

Rebecca Maker

Stats show excellent value on several fronts, and first-timers may catch up

By STEVE KLEIN

Trainer Rebecca "Becky" Maker has had her own stable only since April 2002, so it is impressive to see that she was just one winner shy of cracking the top eight in the trainer standings at Keeneland in April, with three wins from just seven starters. Her fans made money there, but that isn't surprising, since she has also been a good friend to bettors overall, with a \$2.34 return on investment on all of her 365 starters.

How did she get off to such a good start? Her résumé provides the answer. Maker, who recently turned 32, was an assistant for D. Wayne Lukas, Todd Pletcher, and Dallas Stewart before venturing out on her own. Asked how they shaped her philosophy, she said that Lukas taught her to stick with her program and to believe in herself.

"In this business, there are so many ups and downs," Maker said. "No matter what kind of a slump you are going through, you stick to what you know is best, and it will come back around."

"The biggest thing I got from Todd Pletcher was his organizational skill – organizing people and horses, so the barn runs smooth," Maker said.

She also picked up another good habit from Pletcher.

"Like him, I'm very particular about checking my horses every day, jogging them in hand, and making sure they are sound before I take them to the track. Things can change quickly with horses," she said.

Dallas Stewart might have given her the biggest push forward.

"I learned a great deal from him, because he threw a lot of responsibility at me," she said. "I was in charge of 50 horses at Keeneland. He really trusted me and let me learn."

Maker doesn't claim many horses. Her favorite way to acquire a horse is to go to a 2-year-olds in training sale, and pick out a youngster for a client.

"My biggest thing when I go to a 2-year-olds in training sale is to watch the video," she

INSIDE THE STABLE

HORSE	AGE/SEX	LAST RACE	FINISH	LAST 3 BEYERS	CAREER RECORD	EARNINGS
Thermostat	3G	Prm Derby	3	93 95 84	7-2-1-1	\$48,400
Sahmkindawonderful	3F	Double Delta	1	82 63 50	4-2-1-0	47,080
Galactic Cat	2F	Prm Debutante	2	67 51 –	2-1-1-0	26,000
Captain Corelli	2C	MdnSplWt	1	80 54 67	3-1-0-2	22,800
Cunning Cat	3G	MdnSplWt	1	95 88 –	2-1-0-1	19,035

said. "I have to like the way a horse moves. If there is anything I see that I like in the video, I'll go and look at the horse physically. I'll give up conformation if I like the way the horse moves overall, which is something you have to do, unless you have an incredible amount of money to spend."

So far, so good with the 2-year-olds as she shows 24 percent winners and a \$2.70 ROI. That would be a very good return for most trainers, but Maker has even higher winning percentages, and bigger profits, in a number of other statistical categories.

How about 4 wins from 8 runners (50 percent) on the drop from maiden special to maiden claiming? The return has been an incredible \$10.35.

She gives every horse she starts out in a maiden special race a chance to succeed at that level.

"You have to be careful not to be too impatient," Maker said. "I take their breeding into account and give them a chance to go long, or to try the turf, if that's what they need. But it isn't beneficial for the horse, or for the owner, to run a horse where it just can't win."

Actually, any horse she starts in a maiden claiming race is worth betting on, with 36 percent wins, and a \$5.87 return on a 22-horse sample.

Layoffs are another specialty.

"When something is wrong, I'm very particular about giving a horse time, so a lot of them are coming off layoffs," she said.

That is a very good thing for attentive bettors. Horses returning from breaks of two to six months have won 24 percent of their starts, with a \$3.44 ROI. Layoffs of six months

and longer have produced 2 wins from 10 starts (20 percent), and a \$3.66 return. Horses of hers running in their second time back following a layoff of between 45 days and six months have won 19 percent of their races, with at least one big longshot who helped to boost the return on that 36-horse sample to a remarkable \$6.11. The second start back from a vacation of six months or longer has netted 3 wins from 9 attempts (33 percent), and bettors have more than doubled their money at \$4.13.

If you are looking for a category to avoid, Maker shows just 9 percent winners, and a modest \$1.33 return, with first-time starters. There is a reason for that. Early on, the 2-year-olds she received from many of her clients were the type who needed time and were unlikely to score at first asking. But don't count on those numbers staying low for much longer.

"Some of the 2-year-olds I've bought more recently are the more precocious type, who can win early," she said. "My first-time-out percentage will probably increase through the next year."

Her second-time starters have had no problems. Her winning percentage is 23 percent, with a \$2.85 ROI.

If her career continues on the upswing, a day might come when Maker is famous enough to make betting value on most of her horses a thing of the past. But until then, take a long look at the trainer stats shown beneath the past performances of any runner from her stable. There is a good chance that a profitable betting angle will apply to the horse in question.

VITAL STATISTICS

CATEGORY	STS.	W%	ROI
1st race after claim	5	0.00	0.00
2nd race after claim	4	0.25	2.10
1st race with trainer	32	0.19	2.78
+180 days since last race	10	0.20	3.66
60-180 days since last race	20	0.25	3.44
Second off layoff 45-180 days	36	0.19	6.11
Second off layoff +180 days	9	0.33	4.13
1st time starter	22	0.09	1.33
2nd start as maiden	23	0.26	3.15
Maiden special to maiden claimer	8	0.50	10.35
1st time turf	16	0.06	1.36
1st time blinkers	8	0.00	0.00
1st time Lasix	7	0.57	3.77
2-year-olds	41	0.24	2.70
Dirt to turf	36	0.17	2.96
Turf to dirt	35	0.06	1.37
Blinkers on	10	0.00	0.00
Blinkers off	6	0.33	4.53
Sprint to route	33	0.18	6.24
Route to sprint	31	0.16	1.92
31-60 days since last race	84	0.18	2.43
Won last start	52	0.17	3.96
Wet tracks	30	0.13	1.36
Dirt	179	0.18	2.01
Turf	136	0.14	3.13
Sprints	143	0.18	2.13
Routes	172	0.15	2.80
Maiden claiming	22	0.36	5.87
Maiden special weight	93	0.19	3.08
Claiming	77	0.12	1.31
Allowance	85	0.13	1.86
Stakes	29	0.14	1.20
Graded stakes	4	0.00	0.00

Trainer statistics reflect North American starts from Jan. 1, 2003 through Sept. 26, 2004



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