

The Wizard's Spotlight Play

January 1, 2009

Fair Grounds, Race 7

Fair Grounds, Race 7, \$46,000, allowance, 3yo, fillies, state-breds, six furlongs.

Warrior Maid (#5) makes her second start off a layoff following a solid effort Dec. 13 over the Fair Grounds main track. She won her debut at Delaware Park at 17-1 for top trainer Larry Jones. Jones is having a solid meeting winning with 20% of his starters. He is one of the best trainers in the country developing young horses. Case in point is the superb job he did with Hard Spun, who ran second to Street Sense in the 2007 Kentucky Derby and Eight Belles, who also ran a dynamite second to Big Brown in this year's Derby.

Jones rarely runs horses making their first start on lasix. The fact that this filly scored when least expected, shows she has quality. Lasix was added last time out. Warrior Maid broke from the tough rail post in a large field of 12. Leaving the gate, she veered in sharply towards the rail and found herself dead last. Rider Terry Thompson was forced to rush her up into contention into a very fast second quarter then was forced to steady in traffic midway on the turn. Once she was clear in mid-stretch, Thompson swung her out wide and with a quick burst of acceleration, she was a fast closing second, galloping out strong past the wire, suggesting there was plenty left in the tank for the Jan. 1 race.

Warrior Maid gets a jockey changed to Gabriel Saez, who is Jones' main go-to rider. She also drops back into allowance company after racing in a \$100,000 Louisiana-bred stake. I expect her to make another move forward, which should land her into the winners circle. I would make a win bet and "key" Warrior Maid in a trifecta with (#3) Lightlightlight, (#4) Wild Etbauer, and (# 8) Trysting.