

GEORGE RYDER [1500m] PREVIEW

April 2, 2011: Rosehill, Race 6, 3.10pm

OVERVIEW

(Based on a track rated dead 4)

The market says that this is a very even race and so does the form to an extent, but there a few key patterns that have played out consistently over the past 10 years that we can use to shed some light on where the value lies. The prospect of a good track should suit all runners bar **Love Conquers All**, who is a couple of lengths better on a rain-affected surface.

Two impressive winners clash here – **Aloha**, a last-start winner of the G1 Coolmore Classic (1500m) in brilliant style, and the 3YO **Ilovethiscity**, who claimed the G1 Randwick Guineas (1600m) on the back of a comfortable victory in the Hobartville Stakes (1400m).

Aloha will start a worthy favourite after her eye-catching win a fortnight ago, but she is at her right price and probably only a genuine betting option for her most avid followers. Although she has beaten the boys in lower grade stakes races, this is her first test against genuine open class Group 1 company at WFA and that is always a concern.

At the \$8 currently on offer Ilovethiscity makes much better appeal, as does fellow 3YO **Skilled** to some extent. Three-year-olds have a great recent record in this race with Weekend Hussler, Haradasun, and Racing To Win beating older opponents. There is not much between Ilovethiscity and Skilled, as demonstrated by the half-neck separating them on the line at Randwick last start, although Skilled may be looking for a shade longer.

Chipping Norton Stakes (1600m) winner **Danleigh** is the other runner worth heavy consideration at good odds, if not for any other reason than for his sheer consistency at this level.

Danleigh's Chipping Norton win was as good as any of his previous wins at WFA and his trademark turn of foot was as strong as ever at the end of that event. The Chipping Norton has provided four winners of this event in the past 10 years and it is by far the most consistent form reference as far as winners are concerned.

Triple Elegance is the most interesting runner in the field and the

TAB	HORSE	JOCKEY	TRAINER	BR	WGT	TAB Odds	MS* Ratings
1	Theseo	Nash Rawiller	Gai Waterhouse	12	59	\$17	\$26
2	Rangirangdoo	Corey Brown	Chris Waller	1	59	\$14	\$26
3	Danleigh	Hugh Bowman	Chris Waller	8	59	\$9.50	\$7
4	Wall Street	Craig Williams	Jeff Lynds	7	59	\$13	\$21
5	King Mufhasa	Michael Rodd	Stephen McKee	9	59	\$11	\$21
6	Centennial Park	Glyn Schofield	David Payne	14	59	\$16	\$12
7	Dao Dao	Dwayne Dunn	Michael, Wayne, John Hawkes	4	59	\$9.50	\$15
8	Captain Sonador	Shane Scriven	Roger Milne	10	59	\$41	\$36
9	Love Conquers All	Chris Munce	Michael, Wayne, John Hawkes	13	59	\$15	\$26
10	Triple Elegance	Jim Cassidy	Chris Waller	5	59	\$9	\$10
11	Bold Glance	Scott Seamer	Norm Hilton	6	59	\$71	\$151
12	Keepin' The Dream	Peter Wells	Jim & Greg Lee	15	59	\$101	\$101
13	Aloha	Glen Boss	Mick Price	3	57	\$4.80	\$6
14	Ilovethiscity	Brenton Avdulla	Grahame Begg	11	56.5	\$7.50	\$6
15	Skilled	Kerrin McEvoy	Peter Snowden	2	56.5	\$13	\$9

Percentages: TAB (121.5%); MS (109%)

*Mick Sharkie's ratings are a guide only. TAB Price as at 9.00am Friday.

least exposed of trainer Chris Waller's trio. A true late-maturer, Triple Elegance has emerged as a live Doncaster Handicap chance after an embarrassingly easy win in a restricted handicap at Rosehill, and then a comfortable victory in the Liverpool City Cup (1300m) in early March, a race that has launched many successful autumn campaigns.

Waller has kept him up to the mark with two barrier trial wins, the latest a facile near four-length victory at Randwick on Mar. 25.

Of the other major hopes, I'd be willing to risk the New Zealand raiders **Wall Street** and **King Mufhasa** to some extent, despite the good form of Kiwi horses during the Sydney carnival. I'd concede that both have minor place chances.

I'll also be risking **Dao Dao**, who just doesn't win often enough for me.

THE TEMPO- GENUINE

Theseo should roll forward second-up and either lead or sit off King Mufhasa, who is also a noted front-runner. The race should pan out beautifully for Danleigh sitting midfield, with Triple Elegance and Skilled.

RECOMMENDED PLAY

Danleigh is a quality WFA performer and with the pace likely to suit him perfectly he makes terrific each-way appeal if the \$11 holds up. I'd expect that layers will take him on as he is not a horse who typically strings two or three wins together.

I'd also be prepared to have a slice of 3YOs Ilovethiscity and Skilled, probably more so the latter at \$13 or longer with Betfair due to a good gate and the prospect of a mid-race smother. Ilovethiscity will either be caught wide or be forced back to the tail, and while he does have a brilliant turn of foot so do many of his rivals here. He might be a horse to lay before the jump and then back in the run if he settles worse than midfield.

Aloha is the tricky one to assess, she's going to look the winner at some stage of the straight but whether she can hold off the swoopers is the big question. If I get a good price about Danleigh and Skilled, I might be brave and lay Aloha in the run when she hits the front.

SPEED MAP- PREDICTED POSITIONS ON SETTLING

		 Centennial Park	 Love Conquers All	 Wall Street		
	 Ilovethiscity	 Bold Glance	 Danleigh	 Dao Dao	 King Mufhasa	
 Keepin' The Dream	 Captain Sonador	 Rangirangdoo	 Triple Elegance	 Aloha	 Skilled	 Theseo

INSIDE RAIL →

THE TOP SIX

1. Danleigh
2. Skilled
3. Triple Elegance
4. Ilovethiscity
5. Aloha
6. Theseo

ANALYSIS BY RUNNER

1. THESEO

(ch g 7, Danewin-Ozone Sand (USA), by L'enjoleur (CAN))

Veteran miler who ran a decent race when returning from a spell in the Chipping Norton after a couple of trial wins. Has the blinkers applied for this assignment and he is the sort who can improve quickly into a preparation with four wins from eight second-up runs. He could run into the top five without surprising, but this should top him off for his next outing.

2. RANGIRANGDOO

(b g 6, Pentire (GB)-She Wishes (NZ), by Kenfair (NZ))

Returned from a long break with a typically honest first-up run in the Canterbury Stakes when no match for More Joyous. He did show a bit of zip in the straight before his condition gave out in a run that would have put a smile on his trainer's face. Has drawn well for this but I suspect that he might race a little flat second-up after such a long lay-off.

3. DANLEIGH

(b g 7, Mujahid (USA)-Graceful Lily, by Dr Grace (NZ))

One of Sydney's most consistent weight-for-age performers and won this race last year on soft ground on the back of a third placing in the

Chipping Norton. He went two better this year when winning that lead-up and has been kept fresh with a trial in early March. He started his autumn campaign with steady efforts in the Expressway and Apollo Stakes but showed last start that he is racing as well as ever, and his profile suggests that there is further improvement to come. He is drawn to get the perfect run midfield with plenty of room to move and few will be able to match his final 300m if he gets room at the top of the straight. He is the one to beat at value odds.

4. WALL STREET

(b g 6, Montjeu (IRE)-Villa Wanda (GB), by Grand Lodge (USA))

Achieved a career best when he prevailed in a busy finish to win the Emirates Stakes during the Melbourne spring carnival, and has returned this year with two good performances at Group 1 level in New Zealand. He is capable of sustaining a high cruising speed in his races and has the ability to quicken off that tempo, a skill that has seen him become the premier miler in New Zealand, and although the strength of that form is often queried he cannot be written off as a contender in weight-for-age races in Australia after a seemingly poor run when outclassed in the Cox Plate. Craig Williams is an excellent booking for a race of this nature and the jockey will ensure that he is well positioned to play to his mount's strengths on the home turn. He can be included in wider multiples.

5. KING MUFHASA

(Br g 6, Pentire (GB)-Sheila Cheval (NZ), by Mi Preferido (USA))

He has been around the mark at this level in previous Australian campaigns without tasting success, but he returns in arguably career-best form after victories

in the Group 1 Telegraph Hcp and the Group 1 Waikato Sprint. Like Wall Street, King Mufhasa races best when able to lead or sit on a strong tempo and his strong fourth placing when setting the pace in the Group 1 Futurity Stakes (1400m) at Caulfield in February is a great guide to this race. I suspect that he won't get his own way in front in this event and although he has been placed twice at 1500m he struggles to stretch beyond 1400m and he could be very vulnerable late in the race.

6. CENTENNIAL PARK

(b g 5, Thorn Park-Trephina, by Last Tycoon (IRE))

A much improved horse this preparation in which he has taken the step to weight-for-age racing in his stride. He looked in rude health when returning from a spell with victory in the Expressway Stakes then buttered up with a closing third in the Apollo Stakes behind Melito, before a narrow second placing in the Chipping Norton. He brings the right form lines to this event and there is no doubt about his bravery or aptitude at this level, however he has drawn poorly and may be caught wide for a large part of the 1500m.

7. DAO DAO

(Br g 7, Shinko Forest (IRE)-Casual Way (NZ), by Casual Lies (USA))

A well-travelled campaigner who has enjoyed stints in Australia and Hong Kong, he has often run bravely at the highest level. As brave as he may be though, he struggles to win in this grade of race. Few punters would begrudge this horse a Group 1 victory,

however history tells us that he is more likely to fill a minor place rather than the winner's stall.

8. CAPTAIN SONADOR

(b h 4, Shamardal (USA)-Pushing Daisies, by Kenny's Best Pal)

Last year's Epsom Mile hero but he has failed to recapture that form after a lacklustre spring campaign. He showed a glimpse of form when outclassing an average field in the Goldmarket Hcp at the Gold Coast in January, but his recent efforts in similar grade under hefty weights on wet ground have been ordinary at best. He's certainly capable of better, but I suspect that recent racing may have taken its toll.

9. LOVE CONQUERS ALL

(b h 5, Mossman-She's A Meanie (NZ), by Prince Salieri)

A really honest wet track sprinter who has raced in typically consistent fashion in feature group races this autumn. This is the first time that he has been tried beyond 1400m and, although he is a placegetter at that distance in reasonable grade, his ability to run out a strong 1500m is a concern.

10. TRIPLE ELEGANCE

(b g 4, Mossman-Mary Machree, by Quest For Fame (GB))

The most intriguing runner in the race and certainly the horse who can be considered the most untapped candidate as the Doncaster Hcp draws nearer. He should be coming into this race with four straight wins to his name but a momentary loss of concentration and a poorly-timed buck in an open handicap at Randwick in January broke the chain of wins. He made up for that with an emphatic win in similar grade at Rosehill, and then stepped up to stakes grade and took the Liverpool City Cup in somewhat arrogant fashion before a five-week break. He showed that he had lost little during the break between runs when winning two trials in recent weeks and a bold performance is expected here. Like Danleigh, he is expected to get a cozy run in behind the leaders from barrier 5.

11. BOLD GLANCE

(br g 5, Sequalo-Flirting Glance, by Al Ameen (USA))

A well-exposed five-year-old from Queensland who has claimed his biggest victories in recent months on

wet tracks on the Gold Coast. He's in good shape but is better off in a handicap and is likely to be outclassed here.

12. KEEPIN' THE DREAM

(b g 6, Keeper-Irish Nassie (NZ), by Nassipour (USA))

Shocked punters were left scratching their heads when he stormed to victory in the Newcastle Newmarket, a race that has produced two winners of the George Ryder in the past decade. Has little option but to drift to the rear of this field from a wide gate and he is likely to see a lot of rear ends for the majority of the 1500m.

13. ALOHA

(b m 4, Encosta De Lago-Tennessee Midnight, by Danehill (USA))

There are few mares in the country, with the exception of Black Caviar, racing as well as Aloha at the moment. Mick Price has always held a good opinion of this mare's ability and he has carefully managed her progress through the grades over the past five months, a progression that culminated with victory in the Group 1 Coolmore Classic a fortnight ago. An inside gate and her ability to race close to the speed put her into the spotlight again here but the query remains on her ability to step out of set weights and handicap class and into genuine Group 1 weight-for-age racing. I'm very reluctant to write her off and would expect her to finish in the top four if holding her current form.

14. ILOVETHISCITY

(ch c 3, Magic Albert-Kensington Rose (NZ), by Kenfair (NZ))

This colt started favourite for the Caulfield Guineas during the Melbourne Spring Carnival after eye-catching performances in the Golden Rose and Spring Stakes. Although he disappointed his supporters at Caulfield he has returned in outstanding shape this campaign with powerful victories in the Hobartville and Randwick Guineas after a pipe-opener in the Royal Sovereign. Punters are likely to anoint him as the best three-year-old prospect in a race in which younger horses have fared particularly well in recent years, but I fear that he may be caught wide without cover from barrier 11. Brenton Avdulla will need to keep his cool early in the race and will be forced to rely on his mount's electric turn of foot if they are to complete a hat-trick of wins.

15. SKILLED

(b c 3, Commands- Dextrous by, Quest For Fame (GB))

While Ilovethiscity will take the limelight in the betting ring, Skilled may well be the best winning chance of the three-year-olds to contest the George Ryder this year. He was unlucky not to win the Royal Sovereign first-up from a break and then was placed in the Hobartville and the Randwick Guineas behind Ilovethiscity, having been run down by that rival on both occasions. Skilled is a gross horse, however, and needs racing to reach peak fitness and with that in mind it would be foolish to simply conclude that Ilovethiscity is the better horse. Skilled has tactical speed that Kerrin McEvoy can put to good use from barrier 2 and at his current price I would favour him as a betting option over Ilovethiscity.