

RACE BY RACE PREVIEWS: VAAL CLASSIC@2024.09.05

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 1, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R75.000, 12:35GMT+2

Race Summary: REMAINS OF THE DAY justified market support by finishing 2nd over this course and distance on his return from a rest during which he was gelded. He is 2.5kg worse off with SUMMER SHADE, THE REAL DEAL and PURSUIT OF FAME but should confirm that form with further improvement. TIGER STORM showed promise in 2 starts as a juvenile and has been gelded since, so should have more to offer. JOHNNY APPLESEED was backed to make a winning debut as a 2yo in open company. He too was subsequently gelded and is open to any amount of improvement. BLACK HOLE SUN completes the shortlist.

Selections:

#8 Tiger Storm, #1 Remains Of The Day, #7 Johnny Appleseed, #2 Summer Shade

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 2, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R90.000, 13:10GMT+2

Race Summary: BELLISSIVAR improved with blinkers fitted to finish a close-up 2nd over track and trip in her last start. She sets the standard in a modest line-up. ROYAL HORIZON, GOLDEN ARGO, FUTURE DATE and CHASING SHADOWS, with the benefit of an introductory outing, all have earning potential. However, the bar isn't set very high and newcomers DENIM BLUE and ENDIZAYO needn't be special to be competitive on debut. The well-bred latter is a Querari-filly out of a multiple Grade 3 and Listed-placed mare. Watch the betting.

Selections:

#5 Bellissivar, #13 Endizayo, #12 Denim Blue, #1 Royal Horizon

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 3, Gallops, 1000m, Turf, R85.000, 13:45GMT+2

Race Summary: Several runners are engaged to run at earlier meetings so their participation here is in doubt. SAKHALA IS'CATHULO has improved recently with a tongue-tie fitted and ought to remain competitive. NKANDLA GOLD, THE NAVY LARK, IN THE ETHER and RATTLE BAG all have the form and experience to play leading roles if taking their place. WHAT A TIGER had excuses for his disappointing last start and is better than that performance suggests, so has to be respected along with DONTSHOOTTHEBARMAN.

Selections:

#7 Sakhala Is'Cathulo, #5 Rattle Bag, #8 The Navy Lark, #4 What A Tiger

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 4, Gallops, 1450m, Turf, R110.000, 14:20GMT+2

Race Summary: Progressive MISS HANNIGAN has thrived since joining Fabian Habib's yard, winning 3 of 5 starts for the stable. She beat SOLDIER'S EYE (has blinkers refitted) and GIMME A SHOT (won her only outing on this course) over this distance at Turffontein last month and could confirm her superiority despite a 1.5kg swing in favour of both rivals. BETULA could pose the biggest threat as she would've tightened up after an encouraging 1200m comeback. Returning CHROME TOURMALINE has won after a layoff so shouldn't be underestimated.

Selections:

#5 Miss Hannigan, #6 Betula, #1 Gimme A Shot, #4 Soldier's Eye

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 5, Gallops, 2000m, Turf, R85.000, 14:55GMT+2

Race Summary: TAXHAVEN and MASTER TIK TOK weren't winning out of turn last time and they could remain competitive out of the maidens as both have form over this distance. FIFTH OF JULY had his last-start success over 1800m franked by the subsequent victory of DIESEL'S SHADOW (1kg better off).

Both are likely to feature despite resultant penalties. It could, however, pay to side with CELTIC RUSH who won his only outing over this trip and has been given relief from the handicapper. CLAW, unexposed stablemate BATTLEOFBARBERTON and ROMEO'S MAGIC have claims too.

Selections:

#5 Celtic Rush, #6 Diesel's Shadow, #3 Claw, #8 Fifth Of July

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 6, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R85.000, 15:35GMT+2

Race Summary: Promising 3yo CHESTNUT BOMBER is carded to run earlier but could still be hard to beat here. GIMMEACHOICE has finished 2nd in back-to-back outings over 1600m, the latest behind re-opposing ARCHIMIDES (1.5kg worse off), so wouldn't be winning out of turn. WILLOW EXPRESS has the form and experience to be competitive although has not won over 1600m in 22 attempts. Rejuvenated ROYAL EDITION, QUATERMAIN on his Highveld and stable debut, and BLACK LIGHTNING, who has dropped to a competitive mark, are others with earning potential.

Selections:

#5 Chestnut Bomber, #3 Gimmeachoice, #8 Archimides, #4 Willow Express

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 7, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R110.000, 16:05GMT+2

Race Summary: PRESLEY is one of many on the card with an earlier engagement, so his participation here could be in doubt. MASTER CHRISTMAS has returned to form recently and confirmed as much by winning his last start at a higher level. He carries a 3-point penalty but should play a leading role in this grade. Fellow last-start scorer MOOLA MAN faces a tougher task stepping up in class under a 7-point penalty. VIVA SPIRIT caught the eye when 3rd over this distance after a 4-month absence. He should strip fitter and have more to offer. KING'S RANSOM shouldn't be underestimated in his first outing over 1600m.

Selections:

#1 Presley, #3 Viva Spirit, #2 Master Christmas, #9 King's Ransom

Vaal Classic, 05.09.2024, Race 8, Gallops, 1600m, Turf, R80.000, 16:45GMT+2

Race Summary: PRINCESS ILARIA and MIGHTY GODDESS are hard-knockers with the form and experience to acquit themselves competitively although they may be vulnerable to less-exposed younger rivals. Last-start maiden winner HAT'S QUEEN fits that profile and is open to improvement. However, fellow 3yo fillies TWOSTEP QUEEN and ACROSS THE POND, themselves last-start winners over this trip, appeal more. The latter performed well at this level as a 2yo in open company and was rewarded for her consistency at this venue a fortnight ago, and a resultant 3-point penalty isn't likely to halt her momentum.

Selections:

#5 Across The Pond, #6 Twostep Queen, #4 Mighty Goddess, #7 Hat's Queen

Best Win: #5 ACROSS THE POND

Best Value Bet: #5 CELTIC RUSH

Best Longshot: #5 CELTIC RUSH