

TWINSPIRES TIPSHEET



JOCKEY CLUB GOLD CUP

Jockey Club Gold Cup (Gr 1)

1 1/4-Mile

PURSE \$750,000

| POST | HORSE | ML ODDS |
|------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | Tacitus | 5-2 |
| 2 | Code of Honor | 8-5 |
| 3 | Vino Rosso | 7-2 |
| 4 | Preservationist | 9-5 |
| 5 | Olympic Village | 30-1 |

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| TOP PICKS | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| 4 | Preservationist |
| 3 | Vino Rosso |
| 1 | Tacitus |
| 2 | Code of Honor |

| \$50 EXACTA |
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| 4 with 1, 3 |

The \$750,000 Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1) will be run Saturday at Belmont Park. The race starts on the clubhouse turn at 1 ¼ miles and the five horses will load on the outside stalls of the starting gate so they will have a relatively straight run into the long backstretch. Three of the five starters are three-year-olds as they take on older rivals for the first time.

#1 TACITUS should have won the Belmont Stakes after racing needlessly wide throughout. He did not break well that day and ran much farther than the rest of the field. In the Jim Dandy Stakes (G2), he came back seven weeks later and once again, broke poorly forcing him to chase a sluggish pace. Last out in the Travers Stakes (G1) going today's distance, trainer Bill Mott added blinkers and while he got away well at the start, it made him part of a contested pace and he was no match for the winner. He certainly has a big Belmont Park main track pedigree as his sire, Tapit, has sired three winners of the Belmont Stakes (G1) and his dam, Close Hatches, won two grade one stakes races on this surface for Mott. Jose Ortiz rides back and the blinkers stay on.

#2 CODE OF HONOR seems to be putting it together late in his three-year-old season. I kept expecting him to try the turf after each loss on the dirt but trainer Shug McGaughey persevered after he ran third, placed second, in the Kentucky Derby (G1). He came back here in the one-mile, one-turn Dwyer Stakes (G3) and after sitting off a slow pace, he exploded to an easy win with a terrific last quarter mile. Off for seven weeks, he showed up at the Travers Stakes (G1) a totally different horse and the diminutive son of Noble Mission rallied wide on the far turn to win convincingly going today's distance in fast time. He earned a gigantic BRIS speed rating of 108 which was 12 points higher than he ever ran before. His connections have indicated that they are going to stop on him after this and not go on to the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1). The problem is, he has done his best racing with his races spaced out and how will he run today off a career-best effort? Johnny Velazquez rides back.

#3 VINO ROSSO won the Wood Memorial Stakes (G2) last year like #1 TACITUS did this year. He did not win a race the rest of last year and was off for over six months before returning with a win going a one-turn mile in the Szymie Stakes at Aqueduct. He came back with an even fourth in the Carter Handicap (G1) going seven furlongs behind one of the fastest sprinters in America. Of that sprint, he shipped to Santa Anita and won the Gold Cup (G1) there going today's distance. The son of Curlin came back and raced evenly while in the Whitney Stakes (G1) going 1 1/8 miles and now Todd Pletcher removes blinkers. Johnny Velazquez gets off to ride #2 CODE OF HONOR so he picks up Irad Ortiz, Jr. who picked up a grade one stakes win last Saturday in the Pennsylvania Derby (G1).

#4 PRESERVATIONIST is a horse for the course that has only raced 10 times at the age of six. He won the Suburban Handicap (G2) here going this distance in fast time second start off the layoff then tired in the Whitney Stakes (G1) when he appeared to get worked up by the big crowd at Saratoga. He came back there and won the Woodward Stakes (G1) in a game effort when rallying from just off the pace to get up in time. The races at Saratoga were his first real two-turn races and now he goes back to a course and distance that he won over. He has good tactical speed, which should be to his advantage against a short field, and I wouldn't be surprised if Junior Alvarado sends him to the lead out of the gate.

#5 OLYMPIC VILLAGE has won his last three starts. Two came at the end of last year and he won going two turns as the 11/10 favorite at Laurel against decent allowance foes. Off for about nine months, he returned with a fast win going seven furlongs and was claimed out of the race by Bob Hess, Jr. who wins 15% with this move. Owner Ron Paolucci is known for running horses in stakes races that they do not belong but he is guaranteed a check and showed enormous talent last out in a race that had a slow pace but fast final time.