

MORPHETTVILLE PREVIEW

May 2, 2009

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DERBY (2500M)

Race 7, 3.55pm (Adelaide time)

Historically, a Group 1 South Australian Derby (2500m) winner has as much chance of winning the Melbourne Cup as the Group 1 AJC Australian Derby (2400m, Randwick), a race held in much higher esteem.

Since the SA Derby was first run in 1860, two winners have won the Cup in the same year – the last was Subzero in 1992. The last AJC Derby winner to triumph at Flemington, as a 3YO, was Hall Mark in 1933.

This year's SA Derby is a most interesting affair because of the presence of the 2008 Group 1 Victoria Derby winner (and pre-post favourite) **Rebel Raider**. The last Victoria Derby winner to win the SA Derby was the Tommy Smith-trained front-runner Brewery Boy in 1981, and before that Bart Cummings' pair, Stormy Rex in 1977 and Dayana in 1972.

History lesson over, this year's edition of the classic is an interesting race which features some up-and-coming stayers that are coming together from different form lines.

It is hard to imagine that any horse who finished behind Rebel Raider in the Chairman's Stakes (2000m), at Morphettville on April 18, can beat him in the Derby. The colt failed to handle right-handed racing in Sydney when his form was so bad, he was being labelled a "one-race wonder" who fluked beating a tired Whobegotyou at Flemington in the spring. Back at home in Adelaide, trainer Leon Macdonald has been able to turn around the form of the son of Reset.

Rebel Raider likes to settle back and

come late as he did in the Victoria Derby and the Chairman's. Expect Clare Lindop to ride him that way again. Macdonald claims the horse has thrived since his form-reversal win.

Looking outside the horses that ran in the Chairman's, it is not hard to come up with two threats to Rebel Raider – the smart Larry's Never Late and the handsome but highly-strung Sydney colt Naval Escort.

Larry's Never Late was fancied (he was \$11 and RR was \$101) in the Victoria Derby, but he just wasn't seasoned enough – he finished sixth, beaten 6.8lens, behind RR. With Saturday's jockey Glen Boss aboard, LNL showed great maturity and endeavour to beat some tough old stayers in the Hamilton Cup (2200m) on a slow track on April 19. Boss was easing the gelding down at the finish, and the Group 1 jockey has delayed a six-day suspension to ride in this race.

Naval Escort is better than his record of one win from nine starts. He is a magnificent looking son of leading sire of stayers Montjeu and he's on the improve. Naval Escort caught the eye with a strong finishing sixth behind Roman Emperor in the G1 AJC Australian Derby on April 11 – that's good form for this weaker race. In-form jockey Craig Williams has the ride for trainer David Payne.

Expect **Reprisal** to be improved by his Chairman's second and Peter Moody has a big opinion of **Fitoussi**, who got too far back in that race, so expect the trainer to have him switched on.

The tips: Rebel Raider to beat Larry's Never Late, Naval Escort, Fitoussi and Reprisal.

AND ALSO

All right, I was wrong. Horribly wrong. Doubting the mighty **Takeover Target** last time he went around (in the TJ Smith at Randwick under Nash Rawiller) in favour of Apache Cat (3rd) has haunted me ever since, and there is no comfort in knowing there were many others who thought age might have caught up with the rising 10YO – what other reason can there be for TT starting at \$5.50 after better was bet?

The problem is that after win No. 20, one of his best, all the other doubters have jumped back on the champ's back along with me and his regular rider Jay Ford, and TT at \$1.60 is too short to back in The Goodwood (1200m) at Morphettville on Saturday. Or is he, considering he is a weights certainty?

Here's a novel idea – why not have \$10 (or \$100 if you're cashed up) on him at the \$1.60 and on the way out put the \$16 (\$160) in the Salvos' tin or whatever it is they rattle outside the track or whichever TAB you attend.

Or, if TT doesn't win you can keep the ticket as a memento of what is almost certainly his last run in Australia. For sentimentalists like me, that sounds like a good eachway bet, with either charity or history a winner.

For pragmatists who work out that the track, or the way the race will be run, won't suit him, this is your chance to get inflated odds about your fancy. You can back it, and TT too. Simply have the \$10 (or \$100) on TT at the \$1.60 and have \$6 (or \$60) on last year's winner **Shadoways** (\$18), a finisher, or on the super-quick **I Am Invincible** (\$11), the obvious leader.

Stephen Howell

SPEED MAP

Predicted positions on settling

						
Honourable Kind	Naval Escort	Reprisal	Larry's Never Late	Bondarchuk	Tuscany View	Fitoussi
						
	Mancuso	Galileo's Dream	Falken	Astro Gains	Goldstinger	Rebel Raider