockey Mike Smith

Now the heat was on. Fans and commentators alike began clamoring for a match with the boys. But neither Hollendorfer nor the filly's owners were keen on the idea.

"I'd like to keep her in California like we did with Songbird and if we're lucky go for the Kentucky Oaks." Fernando Diaz-Valdes noted that he had been told to go to the Kentucky Derby, but that a wait-and-see position made the most sense at the time.

Three-year-olds are all about learning new tricks and in Unique Bella's next start, the 1 1/16 mile G3 Santa Ysabel at Santa Anita March 4, she was required to dig a bit deeper into her well-documented talent. Breaking a bit slowly from her rail slot she had to bull her way through to the lead, but had established herself as the one to beat with a five-length win in mid-stretch.

At that point, many went to cash their tickets, but a roar from the crowd

was heard when a late-charging G1 winner named Abel Tasman came flying at the grey filly. Mike Smith asked his budding superstar and she rebroke and found that something extra the good ones have to beat off the challenge and go on to a 2 ¼ length win – this time "driving" instead of handily. Given that a filly had tested her, however, made the Santa Anita Oaks – and the Kentucky Oaks if the result was as hoped – and not the Derby a more likely springtime goal for Unique Bella.

Nevertheless, as mid-March approached, there was still no standout among the colts. Would the Unique Bella camp change their mind and go for the roses? Her connections did not seem to be leaning in that direction.

"We're just trying to do our best and she's rewarding us," Hollendorfer commented. "I don't have any thoughts about running her against the boys."

Diaz-Valdes added that while it might not appear right this minute that the males constitute a great crop, that they are developing and his concern is the filly, not someone else's colts.

"With a filly like this, you have to take one step at a time. You can't afford to leave races like the Kentucky Oaks on the table." As the Don Alberto brand has continued to grow, Diaz-Valdes is aware that the now global racing and breeding enterprise needs family lines to build upon.

A filly like Unique Bella is just what a major breeding farm needs – far more than they need a win against males. It will likely be on this basis that decisions about her future will be made. So don't count her out – but don't count her in, either.



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