

# SANTA ANITA ANALYSIS



BY BRAD FREE

## BEST BET: RACE 8, WEST COAST

### FIRST RACE

**PEE WEE REESE** is on a roll. He seeks his fifth straight, and first stakes, after an impressive N2X last out under tough circumstances. Stretching out for the first time, he set a fast pace, got headed in the lane, and then re-rallied to win going away. The win was validated when runner-up Kenjisstorm returned to win. PEE WEE REESE faces another challenging pace scenario, but he showed last out, and in three previous sprints, that he can take heat and keep running. He is drawn outside his main rival and might have options regarding strategy. G1 winner **WHAT A VIEW** is the class of the field, possibly the favorite based on runner-up finishes in graded stakes. Though winless his last seven starts, he has been knocking heads with the circuit's top milers. His most recent start in a G1 was a toss; it was the second time he misfired at Keeneland. Back home at Santa Anita, dropping to a state-bred stakes, he will motor up front. **GRAZEN SKY** and **BURNAROUNDTHEDGES** will be running late in what looks like a match race between the top pair.

### SECOND RACE

Cal-bred 2yos sprint four and a half; **MASCO YODELER** has sharp workouts and a win-early pedigree. His gate works at Los Alamitos look good; he is a full brother to 2yo debut winner/stakes winner Swiss Lake Yodeler. The Jerry Hollendorfer-trained colt should come out firing under promising apprentice Evin Roman. **CASEINTIME** is a full brother to 12-for-34 mare Time for Angie, who won her career debut as a 2yo going four and a half. Based on his sharp half-mile gate work 10 days ago, **CASEINTIME** looks ready to roll. **MOONLIGHT PRAISE** showed speed and tired in his debut, worked twice in the interim, and wheels back two weeks later. At very least, he is fit. **DRIZZY** has sharp works; his 9-for-21 dam Grant Marty a Wish produced stakes winner Monument.

### THIRD RACE

**EXCAVATION** was gelded prior to his most recent start, and finally delivered on the potential he showed early in his career. He won a maiden-30 going away, over a next-out winner, with a slow-fast running style that suggests two turns will be up his alley. **THE ALL BUTTON** was in tough last time in a N1X turf sprint. He returns to a surface (dirt) on which he won three of his previous six. He is the only three-time winner in the field. **GENTRIFIED** was claimed from a maiden-30 win, gelded, and returns in a starter allowance/optional while not risked for a tag.

### FOURTH RACE

**I'LL BE AROUND** returns from a long layoff, at rock bottom \$12.5k claiming non-winners two/3yo class level. She has some zip, meets a field that lacks speed burners, and should run her best race first start back. **SHE RULES YOU** overcame a slow start to win her debut. Low speed figure, but room to improve. **MUNNY SPUNT** set the pace and faded in a \$25k claiming sprint; now drops to the bottom.

### FIFTH RACE

**HEAVENLY THOUGHT** ran well in her debut. Racing one mile on turf first out, she dropped to the rear of the field while the pace unfolded slowly, then rallied to fourth, missing by less than three lengths. Good effort by the War Front filly who should improve second time out. **SCANDAL** is a 10-start maiden, runner-up five straight. She has ability, and will get there one of these days. **CREME DE LA** seemed to race greenly in her U.S. debut, fourth by three. She might do better with a race under Her belt. However, she is an 11-start maiden with nine in-the-money finishes.

### SIXTH RACE

The pick six starts here (races 6-11), with a difficult maiden-20 sprint. **MY SPECIAL IMAGE** returns from a one-year layoff with quick works, while dropping to the bottom for the first time. Trainer Paddy Gallagher won a maiden-20 route last month with a similar comeback dropper (\$12.80 My Golden One). **RED CARPET CAT** is quick, gets the apprentice Evin Roman, and benefits from the turnback to five and one-half furlongs. **ZACHIAN** has started only twice, ran well both times, third and second. Stuck inside, but fits on ability. **HOPPITTY** improved slightly his second start, while **ROCKIN MY MAJOR** showed speed his only start a year ago. Unusually competitive race for this class level.

### SEVENTH RACE

**OSCAR DOMINGUEZ** has been stuck at this N1X level since arriving from Europe during winter 2015-16. He might remain stuck. But until his most recent start at a distance that was perhaps too far, his races have actually been okay. He cuts back from a mile and one-half to a mile and one-quarter, and is reunited with a productive grass rider in Rafael Bejarano. **PATH OF DAVID** drops to N1X/optional \$40k claiming while making his first start since transferring to a red-hot stable. **KLONDIKE CREEK** set the pace and held second, while finishing in front of the top choice. 'CREEK also benefits from a cutback in distance.

### EIGHTH RACE

The only 3yo in this N1X route, front-runner/presser **WEST COAST** should be tough. He finished one-two all three starts including a big runner-up effort last out in a G3 at Keeneland. Three-, four- or five-wide start to finish, he opened up in the lane but got collared while running a winning race. He posted a series of fast works since returning home; trainer Bob Baffert is 11-for-18 with favorites this year in SA dirt routes, five others finished second. Looks like the most probable winner on the card with an up-front trip in a race that is not exactly loaded with speed. **GENERAL IKE**, unraced since fall 2015, has a solid work pattern for his comeback. He passed this allowance condition a long time ago, and returns in this N1X/optional \$40k claiming race while utilizing the no-claim waiver. Good sign. **KID CHARMING** improved second time out, winning a maiden turf route. Off-the-pace threat if he handles dirt.

### NINTH RACE

Lightly raced **LORD SIMBA** is the one to beat in this G2 sprint. He jumped from maiden to G3 last out, and won clear with a triple-digit Beyer. Video of his team workouts since then suggest he has held his form. He has speed, and can finish. Cozy post near the outside, should get a pressing trip. **RANSOM THE MOON** scored an impressive win in his California debut, a highly rated N2X that he won by more than four lengths. Previously based at Woodbine (synthetic racetrack), 'MOON clearly has improved since moving to conventional footing. **EASTWOOD** ran well last out, runner-up to the top choice while starting for the first time in nearly two years. Have to believe he will move forward now that he has race under his belt. His East Coast-Midwest speed figures in 2014-15 are among the highest in the field.

### TENTH RACE

This Cal-bred maiden race is an appropriate spot to take a shot at price with a second-time starter that had no shot in his debut. **WATERED DOWN** worked very well into his first start (on turf), was well-backed (8-1 morning line, off 6-1), but finished nowhere. He walked out of the gate, appeared intimidated at the right-hand turn, fell back and did nothing. But he returned to work well on dirt, the same surface over which he worked well prior to his debut on turf, and should improve second time out. **LOVELY ANZI** could be the one to catch. He dueled on a strong pace in his comeback, stuck in there to the final eighth, and tired to third. The runner-up Nap Lajoie returned to win. **LOVELY ANZI** shortens from six and one-half furlongs to five and one-half. Come catch him. **TONY BLACKJACK**, runner-up two straight, goes route to sprint and will rally late.

### ELEVENTH RACE

**GUGGENHEIM** stretches to two turns, switches to a top turf rider in Flavien Prat, and should get a comfortable trip saving ground just off the speed. His comeback last out was ordinary, but he has a right to improve second start back, first since being claimed by Robertino Diodoro. Few trainers have been more productive first-off-the-claim recently than Peter Miller, 31 for 31 since August. Miller claimed **FREDDIES DREAM** last month, and immediately returns the gelding to his preferred surface (turf). His best races are good enough for this \$32k claiming level. **ATOMIC RULE** drops in class and is arguably the "best horse" in the field. But he drew post 11 in this mile turf race.