

SANTA ANITA ANALYSIS



BY BRAD FREE

BEST BET: RACE 1, IMPRESSION

FIRST RACE

IMPRESSION looks tough to beat in this maiden-50 turf mile. He finished in the money all three special-weight starts in California including a runner-up finish last out at Golden Gate, and now drops into a maiden-claiming race for the first time. Fastest in the field, tactical speed, low-odds standout. **STREET TO INDY** is unproven around two turns, and unproven on grass. But the gelding ran well two recent starts against winners, is back with maidens this time, and tries a rider switch on the drop. 'INDY is good enough on class/form; the challenge is the one-mile distance while switching to grass. **PRINCIPAL BOB** will pick them up late. His fourth-place finish two months ago in a maiden-62.5k turf route at Del Mar puts him in the thick of it. **PERFECTION TALE** finished third two starts back in a similar maiden-50 at Santa Anita. He is not impossible off that effort.

SECOND RACE

Trainer Bob Hess Jr. has two principals in this 3yo starter allowance. Both are recent acquisitions making their first start for Hess following ownership change. **FIRE WHEN READY** stretches to a mile following a daylight sprint victory that was validated when the second- and fifth-place finishers returned to win. A mile around two turns is uncharted territory, but he is fast. **KALEIDOSCOPE KID** rolled to a decisive debut victory racing one mile at Los Alamitos. He could tuck into a comfortable trip behind the top choice, and would be one of the first to attack if his stablemate does not stay the trip. Either way, the Hess duo looks formidable. **BUILDER** finished more than four lengths clear of third last out in a five-horse field that might have been stronger than one would expect from such a small field. That is because the 3-4-5 finishers behind him returned to win. Each start by **BUILDER** has been better than the one before; this is his first start in nearly three months.

THIRD RACE

This race is a split of race 1, as Santa Anita offers an increasing number of maiden-claiming races on turf. **BIG SKY LOGAN** returns from a 10-month layoff for a trainer whose returnees frequently fire. Vladimir Cerin is 4-for-14 the past year with horses off six months or more; the last three of those comeback winners were ridden by Kent Desormeaux. Same combo here. 'LOGAN missed by a neck last February in a special-weight on turf; he should fire his best shot first start back. **ACKER** finished third both previous maiden-claiming attempts at a slightly higher level. He drops from maiden-62.5k to maiden-50, and will be rolling late. He was compromised both recent starts by slow takeoffs; Flavien Prat takes over this time. **BOTTLE SERVICE** finished in the money five of eight on turf; **WISE CURLIN** is racing for a claim tag for the first time.

FOURTH RACE

Runner-up in a highly rated race for the level last out, **SPITFIRE** is the one to beat in this \$16k claiming N3L route. He had been off more than a year when he rallied to a decent runner-up finish last month against similar. The lightly raced (six starts) 6yo gelding is making his first start since changing trainers; anything close to his recent comeback would probably be good enough. **ALL STAR PARADE** stretches back to his preferred two-turn trip after breaking slowly and finishing last in his most recent start in a sprint. **HOT PARIS NIGHT** was stuck at this level during spring and summer, in the money three straight before he was sidelined. This is his first start since June. **GENTRIFIED** finished a flat third last out at Los Al; he seems to run best at Santa Anita.

FIFTH RACE

DOS PALOS lost ground start to finish in a similar maiden-30 route last out, missing by only four lengths while finishing a better-than-looked third. He moves from post 10 to post 1 for this mile race, and may have to take dirt, but he will be saving ground. **STARSHIP CHEWY** gradually improved (speed figures) as his 2yo season unfolded. Freshened two months, he will be ridden for the first time by apprentice Evin Roman. **TOUCHDOWN U S C** finished in front of 'CHEWY last time, and will be one of the favorites based on his runner-up effort. He was more than four lengths clear of third at the wire. Tough outside post for this trip, however.

SIXTH RACE

Another maiden race on grass, this is a special-weight for Cal-breds. **BOLD PAPA** "won" a similar maiden turf race two starts back but was disqualified for interference. He subsequently misfired two weeks ago on dirt. Back on grass, repeatedly proven on this course, he can win again by reproducing his effort two back. **SAVE GROUND** finished an okay third last time at Golden Gate; the runner-up from that race (Impression) is scheduled to start favored in the first race earlier on this card. **ATONARUN** returns from an extended layoff for a stable that does well with comebacks. **DIAL ME IN** and **SCHOOLEY** finished third and fifth last time in the Calbred race that was "won" by **BOLD PAPA**.

SEVENTH RACE

FAMILY GIRL trounced \$32k claiming fillies last month, and looks like the one to catch moving up in class to Calbred N1X for 3yo fillies. Come catch her. **SHOW IT N MOE IT**, a two-time winner entered for the optional \$50k claim tag, was an early-season stakes winner at Del Mar. She faced colts and geldings last time and finished nowhere. Her third-place finish two back in a \$200k stakes for Cal-bred fillies would make her tough to beat. **SMILING TIGRESS** drops from an open stakes in which two of the circuit's top fillies (Dream Tree, Midnight Bisou) finished one-two. **CARRIE'S SUCCESS** will roll late.

EIGHTH RACE

PRINCESS KAREN will appreciate easier as she drops into a minor stakes after facing graded company including Unique Bella her last three. 'KAREN wired 3yo fillies the last time she raced in a stakes race similar to this. She is drawn outside her main pace rival, and can apply pressure from the outside. She can win if able to reel in speedy comebacker **SELDCOURT**, who is training smartly for her first start since May. **SELDCOURT** has 21-and-change, 44-and-change speed; her only option from her inside draw (post 2) is to bust out and try to wire the field. Her debut last February was a crusher by more than nine lengths; she followed with two in-the-money finishes in stakes before she went to the sidelines. Although eligible to N1X, she returns in this \$75k stakes as quite possibly the one to catch. If the top pair hook up in a pace duel, the race could set up for the late rally of **MALIBU STACY**. She goes turf to dirt, route to sprint. G2 to non-graded, and has a closing style that would play well if the top pair run each other into the ground. **REVERSE** also has a longshot chance rallying from the back of the pack.

NINTH RACE

EVO CAMPO did not have a visible alibi last out, off the board in a filly-mare turf stakes marathon with a field similar to this field. However, **EVO CAMPO** did not have ideal preparation into that G3. She got nothing out of her comeback prep, and in the G3 she ran like a mare that needed a start. Since then, her workout pattern has gone uninterrupted, she won stakes the last two times she ran a mile and a half, and she is 5-for-9 at Santa Anita. Give her another chance, perhaps at an overlay price. **ESTRECHADA** surrendered last time, but that was a dirt marathon against males. Her best races have been marathon turf races vs. her gender including a G3 win last summer at Saratoga. She drops in class, and is racing over a turf course on which she finished in the money both tries. **HOW UNUSUAL** was the upset winner in the race the top choice exits, rallying from far back to win going away. It was her second consecutive win; she is a legit late threat to make it three straight. European comebacker **PLEIN AIR** is likely to set the pace. She was a confirmed front-runner in Italy, where she won 7 of 10. Come and catch her.