

2023 LEXUS MELBOURNE CUP COMMENTS

R7 02:00PM LEXUS MELBOURNE CUP

Race Overview: WITHOUT A FIGHT (3) won the G1 Caulfield Cup last time out, proving the strongest stayer off a very fast tempo. Ran to a new peak there and suggested he could hope with the rise in trip. Goes up 1kg in weights but should get preferred conditions and can do the double. VAUBAN (5) is a multiple Grade 1 hurdle winner in the UK who switched back to the flat and won races at Royal Ascot and Naas in impressive style. Have to respect the stable and his staying prowess. SOULCOMBE (6) missed the start badly in the Caulfield Cup but clearly has talent and if he jumps cleanly he'll be hard to hold out. GOLD TRIP (1) last year's winner who has followed an identical preparation. Going as well as ever and can go back-to-back. INTERPRETATION (22) sneaks in with 50kg and must be respected at odds after a drought-breaking win in the Bendigo Cup.

1. x4135 GOLD TRIP (2) T: CIARON MAHER & DAVID EUSTACE J: JAMES MCDONALD 58.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$306,428 B 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Turnbull Stakes winner. Last start 5th of 12 at Moonee Valley in the G1 Cox Plate on October 28 over 2040m, 1.4 len behind Romantic Warrior with 59kg at \$7.50. Before that 3rd of 18 at Caulfield in the G1 Caul Cup on October 21 over 2400m, 2.25 len behind Without A Fight with 58.5kg at \$6.50. Going for back-to-back Melbourne Cups and is going just as well as last year. Top weight but deserves every bit of it.

2. 0x059 ALENQUER (9) T: MICHAEL MORONEY J: DAMIEN OLIVER 56.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$85,539 B Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Tattersalls Gold Cup winner. At the latest run got back early 9th of 14 at Moonee Valley in the G2 Mv Cup on October 27 over 2500m, 3.5 len behind Cleveland carrying 58kg at \$26. The start before that got back early 5th of 10 at Caulfield in the G1 Caulfield Stks on October 14 over 2000m, 6 len behind Alligator Blood carrying 59kg at \$41. Hasn't shown his best in Australia and happy to risk.

3. 11x61 WITHOUT A FIGHT (16) T: A & S FREEDMAN J: MARK ZAHRA 56.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$200,245 BR Gelding 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Caulfield Cup winner. Third-up today and won third-up previously. Resuming 6th of 15 at Caulfield in the G1 Underwood on September 23 over 1800m, 2.25 len behind Alligator Blood with 59kg at \$4.50. Last start won by a head at Caulfield G1 Caul Cup October 21 over 2400m defeating West Wind Blows carrying 55.5kg at \$8.50. Too strong last start and if he runs the trip he'll take a power of beating.

4. 340x8 BREAKUP (18) T: TATSUYA YOSHIOKA J: KOHEI MATSUYAMA 55.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$93,855 CH 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 2 winner. Second-up. First-up after four months 8th of 18 at Caulfield in the G1 Caul Cup on October 21 over 2400m, 5.5 len behind Without A Fight carrying 55kg at \$10. Previously second-up ran on from midfield; 4th of 17 at Kyoto in the G1 Tenno Sho on April 30 over 3200m, 5 len behind Justin Palace with 58.0kg at \$45.80. Okay in the Caulfield Cup but is better suited to this trip and boasts some strong Japanese form lines. Keep safe.

5. 4211x VAUBAN (3) T: WILLIE MULLINS J: RYAN MOORE 55.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$58,436 CH Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Multiple Group 1 winner. First-up. Finished off last preparation won by 1.5 len Naas G3 Ballyroan August 7 over 2414m slow track defeating Valiant King with 61kg at \$1.70. Previously first up; second in a small field at Leopardstown in the G1 Matheson Hurdle December 29 over 3219m, soft track; 4.5 len behind State Man with 75.5kg at \$3.80. Top class jumper who has won both recent starts on the flat in good style. Must respect the stable bringing him here, will take beating.

6. x1437 SOULCOMBE (4) T: CHRIS WALLER J: JOAO MOREIRA 53.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$52,079 B Gelding 4yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. At the latest run 7th of 18 at Caulfield in the G1 Caul Cup on October 21 over 2400m, 5.5 len behind Without A Fight with 53.5kg at \$8. The start before that 3rd of 16 at this track in the G1 Turnbull on October 7 over 2000m, 2.25 len behind Gold Trip carrying 56kg at \$6. Should be suited getting to Flemington and if he jumps cleanly he can win.

7. 1261x ABSURDE (8) T: WILLIE MULLINS J: ZAC PURTON 53.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$48,491 B Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Resuming. Finished off last campaign by 0.5 len York August 26 over 2816m defeating Sweet William carrying 60.5kg at \$8. Previous preparation first-up to post a big 3.5 len win. Killarney May 15 over 4023m defeating Emily Roebing with 71.5kg at \$1.30. Well beaten by stablemate Vauban when they met but will have no issues with the trip and has a world-class jockey on board.

8. x2505 RIGHT YOU ARE (15) T: CIARON MAHER & DAVID EUSTACE J: JOHN ALLEN 53.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$42,146 B/BR Gelding 7yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 3 placegetter. Last start 5th of 18 at Caulfield in the G1 Caul Cup on October 21 over 2400m, 4 len behind Without A Fight with 53kg at \$41. Before that 11th of 16 at this track in the G1 Turnbull on October 7 over 2000m, 7 len behind Gold Trip carrying 55kg at \$14. Quite good in the Caulfield Cup but has a few lengths to find to be troubling the placings.

9. 0x022 VOW AND DECLARE (19) T: DANNY O'BRIEN J: BILLY EGAN 53.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$191,998 CH Gelding 8yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 winner. Form hard to fault. Most recently made ground from midfield; 2nd of 14 at Moonee Valley in the G2 Mv Cup on October 27 over 2500m, 0.8 len behind Cleveland carrying 57kg at \$6.50. The race before that 2nd of 10 at Caulfield in the G1 Caulfield Stks on October 14 over 2000m, 2 len behind Alligator Blood carrying 59kg at \$67. 2019 Cup winner lining up for his fourth run in the race. Going well, a big run wouldn't shock.

10. 49621 CLEVELAND (23) T: KRIS LEES J: MICHAEL DEE 52.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$56,001 B 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 2 winner. Useful type. At the latest run won by 0.8 len at Moonee Valley G2 Mv Cup October 27 over 2500m defeating Vow And Declare with 55.5kg at \$6.50. The run before that made ground from midfield; 2nd of 10 at Randwick St Leger on October 14 over 2600m, 2.75 len behind Land Legend carrying 55.5kg at \$3.80. Good win last time and has had a good grounding for this trip. Not the worst.

11. 0x762 ASHRUN (11) T: CIARON MAHER & DAVID EUSTACE J: KERRIN MCEVOY 51.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$34,440 B Gelding 7yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. Most recently 2nd of 13 at Geelong in the G3 Geel Cup on October 25 over 2400m, neck behind Amade carrying 56.5kg at \$5. Before that 6th of 16 at this track in the G3 Bart Cummings on October 7 over 2520m, 2.75 len behind Future History with 59kg at \$26. Has come back well from a long injury layoff and should peak here but perhaps lacks the class to trouble the first few.

12. x0074 DAQIANSWEET JUNIOR (12) T: PHILLIP STOKES J: DANIEL STACKHOUSE 51.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$29,573 B/BR Gelding 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 2 winner. Useful gelding. Last start 4th of 9 at Caulfield in the G2 Herbert Power on October 14 over 2400m, 2.25 len behind Military Mission carrying 58kg at \$9. The start before that 7th of 16 at Caulfield in the G3 Naturalism on September 23 over 2000m, 3.5 len behind Uncle Bryn carrying 56.5kg at \$61. Building nicely this time in and was good in this race last year. Include in wider exotics.

13. x5130 OKITA SOUSHI (20) T: JOSEPH O'BRIEN J: DYLAN GIBBONS 51.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$14,189 B 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 3 placegetter. Most recently got back early 12th of 18 at Caulfield in the G1 Caul Cup on October 21 over 2400m, 9 len behind Without A Fight carrying 51.5kg at \$26. The start before that second last in a small field at Curragh in the G3 Irish St Leg Trl on August 20 over 2816m, 6 len behind Shamida carrying 61kg at \$5.50. Well beaten at his Australian debut and can't see him turning the tables.

14. x0808 SHERAZ (22) T: CHRIS WALLER J: BEAU MERTENS 51.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$28,129 B Gelding 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. Most recently 8th of 14 at Moonee Valley in the G2 Mv Cup on October 27 over 2500m, 2 len behind Cleveland with 55kg at \$19. The start before that 12th of 16 at this track in the G3 Bart Cummings on October 7 over 2520m, 5.5 len behind Future History carrying 58.5kg at \$13. Doesn't appear to be going well enough and would need a genuinely wet track to feature.

15. 2341x LASTOTCHKA (21) T: MICK PRICE & MICHAEL KENT JNR J: CRAIG WILLIAMS 51.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$24,363 B Filly 4yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Multiple Group 3 winner. Resuming. Finished off last preparation by 2 len Longchamp G3 Pr Gladiateur September 3 over 3100m defeating Fasol with 56kg at \$4.20. When resuming last campaign second of 9 at Longchamp in the LR May 7 over 2800m, 3.5 len behind Melo Melo with 56kg at \$6.30. Creates interest at her Australian debut. Stays well, a good run is to be expected.

16. 6x906 MAGICAL LAGOON (7) T: CHRIS WALLER J: MARK DU PLESSIS 51.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$58,459 B Mare 4yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Irish Oaks winner. Most recently did the work up front then tired 6th of 13 at Geelong in the G3 Geel Cup on October 25 over 2400m, 1.1 len behind Amade carrying 55.5kg at \$21. The start before that 11th of 14 at Rosehill in the G2 Hill Stks on October 7 over 1900m, 4 len behind Montefilia carrying 57kg at \$81. Better last time but this is much harder, happy to risk.

17. 20141 MILITARY MISSION (5) T: G WATERHOUSE & A BOTT J: RACHEL KING 51.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$29,582 GR/BR Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 2 winner. Recent form sound. At the latest run won by 0.8 len at Caulfield G2 Herbert Power October 14 over 2400m defeating United Nations with 57kg at \$8. Before that 4th of 15 at Randwick in the G1 The Metrop on September 30 over 2400m, 5.5 len behind Just Fine carrying 51.5kg at \$21. Racing in good form and although this is much tougher, he could give some cheek.

18. 9x243 SERPENTINE (1) T: G WATERHOUSE & A BOTT J: JYE MCNEIL 51.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$42,374 CH Gelding 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 winner. Going well. Comes off a 31 day let-up. Last start raced on the speed and boxed on steadily 3rd of 16 at this track in the G3 Bart Cummings on October 7 over 2520m, 2 len behind Future History carrying 58kg at \$13. The race before that 4th of 10 at this track Qlty on September 16 over 2500m, 2.25 len behind Mostly Cloudy with 59.5kg at \$4.50. Racing quite well and can give a sight but this will test him.

19. x0908 VIRTUOUS CIRCLE (6) T: LIAM HOWLEY J: CRAIG NEWITT 51.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$52,900 B/BR 4yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. Last start 8th of 13 at Geelong in the G3 Geel Cup on October 25 over 2400m, 4.5 len behind Amade with 55kg at \$5. Before that 10th of 16 at this track in the G3 Bart Cummings on October 7 over 2520m, 3.5 len behind Future History with 57.5kg at \$21. Not going well enough to feature and a top-ten finish appears unlikely.

20. x7285 MORE FELONS (24) T: CHRIS WALLER J: JAMIE KAH 50.5

PRIZE MONEY: \$13,455 B Gelding 4yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 2 winner. Useful type. At the latest run 5th of 13 at Geelong in the G3 Geel Cup on October 25 over 2400m, 0.6 len behind Amade carrying 55kg at \$12. Before that 8th of 22 at York on August 26 over 2816m, 3.5 len behind Absurde with 61kg at \$15. Not bad at his Australian debut but this is much harder. Will be running on.

21. 21213 FUTURE HISTORY (13) T: CIARON MAHER & DAVID EUSTACE J: HOLLIE DOYLE 50.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$36,346 B Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 3 winner. Form hard to fault. At the latest run 3rd of 14 at Moonee Valley in the G2 Mv Cup on October 27 over 2500m, 0.9 len behind Cleveland carrying 56kg at \$7.50. The race before that won by 0.8 len at this track G3 Bart Cummings October 7 over 2520m defeating First Immortal carrying 54kg at \$9. Continues to raise the bar and the stable must be respected, especially with 50kg.

22. 32591 INTERPRETATION (17) T: CIARON MAHER & DAVID EUSTACE J: TEODORE NUGENT 50.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$37,192 BR Gelding 5yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 3 winner. Most recently favourite; came from midfield and won by a nose at Bendigo G3 Bdgo Cup November 1 over 2400m defeating Brayden Star with 54.5kg at \$2.60. The race before that eased back early on 9th of 16 at this track in the G3 Bart Cummings on October 7 over 2520m, 3.5 len behind Future History with 55kg at \$21. Drought-breaking win last time and gets in on the minimum. Keep safe.

23. I7331 KALAPOUR (14) T: KRIS LEES J: ZAC LLOYD 50.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$30,857 B Gelding 6yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. Useful gelding. Most recently won by a neck at this track G3 Archer Stks November 4 over 2500m defeating Athabaskan with 56kg at \$4.50. The start before that made some head-way from midfield; 3rd of 10 at Randwick St Leger on October 14 over 2600m, 3 len behind Land Legend carrying 57.5kg at \$4.50. Sound win on Saturday but this looks too tough.

24. x8080 TRUE MARVEL (10) T: MATTHEW SMITH J: BEN THOMPSON 50.0

PRIZE MONEY: \$14,459 BR Gelding 7yo BY: / STARTS: :-

Group 1 placegetter. Most recently from last on the turn 10th of 14 at Moonee Valley in the G2 Mv Cup on October 27 over 2500m, 3.5 len behind Cleveland carrying 55kg at \$101. The race before that 8th of 10 at Randwick St Leger on October 14 over 2600m, 14 len behind Land Legend with 55.5kg at \$61. Will appreciate the rise in trip but lacks the class to threaten.