

WEEK 04  
Tampa Bay Derby & more

March 17, 2023

Well, I think I can scratch GOLD MAGIC from the Kentucky Derby possibles list as he had a lackluster 4th place finish in an optional claiming event at Gulfstream Park today. Winner was TICKING, a son of Bolt D'Oro, who was winning his 2cd of 3 starts, both wins happening this year. Trained by Ed Pleasa Jr and ridden by Edgard Zayas, the Florida-bred broke his maiden on Febuauy 18th. That was also a seven furlong AOC and he won as he pleased as favorite by just over 6 lengths. I don't think there are any Derby aspirations for that one but I could be wrong. Anyway, I see GOLD MAGIC headed to Canada now to prepare for the King's Plate.

TAPIT TRICE had a gallop in Tampa Bay Derby and he's headed for the Blue Grass Stakes at Keeneland on April 8th, being just one of Todd Pletcher's stable of Kentucky Derby possibilities, headed by the early favorite FORTE who of course won his last, barely breaking a sweat. Unfortunately, the very promising LITIGATE is off the Derby trail after suffering a set back. KINGSBARNES will go in next weekend's Louisiana Derby. Just tossing this in, the dam of Forte is to be bred to Horse of the Year, Flightline.

Others that are officially out of the quest for the Derby are Arabian Knight, CAVE ROCK and LOGGINS and there hasn't been a listed work out for last year's maiden winner (and first choice at the time in the future book for Kentucky Derby favoritism) EXTRA ANEJO.

I don't see a Derby candidate in this weekend's Hutcheson Stakes (Gulfstream Park). The 6 furlong event has 7 entered and it is headed by SUPER CHOW. His record of 5 wins in 7 starts (at 5 different tracks) is impressive but when it comes to analyzing future Kentucky Derby starters, it's not. His 2 stakes wins were at 6 furlongs and when they tried him at 7 furlongs, in his last start, he was beaten by a length after setting the pace but finished 11 lengths ahead of the 3rd placed horse. (Winner of the Swale Stakes was General Jim). I'd love to see jockey Chantel Sutherland at Churchill Downs, so there is part of me that has hopes. Super Chow is by Lord Nelson which won the San Vicente (G2) but was basically a sprinter. He retired at 4 and went to Spendthrift Farm where he was off to a decent start at stud, contracted laminitis and eventually was euthanized do to that problem reoccurring. Much of the progeny thusfar has shown talent only in sprints. Jorge Delgado trains Super Chow. Anyway, others in the field include TWO OF A KIND, who is trained by Brian Lynch and will be ridden by Joel Rosario and is actually my selection. Last year's Tremont Stakes winner is a sprinter as well, sired by Overanalyze who, trained by Todd Pletcher, won the Arkansas Derby. He started his stud career at WinStar but is now grazing between trips to the breeding shed in South Korea. His best racing son to date was Hog Creek Hustle, best under a mile. His filly You're My Girl was second in the Frizette Stakes at a mile. DIAMOND COOL is the third choice on Saturday and this son of Prospective won a 7 furlong state bred race in his only win to date.

The Hutcheson used to be a prep for the Florida Derby back in the day and it was a Grade 2 but over the years, it was cut down from 7 furlongs to 6 and from Grade 2 to 3 and then to a listed event and now to a black type stakes race. Thinking way, way back we used to have the Flamingo Stakes at the beautiful Hialeah Race Course which was on par in importance with the Florida Derby.

The good ole days...

OK, so with no Derby preps this weekend (the major entry points will start in another week), let's talk about a few others I have not mentioned thus far.

Boosted to #2 on the current Derby Top Ten by some is INSTANT COFFEE. Brad Cox is the trainer of this son of Bolt D'Oro. His best race to date was when he defeated eventual Rebel Stakes winner in the LeCompte Stakes a Fair Grounds and he has been training forwardly for an appointment at that track in the March 25th Louisiana Derby (where he will meet Pletcher's KINGSBARNES apparently). Instant Coffee has won 3 of his 4 starts. Last year he won the Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes (8.5f) over Curly Jack.

Bolt D'Oro was a good horse in his own right, having won the Del Mar Futurity, the FrontRunner Stakes and the San Felipe Stakes. He ended up 12th in the Kentucky Derby. He made more headlines when his trainer, Mick Ruis, wanted Justify to be DQd from the Santa Anita Derby after a drug positive (scopolamine) but the stewards took no action. He never won after the San Felipe, his last start being in the Metropolitan in which he was last of 11. He headed off to stud at Spendthrift and shuttles to South America as well. Todd Pletcher has a son of his in his barn (Major Dude) who is scheduled to run in the Jeff Ruby Steaks but thusfar has performed well only on turf, winning the Pilgrim S and the Kitten's Joy. Another son, Boppy O, is a graded SW on turf as well. Brad Cox' Corona Bolt is impressive but has been limited to six furlongs. Looking at the dam's side of the pedigree of Instant Coffee, the made is Follow No One, who broke her maiden at a mile on turf and won her only other race (in a career of a dozen starts which also included a 3rd place in the Alma North Stakes) and a mile and 70 yards. Instant Coffee is her only foal to race; she has a 2021 Frosted filly. Second dam, Miss Red Delicious (by Empire Maker), was a stakes winner at 7 furlongs. Go back to the third dam, Miss Mary Apples, and you have a Grade 3 stakes producer (Lady Apple).

The other day, Pletcher's FEARLESS SOLDIER progressed in his career by breaking his maiden in a 7 1/2 furlong turf event at Gulfstream Park. He's from G1SW City of Light's first crop. City of Light's son, Bourbon Bash, won a stakes race while defeating previously mentioned Super Chow in the Bowman's Mill Stakes. Continuing with three year old colts in Pletcher's care are Neutral who is scheduled to make his racing debut at Gulfstream on the 18th in a one mile event in which his stablemate, Magical Power, is also entered. Neutral is by Horse of the Year Curlin out of SP Value Stream by Horse of the Year A P Indy. Magical Power cost \$460,000 as a yearling. He's by Champion Good Magic (by Curlin) out of non-winner Follow Moon by Malibu Moon. Follow Moon is the dam of English SPW Kaboo, her only other foal to race. That maiden race will have my attention. Shug McGaughey has a Quality Road colt in as well (Citizen Mack) who thusfar has started 6 times with no wins. Race will be interesting!

OK, the last Kentucky Derby hopeful I will discuss today is REINCARNATE (by Good Magic) who is aiming for the April 1st Arkansas Derby, after having finished 3rd in the prep, the Rebel Stakes. Winner of that one, of course, was Confidence Game. There is yet no decision on where they are going to start Confidence Game yet, the Arkansas Derby, the Blue Grass or go straight to the Kentucky Derby. Reincarnate will be making his second start for Baffert-sub Tim Yakteen. He previously won the Sham Stakes (8 furlongs), with Newgate 2cd and National Treasure 3rd. (all Baffert). Newgate is out with a hock injury. National Treasure returned to workouts (after being given to Tim Yakteen) after suffering a bruised foot. This Quality Road colt is a possible for the Santa Anita Derby. Back to Reincarnate (sorry, I am all over the place!), his dam is Allannah who won the Cincinatti Trophy as a three year old (6.5furlongs). Her other two wins came at a mile. She's had no other foals of note.

Brad Cox is aiming Angel of Empire at the Arkansas Derby, Hit Show & Slip Mahoney to the Wood Memorial, Verifying to the Blue Grass Stakes with Victory Formation (recovered from a minor injury) is being considered for several prep races.