

Date: January 10, 2019 Track: Santa Anita

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Victory Element (2nd race)

#### First Race

1. Goseecal    2. Speakers    3. Halo Darlin

Despite a five-month layoff and just four recorded works, GOSEECAL gets the call in a perplexing turf mile for \$35k claiming fillies and mares, non-winners of three. She has run well fresh (comeback N2L sprint winner last spring), and figures to be within striking range of the lead in a race likely to unfold at a tepid pace. SPEAKERS was claimed from a ninth-place finish in a Cal-bred N1X/optional \$20k. Her recent form is not great, but she has run well on this course and could improve for her new trainer. HALO DARLIN stretches to a route, first off the claim following a respectable third two months ago in a downhill sprint. In a race without a confirmed front-runner, she should be forwardly placed chasing/pressing modest fractions.

#### Second Race

1. Victory Element    2. Candy Cornell    3. Mantaray Island

Runner-up both starts last spring, VICTORY ELEMENT returns from a long layoff with fast works including a bullet gate drill here Dec. 27. Comebackers from this stable typically are ready to fire, 'ELEMENT looks like a low-odds standout. CANDY CORNELL showed promise in his November 2017 debut, runner-up in a fast race, then regressed both starts thereafter. His third-place comeback in October was okay, he might have more speed than the top choice. MANTARAY ISLAND makes his California debut and second career start after a runner-up finish in a low-rated race at Gulfstream Park. Second time out, improvement likely for the sibling to G3 winner Ocho Ocho Ocho.

#### Third Race

1. Slewgoodtobetrue    2. Soothing    3. Claudelle

Following a pair of respectable runner-up sprints, SLEWGOODTOBETRUE is ready to stretch out and win this dirt mile for 3yo maiden fillies. She finished more than five lengths clear of third last out in a highly rated race; she has enough speed to be forwardly placed on the stretch-out. SOOTHING ran well her only start, runner-up in a sprint from which the third-place finisher returned to win. Off since that race three months ago, she returns with a solid work pattern and a pedigree that suggests two turns is fine. CLAUDELLE misfired last out; three previous in-the-money finishes make her a contender.

#### Fourth Race

1. Peach Cove
2. Girl Downstairs
3. Miss Boom Boom

PEACH COVE finished more than six lengths behind GIRL DOWNSTAIRS the last time they met, but that was at Del Mar. At Santa Anita, it might be a different story. PEACH COVE is a four-time winner here; she returns from a short layoff with a history of running well fresh. The veteran mare can sit, wait and blast home for the win. That is, unless GIRL DOWNSTAIRS reproduces her blowout victory three starts back in which she defeated the top choice by more than six lengths. Perhaps that race was an aberration, because two subsequent starts by 'DOWNSTAIRS were only okay. She was claimed from an odds-on runner-up finish last time, freshened two months and has more tactical speed than the top choice. MISS BOOM BOOM will rally from far back, while EMMY AND I will keep the pace honest up front.

#### Fifth Race

1. Ohtani
2. Gran Martillo
3. Drink

This maiden-50 sprint is a good spot to take a shot with OHTANI, whose third-place debut was better than it looks. He was squeezed and steadied at the start to lose all chance, but unleashed an extended rally and somehow made it respectable. He finished third by eight+ lengths. The second-start maiden moves from an inside post to the outside, may have more speed than he showed in his debut, and with a clean break and another half-furlong he can spring a mild upset. GRAN MARTILLO finished a creditable third in his debut at Los Alamitos. The race was run at a strong pace, he was forwardly placed and missed by only two and a half lengths. DRINK showed speed vs. special-weight maidens. He drops to maiden-50 second time out. A similar comment applies to second-start dropper NICE WORK, while DYF was gelded since his most recent and adds blinkers while shortening in distance and returning to dirt.

#### Sixth Race

1. Sheza Chattykat
2. Saburai
3. Silken Spy

Evenly matched SHEZA CHATTYKAT and SABURAI are the principals in this turf sprint, \$40k claiming non-winners of two. The edge goes to 'CHATTYKAT, who has more tactical speed than her main rival. 'CHATTYKAT drops from a series of N1X races including four in-the-money finishes. Turns out she is not quite allowance caliber, but a slight drop might do the trick. That is, unless SABURAI mows her down. The latter also has faced better throughout her career, now she shows up for a tag and goes route to sprint. She should be finishing fastest of all. SILKEN SPY returns to preferred turf footing and drops in for a tag for the first time.

### Seventh Race

1. Allaboutaction
2. Kochees
3. Adens Dream

ALLABOUTACTION is an 8-for-28 pro dropping from a tough allowance back into a claiming race (\$40k). His forwardly placed style should play well, and he does like this racetrack. Six starts at Santa Anita produced 4 wins, 2 seconds. KOCHEES is a 9yo win machine. He finished second last out in a highly rated starter allowance, and should be within striking range of the top choice. KOCHEES has won 11 of 43. ADENS DREAM had trouble last time finishing fourth as a longshot in a Los Al allowance. He fits with these.

### Eighth Race

1. S Y Sky
2. Show It N Moe It
3. Isa Firecracker

S Y SKY has more speed than her main rival; she finished in front of that rival when they met in November. All three starts by S Y SKY on the comeback trail have been solid including a fast-pace N2X last out she won via disqualification after missing by a neck. With a front-running or pace-pressing trip, 'SKY looks formidable in this Cal-bred allowance sprint. However, her main rival SHOW IT N MOE IT is no slouch. She faced good company through her 2018 campaign, winning a pair of allowance races on this track and finishing in the money in four stakes. She fits the conditions of this state-bred allowance, restricted to nonwinners of a stakes since 2017. Northern California based ISA FIRECRACKER missed by a head last out in a state-bred stakes; she finished in the money both starts on this track way back in fall 2016.

### Ninth Race

1. Smiling Annie
2. Smoovie
3. Into Rissa

SMILING ANNIE and SMOOVIE finished fourth and third, respectively, when they met on this downhill course in a state-bred maiden race in fall. Perhaps the order of finish will reverse this time. One could argue 'ANNIE actually ran better than her rival when they met in fall. ANNIE set the pace, battled back, and got swallowed late. Her next start was a toss; she faced open maiden fillies and was in too tough. Freshened since, dropping back to Cal-bred maiden, 'ANNIE gets the call with a front-running/pressing trip. SMOOVIE is an obvious contender. Her last-out third was her first try on the hill, and the best race of her career. She appears to have trained well for her first start in two months, she should be forwardly placed. INTO RISSA is a 13-start maiden that will roll late, OH PRETTY WOMAN is lightly raced with two in-the-money finishes from three starts, while WHOA NESSIE has enough speed to make her presence felt partway at a price.