

Expert Analysis

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Romantic Ride (3rd race)

First Race

1. Lubie's Music

2. Vow to Resiliency

3. Conquistadora

~LUBIE'S MUSIC^ can make amends after finishing fourth as the favorite in a similar maiden turf mile. She did not have a good trip. Forwardly placed while losing ground three-wide both turns, she ran in spots in the stretch, and finished okay in a race dominated by late-runners. Not a bad effort by 'MUSIC. Her runner-up finish two starts back behind a next-out winner would be fast enough to win this. ~VOW TO RESILIENCY^ finished in front of the top choice last time, third while making her first start in more than a year. The six-start late-running maiden has a right to improve second start back. ~CONQUISTADORA^ showed promise both starts last year as a 2yo. Third in her debut at a mile on turf, she subsequently finished fourth in a dirt route from which the one-two finishers returned to win. CONQUISTADORA is making her first start in more than four months; her debut third shows she runs well fresh.

Second Race

1. Miz Clubcali

2. Aloha Dreamin

3. Misty Dancer

~MIZ CLUBCALI^ drops from \$30k claiming N3L turf, to \$10k claiming N3L dirt after a double-digit drubbing. Her January-February efforts on turf would be fast enough, and she has run well on dirt (win, second). 'CLUBCALI has speed to keep likely pacesetter ~ALOHA DREAMIN^ in her sights. The latter probably is the one they must catch, up a notch after she wired a \$10k claiming N2L sprint. If she can dispose of her main pace rival who breaks from the outside post, 'DREAMIN could be gone. ~MISTY DANCER^ drops in class from open \$8k claiming down to N3L claiming. She will rally late. SEI BELLA is the aforementioned outside-post front-runner that ALOHA DREAMIN must deal with.

Third Race

1. Romantic Ride

2. Ventry Strand

3. Uecker

Back-to-back winner of Cal-bred maiden and allowance turf sprints, ~ROMANTIC RIDE^ stretches to a mile following the best race of his four-start career. He won clear by nearly two lengths. Sired by Clubhouse Ride, one mile should be within reach although his dam was a pure sprinter. Sharp horse can fire right back with a front-running/pace-pressing trip. ~VENTRY STRAND^ has something the top choice lacks. That is, experience around two turns. 'STRAND followed her last-to-first maiden sprint victory with a sharp runner-up finish last time in her first try around two turns. 'STRAND has improved each subsequent start, and will be rolling late. ~UECKER^ is speed, runner-up last out in a dirt route, and proven on turf (maiden win, allowance third). UECKER is expected to set the pace, but top choice ROMANTIC RIDE will be breathing down his neck.

Fourth Race

1. Ghazaaly

2. Magnify

3. Berlin Wall

~GHAZAALY^ scored a decisive win last out at this N1X/optional claiming level, no reason he cannot win again at the same level. He remains eligible because he ran for the claim tag last out. However, he might not get same ideal trip as last time, when he pressed the pace in the clear before he kicked away. But he can take dirt, which he did three starts back when he raced inside and behind rivals before swinging out and running away. Sharp horse, never better. ~MAGNIFY^ finished second, three lengths behind the top choice, while making his first start in more than a year. With that comeback under his belt, he figures to improve second start back. ~BERLIN WALL^ was hard-held and uncomfortable early in the same race the top pair exit; 'WALL finished fifth. Now he moves to an outside post (6 of 7) and will be racing in the clear.

Fifth Race

1. Christa McAuliffe

2. Redheaded Reba

3. Goje

This Cal-bred filly maiden dirt sprint is a split of race 7. ~CHRISTA MCAULIFFE^ is ready for a maiden win, despite drawing the rail at five and one-half furlongs. 'MCAULIFFE finished second last out behind Another Zero, a contender Saturday in the Evening Jewel Stakes (race 8). A good effort by 'Zero would validate the form of 'MCAULIFFE, who has improved each subsequent start. One more forward move can land her a maiden win. ~REDHEADED REBA^ has shown ability in workouts at San Luis Rey Downs according to the clocker for So Cal Workout Report. 'REBA is by top debut sire Om (17 percent debut wins, 3yos and up). ~GOJE^ returns to a dirt sprint after she set the pace and held second in a turf mile. She finished third in her first two starts in dirt sprints.

Sixth Race

1. Smart Code

2. Gregory's Pride

3. Belly Up

~SMART CODE^ drops from N3L starter to N3L claiming, with the highest figures in the field and a pressing style that should have him forwardly placed in a turf sprint that could unfold at a tepid pace. Based on speed figures, he is a borderline standout. ~GREGORY'S PRIDE^ finished directly behind the top choice last out while making his first start in more than a year. Same as the top choice, 'PRIDE has never raced at a level this low. He will rally from behind. ~BELLY UP^ found six and one-half furlongs too far last out, and tired to third at this level. He shortens to six, with speed to establish position from the inside post. RHYTHEM ON STAGE finished a creditable second in his comeback, a half-length in front of BELLY UP. 'STAGE is a late threat.

Seventh Race

1. La Silenciosa

2. Darn Good Dancer

3. Jacklyn Lucas

This Cal-bred maiden dirt sprint is a split of race 5. A creditable third-place debut by ~LA SILENCIOSA^ makes her the choice despite the inside post. She was not quick first out, made a middle move, and went evenly to finish third behind Saturday stakes contender Another Zero and race-5 selection Christa McAuliffe. LA SILENCIOSA adds blinkers and Lasix, and figures to improve with a race under her belt. ~DARN GOOD DANCER^ has trained well for her debut, including a good-looking gate work last weekend in which she appeared to be going easier than G1 turf winner King of Gosford. Although progeny of Mo Forza do not win often first out, 'DANCER has shown above-average ability in morning works and could come out firing. ~JACKLYN LUCAS^ returns from a six-month break; she finished a creditable second in her second career start last fall. Lasix is on for her comeback.

Eighth Race

1. Wild Like the West

2. Inbox

3. Darya

The \$100k Providencia Stakes for 3yo turf fillies returns after a one-year hiatus. Although a mile and one-eighth is a challenge for ~WILD LIKE THE WEST^, she gets the call stretching out from mile races. Runner-up in a stakes mile two back, she finished second again last out in a relatively fast allowance while four clear of third. 'WEST has tactical speed, and could make the lead in this relatively paceless race. With an up-front trip setting or pressing tepid fractions, 'WEST will get the jump on the late-runners. She can win if she stays the trip. Distance is not a concern for last-out maiden winners ~INBOX^ and ~DARYA^. Both won at a mile and one-eighth; INBOX has had more time between starts following her winning U.S. debut in January when she ran her final three furlongs in :35.68. She runs well fresh, stays the distance, and this is only her third start. DARYA, Phil D'Amato-trained stablemate of INBOX, wheels back two weeks after her maiden win. She ran her final three furlongs in :35.28 and will be rolling late. ABIGAL ships in from Tampa Bay Downs, where she won two of three starts this winter. She exits the best race, having split the field last out in a G3.

Ninth Race

1. Captain Sparrow

2. Four O Six Creed

3. Broadway Unions

~CAPTAIN SPARROW^ has plenty going for him in this \$10k claiming starter. He won three of his last four claiming races, he has speed to set or press the pace, and his figures rank among the highest in the field. ~FOUR O SIX CREED^ drops in class and gets off the rail after misfiring last out with an inside trip. Entered for the \$12.5k optional claim tag, 'CREED will be ridden for the first time by Juan Hernandez. The past five years, Hernandez and trainer Jeff Mullins have teamed to win at a 31 percent clip (33 for 105). ~BROADWAY UNIONS^ was claimed for \$10k last out from a decent runner-up finish. He'll be rolling late, while DIRTY WORDS is expected to show speed from the rail.

Tenth Race

1. Goodfella

2. Tribal

3. Fire Mountain

~GOODFELLA^ ran well last out against better than he faces in this \$25k claiming N2L turf mile. Although he has never crossed the wire first (maiden win via disqualification), he has run fast enough to handle this soft bunch. ~TRIBAL^ shortens to a mile after finding a mile and one-eighth too far, and the starter allowance level too high. Trainer Doug O'Neill is dynamite second off the claim, 24 percent (26 for 109) the past five years. TRIBAL finished second at this level two starts back when he was claimed; he was overmatched last out. ~FIRE MOUNTAIN^ meets easier than last out, but he is stuck in post 10 of 10. SIX MAGPIES will be rolling late. That is a wrap for the winter-spring portion of the Santa Anita meet. After a one-week break, racing resumes April 17.