

SANTA ANITA ANALYSIS



BY BRAD FREE

BEST BET: RACE 6, SHEZA FIRSTSAMURAI

FIRST RACE

SOUTHERN KEYS could be loose on the lead in this starter allowance turf sprint. He set a strong pace last out winning a maiden race in his first start on the hill, and should make the lead from the inside post. If he runs two alike, color him gone. **TAIMA THE HAWK** will vie for favoritism based on three successive runner-up finishes at this level including a solid comeback two months ago his first start of the season. A closer, he will roll late. **HAWK** was a vet scratch from a starter allowance turf route April 2. **SEQUENTIALLY**, third in back-to-back dirt races at this level, will try to turf for the first time. Trainer Mark Glatt won with two of his last three first-time turf starters (Sharp Samurai, Law Abidin Citizen). **LAUREN'S LADD** drops from N1X, and is another that will roll late. He has won on this course.

SECOND RACE

MAKE IT A TRIPLE and **SUPER STORM** both ran better than the line looks first time out; both are likely to improve second time out. **MAKE IT A TRIPLE** finished fourth after a compromising trip. Not quick from the gate, shuffled back, middle move wide, evenly late. Not bad, he should move up with a clean takeoff. **SUPER STORM** also ran well finishing fifth. The 5yo had shown speed in workouts, but was not quick breaking from the rail. He also made a middle move, and then raced evenly. If he breaks running second time out, he should be right with the leaders. Speed was dynamite last week on the main track; 9 of the 14 dirt sprints were won by the pacesetter. **BUCKY GOLDSTEIN** finished in front of the top pair in his debut; the winner of the race (Hitters Park) returned Saturday to finish second in a starter allowance. First-time starter **IT'S TIZ TIME** appears to have trained well.

THIRD RACE

RIZZI'S HONORS and **TIME AND CHANCE** both return from extended layoffs as contenders in this five-runner starter allowance. **RIZZI'S HONORS**, off nine months, earned figures last spring (83 Beyer) that top the field; trainer Dan Blacker is 4-for-21 with six-month layoff runners the past three-plus years. **TIME AND CHANCE**, off eight months, is quick and has sharp works for her comeback. Trainer Bill Morey has a 23 percent win rate (13-for-56) with six-month comebacks the past five years; he produced a flat-bet profit (\$2.69 per \$2). The top two choices seem evenly matched. **THE CAT'S LEAVIN** runs well fresh and also has speed. To B. **AVA** should be forwardly placed.

FOURTH RACE

JILL MADDEN, beaten favorite three straight maiden-claiming races, actually ran super last out finishing second in her first try around two turns. She set the pace over a surface that played inordinately slow, and only got worn down in deep stretch. It was a winning effort in defeat, and stamps her as the one to beat second time long. Blinkers on, inside post, likely pacesetter, she is the one to catch. **WARRIOR VIXEN** ran poorly last out in the same race, but her previous third-place finish vs. special-weight maidens on Feb. 3 would put her in the hunt. Blinkers are off. **QUIET NO MORE** merely ran around the track in her debut last month at Golden Gate. She was listed as a vet scratch March 31, but worked twice since and drops to maiden-30 second time out. Improvement is likely.

FIFTH RACE

This turf sprint for California-breds includes locals in murky form; it is a good spot for a potential upset by Golden Gate shipper **HOLDTHISMISS**. His acceptable recent form includes a wide-trip third last out on synthetic; he runs best on grass. The gelding has enough tactical speed to be forwardly placed behind the speed, and in front of the closers. If or when the front-runners tire, **HOLDTHISMISS** can get first run. If able to reproduce his most recent start on grass (N1X runner-up last July), he can spring a surprise. Can we get 8-1? **OVER PAR** has two seconds and two thirds from five starts at this Cal-bred N1X/optional claiming level. This is his first start since November; he runs well fresh. Although he might prefer two turns, he will roll late. Front-runner **A NEW TREND** looks like the speed of the field. He will lead as far as he can. He finished third last out in a race that produced one next-out winner, and two next-out runners-up. **SENATOR ROBERT** might be ranked too low by this handicapper; he finished second last out under similar conditions.

SIXTH RACE

SHEZA FIRSTSAMURAI ran a winning race last out, runner-up while favored at a slightly higher class level for maidens. The speedster shortens from six furlongs to five and a half, drops from maiden-50 to maiden-40, and could be tough to catch. **CALIFORNIA SUMMER** returns from a layoff of more than seven months. She has speed, runs well fresh (debut runner-up) and should have the top choice in her sights all the way. First-time starter **MARTHAMDEAR** has an okay work pattern, same as first-time starter **CHEYENNE DANCER**.

SEVENTH RACE

TRULY PONTI, 1-for-17 and stuck at this N2L claiming level since last summer, gets the call after a runner-up finish last out. Her "trouble" was not severe; it was more a case of weak handling. She gets a rider upgrade to Stewart Elliott, and has enough speed to be forwardly placed. **WATCH ME NOW**, in the money against Cal-bred N1X foes twice last summer, returns from a layoff at rock bottom. Sharp workouts at Los Alamitos, and no killers in this lineup. **SUNSHINE LAURIE** also returns from a layoff, first time at the bottom level. **HARBORED AFFAIR** won a low-rated maiden-20 last out, earning a low figure (44 Beyer). However, last-out maiden-claiming winners often win right back at this N2L level. Upset candidate.

EIGHTH RACE

Also-eligible **CALIFORNIA** is worth gambling on, if he draws in. He set/pressed fast fractions both recent turf routes, weakening late in each. Now he shortens to six and a half on the hill, would break from an outside post and should be forwardly placed. Horses that lose their punch running long often run well shortening to a downhill turf sprint. **KOPITAR** could inherit favoritism. In the money both career starts on the hill, he disappointed last out when he pressed a slow pace but was unable to get past the winner. His third-place debut was actually better, considering the faster pace. This is only the third start of his career; he has room to improve. **DOG GONE LENNY** switches to turf, second start back from a layoff. He has speed, and is worth price consideration with a front-running/-pace-pressing trip in a field without much speed. **ARMS RUNNER** is a sibling to graded stakes winner Calculator. This stable wins often with first-time starters, but rarely with first-time starters on turf. Second-time starter **GUMMY** can improve with a race under his belt.