

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#7 CHICAGO HALL was a \$47,000 Lexington purchase that trained down well last year and was highly regarded by the connections at The Stable. It was a bit surprising that he didn't break his maiden in 10 starts in his rookie campaign. He did manage to earn more than \$81,000 by taking cheques in nine of those 10 starts, including a third in the mid-season Gold final and a fifth in the Gold Superfinal. His March 21st qualifier was very good; he left well, and kindly dropped right into the three hole, and sat there to the lane. He was purposely kept covered up until he was inside the eighth pole, where he was then produced three wide. He passed two rivals with little effort, trotting a 27 3/5 kicker while under tight James Macdonald lines. This should be graduation night for this sophomore son of Muscle Mass. He gets top billing to start the \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

#1 FISHERMANS BLUES raced well in both starts since breaking in his debut race. In his second start, he was carefully driven needing a clean line, and he closed decently for third as the favorite. In his last start, he was much more aggressive, and he was passed only by the favorite in the lane. He is the logical alternative to the top pick, but I have a feeling he will be racing for second if that rival brings his best effort.

#6 RITCHIE RICH is a homebred half brother to eight-time winner Flirty Dancer (\$146K, 1:55 2/5 S.). He raced well to win in the one race of three in which he stayed trotting at two, unleashing an impressive first-over move at Flamboro Downs in November to score his maiden win. He comes into this sophomore debut sporting a 28 1/5 kicker in a qualifier that was won by a gelding that then jogged racing for a purse on Saturday. This Wheelin N Dealin colt can get a good piece of this if he stays flat.

#3 ENIGMA BOVINO finished second twice at this level to kick off her sophomore campaign, beaten by two decent rivals. She then tried a wide move on the final turn that didn't work on March 20th. She gets post relief here which should enable her to get positioned better early in the mile. She should be part of the Tri and/or Superfecta tonight.

BEST BET: CHICAGO HALL

Race 2 Selections

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#7 ALLSMOKEANDMIRRORS is the definition of a racehorse that has class limitations, and performs well when classed where she can do, and fights for cheques when she steps out of that class. Tonight, she drops back down to the level where she fits like a glove, the \$20,000 conditioned claimer level. Consider, the last five times she has raced at this level she has taken five wins, dating back to last October. She didn't have much of a chance last time trying to close into a pace that featured a 27 2/5 kicker. She should get an aggressive steer tonight back at her best level and she gets top billing versus this group.

#5 FOX VALLEY TATUM is another mare that seems to do best at this level. She exits the same tough non-winners of three race as the choice, and two starts back, she was a closing second to that rival in a race where Allsmokeandmirrors got the better trip. This Amy Husted trainee has post advantage here and she could work out a nice trip racing near the front. Billy Davis, who has been a good partner for this mare, once again takes the lines and she merits a close look for the early Pick 5.

#6 MY LAST KISS comes in off a win at this level and she attracts the leading driver, and she is another that typically performs well at this \$20,000 conditioned claiming level. Macdonald has driven her five times at this level since last November, and she has come away with a win, two seconds, and two thirds from that quintet of starts. She gets the best post here, and she was perfect pocket trip winner last time she started from the middle of the gate with Macdonald driving on January 30th. She would likely need to find a similar trip tonight to take down the top two choices, but it could happen.

#4 QUIET ASSURANCES has been busy recently, racing four times in 24 days, but she has also been razor sharp and performing well in each start, including two seconds at this class level at this track. She looked like a winner in early stretch here on March 21st only to get picked off right on the money by My Last Kiss. She went to Flamboro a week later and smoked an overmatched field of \$20,000 conditioned claimers. She will get put into this race early by Tyler Borth and she should stick around for a good share.

Race 3 Selections

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#5 INTERNATIONAL LOVE makes her sophomore debut coming in off one decent qualifier. The \$20,000 Lexington buy settled in third early and followed to the lane where she got out sprinted, but she finished okay when you consider that the leader threw in a 27 3/5 kicker to finish off that mile. This \$20,000 Lexington buy, who finished third in her only two starts in her rookie campaign, lands in a good spot here. I expect her regular pilot Doug McNair to give her an aggressive steer tonight. She gets the nod to take her maiden victory in this spot.

#4 WHITE IGNITE is the first foal out of a \$468,000 earning dam who won multiple OSS Gold races and the Canadian Breeders Championship here at two. Her second qualifier on March 21st showed what she is capable of. After getting out sprinted leaving the gate, she settled into fifth and sat there until after the half. She was pointed to the outside entering the last turn and she unleashed an impressive turn of foot to pass the four rivals in front of her by the top of the stretch. From there, she easily held her rivals safe in a professional performance for a filly making only her second qualifying start. Trainer/driver Etsell tends to be patient with young trotters, so my only concern is that she might get too far back and/or encounter some traffic issues. She is an obvious player here, but I'd be mindful not to take too short of a price.

#7 PAHOKEE showed up here on March 20th showing some miles that were just okay racing against Flamboro Downs maidens. As is the case frequently at this track, she showed immediate improvement with the leading driver in the bike, and she closed for second off a following trip at 48 to 1. I'm not sure she measures up to the top two picks in this race, but it would be no surprise if she rounded out the Tri behind those two.

#2 MY TIME YOUR MONEY has taken a second and two thirds racing four times in this class at Mohawk Park. His good gate speed should get him a spot near the front at the start again tonight. I don't see him taking a maiden win in his twenty seventh try tonight, but he should be able to land in the Tri or Super.

Race 4 Selections

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#4 BRIGHT GREEN fires back quickly following an impressive sophomore debut mile where she was a strong second to another Green Manalishi progeny who controlled the race from start to finish racing on a wet track on a night where the races were canceled after six races due to weather and track conditions. This Eric Nadeau trainee left the gate well, but she got out sprinted by two other rivals. Driver Louis-Phillipe Roy was content to sit third to the lane where he cut the corner and started an inside rally with his filly. She finished strongly trotting the lane impressively to finish a clear second while firing a 27 4/5 kicker over the wet track. She should get an aggressive steer her leaving from the middle of the gate and she gets top billing.

#2 ROXIE HART is a lightly raced daughter by popular local Open trotter Musical Rhythm that has shown some talent in her short career. She was a first-over winner of her debut as a longshot here last summer which encouraged her connections to try the OSS Gold races. She had gait issues, however, and couldn't stay flat in either of those stakes. After requalifying, she was a front end winner at 1 to 2 to finish off her rookie campaign and she was put away for the year. Flash forward to March 21st and her lone qualifier leading to this sophomore debut: she trotted a 57 1/5 back half and a 27 2/5 kicker to get up for third behind a dominant winner, showing she is ready to roll. She should be heard from late in this mile.

#3 KADIDDLE can't be faulted for what she has done so far in her three-race career. She has taken a win, a second, and a third while passing rivals in the stretch in every one of those races. She might find the top two picks in this race a bit tough, but if either of those falter, she will be along to pick up the pieces. She is a good one to use on Tri and Super bets.

#8 HOPE N GLORY is only 1 for 34 to date, and while I don't expect her to improve on that win record tonight, there is reason to think that she could hit the ticket at what should be a big price starting from out there. She seems to perform best with Jody Jamieson in the bike, taking two seconds, a third, and a fourth the last four times he drove her. He won't be afraid to put her in play from out there and she could add some value to Tri and Super bets.

Race 5 Selections

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#6 RUSTYS BETT makes his first start of 2025 coming off a good 2024 campaign where he recorded seven wins from 31 starts. He really started to get good when he dropped into this \$20,000 conditioned claiming class here in October. After finishing second in his initial try at this level, he reeled off three wins at this level. He comes in off a nice qualifying win that featured a 56 3/5 back half and a 27 3/5 kicker. Coming in fresh, he gets the call to kick off the year with a win.

#8 ARAGONITE is a typical conditioned claimer with form that fluctuates. There is reason based on his most recent start to believe he has a good effort coming tonight. Chasing a leader that was cutting fractions that were too fast, he started to close in the stretch, but he lacked a clear lane at the most critical point of the race. He altered course, but by then it was too late. He was a decent fourth in a fast mile and he is worth a look for multi-race tickets tonight in a spot where he should offer a good price.

#9 LANESIDE SPORTSTAR tried to bottom out the field last time and it almost worked. He had a clear lead at the eighth pole and only tired very late in the mile, the 28 2/5 third quarter taking its toll in deep stretch. He shows a similar chart line on March 3rd with the exact same result – a clear lead in the stretch squandered and the race ending with him finishing third. He is 1 for 23 now and he his probable result is a third or fourth place finish in this field.

#5 ROSE RUN AJAY dropped into a conditioned claimer for the first time in his most recent start and he disappointed as the 9 to 5 favorite. He moved at the half and got into a good flow, working out a decent second-over trip. He tipped off cover turning for home, but finished one-paced to be fourth, nit being able to catch the tiring leader Laneside Sportstar at the wire. I imagine he will get over bet again tonight and he is one that I will have to try to beat on muti-race tickets, although he can be part of the Tri or Super.

Race 6 Selections

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#4 GOONED AGAIN was bet down to favorite for her second start following a debut mile where she took a shuffle then closed willingly for third. In that second start, she was raced much more aggressively, leaving hard for position, then moving first up on the last turn to challenge the leader. She eventually got the better of that rival but she provided good cover for the second choice winner, who passed her in the lane. She looks good versus this field, and she has a big shot to break her maiden tonight.

#6 WICKED CRAVING took a little action at the windows for her sophomore debut coming in off a blowout qualifier win on March 14th. In that mile, she faced the choice and she out left her to get the pocket position leaving the gate. From there she followed to the lane where she started to look for racing room. With neither the choice nor the filly racing second-over backing up, and the leader sticking to the pylons, this filly had to wait and come around, and she closed too late, but she was gaining on the choice late. She draws perfectly here to get a good trip racing on or near the lead and she is another one to consider for all multi-race tickets.

#3 GUCCI SEELSTER is sent out by veteran trainer Brethour off a good qualifying effort on March 21st where she finished third to two older, far more experienced mares. She moved first-over and still kicked in 27 1/5 while finishing evenly in an accelerating late pace. She has already shown that she can fire fresh, finishing second in a Prospect series race in her debut last July. She is another in with a shot and she could provide some value for multi-race tickets.

#5 WINDSOR PATTY raced okay in her Mohawk Park debut on March 13th racing on three days rest where she passed several rivals in the final quarter to land in the bottom of the Super. She gets Daryl Thiessen in the bike tonight and he steered her to her only win on March 2nd. She shows a stale date now and I'll use her on the bottom in this spot.

Race 7 Selections

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#6 HOUSTON SEELSTER comes into this race off a tough trip fifth where he probably deserved better. He attempted to leave for position from the 10-hole and things looked good for him early until a rival pulled off the rail heading into the first turn, forcing him three wide. From there, he was out for most of the mile. In the lane, he tried to close and in deep stretch, he got into a blind switch and was forced to check. He then angled out and closed with some trot, but it was too late at that point. He moves from the worst post to the best one tonight, and I could see Travis Cullen blasting with him and leading all the way tonight. He gets top call.

#5 EXQUISITE TASTE will likely take plenty of action here showing a third in the OSS Superfinal as her final start last year, a race in which she trotted a 1:54 1/5 mile. She failed to break her maiden at two, but she raced in stakes for most of the year, earning more than \$82,000. Her qualifier on March 21st where she gained more than 10 lengths in the back half was fine, and she is in with a good chance to graduate here in advance of a sophomore stakes campaign. She could get over bet in this spot, but she is an obvious win candidate in this field.

#4 MODELO GOLD finished second in the race that the choice exits, and he is the one that kept him pinned in with trot in deep stretch as he was firing from the back with some good late trot. That good effort followed a nice sophomore debut where he finished a close third in a race where the late pace was strong. He is the obvious threat to the top two choices, and he will likely get a more aggressive drive in this spot. He is another possibility for late multi-race tickets.

#2 FRENCHMONI HANOVER's best race of her brief career came here on March 20th. Starting as a 46 to 1 outsider, she closed nicely to finish a clear third behind the 1 to 5 favorite and 3 to 1 second choice. The daughter of top local mare Frenchfrysnvinegar has gained ground in the stretch in all of his four starts, and she is a good one to use in the bottom tonight.

Race 8 Selections

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#4 LETS GET PICKLED was claimed out of a race at this level five starts back, and he won immediately off the claim racing at Flamboro Downs, then almost doubled up here. In his next two starts, he got tough trips starting from outside post at Flamboro, now he gets a good post in a spot where he should be able to make front leaving the gate and try to control this race. The 27-time winner has a good chance in this field and he gets top billing tonight.

#6 DIRTY LIL PIGLET races off the claim for the fourth straight start because he is in excellent current form, and he is another that will be heard from here starting from the best post. He raced well in a recent Pop Up series, leading most of the way as the even money choice in the \$20,000 final before getting passed in the stretch by the pocket sitter. His most recent start at Flamboro Downs was also a good one in which he raced first up a long way and held second. Starting from the best post here coming in off four straight Exacta finishes, he is hard to leave off late Pick 5 and Pick 4 tickets.

#2 THATSWHATISAID N tripped out perfectly to beat the choice on March 13th, taking a great following trip then popping out of the pocket in mid stretch to get the job done. He followed that up with an even effort in a race that featured a strong early pace. That fifth-place finish, beaten eight lengths, will likely drive his price up tonight. We already know that he can beat the choice with the right trip, and he could add some value to late multi-race tickets in this spot.

#1 BET NINETEEN hasn't raced since March 13th, but that was a decent effort in the Pop Up series final where Dirty Lil Piglet finished second. He couldn't find a spot along the pylons early, so he stayed out and got into the flow. He took a second-over trip and finished an even fourth in a decent effort in a race that was dominated by the leader and pocket sitter. He is one that can land in the bottom of the Tri or Super despite having a stale date.

Race 9 Selections

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#7 TELLS BELLS will likely battle with the mare who starts to her outside tonight, and two starts back at Flamboro Downs, she led all the way to beat that rival (who was her stablemate that night) by close to two lengths. She has been terrific in 2025 so far, matching her 2024 win output of six in just 11 starts. Last year she took six wins in 32 starts. She is only a neck and a head short of coming in with a five race win streak, and she is the one to catch and beat here.

#8 WIFEY SAID SO was on a big roll here in January and February, winning four straight and five of six starts. Her bubble burst on March 5th when she broke stride racing at the Raceway at Western Fair in London. She was then beaten by the choice in her next start but showed she might be returning to her best form in her next start here where she came only a neck short of winning from post 10. She is the obvious threat to the choice here and she is hard to leave off late multi-race tickets.

#5 TAMARA HANOVER conquered Wifey Said So two starts back when she dropped to this level following a decent effort in a non-winners of \$2,500 last five race where she fired a 27-flat kicker. Off that win, she tried the Raceway in London where she was understandably bet down to 4 to 5. After getting out sprinted into the first turn by four rivals she broke stride bending around that turn. She gets the leading driver here and she will no doubt get plenty of attention with the leading driver taking over in the bike. Coming off that break, she is one that I will try to beat out of the late Pick 5 and Pick 4 as a likely underlay.

#3 DOLLYDAYDREAM has kicked off her 2025 campaign with several good efforts and a win and three other top three finishes in six starts. Two starts back, she challenged the top pick in this race first-over in the back half and she stuck around for third. She notched several top four finishes at this track last year, and I can see her sitting and rallying for a piece of this.

Race 10 Selections

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#2 PASSIONATE PRINCE comes off a solid effort where he raced first up, took over the lead at the head of the lane, then got picked off by a rival that got a better trip and had more left for the stretch drive. That was his second good race in a row, and he is getting closer to his first win of 2025 having taken five shares in eight starts so far. Tyler Borth chose him over some others in here and he gets the nod to top the High-5.

#3 RAYS CREDIT gets a look here because he drops from claiming handicaps into a conditioned claimer tonight and faces easier than he has been meeting for most of the year. He has had some recent gait issues, but when he is on his game, he is capable of beating these. He can be right there if he behaves tonight.

#9 BETTOR THAN PRIDE is another that drops from a claiming handicap into a conditioned claimer that is worth a look for late multi-race tickets in this spot. His good race two starts back makes him a contender in this spot. On that night, he was part of a swift opening half in which he paced 27 3/5 and 28-flat quarters, and he still stuck around to finish a close third. He is another that is coming off a break, but if he stays flat in here, he could be very tough.

#5 BETTORHOLDONTIGHT last recorded a win racing in a conditioned claimer with James Macdonald driving six starts back, and he seems to fit well here. I'll overlook the break in stride in his last start racing over a sloppy track rated three seconds off at Flamboro Downs. He is a one dimensional closer that will be kept covered up until the stretch. While I prefer to use him underneath tonight, it wouldn't be a big shock to see him get his nose up right on the wire.

#1 MODERN WRITER races off the claim here after finishing a closing second to veteran war horse Brody's Scrapper. This gelding hasn't missed the top five in his last 11 starts dating back to last August and he should be passing some of these in the final quarter. He is a good one to use on the bottom if Tris, Supers and High-5s in this spot tonight.

