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Del Mar | Posted 7/20/2009, 5:31 pm



Baffert well-stocked with juveniles

By Jay Privman

DEL MAR, Calif. - From 1996-2002, if you weren't named Bob Baffert, you did not train the winner of the Del Mar Futurity. Baffert had a hammerlock on the race, winning it a record seven straight times with the likes of Silver Charm and Forest Camp. After a mild drought, he won it again last year with Midshipman, who went on to become the Eclipse Award-winning 2-year-old colt of 2008. Based on the quality of 2-year-olds Baffert has this summer at Del Mar, eight Del Mar Futurities might not be enough.

Baffert is loaded.

"I've got some nice ones," he admitted. "The majority of them will be ready toward the middle of the meet."

There was a preview of coming attractions at Hollywood Park, when Lookin at Lucky, a colt by Smart Strike, won powerfully in his debut on July 11 under jockey Garrett Gomez. He is scheduled to come back in the Grade 2, \$150,000 Best Pal Stakes on Aug. 9, a prep for the Grade 1, \$300,000 Del Mar Futurity on Sept. 7.

"Garrett really likes him a lot, and he usually doesn't say anything," Baffert said.

Baffert's other promising colts, all scheduled to debut this summer, include Marcello (by Johannesburg), Ranchero (Closing Argument), and Tiny Woods (Roman Ruler).

Baffert has had great success with 2-year-old fillies at Del Mar, too. He has won the Grade 1 Del Mar Debutante - to be run this year on Sept. 5 - six times. His best chance to win that race this year may be with Bonnie Blue Flag, a daughter of Mineshaft.

"She's pretty special, this horse," Baffert said.

Doug O'Neill holds the hottest hand right now with fillies. At Hollywood Park, O'Neill beat the boys in the Hollywood Juvenile with the filly Necessary Evil and took the Landaluce with Repo, who is being wheeled right back on 12 days' rest for the California Thoroughbred Breeders' Association Stakes on Friday. O'Neill also has the filly Octogarian, who was a debut winner July 9, and the colt Bench the Judge, who closed quickly for third in his debut July 5.

John Sadler, the leading trainer last summer at Del Mar, should come out firing with two of his better 2-year-olds this weekend, when the first non-claiming maiden races for 2-year-olds are scheduled. He has Samardo, a colt by Stormin' Fever, and Misinjennoous, a filly by Tapit, both ready to roll.

"The kinds of 2-year-olds I have are not by A.P. Indy, or the most expensive stud, but they're athletes," Sadler said. "These two, I think they're both good enough to be live first time out and still have the ability to go on."

Sadler's best colt may be Hurricane Ike, who acted goofy in his debut on July 5 at Hollywood Park yet still re-rallied to win. He also trains Ivory Fudge, a Candy Ride colt who finished well for third behind Baffert's Lookin at Lucky.

Lions Story, who finished second to Hurricane Ike on July 5 in his debut after starting from the rail, could race this weekend.



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"He was not cranked up first time out," said Dan Ward, assistant to Jerry Hollendorfer, who trains Lions Story. "He had to go from the rail. I think he'll be a little better coming a little off of it."

Mike Machowsky believes that Kuro, who finished third in his debut at Hollywood Park on July 5, can improve second time out. He also is high on the Birdstone colt Guiltbyassociation, who will make his debut one of the first two weekends of the meet.

"He wants to go on," Machowsky said.

David Hofmans had a big meet at Hollywood Park with the filly Well Deserved, who won the Cinderella and then finished second in the Landaluce. This weekend at Del Mar, Hofmans will unveil the Stormy Atlantic colt Oceanographer, who flew out of the gate on Monday morning en route to a five-furlong work in 1:00.80. He was mistakenly listed as Oceanography, who is trained by James Kasparoff, on Monday's official work tab.

"I don't know how good he is, but he's quick," Hofmans said.

Also possible for this weekend's 2-year-old race for males is Alfarabi, an Eoin Harty-trained son of Yes It's True who was second to Patrick Biancone-trained Zip Quik in his debut June 20. Zip Quik came back to run second in the Hollywood Juvenile.

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