

ROSEHILL PREVIEW

April 4, 2009

GOLDEN SLIPPER (1200M)

Race 7, 4.05pm (Sydney time)

The likely wet track – expected to be at least slow – has thrown open this year’s Group 1 Golden Slipper Stakes. Last year’s Slipper was won on heavy ground by the \$6 favourite Sebring, who overcame a tardy start to weave through the field for a dramatic win – a Glen Boss classic Group 1 ride.

Before that you need to go back to Canny Lad in 1990 to find the next Slipper run on a genuine slow/heavy track – and what you notice about both races is that the winner came from behind the speed, and through the field. The fittest and the strongest 2YO will win the Slipper in wet ground.

For that reason, and others, I believe **(1) Real Saga** will beat the classy filly More Joyous in this year’s Slipper. The big colt should be too strong for the lightly-framed filly if the race boils down to a slog to the line.

Real Saga is aiming to be the 25th colt (six geldings have won the race) to win the Slipper and the filly would be the 23rd of her sex. Trainer Gai Waterhouse worries that the fillies meet the colts on a 1kg worse term than they used to, but Miss Finland (2006) and Forensics (2007) have been able to beat the boys since the weights for fillies were raised from 53.5kg to 54.5kg (now a 2kg difference with the colts and geldings) in 2004.

Real Saga is a masculine colt who has all the ingredients of a Golden Slipper winner. His co-trainer John Hawkes – who has won the Slipper with Forensics and Guineas (1997) – said the colt’s maturity was a key factor to him being so good at this age. “He hasn’t

had a day of shin-soreness. He’s built like a 3YO and races with the maturity of a 3YO,” he said of the colt who won the Group 2 Breeders’ Plate (1000m) at Randwick in the spring. His only defeat was a luckless second behind **(2) Reward For Effort** in the Group 1 Blue Diamond Stakes (1200m) at Caulfield when jockey Damien Oliver “tucked in” to some dead-ends when the colt needed clear ground. Real Saga’s dominant win in the Group 2 Todman Stakes (1200m) was probably more impressive than **(8) More Joyous’s** win in the Group 2 Reisling Stakes (1200m) on the same day, because he powered over his rivals after tracking in last place off a slow tempo. Even Waterhouse conceded “the colt is very good”.

The Melbourne filly **(9) Rostova** is the query runner. If you excuse her Blue Diamond fifth, when she got her tongue over the bit, she hasn’t put a foot wrong. Her recent trial second to Reward For Effort was a brilliant warm-up for this race. And like Real Saga, she is mature like a 3YO..

The tips: Real Saga to beat the fillies Rostova and More Joyous. Looking for a roughie, then **(15) Marquardt** and **(6) Phelan Ready** are the two that will be hitting the line hard, and they are over the odds.

TEMPO - FAST

The Golden Slipper is rarely run at a slow pace – the nature of the big field, tight run to the turn and precocious, green 2YOs, usually guarantees a solidly run affair. The pace in this race will come from the Gai Waterhouse pair Horizons and Manhattan Rain, and the Melbourne colt Reward For Effort.

AND ALSO

Five Group 1 races, five intriguing contests at the highest level at Rosehill on Saturday – but if you’re having a punt, you should look to the ‘befores’ and ‘afters’, with two races before the Group 1 glut, and two after.

Two warnings: don’t let the lesser names get under your guard with so many stars on track; and be wary of the weather. Very wary. We know rain won’t stop you betting, so here is our under-the-radar approach:

R1: Butch James is a low-key addition to Mick Price’s in-form stable and comes off an Auckland Cup sixth for owner-trainer-dairy farmer Adrian Bull. He has won over 2000m, and Price wouldn’t take him on if he didn’t think there was a good win in him. Eachway at \$15 in early markets.

R2: Dr Doute’s isn’t without profile, but alongside Whobegotyou and Mark Kavanagh’s swag of recent Group 1 winners, he is almost anonymous – the 2000m suits, and he has dead and slow form. The \$5 looks juicy.

R7: Group 1 winner **Mr Baritone** likes the wet and has 1200m form, so he could be value at \$16 if Mike Moroney starts him in this instead of the last, in which he is first emergency.

R8: Dao Dao is the go here. A year ago, DD flopped behind Good Ba Ba in the Champions Mile; sent home, he was only a half-length away when fourth first-up to Judged in the Liverpool City Cup (1300m). Another 100m here, Darren Beadman, who won on him twice pre-HK, replaces Rod Quinn, \$7 on offer ... say no more.

Stephen Howell

SPEED MAP

Predicted positions on settling

		 Real Saga	 Marquardt	 Our Joan Of Arc	
	 Phelan Ready	 Headway	 More Joyous	 Melito	 Horizons
 Zikmann	 So Anyway	 Indian Ocean	 Rostova	 Manhattan Rain	
		 Delago Bolt	 Wanted		 Reward For Effort