



## RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS

*by Ron Nicoletti*

### FIRST RACE:

**7 SMOOTH VALENTINE** and **5 GRYFINNDOR'S SWORD** are an uncoupled pair from trainer Bill White that merit consideration. The former, a son of Smooth Jazz, is hoping to find a little more after rallying along the inside, as the favorite, to finish second here last out while the latter, a son of Awesome Again, makes his first start since posting the best last-race Beyer figure (67) when finishing third at this level and distance at Calder. Note that jockey Elvis Trujillo rode both horses last out and opts to stick with Smooth Valentine. **2 E'S TOO SMART** has his claiming tag sliced in half after encountering traffic on the turn (checked) when finishing sixth in a 'key' \$40,000 claimer that produced repeat winner Sparkle City, and next-out winner Personal Good.

**SELECTIONS:** 7-5-2

### SECOND RACE:

**2 HE'S SO CHIC**, who was the talk of New Jersey when he posted a triple-digit speed figure (105) when winning an entry-level allowance at the Meadowlands in 1:07 & 3 for the 6 furlongs, was sent south after dueling throughout and finishing second on the 6-furlong \$65K Pelican at Tampa. Trainer Jason Servis has Jose Lezcano atop the swift son of Jump Start. **4 GSTAAD** makes the usually fruitful third start of his current form cycle after getting beat neck in his local debut at 7 1/2 furlongs (Jan. 10), and finishing third when facing hard-knocking Tsali in a 7-furlong 'two-other-than' allowance last out. **7 NOT FOR MONEY** is turning back after recovering from a slow start to finish fifth behind Gstaad at 7 1/2 furlongs on Jan. 10, which was his first race in 7 months. Trainer Rich Dutrow, 30% with horses making the second start after a lengthy layoff, readied the colt for this assignment with a bullet 5-furlong drill at Palm Meadows.

**SELECTIONS:** 2-4-7

### THIRD RACE:

**13 MASCOT** is hoping for a clean trip after being blocked from the 1/4-pole to the 1/8-pole and beaten only 2 lengths by almost the same group at 9-furlongs last out. Trainer Eddie Broome claimed him last out and tabs Edgar Prado to ride. **10 STORMY ROMAN** turns back to a mile and a sixteenth (21-3-3-7) after altering course in the stretch and getting up to defeat similar, including Mascot, in their recent clash at 9 furlongs. Red-hot trainer Peter Walder has John Velazquez going for two in a row. **9 DEVIL'S PREACHER** is turning back after surrendering a late lead to finish second - only a half-length behind Stormy Roman last out. **11 INSTINCTIVELY** is turning back to a mile and a sixteenth after making what looked like

a winning move before settling for third behind Stormy Roman and Devil's Preacher last out.

**SELECTIONS:** 13-10-9-11

### FOURTH RACE:

**1 THAT'S AN OUTRAGE** drops to the \$6,250 level on the dirt after following a second place finish vs. \$10,000 claimers at a mile on a 'good' track with a third place showing vs. another group of \$10,000 claimers at a mile and a sixteenth on the grass. Trainer Nick Gonzales, 25% with the turf-to-dirt angle, has Josue Arce handling the surface switch. **2 SUAVE BARON** will try to make it two in a row after returning from a 2-month freshening to defeat similar, as the favorite, at the distance, last out. Trainer Peter Walder, 25% with horses winning consecutive races, has Ray Fuentes in the saddle again. **3 BANDIT NAILHEAD** is hoping to find a little more for the stretch drive after following a well-meant second place finish behind Suave Baron on Jan. 14 with a third place finish behind **12 MEGGA GEE** last out. The latter moves to a tough outside post (12) after posting the best last-race speed figure (73) when finishing a troubled second from Post 5 last out (bumped start).

**SELECTIONS:** 1-2-3-12

### FIFTH RACE:

**6 VACATION**, a half to stakes placed Boca Grande, debuts on the turf with blinkers added after making a 4-wide bid, from a tough post (8), to finish fourth behind impressive winner Elysium Fields in his local debut at 9 furlongs. Trainer Shug McGaughey has Javier Castellano returning on the son of Dynaformer. **11 DISTANT POINT** is moving to the turf after a promising career debut in a race moved to a mile on a 'good' track in which he rallied to finish third. Trainer Barclay Tagg readied the \$210K son of Tale Of The Cat for this assignment with three sharp Palm Meadows workouts (2 on turf & a bullet on the dirt). **3 FIONN**, bred to love the turf, the son of Mizzen Mast moves to the grass after rallying to finish a frustrating second in three consecutive races on the Woodbine Polytrack, including a half-length defeat at this distance last out. Trainer Mike Doyle has the sophomore working sharply on the Palm Meadows turf. **13 HOLY KNIGHT**, a half to Grade 1 performers City Zip and Ghostzapper, and also a half to local runner Lion Lord, makes his career debut off a string of solid workouts on the Palm Meadows turf. Trainer Brian Lynch has Rene Douglas handling the son of Sligo Bay.

**SELECTIONS:** 6-11-3-13

Sunday, February 17, 2008

**SIXTH RACE:**

**4 ALTESSE** has trained sharply at Payson Park in preparation for the first start since chasing the pace and finishing fourth in the Grade 2 Top Flight Handicap at Aqueduct (Nov. 23), a race in which the second and third place finishers, Lady Marlboro and Golden Velvet, returned to win the Sabin Handicap (G3) here in a dead heat. **5 WELLOFAPRIZE** is stretching out to 9 furlongs after a useful return from an 8-month layoff in which she closed to finish third at seven-eighths of a mile. Trainer Todd Pletcher has Edgar Prado handling the stretchout as John Velazquez moves to Altesse. **3 SPRING WALTZ** will debut at the distance after following a mile and sixteenth optional claiming victory on the Woodbine Polytrack with a victory vs. \$40K optional claimers at a mile & 70 yards at Calder on Dec. 30. Trainer Brian Lynch has the lightly raced mare firing bullets at Palm Meadows in preparation for the return.

**SELECTIONS: 4-5-3**

**SEVENTH RACE:**

**3 ELA ENTA** is turning back to a mile and sixteenth after responding to the addition of Lasix with a 'two-lifetime' allowance victory in her North American debut at 9 furlongs. Trainer Kiaran McLaughlin, 30% with horses making the second start after a 45-180 day layoff, readied the daughter of Royal Applause for this assignment with bullet half-mile drill on the Palm Meadows turf. **7 KIN TO THE WIND** is stretching out to a mile and a sixteenth after a sharp local outing at a mile in which she rallied to finish second - beaten a half-length in a 4-horse blanket finish. Trainer Marty Wolfson tabs Edgar Prado to ride the daughter of Giant's Causeway. **5 MY GOLDEN QUEST** should be primed and ready to score after dueling for the lead and finishing fourth - a nose and neck behind Kin To the Win in their recent clash at a mile. Trainer Todd Pletcher, 27% with horses making the second start after a 45-180 day layoff, has go-to guy John Velazquez handling the rematch. **6 VIVA LA FLAG**, a beautifully bred daughter of Rahy, makes her North American debut with Lasix added after winning 2 of 7 races on the turf in England. Trainer Shug McGaughey has the Phipps Stable homebred training nicely on the Payson Park turf.

**SELECTIONS: 3-7-5-6**

**EIGHTH RACE:**

**5 SUGAR SWIRL** is stretching out to 7 furlongs (3-2-0-0) after drawing clear 4-wide to score impressively on a sealed 'sloppy' track in the 6-furlong First Lady Handicap (G3). Trainer Brian Lynch has Javier Castellano returning on the daughter of Touch Gold. **4 LADY MARLBORO** is turning back to seven-eighths of a mile (2-1-1-0) after rebounding from a

frustrating nose defeat in the Top Flight Handicap (G2) at Aqueduct with a dead heat victory here in the 1-mile Sabin Handicap (G3). Trainer Jim Jerkens has leading jock Eibar Coa in the saddle as Castellano sticks with Sugar Swirl. **2 CHER AMI**, a winner of 7 of 12 races in Florida, is back home after getting cooked in a sizzling pace duel of :20 & 2 and :43 & 1 at Santa Anita in the 6-furlong Sunshine Millions F & M Sprint. Trainer Larry Bates has Ariel Smith in the saddle again.

**SELECTIONS: 5-4-2**

**NINTH RACE:**

**3 HIGHEST DEGREE**, who beat entry-level allowance competition at Churchill in November, plunges into this \$30,000 'three-lifetime' claimer after stalking the pace and failing to muster a late response when facing considerably tougher in his local debut vs. \$62,500 optional claimers. Trainer Ken McPeck has Kent Desormeaux in the saddle again. **4 PARTY JONES**, beaten a length at this level at Belmont last October, returns after ending his 2007 campaign with a troubled seventh place finish vs. \$50,000 starter allowance runners at Aqueduct on Oct. 31. Trainer Dominic Galluscio has Ariel Smith named to ride. **9 HYRACOTHERIUM** will return to the turf (4-0-1-1) after rallying late on the dirt to defeat \$30,000 'two-lifetime' claimers at a mile and an eighth. Trainer Todd Pletcher has Johnny V handling the surface switch. **14 SOUND CHECK** is stretching out to his best distance (4-2-0-0) after a 4-wide journey vs. similar at 5 furlongs on a 'yielding' course failed to produce a winning performance. Trainer David Fawkes, 19% with the stretchout move, tabs Elvis Trujillo to ride.

**SELECTIONS: 3-4-9-14**

**BEST BET: RACE 5 - VACATION**

**LONG SHOT: RACE 7 - SALLY BOWLES**