

Louisiana Derby thoughts

1. #1 is third off a layoff, has decent works, and great connections. However, he moves into the one-hole, where Santana must make a split-second decision: to go or not to go. Since it's a long race, and he has the breeding for it, I think he'll opt to rate, since the horse doesn't appear to have much early speed. If he does, he'll have to work out a trip, finding a path through eleven other horses. I'm going against.
2. #2 is a Saez/Cox horse, so nuff said. He's won two graded stakes races already in his short career. He should be able to get the distance. Hasn't run for more than two months, but it's a Cox horse with very good workouts since, and has also run well off of short layoffs. Won here in last, with the highest last race speed rating (96), in a tie with #4. Choice, so far, but odds will be tiny.
3. No flies on Morales and Amoss, either. Their horse has been running against very good company, and won a G3 at CD, but his figures are not as impressive as others in here, some of whom also have run in some tough races. Works since not impressive, either. Has not shown propensity to run best second off a layoff, either, which he is today. Hasn't won since last year. I'll pass.
4. Ran second in last with highest last race fig (tied with #2) in a G2 here at a mile and an eighth. His best race so far, and first at FG. Other than that race, his figs are not exceptional. McPeek keeps BJ, so excellent connections also. Excellent works since. Certainly a good possibility.
5. Rosario comes in to ride a Candy Ride horse for Asmussen's second horse in here. Figures are okay, workouts are okay, been running against easier company. You might think he doesn't stand a chance, but Rosario and Asmussen? Have to vote against, anyway. I'll probably play him somehow, though, 'cause he's a Candy Ride horse: my favorite sire.
6. Well, any race like this you expect to see the good guys turn out. So here's Prat picking up the mount for Saffie. He's won his last two in pretty good style, pressing and winning fairly easily. But of course against much cheaper, and has the figs to show for it. Should get this distance. Only questions are how will he run at FG against this caliber of competition under a new rider, even if it's Flavien? Remains to be seen but don't go overboard on him.
7. Don't sell Torres short; he's a good rider, making good decisions. Don't really know anything about the trainer, so can't comment. Anyway, #7 is third off a layoff for the first time, and DeVaux seems to do well with that angle. A presser, which style is okay for this track and distance. May surprise for a piece at a price.
8. No, Desormeaux doesn't have a sterling record in graded stakes (4 of seventy), but who's counting? Horse is light on figs and company as well as connections, but looks capable of getting the distance. Last two races, both routes here, had decent figs, the last (91) in the grade two Risen Star. Works since are pretty good. Still have to pass.
9. Another Brad Cox horse, this time switching from Geroux to Manny Franco, probably a lateral move. Is third off a layoff, after throwing a 93 fig in both of his last two, both here. Pretty sure to get the distance (Tapit). Pretty good works since. Stuck on the outside, but a good closer/presser. Would not surprise me; I think he'll outrun his odds.
10. Another McPeek horse, that's run some decent figs, some against tougher. Gets Junior, who shows up sometimes in the big races. Won his last, here, with a 94 fig. Good works since. Candy Ride horse (LOL). May be in the mix; may even get a share, but don't see him for the win. Of course I'll bet on him, anyway, to do something.
11. Another Brad Cox horse, if you can believe it. This time switching back to Geroux, who has run him well before, and who also has a talent for winning the big ones. Has run in three

graded races out of his four races total, and has not showed up. Good works since. Ran his best race on the engine; don't think he'll get that option here. Never has run this distance, so that's a question mark. However – Florent and Cox. Can't dismiss completely.

12. Just broke his maiden. Light on figs. Decent works since. Good connections, but I fear he's rather dramatically overmatched.

Okay. If you like the Bris power, you'll favor 9, 2, and 4. If you like their last race, you'll like 6, 9, 4, 3. If you like last race speed figures, you'll favor 2,4,10,9. If you like closers, you might favor the 2,4,1,12. If you like early speed you might take a long look at #6, #1 and #3. Is a puzzlement, right? Well, there's really no dominant speed in this race. Tom Amoss, talking about the #3, infers that the horse will be rated, but who knows what will happen when the bell rings?

As usual, an undecipherable race. #2, Instant Coffee, has probably the best resume. He's a bigtime closer, but will have to work out a trip, which Saez is capable of doing. I won't bet him, because the odds will be too low. I might consider #3, in spite of Amoss's remarks; he appears to be the true speed in here. And of course I'll throw my Candy horses in somewhere.

Over to you.