

SANTA ANITA ANALYSIS

BY BRAD FREE



BEST BET: RACE 4, CITY OF LIGHT

FIRST RACE

This maiden-claiming sprint for 2yos came up soft. The runner-up finish last out by **FABRICATION** gives him the slight advantage. He has enough speed to be forwardly placed; his figures are inching forward. Best of a weak lot, it appears. **IMA TAKE CHARGE** drops from maiden-50 to maiden-30, and shortens from a route to a sprint. He has no speed, but that might not be an issue because most of his rivals are unproven at this six-furlong distance and are likely to be slowing down late. **CHARGE** has two routes under his belt, and will roll late while cutting back in distance. **DRAMATIC RIDE** was bumped at the break, raced wide into the lane, and virtually split the field in a possibly better-than-looked effort. It certainly was an improvement over his debut. Seems like he is rounding into form.

SECOND RACE

BLACKJACKCAT emerged this summer as the top turf miler on the circuit, winner of a restricted stakes in July followed by a G2 in August at the expense of graded winners Vyjack and Om. The gelding seeks his fourth straight in this ungraded \$75k stakes, and he should get a great trip positioned second behind the speed. Low-odds standout, on paper. The past 90 days, trainer Mark Glatt is 10-for-18 with favorites. **HE WILL** does not win often anymore (0 for 6 this year, mostly low odds), but he is usually close by. Runner-up last out in a dirt stakes, runner-up three back in a turf stakes for Cal-breds, he will narrow the margin late. **MACH ONE RULES** won three stakes this summer at Emerald Downs; he ships south and gives turf a try. Not bred for grass, but he is a pro. His 17 starts produced 7 wins, 6 seconds. **CISTRON** is the aforementioned front-runner. He figures to clear the field, and take them as far as he can.

THIRD RACE

MISTER MOJO was not disgraced in his fifth-place debut, which appears to have been a schooling run. Cold in the betting (9-2 morning line, off at 6-1), he broke running, dropped back while not asked for speed, loomed a threat wide into the lane and lost his punch. He ran like he needed a start. Blinkers are on, steady work pattern since raced, outside post, tab for improvement second time out. **LITTLE JUANITO** is beginning to look like a "trial" maiden, yet he may deserve one more chance. He may have had excuses for three losses since returning from a layoff. Solid runner-up try in his comeback, compromised by a rally-wide trip on an inside-favoring surface second start back, and foiled last out by a wicked pace. Blinkers off; the best race of his five-start career was on this track. **CATALINA CRUISER** has solid works for his debut. The Union Rags colt is a sibling to Eagle, debut winner/stakes winner/Grade 1-placed.

FOURTH RACE

The 1:09.35 maiden-race smasher by **CITY OF LIGHT** was the second-fastest six furlongs of the Del Mar summer meet, and stamps the lightly raced 3yo as an exciting prospect into fall and winter. He crushed that maiden field by more than seven lengths, shows three easy works since returning to Santa Anita, is drawn outside in this first-level allowance, and looks like a "can't-miss." The knock is likely low odds. **COILS GOLD** put it all together third start back from a layoff, a daylight win over Cal-bred N1X foes. The runner-up Gigantis was scheduled to start as one of the favorites in race 4 Thursday. The challenge for **COILS GOLD** is moving from a comfortable outside post. He is now buried on the rail. **AMERICANIZE** has been stuck on seconds at this N1X level, but he does run fast numbers. Blinkers are on as he shortens from a route back to a sprint. **MIDNIGHT PLEASURE** will be rolling late as a potential upset candidate.

FIFTH RACE

The fifth-place debut by **ORAGEUSE** was good enough, and suggests the 2yo filly can post a mild upset second out while stretching from five furlongs on turf, to six and a half. She worked well into her debut, was not asked for speed, and basically maintained position midpack throughout the race. She also was a green in the lane. All in all, not bad. Steady work pattern since, another furlong and a half to work with, expect a major forward move now that her prep is out of the way. **SAPPHO** makes her U.S. debut for a top stable; she ran well finishing second in her most recent start in Ireland. **BUNNY YOGURT** is a Scat Daddy filly making her debut for a stable that won with 2 of its last 4 debut juveniles.

SIXTH RACE

ROY H finished behind **RANSOM THE MOON** last out when second in a G1 sprint at Del Mar, but there is no doubt **ROY H** was best. He got caught outside a riderless horse, carried extremely wide into the lane while his rival cut the corner, tried to re-rally and missed by only a length and a half. He probably would have won except for the incident. **ROY H** developed this year into one of the fastest sprinters in the country (111 Beyer at Belmont), and should turn the tables with a clean trip. **RANSOM THE MOON** may have been fortunate to win last out, but his credentials are solid. Since relocating to California, he has a G2 win, G2 runner-up and a G1 win. Inside post no bargain, and there is not much speed in this field to run at, but he stamped himself as one of the top sprinters in California. **AMERICAN ANTHEM** won a pair of graded sprints for 3yos in summer, then finished third with a wide trip last out in a G1 for 3yos at Saratoga. The challenge is six furlongs, which is shorter than he has been running.

SEVENTH RACE

This Cal-bred maiden-50 for 2yos is difficult. **OH MAN** improved last out in his first start off the claim. He dueled on a fast pace, was no match for the runaway winner, but held second. He is quick enough to establish position from the rail, and with a clean break might wire the field. Key word: "might." **LIPSTER** finished a creditable third in his debut. He has speed, his last-out figure is the highest last-out figure in the field (57 Beyer). **ROYAL TRUMP** goes first off the claim after an okay second in an open maiden-32. Tough race.

EIGHTH RACE

INSTA ERMA can upset this restricted turf stakes for fillies and mares, after a troubled fourth in her California debut in a Grade 2. She ran into a traffic jam at the quarter pole, took up sharply and lost momentum, then re-rallied to miss by only three and one-half lengths. It was actually a super performance. She would have been right there with a better trip. Much improved in California, the lightly raced filly is plenty good enough for this minor stakes. **BELVOIR BAY** is the speed of the field. One mile is a challenge, but she could be loose out front after a decent runner-up finish in a sprint last out. She will take them as far as she can. **MRS MCDUGAL** disappointed in both starts this summer at Del Mar, but she worked very well since returning to Santa Anita. One more chance? She was a G2 winner, G1-placed early in her career. **MADAME STRIPES** finished third last out in the G2 from which the top choice exits.

NINTH RACE

CITY STEEL was in tough spots this summer at Del Mar, and finished off the board. Now he drops to \$25k claiming, returns to the track on which he is 3 for 8, and probably would prefer a waiting ride instead of engaging for the lead like last time. This class is the right level for the 12 for 42 career pro. **TRIBAL JEWEL** has defeated the top choice, and finished behind him. This is the first start in two months for **JEWEL**, a 12 for 49 pro with speed for an up-front trip after breaking from the rail. **PIONEER OF THE WEST** drops in class and will be rolling late, as will deep closer **SHACKLEFORD BANKS**.

TENTH RACE

Although she has lost five starts since her maiden win, including three as the favorite, **MIDNIGHT SWINGER** figures as the one to beat in this starter allowance turf mile. Her third-place comeback in late August was her first start of the year, she is eligible to improve with a race under her belt. **LOOKING AT THE LAKE** is a consistent closer that will roll late, while **TAMMY'S WINDOW** has run her best races on this turf course.