

GOLDEN GATE ANALYSIS

By **CHUCK DYBDAL**



BEST BET: El Cugat (3rd race)

First Race: 1.Comic Fool 2.Smoke Cat 3.Himself the Elf

COMIC FOOL seems to enjoy quite a pace advantage here. Although he graduated at only five furlongs, his final time was more than a second faster than the five-furlong split for his primary rival SMOKE CAT. That type of advantage is hard to overcome. Both runners have hit the board in all three starts, but Smoke Cat has a pair of seconds to go with his victory, while Comic Fool has a pair of third-place finishes. Smoke Cat's maiden win also came against a higher level of competition. HIMSELF THE ELF has run twice here at this level after beginning his career in Canada. Turned in a strong second-place finish at 25-to-1 last time after sticking his head in front in the lane. He may be capable of even more improvement.

Second Race: 1.El Palqui 2.Holy Coyote 3.Strawberry Lake

As with the top pick in the first race, EL PALQUI seems to possess a decided pace advantage here. He has been running well at this level, pick up a check in five straight starts. HOLY COYOTE steps up off a solid win. He has two wins and has hit the board in six of seven starts here. Has never raced this high against winners, but his best makes him competitive here, and he has an easy maintenance drill since raced. STRAWBERRY LAKE is a 9 YO making his first start since April Fool's Day of 2007. Flashed speed going down the hill at Santa Anita and was a Grade 1 stakes winner in his native Argentina. Definitely an 'X' factor, but note the six-furlong bullet drills.

Third Race: 1.El Cugat 2. Tease the Tiger 3.Walker Rd.

EL CUGAT stretched out to this distance last time and waltzed hom an easy winner, unchallenged in the lane. Has hit the board in all five starts here and has a pair of maintenance drills since raced. Stepping up, but he's been showing improvement. TEASE THE TIGER is a stakes-placed Canadian-bred. Needed his last when he trailed the top pick and Raising Memo, who was overmatched in the El Camino Real Derby. Dueled up front and faded late. Figures to be much tighter here. WALKER RD. doubles his claiming price here after overcoming trouble to win his last start. He's a stablemate of the top pick and is on a real uptick of late. If he shows more improvement, he could win barn bragging rights.

Fourth Race: 1.Beam Me Up Topper 2.Jackpot Saloon 3.Blazing Dan

BEAM ME UP TOPPER won his debut for the relatively modest claiming price of \$20,000, but he won with style, dueling early and increasing his advantage in the lane. Comes back five weeks later with five nice maintenance drills for the leading barn, including a six-furlong move. JACKPOT SALOON did nothing in his debut last year in a straight maiden affair. He came back nearly five months later and pulled clear late while running for a tag. Haw worked since raced, and barn wins 31 percent with a hefty flat-bet profit second off a layoff. BLAZING DAN ran third at this level after his graduation. He tried allowance types last time, losing to an undefeated runner scheduled to go in Saturday's stakes race. The effort marked his fifth straight improved Beyer.

Fifth Race: 1.Gail Force Wins 2.Dance to My Lou 3.Foxy Indian

GAIL FORCE WINS dropped to this level after an eight-month layoff, running second in her comeback before winning last time. Moves up to the nonwinners-of-three condition here. Like the way she finishes and the solid work pattern since her last win. DANCE TO MY LOU dropped to this level last time, losing a photo as the even-money favorite. She got away a little slowly from the rail but stuck her head in front in the lane but couldn't quite hold on. She draws the outside post here, which will work to her advantage. FOXY INDIAN has never run this cheap. She's been routing of late, but has decent fractions and has won sprinting in the past. Will need to be asked a bit early to be in position to win during the run home.

Sixth Race: 1.U R All That I Am 2.Mission High 3.Bob's Lady Bee

U R ALL THAT I AM is by a very good debut sire and out of a dam who finished first or second in four of five starts. The dam has been perfect with all eight foals winning, four of them capturing stakes and another being stakes-placed. Filly has decent works for leading barn, which shows a flat-bet profit with first-timers. MISSION HIGH is a \$160,000 purchase who makes her debut for a tag. Sire is decent with first-timers. Unraced dam has one other foal, whose record is 9-1-1-1. Like the fact she's had several six-furlong works, and note the five-furlong bullet. BOB'S LADY BEE is the first to race from a multiple stakes-winning mare. Sire has win-early success, and barn shows flat-bet profit with first-timers, but does better in straight maiden races.

Seventh Race: 1.Run It 2.The Major 3.Nina's Benchmark

RUN IT has run well since his debut except for a disappointing stakes try. Bounced back and has been the runner-up in his past two starts at this level, beaten less than a length in combined margins. Finishes nicely and should be well positioned throughout. THE MAJOR won his debut going seven furlong at Santa Anita, proving quite game in the stretch. That's a taxing distance, and he earned a good number for his effort. Shouldn't mind the additional furlong. Barn has entered NINA'S BENCHMARK here, and he would seemingly like the distance. Indications are that he will run in Saturday's sprint stakes, but he'll be a factor if barn goes with 'Plan B': Fitzmo will be sharper after his comeback race here and should also be a factor.

Eighth Race: 1.Blossom Rock 2.Most Popular 3.Conditioner

BLOSSOM ROCK was purchased for \$370,000 last year and has run credibly in three races against straight maiden company. Barn gives a huge drop here, but has a strong win percentage and ROI when dropping runners into maiden claimers for the first time. Mixed signals with the drop, and the value may not be great, but any of her previous starts is good enough to beat these. MOST POPULAR has worked nicely leading up to her debut. Hails from barn that is successful with debut runners. Works, including one at six furlongs, suggest she has plenty of condition and won't get tired here. CONDITIONER steps up for this and draws the rail. Has a bit of speed so rail won't be as big a factor as it might for others. Has been inconsistent, but that explains the claiming tag.