



***Iron Maidens Thoroughbreds  
Sham Stakes (G-3)  
March 6, 2010***



*Sham & his trainer Frank Martin  
- Photo: Sports Illustrated*

The Sham Stakes (G-3) was named in honor of the 1973 underdog who chased Secretariat through the Triple Crown and ultimately had his heart broken in the Belmont Stakes. He finished second to Secretariat, in the Kentucky Derby, despite bashing his head against the starting gate so hard he lost two teeth. His time under the wire was a sub 2:00 and faster than Monarchos' winning time in 2001. In any other year, Sham would have been a Triple Crown winner.

The Sham Stakes was supposed to be held a week ago, but was cancelled due to rain. Two horses were added to the line-up and two were withdrawn, which changes the complexion of the race. Let's take a closer look.

**Marcello** (Johannesburg - Miramar Miracle, by Affirmed) was a late running third in his last race, a down the hill turf sprint. He has a pedigree full of brilliant speed received from his champion sire mingled with the stamina from his damsire Affirmed and second damsire Strawberry Road. Marcello's unraced dam is a half sister to a Japanese stakes winner and a stakes placed runner. The barn has a 19% win average with the turf to synthetic angle.

**The Program** (Harlan's Holiday - Shadow on the Moon, by Deputy Minister) won his last race by a dueling nose going 1 1/6 miles. He a second-string horse for the Baffert barn, as Lookin At Lucky, California Derby winner Ranger Heartley and Kettle River have all beaten up on him. The Program's dam is a full sister to a Grade 2 winner and is a half sister to the dam of multiple Grade 1 winner Geri and his Grade 2 winning half brother A.P Arrow. The Program's second dam Far Flying is a stakes winner, fourth dam Nalee and fifth dam Levee are blue hens. The Baffert/Garcia team win at 24%.



*The Program - Photo: Louise Reinagel*

**Outlaw Man** (Forest Wildcat – Pier Sixty Six, by Cozzene) broke his maiden last out going 1 1/8 miles over the turf after three previous attempts. His sire was a dirt sprinter, but Outlaw Man's damsire was the 1985 Turf Champion. His unraced dam was named after a favorite Ft. Lauderdale hangout of the author's and she (the dam) is a half sister to multiple stake winners Misty Sixes and turf stakes winner Broadway View. Second dam is a G-3 stakes winner and a half sister to multiple stakes winner Devil's Orchid and two stakes placed runners. Outlaw Man's three works over the Polytrack have been rather slow. Trainer McPeek is 22% with horses switching from turf to synthetics and Garrett Gomez is on board.

**El Mirage King** (Out of Place – Armenian Dancer, by Shavian) broke his maiden sprinting on the downhill turf course. He has an interesting pedigree without the usual Mr. Prospector/Bold Ruler/Northern Dancer mix, although he does have two instances of the latter cropping up four and five generations back. El Mirage King is a half brother to a stakes winning sprinter, El Mirage Queen. El Mirage King's sire, a son of Coxs Ridge, is a G-3 winner at 1 1/8 miles. His damsire Shavian was a Group 1 winning miler son of Kris and second damsire Lommond, was also a Group 1 winning miler and a \$1.5 million half brother to Seattle Slew. El Mirage King's dam is an Italian stakes winner. Third dam produced Bold Arrangement, second to Ferdinand in the 1986

Kentucky Derby. El Mirage King shows some very good works at Hollywood, but it's anyone's guess how he'll take to the Pro-Ride.



Boulder Creek - Photo:  
West Point T'Breds

**Boulder Creek** (Tapit – Granuaile, by Regal Classic) broke his maiden first time out in February after three attempts last year. His sire Tapit is #3 on the third crop sire list, but only four of his sons are stakes winners or stakes placed. Canadian champion Regal Classic is a half brother to two champions plus the dam of Smart Strike. He's the broodmare sire of Fatal Bullet and several other graded stakes winners. There are no stakes winners in the first three generations of Boulder Creek's distaff family. The barn is 24% with the maiden to stakes winner angle.

**Kettle River** (Congaree – La Grande Mamma, by Compadre) has shown improvement in all three of his starts and beat The Program last time out. His trainer is 22% with last out winners. Kettle River's sire Congaree was an excellent miler, but hasn't lived up to expectations at stud. Damsire is a G-3 turf stakes placed runner at 9F. Dam was a stakes winning sprinter and her two siblings to race are also sprinters. That's pretty much it for the distaff family. The barn is 22% with next out winners.



Kettle River - Photo: Benoit

**Setsuko** (Pleasantly Perfect – Dance with Grace, by Mr. Prospector) took five starts to break his maiden, which is typical of his sires' late-developing progeny. After that win, he came back a few months later to finish second by ½ length in a 1 1/8 mile turf race. Setsuko is a half brother to G-1 stakes placed Indy Dancer. Setsuko's sire was at his best from 9 to 10 furlongs and competed at the highest levels, winning the Breeders' Cup Classic and a year later the Dubai World Cup. Setsuko's dam one three of seven sprints, including a stakes race. She's a full sister to Grade 2 winners Souvenir Copy and Dance Sequence and stakes placed Gold Tribute. Second dam is a Group 1 placed half sister to graded stakes winning sire Doneraile Court, fourth dam Close Control is a blue hen. Setsuko breezes are on the slow side, but Mandella/ Bejarano team up for 27% wins.



Wolf Tail Photo: Benoit

**Wolf Tail** (Strive – Bright Sunday – Dynaformer) was beat two races back by Alphie's Bet. He's been running in state-bred sprints and was beaten by over five lengths in his first attempt at two turns, but did break his maiden in the 5 ½ furlong Graduation Stakes at DelMar. His sire, by Deputy Minister, was third in a G-2 race at 1 1/8 miles. Wolf Tail's dam was in the money six of ten dirt routes with no stakes wins. This is a modest but durable family with many runners making double digit starts. The barn is 11% with graded stakes this meet.

**Nextdoorneighbor** (Lido Palace – Fencelineneighbor, by Wild Rush) easily broke his maiden last out by four lengths when stretching out for the first time. Nextdoorneighbor has no inbreeding within five generations and only one instance within six generations, which is rare. Like El Mirage King, he is free of the Mr. Prospector/Bold Ruler/Northern Dancer mix, except for one instance of Mr. Prospector. Nextdoorneighbor's sire was a gritty G-1 winner, but hasn't done so well at stud with only two graded stakes winners in four crops to run and he produces mainly sprinters. His dam Fencelineneighbor is a multiple stakes winner at 1 1/8 miles and his second and third dams were also stakes winners. Nextdoorneighbor's dam sire and second damsire Flying Paster were also at their best up to 1 1/8 miles. Machowsky/Smith are 13% together.

**Alphie's Bet** (Tribal Rule – Miss Alphie, by Candi's Gold) came flying two races back to be a good second to the unbeaten Caracortado beaten only 1 ¾ lengths going 1 1/6 miles in the California Breeders' Champion Stakes while still a maiden. In his last start, he broke his maiden by 1 ¼ lengths running a mile over turf. His sire Tribal Rule is also the sire of graded stakes winner Georgie Boy and this son of Storm Cat is quickly becoming a good California sire. Alphie's Bet has strong stamina influences on his distaff side. His damsire was a G-2 winner and had the misfortune of being a California stakes horse when Alysheba and Ferdinand were racing, as he was often second to them. Second damsire Pine Bluff won the Preakness and third damsire is Affirmed. Alphie's Bet's dam placed in a couple of turf and one dirt route races. She's a half sister to an Australian Group 2 winner. Alphie's Bet has two consecutive bullets coming into this race. Trainer Barba has go-to jock Solis up and they have a strong 50% win rate.

### Selections:

Speed is king in California, except for races over a mile. For most of the meet, stalkers and closers have won 40% of the route races.

So, who fits the profile? **Alphie's Bet** is the lone stalker in the field and the only one with a last out bullet work. Yes, he broke his maiden last out and is jumping up in class, but so did Caracortdo, who beat Alphie by a diminishing 1 ¾ lengths when they hooked up. Plus, his sire is up and coming. **Kettle River** beat **The Program** last out, but that one was coming with a rush and Kettle River has a more sprint oriented pedigree. It's never good to ignore a Baffert Baby. The other Baffert Baby **Marcello** won his only other start over the Santa Anita Main track and may be one to fill out the exotics. **Setsuko** typically regressed a little after his maiden win, but he should be improving and enjoy the distance. **Outlaw Man, El Mirage King, Boulder Creek** and **Nextdoorneighbor** all broke their maiden last out. A couple of them may regress, but **El Mirage King** and **Nextdoorneighbor** could surprise. Both show excellent works after their maiden races.

**Setsuko**

**Alphie's Bet**

**The Program**

**Nextdoorneighbor**