

GOLDEN GATE ANALYSIS

By CHUCK DYBDAL



BEST BET: Black Gulch (1st race)

First Race: 1.Black Gulch 2.Rogue Racer 3.Quite Unusual

BLACK GULCH just missed when dropped to this level following a six-week layoff. He's had a nice pair of works since for a high-percentage barn that wins 36 percent with a positive ROI on the second start after similar layoffs. Seemed to hang a bit last time so the race and works since should have him more fit today. Note that he winless here, but he does have a pair of seconds and a third. ROGUE RACER makes his third start following a layoff. He's met better in those two tries and runs for a tag here, although the nonwinners-of-two condition remains. Comes off even effort at mile while earning a career-best Beyer. QUITE UNUSUAL just got done chasing the top pick, who blew past him into the lane. He did make up a bit of ground late and has run third in both starts at this level.

Second Race: 1.Count Me Twice 2.Highjinks 3.Little Miss Ruler

COUNT ME TWICE sat close, stuck her head in front in the lane but couldn't hold in her first start off a seven-week layoff in her first start for this tag. Effort wasn't that far off her best races, and she should improve a bit. Likes the distance and has run all right here in the past. HIGHJINKS has picked up checks in her past two starts, regressing a bit last time when going a bit farther than today's distance where she ran second in her previous start. Not much in this field, and she showed two back that she is a good fit at this lower level even with a mildly troubled trip that day. LITTLE MISS RULER has been running consistently, but she is making her first start in nine weeks. Has decent enough works and has scored both career wins at this distance. Barn usually needs a race to get them back all the way.

Third Race: 1.Smooch Me 2.Snooty Gal 3.Frisco Jag

SMOOCH ME comes north and runs for a tag for the first time. In some ways, her second start was better than her debut despite the big fade at the end. She was able to sit closer early, indicating improvement. Has a strong half-mile work since and moves to a barn that enjoys success with new faces. SNOOTY GAL drops a notch down the claiming ranks if you look only at the price tag as she returns to Northern California. In reality, she was running against the bottom level down south, while this is a fairly tough Nocal level. Outside draw helps, and she should be able to get a great stalking trip. FRISCO JAG is a \$150,000 purchase making her first start for considerably less. Solid works for her debut, including a bullet at this distance.

Fourth Race: 1.Out of Seattle 2.Acekingqueenjacten 3.Funky Chanteal

OUT OF SEATTLE is going in good form right now. She has earned checks in seven straight starts and fell two heads shy of a win last time, hanging late after swining into contention with a four-wide move. All three career wins have come here, and the leading rider stays aboard. She has a bullet work since raced and may sit a bit closer early with the blinkers on today. ACEKINGQUEENJACTEN is another that likes this track. She was claimed three back when second at this distance after winning her debut at it. Will have to improve off her last start, but that was in a pretty contentious heat. FUNKY CHANTEAL has split decisions with the second choice in her past three starts. Has been given a brief freshener with only one easy half-mile drill since her last start on Feb. 1. Rail draw no help, but she has enough early foot not to lose too much ground early.

Fifth Race: 1.Unusual Treasure 2. Faulkwood Shores 3.Portland Storm

There are a lot of horses that like the lead in this race, but UNUSUAL TREASURE isn't one of them. His willingness to sit back and stalk should play well here as he steps up off a solid upset victory in a conditioned claimer last time out. Should be able to wait and let the leaders burn themselves out before making his move into the lane. FAULKWOOD SHORES is one of those that enjoys taking the lead. He may prove too fast for his pace rivals, and we've seen examples of the speed of the speed prevailing in races like this. Hasn't won in ages, but past classer is dangerous and just failed to hold after breaking slowly in his first try at this level last time. Another positive is that this is his third start off a layoff. PORTLAND STORM stretches out here after winning a conditioned sprint at this tag. He'll have plenty to say about the pace scenario and has the advantage of an outside draw, allowing him to sit wherever he wants.

Sixth Race: 1.Hiptopia 2.Timber Prince 3.It's Touch and Go

HIPTOPIA returns to sprint action here after setting the pace while odds-on at this level in his last start. He's been freshened since that start and has a pair of easy drills in the nearly seven weeks since raced, including a six-furlong move. TIMBER PRINCE sat close to creepy-crawly fractions last time in his first try around two turns. Had sprinted well in his first two career starts and drops in for a tag for the first time today. IT'S TOUCH AND GO basically ran an even race in his debut last fall. He was never really a threat and wasn't asked after falling back in the lane. Decent works for his comeback, and barn is good off layoffs and particularly good when dropping runners from the straight maiden to claiming ranks.

Seventh Race: 1.False Impression 2.Beautiful American 3.Buttons and Bows

FALSE IMPRESSION won't be 61-to-1 her as she was in her West Coast debut. Sent north looking for an easier spot and allowed to stretch out, which should be something she likes. She switches over from the turf and did score her lone victory going one mile. Has pair of steady works since her California debut in a graded sprint stakes. BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN has been second in both starts at this level since her graduation. She seems to like routing and finishes well. Making first start in six weeks and adds blinkers. Has worked steadily since her last start. BUTTONS AND BOWS just scored a starter allowance victory and meets better here. She stalked nicely and was up in the lane with a good run. She's a stablemate of the second choice and actually beat her when she broke her maiden. Recent maiden winner Glacier Peak has run competitively with several of today's rivals and can't be dismissed lightly.

Eighth Race: 1.Commander Tom 2.Don's Early Flight 3.Sound'o Glory

COMMANDER TOM takes off blinkers and drops into the claiming ranks in his bid to graduate here. Faded in the lane in his comeback after two months on the sidelines, but has worked nicely since, including a bullet work in his final drill. Showed improvement in his second start last fall, and expect improved try here. Will be stretching out for the first time, but he's bred to love two turns. DON'S EARLY FLIGHT comes north for this. Has run all right down south, but those recent races have been at the bottom level. Does get the leading rider for barn that does very well with the horses it ships north. SOUND'O GLORY is the lone winner in the field, having dropped down for a confidence builder last time. Won but bothered rivals after leaving the quarter pole and had to be disqualified back to third. Stepping back up but going in good form.