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Santa Anita Park – May 14th, 2022

Race 1 | Turf | 8 Furlongs
$80k Allowance Optional Claiming | 3YOs+

Must Use: #5 Moody Jim (3/1)
Ability level as a whole down some from 2019 campaign after a 2-year lay-up but current condition still fits with well with today's field. Been consistent in the 67/75 range and remains healthy and durable getting into 4th start of this year.

Must Use: #6 There Goes Harvard (4/1)
Recent main track starts tightened the dirt spread from +4.7 to +1.5, a positive look for a turf switch as it indicates more even energy distribution and better late speed, which we like for the dynamics of turf racing. Triggered a TDL 2nd time trying turf which very often signals a horse with turf success in their future. May need this runner to carry the rider home as Herrera just 5% wins on 127 turf starts this meet.

Fringe Add: #1 Sword Zorro (7/2)
Bit more consistency than most in here ranging +7 to +10 turf spreads through last year. Twice a winner in comeback spots for stakes races so proven off the break and gets a good prep spot here down to essentially allowance company. Tries Lasix for first time. Solid layoff stats for connections.

Deep Toss: #7 Irideo (12/1)
The stateside debut of 67h/69h is a ways behind this group but runner was a habitual winner in Argentina and could have been "given a race." Same connections shipped Blue Stripe up here last fall to lose by double-digit lengths then won next out a couple weeks ago. The third runner the connections share debuted in 7th place then broke maiden next out. Not much of a sample but 2 for 2 is enough to at least keep an eye on this one.

Other Runners:

#2 Vantastic (4/1)
Comes off a string of sprints including some tricky downhill course tries and now back to a mile, which he enjoyed in previous string, winning 2 of 3 while also posting a Final 81.1 the rest of this field hasn't topped in some time. I don't give much credit to the turf spread advancement to +7 in last as it came on a very slow pace of 59 4F but trip-wise it's a positive he'll see a more normal pace today and can pass some runners late this time. Has closed margin in stretch 7 races straight. Wouldn't be a surprise.

#3 Hudson Ridge (6/1)
Some nice development last year to keep working on late kick as the turf spreads went from the single digits to explode to +14 and +16 with a PLOW in last couple before break. Returns back to more forward type self this year geared up at -3 and -2 turf spreads so far. They'll try blinkers off here hoping not to be too spent early as has been so far but only other time he ran without blinkers, he barely ran at all from the bell. We'll make a note and watch this one to see if his turf spreads suddenly begin to shift later in campaign like they did last year.

#4 Tidal Forces (4/1)
Unsure about current condition here. High percentage trainer off the claim figures to draw some money but the only runner these connections have ever waited 180+ days to race DNF. Value Plays' menu likes to see the NPT switch to turf here but after wintering, the effects of an NPT have worn off and don't necessarily clue us to current condition anymore.

Race 2 | Dirt | 4.5 Furlongs
$67k Maiden Special Weight | 2YOs

Unfortunately, no metrics for debut runners currently available on our sheets, but we'll throw out some findings here taking a glance through the pedigree, connections, and workouts. Get the feeling you can cover most of the race's win chances going 2 deep here.

Must Use: #2 Royal Halo (9/5)
Lots of gate works can sometimes raise concern that the runner hasn't been starting well but this is actually pretty standard for this trainer so no cause for alarm. Comes in tight out of a quick bullet work. Sire's foals well above average in spots that apply here (juveniles, debuts, dirt sprints).

Must Use: #7 Hot Memories (4/1)
Like to see him coming off a good work close to today's distance for a barn strong with debut runners. Goes light in weight for rider that is more capable than her current record.

Other Runners:

#1 Knockout Guy (3/1)
Dam's foals 30% winners in 52 dirt sprint tries with 1st time starters in the exacta 5 of 7. Trainer weak stats with debut runners but has come on strong in the last month with a win and two seconds of his 3 juvenile debuts.

#3 Good N Thirsty (4/1)
Like to see runners working close to actual race distance although those works didn't end up getting the best comments from clockers that I've seen. Barn 2 for 32 with debut juveniles.

#4 Lov U Mean it (5/1)
Same comments as #3 for this soft entry.

#5 Mr. Fighter (20/1)
Winless trainer with debut runners and a slumping rider but boasts several bullet works and rides light here. Never know.
#6 Smokem Howard (12/1)
Nothing to go on as far as immediate family for new sire and dam. Sometimes bullet works followed by slower works can be a good sign indicating the trainer is happy and just keeping the runner in "maintenance mode" until a race can be found to enter. Unsure if that's the case though as it seems rider was actually trying to ask for more in those slow works.

Race 3 | Turf | 6 Furlongs
$50k Starter Optional Claiming | F&M 3YO+

Must Use: #4 Aventapp (5/1)
The 70h/66h out of last at this trip is really strong compared to today's field and this one could stand the test of going first against winners here. The two runners that denied this one graduating in the previous races went to this level next out posting a win and a place. May get odds for a win bet.

Fringe Add: #7 Founder's Day (5/2)
With turf spread (Final minus 4F) being our version of late speed, this one can look for an opportunity to make one big run late on the field holding a solid late acceleration advantage on most of these plus a competitive Final Figure near the distance.

Fringe Add: #1 Stressed (4/1)
Would prefer to see some year-over-year improvement as this 4-year old debut running line is the same as her career debut running line. $110k purchase in for $50k tag. Nevertheless, runner got caught up in a hard duel in last. If they can get her to relax better 2nd off the break and this field lets things flow not as hot as the last, could easily steal this one if loose up top.

Other Runners:

#2 She Loves Karaoke (12/1)
Has been pretty forward and might contribute to muddling helping out the cause for stretch runners.

#3 Westward Breeze (7/2)
A bit caught in the middle with decent running lines at both 6.5F and 6F but also both ones easily beaten by some of today's rivals. Not interested at these low odds but will take a second look if floating up to double digit odds.

#5 Girl Ranger (6/1)
Pretty forward so far actually posting negative turf spreads routing. This might indicate the shorter distance could be a good move as long as she's ready to set down and get on a quicker one turn pace now. Sophomore facing older rivals here.

#6 Roses And Candy (4/1)
Comes off a couple quick works but was outworked by a rival here too well in last race for me to see her flip the stables in this one. Went +3.6 on turf spread while the #7 passed her up on a +6.1.

Race 4 | Dirt | 4.5 Furlongs
$67k Maiden Special Weight | CA-Bred 2YOs

Another baby race here which isn't ideal for our purpose, but we need to hit it nonetheless. Found this one a bit more open than the previous and think we found some reasons to take stands on previous races enough that budget could allow most to be somewhat deep in this leg.

#1 Golf Drama (5/1)
Decent pedigree and sale price for this spot. Barn stats not great here but at least have plenty of experience with juvenile runners. You'd prefer this type of runner have speed to get some position being buried on the rail so the fast work buried on the tab may indicate the possibility. Prefer this one to stick in the mid-price range for consideration.

#2 Smokin Amelia (3/1)
Lone experience in the field goes off a 69/59 NEG, a pattern that becomes more important in second-time-out matchups against debut COMP runners. This particular NEG doesn't look like a concern for regression due to how it was earned. Stumbled at the start costing her energy, then she chased the big favorite and finished up a clear 2nd with no reason to be urged much so the NEG could have been easily avoided. Trainer stats in this spot weak overall but has been doing better as of recently. New sire has no stats but dam's foals have hit the exacta over half the time in 40 dirt sprints.

#3 Midnight Lightning (10/1)
Respectable trainer but winless in juvenile debuts. Sire's foals solid in dirt sprints but typically bloom later rating below average for debuts. $130k sale price topping this field seems a positive.

#4 Fordy G (5/2)
Comes out of some good-looking gate works although would prefer a tighter schedule as this one left 10 days between some works and hasn't published one in May. Barn 2 for 37 with debut juveniles.

#5 Thirsty John (4/1)
Solid-looking pedigree for this spot on both sides of the family and boasts the largest stud fee of field. Like the pair of workouts over today's distance coming in. Lone knock would be barn's low winning percentage. I'll use this one.

#6 Krixus Flash (10/1)
Soft entry with the #5, trainer has much more extensive relationship with the other owner than this one as well as this one much cheaper stock bringing only $8k at auction. Toss.

#7 My Man Biggie (4/1)
Soft entry with the #2, see barn comments there. Dam's foals have been much better with distance and age.

Race 5 | Downhill Turf | 12 Furlongs
Grade III $125k Santa Barbara Stakes | F&M 3YO+

At these longer distances, I like to look at the relationship between the Final Figure and the 6F Figure (rather than the usual 4F Figure).

Must Use: #4 Neige Blanche (9/5)
French runner has posted better than +20 turf spreads 3 in a row now, something the rest of this field doesn't touch so look for her to be flying late at a distance that could be a stretch for the rest.

Must Use: #1 Queen Goddess (6/5)
A lot of professional-looking moves across this one's tab. Triggered TDL early in career to signal future turf success and later showed the versatility to move to the main track and trigger COMP with a victory. Runner was unbothered in last by a rank rival pushing way out front and stayed relax to just run her race and not come chasing until it was time.

Fringe Add: #6 Carpe Vinum (7/2)
Triggered the powerful turf pattern of TDL two races back to a 52h/74 (one of the few recent 20+ turf spreads in field) and moved off that to a lifetime Top Final at 69h/78. Perhaps that big uptick took some out of her as they opted to scratch her from a May 1st Grade III to get some some easy works in and fully recover. Should be back to sharp condition now as no lay-off was prompted and can continue improvement behind the recent TDL still in campaign.

Other Runners:

#2 New Heat (12/1)
She's habitually off slow then needing to play catch-up and finds a class hike here where others are already proven to be rolling late so even the perfect race flow may not give her the best shot.

#3 Queen Of The Temple (6/1)
Confident move for high percentage barn to get right to this graded stakes after the maiden win but in a short field, there's little room for her to be backed here as the $3,500 purchase will need to prove herself against well-proven rivals.

#5 Cover Version (20/1)
Been going much shorter in her stateside career up to this point but now 7-year old will get back to trying long distances she seen back in France as a maiden back in the day. Usually gallops out pretty well and appears usable value-wise underneath as longest odds on board.

Race 6 | Dirt | 6 Furlongs
$40k Maiden Claiming | F&M 3YO+

Must Use: #1 Sweet Heidelberg (3/1)
Has been forwardly spent in every start across different distances and surfaces. However, the 75/59 NPT is a positive conditioning move and features a big 4F advantage on the field, at least the experienced runners that is. She should have some room to relax more here and if she's able, can dramatically improve her late sustain.

Fringe Add: #4 Miss Mensa (5/1)
Debuted to a slow 60/55 turf effort in what really looks like a "given prep race." Pedigree doesn't point to turf success and the barn's winning percentage jumps from 9% with debut runners to 20% with second-out runners. Should be an honest effort coming now.

Other Runners:

#2 Your Ringer (9/5)
67h/60 NEG last summer when claimed then laid up for a long stretch. Sports a series of bullet works, gets Lasix, and morning line support. Tough to be confident though on a runner claimed for $50k, kept around 9 months, then entered for $40k. In theory, she should be well-intentioned here as they would want to pick up a check and recoup the bottom line should she be claimed here. Solid barn but below average in this spot at 3 for 30 with claimed horses going back into claimers. Get a look at her on the track and assess the tote. One of those types I'd have to use at 5/2 but would look to beat at 3/2.

#3 Darling Donna (3/1)
Looked like there could be some progression coming when moving off a 71h/64 NEG to a much more compressed 73/69 DTOP next out last summer as a juvenile. Was seemingly feeling good off a 2-month break yet when trying turf but then went straight downhill since. Would like to see this one prove she can better her energy distribution first before I could back at anything near 3/1 at some later date as whether it's been a turf sprint or dirt route, her last three spins have been very forward spent.

#5 Violent Runner (8/1)
Very slow 54/48h turf debut now trying the main track. Takes the ultimate drop of maiden allowance to claiming and this is the barn that gives this rider her winners. Still, appears a bit of an outsider off such a bad debut as this barn doesn't keep 'em under wraps like the #4 we discussed that looks similar at first glance.

#6 Poet Laureate (5/1)
Pretty low stats in these debut situations for an otherwise high percentage barn and not much to show at all from the half-siblings so far. Assess on track and on tote.

Race 7 | Turf | 6.5 Furlongs
$40k Starter Allowance | <$25k Claimers | F&M 4YO+

Must Use: #6 Storming Lady (4/1)
Very consistent 7-year old despite setting her fastest 4F Figure in some time then getting caught very wide in last, still finished up for slightly better Final Figure than previous tries at Santa Anita one-turn distances. Good bounceback spot here.

Fringe Add: #7 Suite Madam Blue (3/1)
Had a consistent stint of turf sprints on this course going slowly pushing up 4F Figure and Final Figure as well with last out's victory and more compressed 69/66 basically a SOFT pattern where she should be plenty eligible to keep on moving forward. Solid contender but attitude could shift toward beating if she happens to get hammered at windows. 3/1 is fine but at 8/5, there's plenty of other options.

Fringe Add: #1 Invincibella (5/1)
Ships up from TUP off a 65/74h win on the heels of a dirt reversal. Dirt Reversals can often translate well to turf since the horse exerted itself more evenly to the late stages of the race even though dirt dynamics typically demand more early stress. Showed durability by stringing together a solid number of sprints up here through last year including a couple wins around this time at 68/65 and 63/66h. Ruben Alvarado is currently running Peter Miller's stable which is where she was for the aforementioned wins.

Deep Toss: #9 Draw Me (20/1)
Long-time synthetic customer moved off break to try the grass at a 63h/62h. The entire campaign last year slowly and incrementally shifted energy distribution when sprinting from a +8 to a +3 before the -9 routing so there's some reasoning there this one could have taken to the dynamics of turf. Wasn't the most comfortable but could be better now that she's seen green once and maybe give a more inspired effort today.

Other Runners:

#2 Respectfully (6/1)
Nice running line last on turf at 81/67 before a dirt romp that should have left her with plenty in the tank. Put in a very slow work but more likely to be intentionally slow just to stretch the legs and keep on going here. Looks like a possible contender but catches a tough field with some speed and early position is what she likes so race flow may not be ideal in this one.

#3 Flying To The Line (6/1)
Competitive type 8 for 17 in the exacta on turf lifetime makes the move to SA where it's deeper after a nice string of fast but compressed lines. Knock might be that while the current 7.5 Furlong form looks strong, when she tried setting down to sprint, she couldn't meet the pace demands and her turf spread dropped to a -6 with a 78/72.

#4 Northern Gem (20/1)
She has a pretty lengthy campaign without a serious break going including several pretty quick turnarounds. After a forward spent 69/62 last out you wonder if she's a bit too used at this point for a big turnaround.

#5 Harper's Gallop (4/1)
Could be any kind of horse here off 188 days and without seeing green stuff since Sept '20. Her dirt form was certainly in a fast regression to end last year which prompted a layoff. Should be fully recovered now and ready to mount a new campaign but overall body of work has been much better performance routing than sprinting no matter the surface. Looks like too much of a "needed race" spot for me to like at odds around co-favoritism which the morning line suggests.

#8 Respect My Candor (8/1)
The 65h/62h off the break doesn't rank well amongst other experienced here. Could be generally argued second off the break is a spot plenty eligible for improvement but need proof. Check out in post parade.

Race 8 | Dirt | 8 Furlongs
$67k Maiden Special Weight | 3YO+

Must Use: #6 Go Joe Won (5/2)
Similar debut line to the rival to left but with route experience under his belt with a more compressed 72/70 showing nice professionalism on the stretch out.

Must Use: #2 One More Bid (2/1)
Prompted NPT when going sprint to route in second start and was best of the rest behind a runaway winner. Could have given more if it was possible to win late.

Fringe Add: #1 Palagio (6/1)
The 70/64h NEG on debut was obviously a warm-up. Barn is 4% with debut runners but 18% with second-out runners, and furthermore 31% with second-out runners going sprint to route on main track. $270k purchase should be well-intentioned here.

Other Runners:

#3 Q B One (5/1)
Took a big step backwards after a decent set of starts to begin. They'll experiment with blinkers now which makes me believe the horse indeed fell out of form and bounced rather than some other excuse such as equipment or trouble.

#4 Lord Sheldon (8/1)
Soft entry to the #1, we covered the barn's tendency not to fire hard first out, but worth noting they thought enough to put this one right into two turns so there may be some added confidence in this one over his stablemates.

#5 Troubadour (3/1)
The 75/65 NEG on dirt debut gives him the Best 4F Figure + Best Final Figure for those that have tried the main track so far. The NEG designation is the most forward of any of the other NEGs and opens him up to being vulnerable to more compressed runners. It doesn't help the rival to his right can match his speed and ruin any thoughts of a lone lead. Can easily upgrade to usable here depending on odds but have a feeling this one will be a shorter price so I'll leave in "other mentions" for now.

Race 9 | Turf | 8 Furlongs
$40k Starter Allowance | <$50k Claimers | F&M 3YO+

Must Use: **#5 Agreetodisagree (7/2)**
Owns the best late acceleration of the field's last contest, otherwise known as our turf spread (Final minus 4F). Also triggered a TDL while setting that spread, a powerful subset of the PLOW. Unlike other Figures, a TDL can only be earned one time in a horse's career with most of them never triggering one. Great pattern for future success in turf runners.

Must Use: **#9 Rose Crystal (4/1)**
Some pretty deep turf spreads being consistently put up by this one, even tried dirt and remained true to good energy distribution by triggering COMP. Can't leave out the one with clearly the most consistent late kick.

Fringe Add: **#10 Dream Princess (8/1)**
What better time to give turf a try than moving from an NPT earned off the layoff, our favorite time for an NPT to occur. Previous REV and COMP form cycle patterns being those that mark even energy distribution also indicate some foundation that this one might like the dynamics of turf.

Deep Toss: **#7 Song Of Fire (15/1)**
Triggered 59/70 TDL in winning fashion last out. While the Final Figure and turf spread do lack a bit compared to the other TDL and a lot of today's field, it's still encouraging to see such an important form cycle pattern triggered. This surfaced first off the claim so perhaps the new training regimen is to this runner's liking and a big step here is possible. Should offer large enough odds to try for a few bucks. 65/71H

Other Runners:

#1 Virulente (6/1)
Needs a step-up here off the win with most of this field consistently running better than her couple spins, although she is the least experienced here which does leave her a chance to move forward a good amount still in early development.

#2 Jimmyssmokedcarrot (8/1)
Triggered his PLOW two back and has run both close and off the pace before to a mixture of consistent running lines but just not quite breaking through for the extra couple Final Figure points needed.

#3 Sky On Ice (4/1)
A bit geared up when moving synthetic to turf at 76h/73, she settled better next out, however, would have liked to see a little more bump in the Final Figure going 65h/74. Figures to contend but there's some others I like more.

#4 With This Vow (5/1)
Moved off a nice dirt combo of NPT/REV and feeling good took off when back to turf gate-to-wire, but pretty forward spent mounting a 4-length advantage after a half. Needs to learn quick how to distribute energy out better or I think there's a good chance they're catching her if she tries to steal this one today.

#6 Brittle And Yoo (12/1)
2 back 59/69h plow

#8 Floral Essence (12/1)
Likes to get to the lead and the wins where she survived the trip rank quite a bit slower than what should win this one today.

Good Racing Luck All.

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