

~ The Early Word ~ New Zealand

Racing returns to the main centres this week with meetings at Ellerslie (Auckland) & Trentham (Wellington). Damp conditions for both venues with Ellerslie predicted Dead/Slow and Trentham a knee high bog. Ellerslie is a beautiful course giving all runners an equal opportunity from most distances while Trentham is affectionately known by the locals as a punters graveyard.

Our best bet of the day is **Auckland Race 4 No 4 Run Aground**. Two runs in & building to this distance, all wins have been on rain affected ground and he normally salutes when expected. Has Colgan on board & strikes a field that is a stride or two behind it.

Our rated price is 2.00. Expected price 2.50-3.00

The value selection for today is **Wellington Race 8 No 3 Old Belvedere**. Failed last start on firm going, 2 runs prior were extra good in similar conditions to what it will strike today. Trainer will be clapping his hands with delight with the rain arriving for this Group 1 event, sure to be ploughing through it best at the finish. Did perform ok in Queensland winter 2007. Currently 16.0 fixed NZ TAB.

Our rated price is 7.00. Expected price 12.00-16.00

Adelaide

The Banker

Race 2 # 1 Exalted Keetah

Rated: 1.80

Expected: 2.25

BEST BET

Returned to racing in fine style when convincing first up winner against similar class of field. Gets in with the same weight and the extra 100m looks made to order. With any natural improvement looks very hard to hold out. A good bet at 1.80 or better. Only danger appears to be Bella Leah(2) rated at 3.

The Value

Race 5 # 4 Yarterbery

Rated: 4.20

Expected: 3.80

E/W BET

Looks to be a race devoid of any early pace with Yarterbery and Rockbank (8) appearing the only genuine on pace runners. Yarterbery has been racing most consistently without breaking through but this really appears to be his best chance especially getting in on the luxury weight (52.5kg) after Bailey claims his 3kg allowance. Looks to get all the favours and rates on top at 4.50 or better.

Open race with all runners rating a chance. Prices are By Sea(5) 4.6, Two Shades Of Blue(6) 7.4, Orme(3) 8.4, Manhattan Sky(1) 8.9, Rockbank (8) 10.70, Imperium(7) 10.7.

(updated after scratchings)

Lacey Underall

2008 Adelaide Cup Winner

Brisbane

The Banker

Race 6 # 1 She's In The Guide

Rated: 2.85

Expected: 2.50

BEST BET

She's In the Guide ran quick time winning over 1010m 1st up. At her last attempt over the Doomben 1200m she blitzed a similar field, leading throughout & winning by 3.8l.

The Value

Race 7 # 8 Askew

Rated: 8.00

Expected: 15.00

E/W BET

Askew showed improvement last season - won a GC 1400m race running ½ sec outside the track record. Should be ready to go after 2 recent trials.

Viewed

2008 Brisbane Cup Winner

Melbourne

The Banker

Race 8 # 3 Zipping

Rated: 4.60

Expected: 7.50

BEST BET

Lloyd Williams will have Zipping ready for his best in the Cox Plate and with the field falling away and both of the favourites big risks, he is the one to beat. He was brilliant in running third in the Turnbull and was just as impressive fresh in the Feehan. He is proven at the Valley and ten furlongs is probably his best trip. He gets all the ticks.

The Value

Race 7 # 15 Causeway Queen

Rated: 11.00

Expected: 13.00

E/W BET

Causeway Queen is a talented mare who looks over the odds in the Moonee Valley Cup. She is untried at the trip and she has drawn wide but her form this time in has been good with her effort in the Stocks Stakes particularly pleasing. She should have beaten Tuesday Joy that day. In an open affair, she will get her chance.

Efficient

2007 Melbourne Cup Winner

Sydney

The Banker

Race 6 # 1 Hurrah

Rated: 3.50

Expected: 3.30

BEST BET

Chris Waller trained horses have been going lengths better at home than Randwick of late. I'm not convinced he's a kid's horse, but this boy can ride and Hurrah gets in ok in a Welter after the 3kg claim. Genuine Listed/Group 3 class horse. Disappointing effort in the Craven plate, but back on top of the ground and back to his home track, looks the best bet on what's a tricky card of racing.

The Value

Race 8 # 7 Party Crasher

Rated: 7.50

Expected: 6.50

E/W BET

Tough galloper who races well at Rosehill and invariably races well at his first couple back from a spell. First up in a Rosehill 1400m with 51.5kg is pretty mouth-watering for this fellow. Will give a big sight and take some running down with that sort of weight. Mad not to save through Reigning To Win in the exactas in what is a very competitive, and likely open-betting race. He was my Epsom tip afterall, but just went too bad to be true. Watch market.

No Wine No Song

2008 Sydney Cup Winner

~ The "Get Out" Stakes ~ Western Australia

A somewhat tricky card, favourites should dominate the early races, but there appears to be more than meets the eye in the latter half of the card. The feature is the wfa Prince Of Wales Stakes race 8 which will see Dark Target dominate the top end of the market on the basis of a stunning first up win 14 days ago. Dark Target has yet to run a place over today's distance of 1200m in four attempts!

Our first this week is **No 3 CLARECASTLE** in **race 5**, this 5yo mare had group form as a 3yo but went amiss as a 4yo enforcing a long 436 day layoff. She found form quickly after that layoff and won at Northam at her 3rd run back, she was immediately spelled and has returned in fine fettle winning 2 from 3 this campaign and is finally starting to realize her early potential. Rated strong figures for a race like this on her last start Belmont win and looks nicely placed here. Drawn the outside of 9, but has early tactical speed and should cross and settle behind assessed leader Interange. Early favourite Henry The Pharoah may be suspect over this trip. Goldy Junior looms as a danger.

Rated Price: **3.50** Expected: 3.80

Underrated mare **No 4 SLEEPWALK** appeals as great each way value in the 7th. This mare propelled her career from class 1 to open class in her gender with a terrific campaign last time in which yielded 3 wins from 5 starts. Rated good figures in those wins against some tidy gallopers and if she can replicate that form here, is in this up to her eyeballs. Nice first up 2nd to Black In Time suggests another fruitful campaign. Should get nice run in transit, just off the leaders. Magical Belle and Comic Hero have the current from to be logical dangers

Rated Price : **4.50** Expected: 4.50