



**Mine that Bird worked an easy 51.2 on Monday for trainer Chip Wooley, and jockey Joe Talamo. The Derby winner went in 13.2, 26.2, and 51.2. Galloped out in 104.4. He seemed to have something left, but he looks nothing like he did heading into the derby. His ribs are showing and he is very light in the flesh. Don't believe me, go watch the Derby and if you have the post parade on tape look at the color, the amount of flesh. He looks like one of those butterball turkeys at your neighborhood grocery store. Plump. He is light. I asked a few horsemen and the constant theme was "the shipping around the country" said one trainer, "did he miss any dances" or about ' the 'throat surgery" was the other excuse for his lack of weight and really anaemic performance in the Goodwood.**

**Mine That Bird had throat surgery on August 18. He had to undergo surgery to repair an entrapped epiglottis. He didn't race after the surgery until the Goodwood, but his itinerary had been extensive since running fourth in the Sunland Derby on March 29. He travelled to Kentucky, Maryland, New York, back to New Mexico after the surgery, and now Santa Anita, but Wooley doesn't think the Goodwood performance was anaemic, as he was quoted by the venerable, hard working Ed Golden in the Oak Tree stable notes:**

***"If you go back and look at the Goodwood, he runs a 99 Beyer (speed figure)," Woolley pointed out. "Last year when he ran over this race track (12th in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile), he ran a 74 Beyer. Figure it any way you want, but that's a huge difference in the two races," Wooley told Ed Golden.***

**"Up until I took the horse over, he had never run over a 79 Beyer, so changing his running style is the key. Even though he didn't run as well as we'd hoped in the Goodwood, he runs a 99 Beyer, as opposed to running in the 70s every time before we changed his style." Wooley added and Golden wrote.**

***"With the Goodwood in him, and the added distance, it's really going to help him, and there's definitely going to be pace in the Classic," Wooley finished off the interview.***

**For a trainer that was in relative obscurity before the Derby, and his famous "they'll know me now" after the Derby I was especially keen to his comments and Training-by-Beyers approach, and his modesty. Wooley's comments or spin of Mine That Bird's performance in the Goodwood brings on an interesting and further discussion.**

**Brad Free, the long time handicapper and astute race analyst in the DRF, made a significant point in his handicapping column in Saturday, October 10 DRF edition, "*Synthetic surfaces lend themselves to bunched finishes*" he writes.**

**If that is true and we have certainly witnessed such synthetic tendencies the way we generate Beyers, sheet numbers and figures overall has to be revisited.**

**For example, on the dirt, at six furlongs one beaten length is equivalent to 2.8 points. The winner wins by 2 lengths, the second place finisher ran 5.6 points slower. The equation is simple 1/5 of a second in a race run in 1:11 flat for six furlongs is approximately 2.8% of the race. This is the dirt equation, but on the synthetics the final 1/4 is the most important. The races are won or lost in the last 1/4 mile. The dirt profiles speed and how a horse can run the competition into the ground with early speed, while synthetics are won by stamina and ability to quicken. Therefore, the emphasis is the finish. The last final 1/4 or 5/16 of mile run is the key.**

**So, if synthetics play to finishing power of a horse and not the speed, the beaten length is the focal point.**

**For example, if we take the average final 1/4's of six furlong races at Santa Anita, let's say it is 24 flat, and run it through our equation (24 seconds is 120 1/5ths of a second) then, every beaten length at the wire should be 8.0 points of difference. For example, run third beaten three lengths you get 24 points less than the winner's figure. Winner an 90, third place gets a 66. If the key is the finish, then beaten lengths have to be adjusted. Same is for turf, as the races are run for a stretch kick. It is a fallacy to count the beaten lengths on a dirt equation on the turf or on the synthetic.**

**So, in Mine That Bird's case, the final three furlongs in the Goodwood was run in 35.3. The average for the Goodwood type of race on the pro-ride, according to Today's Racing Digest class pars, is 36.2. Each beaten length at the distance for the Goodwood should 5.5 points (Beyer's are about 1.8 points per length). Mine That Bird was beaten almost 3 and 1/2 lengths. In standard Beyer method, he would have run 6.3 points slower than the winner Gitano Hernando, who got a 106 Beyer figure in the race. Thus, Mine That Bird a 99, which Wooley is counting on, by Beyer standards, but if we look under the emphasis of the finish on the synthetics, by my calculations, Mine That Bird ran 19.25 points slower (5.5 points per lengths x 3.5 lengths= 19.25) than 'Gitano Hernando, thus making the figure a 90. His last effort at Mountaineer Park on the dirt was a 92.**

**On the other hand, Zenyatta. She gets the knock that she beats her competition easily but by small margins as she unleashes her patented monster late finish. If you look at her races, via our calculations, on the synthetics, her wins, by our beaten lengths, should have been by 7.5 points in the Lady's Secret on October 11, 2 points in the Clement Hirsch, a neck win, at Del Mar, by 14 points (2 and 1/2 length win) in the Vanity, and 10.5 points (1.75 length win) in the Milady.**

**Zenyatta's competition in the Lady's Secret should have gotten significantly lower figures, Lethal Heat, a 89, Cocoa Beach, a 88, and Life is Sweet a 83. Interestingly**

**enough, if you adjust Lethal Heat's second in the Cal Cup Classic to Bold Chieftain, she also runs an 89.**

**Thus, the Training-by-Beyers simply doesn't compute. Chip Wooley, in other words, we would have to guess wouldn't know how to apply the principles of making figures, yet, the spin on the Goodwood and on Mine That Bird is that everything is OK and he ran a 99.**

**His jockey contradicted everything Wooley said to Golden. Borel said: " "He had a perfect trip, but he got to struggling a little. When I asked him to go get them, he was struggling over the track a little bit. Maybe a little bit firmer ground where I can just let him break and pick him up easy – instead of this quick – will be better for him. I don't know if that will work. But I do know one thing. He's a lot better horse on the dirt. When you ask him here, he goes to struggling instead of just running. I don't know. We'll have to work on that a little bit and see what happens. But I think he'll be alright."**

**Doesn't sound like Borel thought the horse ran a 99. In fact, he basically said 'the horse simply didn't handle it, and even a change in tactic here wouldn't work' as I understood his comments. Maybe I don't speak or hear English too good.**

**This isn't a condemnation of Chip Wooley, as there are many trainers that quote Beyer figures, sheet numbers, etc. without the sufficient understanding of their impact or lack of. As a trainer you have to speak to your horse, by being a horseman, by watching, and trying to get into their minds and body, not by figures. The epidemic of reading horses solely, and I said solely, by figures (before every sheet player in the country lynches me with Wooley's crutch) is at an epic proportion. We have lost the art of horsemanship. Steve Andersen made a great observation in his Summer Bird DRF workout story where he wrote "...Such comments do not jibe with the stopwatch-crazy mentality of California trainers," as another case and point of a numbers driven game.**

**Was it Francois Boutin, who trained Arazi, who said "American trainers spend too much time looking at the watches." Spoken like a true frenchmen.....**

**So, numbers, training by numbers 1-2-3....**

**Do you think Charlie Whittingham had sheet numbers, or about Ron McAnally in his heyday with the South American imports, or Bobby Frankel when he dominated the turf racing scene with Juddmonte's European shippers. There were no numbers. no sheets, on those Europeans and South American horses.**

**Mine That Bird ran a poor race in the Goodwood because one he faced elders for the first time, he didn't handle the track, and simply wasn't good enough. He won't be on any of my tickets on Breeders Cup day, but like Wooley said, "they'll know me now", maybe, just maybe, Wooley might have something in his cast or in that crutch to pull off another miracle, and it would be a miracle, Virgin St. Mary-like, of biblical proportions. I am 99% sure of that.**

