

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#7 TOBINS CHESTER entered last week's race in good form, but he had the misfortune of facing three rivals that were all dropping down from the top class. It was no surprise when those three rivals finished in the top three spots, and this Jodie Cullen trainee was best of the rest. He showed he is sharp by pacing a 26 4/5 final quarter, and he returns to a seven-day rotation this week and Travis Cullen opted for him over his stablemate, which starts from the rail. He fits better facing this group tonight. and he gets the nod to kick off the \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

#1 BEE TWO BEE finds a good spot here dropping out of the top class where he was simply racing over his head two weeks ago; he ended up finishing last of six. His race two starts back where he finished second to hot Maritime invader Merigo Magic is a better indicator of what he can do when he races in a class where he fits. Sitting on third-over cover that wasn't advancing, he peeled three wide turning for home, and closed well, but he wasn't catching Merigo Magic who sat covered up on the inside and found a seam in mid stretch and got the jump on him. This veteran Sunshine Beach stallion has enough speed to get away in the top five from the rail, and he should be heard from late.

#4 TROSA A is racing well, but he ran into a hot horse in JK Together Again in his last two starts. That gelding has reeled off four dominant wins since shipping north from New Jersey in February. Trosa A gets a good post and the leading driver back in the bike tonight and he gets away from that streaking rival that has been unbeatable so far since arriving at this track. I can see him tripping out and getting a good piece of this. He is another possibility for the early Pick 5 also.

#2 REDWOOD HANOVER exits the same race as the choice, and he finished close to four lengths behind him despite latching onto his cover on the final turn. Two races back, he was a neck behind Bee Two Bee when racing in a field where he fit much better. His form is solid, and he is in the mix to get a share, but his only win so far this year came at a lower level. He holds no advantage that I can see in this field, and he is one that I will play to beat as the 3 to 1 morning line favorite.

Race 2 Selections

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#1 FASHION FRENZIE came back razor-sharp as a seven-year-old and he will likely be the prohibitive favorite as he looks to sweep the New Holland Series here. The seven-year-old Archangel gelding, a winner of three races all of last year in 17 starts, can equal that win total in only three starts if he converts as expected. Louis-Phillipe Roy will no doubt look to once again control the race with the Jeff Gillis trainee and his competition in this short field will no doubt come from the rival that starts beside him in Post 2. He should prove very tough to beat and he will be a popular Pick 5 single.

#2 NEW RULES blossomed into one of the top trotters on this circuit over the winter, winning at the Preferred level three times in just over a month, with all three of those wins by margins of two or more lengths. He was favored in the opening leg of this series where he challenged the choice first-over in the back half and was rebuffed. He sat the pocket in leg 2, but he would have had to grow wings to catch Fashion Frenzie after that rival cut a 58-flat opening half. He is clearly the second best horse in here on paper. It's hard to find the trip that can propel him past the choice in a five-horse field where that rival will almost certainly control the pace from the outset again.

#3 DREBIN broke at the start in Leg 2 after racing well to finish third in the opening leg. He came into this series sharp for The Stable who has been on a good run at Mohawk in the past few weeks. The leading driver will likely look to leave third with him behind the two favorites that start to his left, and there is a good chance that he will sit the three hole throughout and complete the Trifecta.

#4 LOCATELLI is a classy veteran that usually gives his all in every start. The \$583,000 earning son of Muscle Hill has taken a share in each leg and in Leg 1 he flashed big gate speed which is unusual for him and shows that he is sharp. It's unlikely that he can threaten either of the top two choices in this final, but he will likely battle with Drebin for the show spot after likely sitting third or fourth most of the way then sprinting on the end of the mile.

Race 3 Selections

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#6 ASIAGO SEELSTER is another one coming off a big upset score, and that win came in his first lifetime start here on March 14th. After racing just evenly in his lone 2025 qualifier on February 28th, he attracted no attention at the windows, but showed he could leave the gate by dropping into the favorite's pocket at the start. He sat a good trip then moved off the pylons just before the three quarter pole, and he easily drew off under confident Bob McClure handling. He is drawn perfectly here, and he gets the call to repeat.

#9 BEN LOOKIN took absolutely no action at the windows last week, and he converted a bit of a strange trip into a 38 to 1 upset. Sitting fifth at the half, he moved off the pylons just as a rival was pacing up on the outside, and that forced that rival around him three-wide. That allowed him to latch onto that rival's cover and when that cover stalled on the last turn, he circled up three wide. After drifting to the middle of the track, he hit top gear at the eighth pole, then paced away from the field to blow up the tote board. When owner/trainer/driver Andy Moore gets them good, they tend to string sharp performances together. This gelding won't be 38 to 1 tonight, but he should offer a square price starting from the widest post. He is worth using on early multi-race tickets.

#5 BETTORSEETHESHOW was on Ben Lookin's cover last week turning for home, but he couldn't go with that rival in the lane. He will likely show more early speed tonight getting off the rail post and moving to the middle of the gate. His race two starts back when beaten a nose to Stirrup Lane in 1:53-flat puts him right there with these. He loses McClure to the choice, but he picks up the leading driver. He is another in with a decent chance in what should be a good betting race.

#2 MOOD CONTROL is another that exits the race won by Ben Lookin, and he re-rallied after taking a mid race shuffle to finish second. He found room early enough in the lane to have a chance to win, but he couldn't match strides with the winner in the final eighth. He seems likely to take another slice in this field and he is a good one to use underneath in Tri and Super bets.

Race 4 Selections

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#6 FADEAWAY HANOVER indicated he was ready to roll as a three-year-old with the way he won his qualifier on February 28th, easily trotting past his rivals in the land while under no urging whatsoever. He parlayed that dominant qualifying win with two victories to kick off his sophomore campaign, the second one more impressive than the first. His first-over 1:56-flat win that featured a 27 3/5 kicker puts hi in good stead to take on a tougher field tonight. He draws best and he gets the nod to notch the threepeat.

#8 INCANTATION showed some talent at two, winning a division of the Tompkins Geers in only his second start, and a couple of Grassroots races in September. He had some gait issues along the way, but he performed well in every race in which he stayed flat. Trevor Henry, who drove him to a dominant win in his lone 2025 qualifier, drives him for a purse for the first time tonight, and he should be one to look for late here as he does his best racing when deploying a stalking style. He is one of several in with a chance.

#5 WEARING THE GREEN is another that has shown talent and gait issues so far in his nine-race career. He got good last August, reeling off two straight sub-1:57 wins before breaking in two straight then getting put away for the season despite requalifying impressively following those two starts. He debuts for Team McNair and a new owner tonight coming in off an impressive two move qualifying win. He does his best work racing on or near the lead and he will likely get sent forward starting from one of the best posts. He is yet another that merits a look for multi-race tickets.

#2 BRIGHT GREEN wasn't asked to do much in her qualifier that was won by Incantation, but she did trot home in 27 2/5, which could be exactly what her connections were looking for from that mile. She is obviously capable of trotting much faster than that 2:01 3/5 mile. She holds the fastest mark in the race, a 1:55 4/5 win taken in her final start at two, the Harvest Series Final. She will likely be closer early in this race and she should get at least a share.

Race 5 Selections

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#4 CHICKABELL was bet like she couldn't lose last week, and she sure did deliver. After leaving hard enough from the tricky rail post to ensure that she secured the pocket, she moved out of the final turn in time so as to not get boxed in, then she paced away to a big win while under minimal James Macdonald urging. Facing mostly similar in this field, she gets the call to repeat.

#6 MS QUICK SAND drops multiple levels to the bottom conditioned class tonight, and she figures to be the main threat to the choice in this third start back. The last time she raced at a level comparable to this one at this track was last August 16th, and she was a 1:51 4/5 pocket sitting winner. She will likely get an aggressive steer from Trevor Henry in this spot which she starts from the best post. She is capable of leading all the way vs. these, but she also could provide the perfect pocket trip for the top choice. This looks like a two mare race on paper.

#3 SAULSBROOK ABBEY is one that caught the eye in the lane in the race that Chickabell won last week. Trailing in ninth turning for home, she was sent widest, and she powered down the centre of the track to get fourth on the wire while pacing a 28-flat kicker. She came close to winning at a higher level here three starts back, and she draws better here. She is worth a look at what should be a big price on deeper multi-race tickets.

#10 ONE LAST BET was behind Saulsbrook Abbey at the half last week then she moved around that rival on the turn and dialed up a nice closing effort to get second behind Chickabell. She is a competitive mare that has compiled a nice 8-7-6 record from 43 starts in 2024-25, but she is saddled with post 10 here which means she will likely be last of 10 early. Her ceiling is probably a small slice in this spot due mostly to drawing that worst post. She could land in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

Race 6 Selections

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#7 MISTY COVE is a Millar Farm homebred being unveiled here by top sire Bettors Delight, the first foal out of a full sister to \$600,000 earner Lyons somewhere. He was an easy winner of her first qualifier, then on March 21st, a different approach was taken. He was taught to follow all the way to the eighth pole, where he was eased off the pylons. Once he found his best stride late in the mile, he paced home fast to get second. That mile should set him up perfectly for this career debut and she gets top billing.

#2 ROLLEX is a colt that will surely take more action tonight than he did in his solid debut mile where he was a closing third at 11 to 1. Sitting seventh turning for home, he searched for room between horses in mid stretch but there was none there, and he had to alter course to the outside in deep stretch. He finished with plenty of pace, and he probably would have been closer if he had a clear path for the whole stretch drive. He gets Louis-Phillipe Roy in the bike tonight and he will probably be more aggressive. He is the logical alternative to the choice in this spot and one that merits consideration for the late Pick 5 that starts in this race.

#8 CORPORATE BUSINESS comes in off two solid tries at this level, and he clearly turned a corner, pacing progressively faster miles in each of his last three starts. He showed in his last two starts that post eight is no issue for him as he was able to get position leaving the gate in both of those races. He finished ahead of Rollex last week, but he got a better trip. I prefer to use him underneath the top two choices in this spot as big miles are expected from both of those rivals.

#3 ROCKY J made a couple of moves last week but couldn't sustain the late move that he made when he popped the pocket at the three quarter pole. That race came on the heels of a race where he finished third while spending most of the race parked out. He can be closer here if he stays covered up to the lane and he is one that will likely round out the Tri or Super in this spot.

SPOT PLAY: MISTY COVE

Race 7 Selections

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#3 MOMAS SON BYRNE took a break after dropping to the bottom conditioned level on January 11th and failing to get the job done as the even money favorite. He comes into this return race showing a 26 2/5 kicker that was paced in a race where there was no early pace, but him not losing much ground and pacing that fast final quarter shows that he is sharp for this return. His best race smokes this group, and he could still prevail if not at his very best tonight. He gets top billing here in what should be a good spot for him.

#4 BROOKDALE JOHNNY was favored in the Pop Up series final likely under the assumption that he would get more aggressive early in the mile. As often happens in finals of those series, there were many who had the idea to blast off the gate for position, and this gelding got outsprinted when the wings of the gate folded open. He got stuck inside on the final turn, and he didn't get clearance until the eighth pole. He rallied from last to third in a decent effort and he should benefit from getting off the rail post tonight. He is one that should get a close look for late multi-race tickets.

#9 STONEBRIDGE HELIOS is undoubtedly the class of this field, having earned more than \$738,000 in his career, having won many races higher than tonight's class. He is a tough one to figure at this point, having raced eight times last year, taking only one share, a third. He paced a 26 3/5 kicker in his lone qualifier that could set him up for a speed try here starting from a wide post. If he clears to the front, he could be gone. He is another possibility for late multi-race tickets.

#5 GRAVITATIONAL was bet down to 9 to 2 in the Pop Up final based on a good closing effort the week before and getting an improved post for the final. He made a move to the front in the second quarter then he led all the way to the final couple of strides where the pocket sitter capitalized on a perfect trip to get up for the win. That was a solid effort, and he can be a speed threat again here, although I prefer to use him underneath the top three choices in this spot.

Race 8 Selections

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#4 BRUE HANOVER has been nothing short of stellar in the opening two legs of the New Holland Series. His opening leg win in 1:50-flat was eclipsed by his performance in leg 2. Sitting third at the quarter, he moved out in front of the second choice to head to the front, only to be overtaken by that rival passing the half. He edged off the pylons on the final turn, drifted to the middle of the track as he did in Leg 1, then powered away from the field for a 1:50 3/5 score on a night that was 18 degrees colder than it was for his win in the opening leg. The second choice was left in his wake, 13 lengths back in eighth. He will be very hard to beat here at a miniscule price.

#3 EMMETTS BUDDY improved in Leg 2 and when he gets good, he typically stays sharp for several weeks. He left well to get position, moved off the pylons on the final turn, then rallied gamely between horses to win a four across race for place. The classy Manitoba bred gets a good post to work from tonight, and while it is a tall order to expect him to knock off Brue Hanover, he has a good chance to complete the Exacta again.

#2 AMERICAN HISTORY was a big winner in Leg 1 pacing the fastest mile in Canada this year, but it was a different story racing against Brue Hanover in Leg 2. He was hard used to get the lead from that rival in the second quarter, but he had no response for that rival's late move, and he backed up in the lane. He is obviously capable of much better than he showed last week, and I think he will take a more conservative approach tonight and rally late for a share.

#1 WHATCHULOOKIN AT raced well to finish second to Brue Hanover in Leg 1 then he never got close last week after leaving from post eight. He should be able to get positioned closer to the front leaving from the rail tonight and his good late kick can get him a small share. He is a good one to use on the bottom of Tri or Super bets as I see him getting a covered trip throughout then rallying late.

Race 9 Selections

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#1 RAPTORS WON shoots for the fourpeat here racing again for a tag in a class that she seems to fit like a glove. Her most recent win was impressive in that she was required to fend off a sharp pocket sitter in Coco Jojo who returned to the races sharp and was seeking a second straight win to start the season. Team Cullen sends out this Big Jim mare who should have no trouble starting from the rail post. She will likely leave in the top three or four then make another early move to the front and dare her rivals to come and catch her. This class level is ideal for her, and she should prove tough to beat once again.

#10 WESTERN WISH finished second to the choice two starts back then was elevated to the top class where she was overmatched by the likes of Century Jamila, Blue Pacific, and So Much More. Dropping back down to the non-winners of \$14,000 last five, she fits much better. She is saddled with the widest post, but she has enough gate speed to land in mid pack from where she can launch her second half rally. She could provide some value in vertical wagers in a spot where she can get overlooked mainly due to post position.

#2 SORCHA SEELSTER got a needed start in against Raptors Won last week where she showed a bit of late pace in the lane. She showed on multiple occasions last year that she is capable of much better than she showed in that comeback start, and there is a chance that she will get more aggressive in this spot and land in the choice's pocket early. That kind of strategy could give her a shot at the upset. She is in with a better chance this week in this second start back.

#9 ANGOSTURA HANOVER is making a habit of finished fourth lately. She often finds good cover but finishes only evenly. She will get overlooked in the wagering here starting from the widest post, but she is capable of passing a few of these in the back half. In addition to finishing fourth in four of her 10 starts this year, she has also finished second twice, but starting from a wide post here, a smaller share is likely her ceiling. She could add some value to the Superfecta tonight.

Race 10 Selections

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#5 ODDS ON CAPITALISM has been perfect since shipping north and he tends to make his own luck by being raced aggressively and confidently in each start. In his last start, he made two moves, one to the front leaving the gate and the second popping pocket on the last turn to ensure he didn't lack room. He held sway over a sharp rival that he again faces tonight. His streak won't last forever, but he looks best in this small field, and he gets the call to extend his local win streak to four.

#2 FORTIFY was very good racing here last fall, taking his season's mark of 1:49-flat beating Taurasi in November, and taking two sub 1:50 Preferred wins, one in September, and one in October. He clearly is capable of beating this field on his best day and he gets the leading driver tonight. He teamed the Sweet Lou gelding in a Gold Cup and Saucer elimination win in the only other time he drove him. The 25 4/5 kicker in his preparatory qualifier shows that he is ready, and he will likely be the main threat to the choice tonight.

#3 TAURASI was better as expected last time, racing second up, following the eventual winner on the last turn, and sticking around for a top three finish. When he comes around to his best form, he will be tough to beat in this class. He was last year's 'O'Brien Award winner for Aged Pacer with good reason: on the strength of winning 11 of these Preferred paces and earning more than \$300,000. He might need another start or two before reaching his peak, and I'll use him underneath tonight.

#4 MERIGO MAGIC has been a nice addition to the top pacer ranks here, parlaying a great sophomore season in the Maritimes to three excellent efforts at four on the big Mohawk Park oval. His best game is following cover then rallying in the lane and he gets a familiar teamster in Adam Merner tonight. This is a tougher spot now with the return of Fortify, but he should be able to crack the Tri or Super utilizing his potent late kick to pass some rivals down the lane.

Race 11 Selections

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#3 REGIL BUBB continues to race well every week, and he is the horse to beat tonight starting from a better post. Last week, after starting from a wide post, he fell too far back early but rallied furiously to just miss. His late speed continues to improve, as noted by the identical 27 2/5 kickers he paced in his last two starts. Andy Moore will likely position him closer to the front tonight and that gives him every chance to turn the tables on the #4 horse in here who scored the upset last week on the benefit of a much better trip.

#4 SMOKIN HOT DUDE was perfectly driven by Doug McNair last week to score the upset over the choice. He was taking his third win in four starts that night though, and he has shown the knack for landing in the pocket early in his miles and finding good trips. He loses McNair to the #5 in this race, but he remains a threat likely racing from close range throughout. He should offer another good price in this spot.

#5 OVERTHINKING is an obvious threat in this field dropping from the winners of three but not more than five level to a straight non-winners of three class. He has been chasing sharp invader JK Together again who would be 1 to 5 in this field. Last time he raced at this level three starts back, he was a closing second. As mentioned above, McNair sticks with him over Smokin Hot Dude. He is another that figures to be a threat, but I wonder if he will get over bet tonight.

#7 SOUTHWIND INFUSION comes into tonight's race off a strong first-over performance that he should be able to build off. He was probably unlucky in defeat, getting nailed by Smokin Hot Dude, who had the easier trip and skimmed the pylons late in the stretch. My concern for him tonight is that he starts outside the three main contenders listed above. I see him taking a small share this time.

Race 12 Selections

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#7 COCCO PUFF POWER returns in a good spot here and adds Lasix for trainer Meg Crone. When last seen, she was facing tougher than she meets here in the Blizzard series. She has yet to take a win in 2025, but she should get every chance tonight facing non-winners of two. Doug McNair will likely leave with her and find a spot near the front then look to take control of the race on the backstretch. She gets the nod to notch her third lifetime win in this spot.

#1 ALLSMOKEANDMIRRORS is one that bounces around class levels and performs accordingly. Her competition last time in a non-winners of three race was just too tough, and the race was too fast for her. Dropping back to non-winners of two gives her a better chance and she should improve sharply versus these. Give her a look for late multi-race tickets.

#5 COUNTRY DANCING is sent out by The Stable seeking her second win over this track in as many starts. She produced a nice first-over effort to take a win in her local debut on February 21st. Her most recent start at the Meadows is a toss out due to her making an equipment break at the start. She has the second fastest mark in this field after the top pick and she seems to fit okay. She should be good for a share in this spot.

#3 ONTOP RAINSTORM comes out of two races won by the same sharp filly, Superior Delight. Getting beat by only two lengths in both of those starts. She produced decent closing kicks in both of those races, and she is a good one to use underneath in this spot, looking to add to her total of eight top three finishes taken in her 20 starts in 2024-25. She will likely get good position leaving the gate from post three and look to sit a covered trip most of the way, then rally in the stretch.

Race 13 Selections

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#2 CODENAME CIGAR BOX gets needed class relief tonight and he lands in a spot where he should improve sharply. He had the misfortune of hooking monstrous Brue Hanover in that series, and he did finish a distant third to him in the opening leg. Last time he raced this low was last December, and he reeled off two straight wins at this level. In both of those wins, he was on top before the half. I expect the same kind of aggressive steer from Travis Cullen tonight and he gets top billing here.

#4 SERIOUSLY HANOVER may have been a tad over bet last week down to 6 to 5 favorite when he rose in class and got the leading driver in the bike. He did race well, however, racing first up and closing in 27 4/5. His race two starts back at this level was very good as he closed from last to a close fourth after starting from post 10. He figures in here, and he could do if he can find a live helmet to follow this time. He is the one that the choice might be trying to fend off late in the mile.

#6 WANNABEBIGSTAR had the next to impossible task of trying to beat JK Together Again in his last two starts when you consider that no horse has been able to do so in four races all won by that one since he shipped north. He is in a better spot here, but the top two choices are no pushovers, either. I see him getting positioned in mid pack early and closing late for a small share tonight.

#5 HIGHLANDBEACHLOVER couldn't be much sharper coming in off a Pop Up series win, but he was beating easier in all of those starts and he gets class tested now. If he could reproduce his 1:50-flat win from two starts back, he would be tough in here, but I'm not sure he has another one of those miles in him in a two-week span. I see him flashing early speed but being overtaken by at least two of these and staying for a small share.

Race 14 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#3 ALL BETS ON TEX has raced well in every start over this track this year, and he is due for some better racing luck, and a win. He raced tough from post 10 in his last start, racing first up a long way and showing a short lead in the lane before finishing third. This field is within his scope when he is at his best and he comes into this race sharp. He gets a slight nod in a very competitive race that features a mandatory High-5 payout and a carryover of more than \$132,000.

#10 KOLBY TWO STEP comes into this race razor-sharp having taken a blowout 1:52 3/5 win when returning in five days last Saturday. His best game is his speed and there doesn't appear to be many to his inside that can out leave him. Driver Louis-Phillipe Roy's strategy will likely be to blast off the gate and look to clear the 11 rivals to his inside as fast as he can. If he clears successfully, he might be gone on the lead. Trainer Menary continues to run hot, and this gelding is in with a good shot here despite drawing widest.

#6 ROCKABILLY REBEL drops into a good spot here where his strong tactical speed should play well. He will no doubt be leaving hard then looking to get covered up, find a nice trip then rally late like he did when he won on March 17th. If he can get that kind of a trip and clear sailing in the stretch in this 12-horse field, he could do. He is another to consider using on top in this High-5.

#8 PIPEWRENCH CHARLIE just won a Pop Up series final starting from the same post he draws tonight, but his task is made harder when there are two trailers added to his left. Still, he is in great form, and he has shown versatility in recent starts. He can produce a big late kick and pass horses in the last quarter. He should be part of this High-5.

#1 ELLIOT MOOSE is another in good form, but he seems to lack gate speed, so he will likely be trying to rally from far back in this spot. If he can find live cover to follow, he could sneak into the bottom of the High-5. When making that wager, though, predicting who is going to finish fifth can be near impossible. Sometimes, the all button can be your friend if it meets your budget to play it that way.

