



Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Gimcrack Stakes Sectional Timing Analysis

Some good two-year-olds have won the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Gimcrack Stakes over the years, not least future Champion Sprinter Muhaarar in 2014, but there can have been very few who put up a better performance in the race itself than this year's winner, Blue Point.

A heavily-backed favourite against nine accomplished and/or promising rivals, Blue Point had wowed the time and sectional analysts with his runaway victory at Doncaster on his second appearance but had some restoring of his reputation to do after being beaten narrowly by the streetwise Mehmas in the Richmond Stakes at Glorious Goodwood.

In the event, it was a cakewalk this time round. Blue Point tracked a pace that was by no means strong for conditions which included a significant tailwind, before letting loose at the two-furlong pole and having the race won all bar the shouting a furlong later.

At the line, Blue Point had three long-looking lengths to spare over Mokarris – himself touted as a potential top-notch beforehand – with nearly two lengths further back to the useful pair The Last Lion and Global Applause. In sprinting terms, those are wide margins.

Blue Point's winning time of 1m 09.00s was just 0.10s outside Tiggy Wiggy's juvenile course record, achieved in the 2014 Lowther Stakes. None of the recent Gimcracks has been run nearly so fast.

Time analysis and sectional analysis are valuable when trying to make sense of racing performances, especially apparently superlative ones from unknown quantities. Thanks to TurfTrax's tracking system – which has been in operation at York throughout the week – this can be done properly for Blue Point and with reference to past races at the same course and distance.

The aforementioned tailwind affected times throughout the card, but it should have affected a race on a straight course, as the Gimcrack was, in a uniform manner. TurfTrax's own data gave it as an average of 16.3 mph and from the South West (the straight runs almost directly from South to North) at the time when the Gimcrack was run.

For example, a one-on-one comparison with that Tiggy Wiggy performance has the following cumulative times from start to finish (Tiggy Wiggy's time in brackets): 14.11s (13.51s); 24.71s (23.60s); 35.75s (34.30s); 46.73s (45.31s); 57.60s (56.67s); and 69.00s (68.90s).

In other words, in a theoretical race between the two, Blue Point would have been nearly 10 lengths behind mid-race before making up ground hand over fist and failing to overhaul the filly by less than a length.

Comparisons nearer to hand are also possible. How about Blue Point's last two furlongs of 22.27s (40.4 mph) being 0.59s quicker (almost four lengths) than the brilliant mare Mecca's Angel's sectional at the same point 24 hours earlier?!

Wind-assisted, or not, that is motoring, and it is no surprise that Blue Point's rivals were left trailing by a display of such raw speed.

As with Mecca's Angel in the Nunthorpe, Blue Point did not actually run the fastest individual furlong in this year's Gimcrack (there may well be a message about efficient energy distribution in that).

The detailed TurfTrax sectionals show that his 10.60s for the second furlong was surpassed by no less than six of his rivals at that stage. But the energy conserved there enabled him to run fastest of all late on.

What this means is that Blue Point could, at least in theory, have broken that juvenile course record with comfort (by around 0.25s according to sectional upgrading methodology) had this year's Gimcrack been run at a true pace throughout.

It also means that Blue Point has exceptional speed, but that his stamina for further would need to be taken on trust, despite the way he finished here. Wider form and time analysis could well have him running over 120 in terms of ratings.

Blue Point is an exciting horse, indeed, and just how much so really becomes clear when those TurfTrax sectionals are considered.

Simon Rowlands

Rowlands Racing & Research Limited

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