



Welcome to Sunland Park for a great final weekend of 2013! Racing Ace **Denis Blake** previews the **Sunland Park Winter Futurity** and special guest handicapper **Jonathan Horowitz**, who calls the races at both Arapahoe Park and Zia Park, offers his analysis of the **Sunland Park Winter Derby**.

The stakes action continues on Sunday, December 29 with the running of the **\$350,000 Championship at Sunland Park (G1)**. Denis will offer his analysis and will be joined by another special guest handicapper, **Jose Contreras**.

Follow the Racing Aces on Twitter **@HorseRacingAces** as well as on Facebook. Good luck to all!

Friday, December 27 - Sunland Park 5th Race: \$140,125 Sunland Park Winter Futurity (G2), 2-year-olds, 400 yards

The Sunland Park Winter Futurity features a strong group of juveniles but no standouts, and that should make this an excellent betting race. All 10 finalists are searching for their first stakes victory, however many of them already have graded stakes experience and several of these horses should develop into major players as 3-year-olds.

Cruzin ran a very game race to win his trial in his first start since running in the Grade 1 Dash For Cash Futurity at Lone Star Park in Texas. The gelding is a perfect three-for-three with jockey Ricky Ramirez aboard, and he will pilot the Texas-bred again today.

Rae Of Fire has improved tremendously with two straight wins after finishing off the board in her first three starts. She set the fastest time in the trials.

Fatal Policy ran in the Grade 1, \$2.6 million All American Futurity earlier in the year and finished a good second to Rae Of Fire in the trials.

Famous Edge Of Glory is one of many improving runners in here with two solid wins after failing to find the winner's circle in his first three outings.

Denis' Selections: (#10) Cruzin, (#1) Rae Of Fire, (#5) Fatal Policy, (#8) Famous Edge Of Glory

Saturday, December 28 - Sunland Park 5th Race: \$134,375 Sunland Park Winter Derby (G2), 3-year-olds, 400 yards

Several late-blooming 3-year-olds will try to finish 2013 on top in Saturday's Sunland Park Winter Derby, the final derby of the year in New Mexico. After New Mexico has hosted some of the country's richest derbies this year, the 400-yard Grade 2 contest brings together 10 3-year-olds that will all be looking for their first career stakes success.

Fastest qualifier **Streak Hitter**, who clocked 19.575 seconds in the December 7 trials, is in his first derby or futurity finals after three previous trial attempts. Others have come close in major New Mexico derbies. Ill Stop the World was second in the Grade 1 Ruidoso Derby at Ruidoso Downs in June. Obamano, with three wins in five races since starting his 3-year-old campaign late in September, took third as the fastest qualifier in the Grade 3 Hobbs America Derby at Zia Park in September. **Icu Deity** and Whiteface Eagle were second and third, respectively, in the Grade 3 West Texas Derby at Sunland Park in March.

Jonathan's Selections: (#2) Obamano, (#10) Icu Deity, (#8) Streak Hitter, (#9) Charvet

Sunland Park 5th Race: \$134,375 Sunland Park Winter Derby (G2), 3-year-olds, 400 yards

Just like the Sunland Park Winter Futurity on Friday, Saturday's Sunland Park Winter Derby provides a great wagering opportunity with an evenly-matched field of runners. A case can be made for just about any horse in the field, and it's a good idea for handicappers to watch the trials at gracingvideo.com to compare each runner and what kind of trip they had.

First Prize Moon has had the misfortune of running into some very tough company this year with his five starts before the trials all won by graded stakes winners - Wicked Courage, PJ Chick In Black, Llano Cartel and Jody Pops Zoomer. This colt looked very impressive in winning his trial and has a big chance to win again in the final.

Charvet is a perfect two-for-two at Sunland after winning his trial and taking an allowance/optional claiming race back in January. He ran a close fifth in the Grade 1 Ruidoso Derby in June and ran a strong race in his trial.

Obamano has hit the board in 12 of 15 career starts and all five outings this year, so he deserves to be included in any exotic wagers and could certainly win this with his best effort.

Streak Hitter ran a monster race to set the fastest qualifying time in the trials. This will mark the stakes debut for the gelding and he will have to prove that he can compete at this level.

Denis' Selections: (#6) First Prize Moon, (#9) Charvet, (#2) Obamano, (#8) Streak Hitter

The Racing Aces is a fan education program initiated by the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) which began in June 2010. The Racing Aces are individuals who have been involved in American Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred racing as handicappers, racing writers and publicists. The major goals of the Racing Aces program are to promote the sport, provide fan education services and help to develop new fan bases.

Helpful racing websites:

Thoroughbred:

Daily Racing Form

www.drf.com

Equibase

www.equibase.com

The Paulick Report

www.paulickreport.com

Quarter Horse:

American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA)

www.aqha.com/Racing

Stallionsearch

www.stallionsearch.com

For more information on live racing, handicapping or future Racing Ace appearances, visit the American Quarter Horse Association website at aqha.com/Racing or follow us on Twitter: @HorseRacingAces