Race 1 Selections **The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale**

#2 DIAMOND RYDER came into the first leg of this Pop Up series last week with a 1 for 29 record, but he had been facing tougher, including hot Steelwheel Hanover in three straight starts that were all won by that rival, and he finished on the edges in each of those races. Last week, he was the fastest horse in the field, and Jody Jamieson drove him with confidence, making two moves then driving away from the field. He once again looks clearly fastest, and there is a good chance that he will go off as an odds-on favorite for the first time in his career in this 31st start. He should prove tough to beat once again. He gets top billing to kick off the $75,000 guaranteed Pick 5, and I imagine he will be singled on many tickets.

#5 DANCE CAPTAIN turned a corner when he raced at Hiawatha Horse Park, breaking his maiden on May 3rd, then reeling off two more wins, racing aggressively in all those starts, making second quarter moves to the front each time. He raced well in defeat in the Little Saratoga Series in Dresden on Sunday, now he fires back quickly and gets a notable driver change to Tyler Borth tonight. I could see him finding the pocket following Diamond Ryder and completing the Exactor in this spot.

#4 ALWAYS B SWEETEST entered last week's opening leg in this series with form that wouldn't suggest that he was going to produce a strong late kick to get second behind the top choice in this race. He raced 10 times from March 18th to May 22nd not finishing in the top four once, his best result in that stretch being one fifth-place finish. Last week, he sat last in the seven-horse field until the three quarters, then commenced a wide rally to finish a clear second. His 27 2/5 late speed should play well again in here if he can replicate it, and he should be part of the Tri.

#1 SOME MIGHT SAY brings a decent 2025 record into this race, having hit the board 10 times in 14 starts, but he has only recorded one win. He has been a handy racehorse for the most part. He has been sitting no worse than fourth in all of his last 12 starts, no matter what post he started from. He has finished third or fourth in eight of the 14 starts, and I could see him taking another small slice tonight.

#6 CALL ME PARKER dropped out of the SBOA final last week to a class level where he was 3 to 2 last time he raced in that class facing maidens four starts back at this track and falling just short after making a middle move to the front on that occasion. Last week, he closed at 9 to 5 and regular driver Tyler Borth took no chances, making a middle move to the front. He looked like a sure winner in mid stretch, then jumped it off, taking himself out of the race. After watching the replay several times, it appears there was no reason to make that break and squander a win. He once again lands in a spot where he looks best, but he is hard to trust completely at this point. I'd be looking for at least one backup horse for the early Pick 5.

#3 OUTBOUND TRAIN is 0 for 9 lifetime, but he produced one of the better efforts of his career last week when he was a closing second to a 6 to 5 favorite who led all the way to break his maiden in his third start. This son of Muscle Mass showed good gate speed to get away third, then he stayed in and took a mid race shuffle. He was wheeled to the far outside in the lane, then he closed fastest to finish a clear second, visually moving well at the wire. He will likely be the main threat to the choice and the probable beneficiary if that rival miscues again. He may be able to beat him straight up anyway.

#10 SOLO C P will get the attention of trip handicappers tonight because of the journey he got last week. Coming into that third start having broke stride in both of his first two starts, he was predictably driven carefully, racing in mid pack and staying inside to the stretch. He had plenty of trot to offer, but nowhere to go until mid stretch when it was too late. He closed well once he found room, and he can be a player tonight if he can work out a trip starting from the widest post. He is the third one that I would consider using in the Pick 5.

#5 FIREFLIESNTHUNDER came into last week's race with little expectation from the betting public as he was sent off as a 29 to 1 longshot. He outraced those odds, leaving hard enough to sit the pocket, then finishing a clear third, picked off late in the mile for second by Outbound Train. He has improved in every start in his young career, and he can be part of the Tri or Super again tonight.

#1 ANGELIC brings a 0 for 14 record to the track tonight, but there is reason to believe that number 15 could be the charm for the black sophomore daughter of Archangel. She raced close at this level in her first four starts of this year, not once losing by more than two lengths while taking one second and two thirds. She tried the Grassroots level here on May 26th and raced first up against the likes of winner Tellers Choice, who returned Monday night to win again. That strategy wasn't going to work in that field. Now, she is back with maidens and Doug McNair stays in the bike. I think he will give this filly a more aggressive steer tonight, and she could be the one to catch at the head of the lane. I'll give her a slight nod in what appears to be a wide-open race.

#4 SUPERGIRL MOLLY was OSS Gold placed at two, so we know she has some ability. Her issue at two was she had trouble staying flat, breaking stride in three of seven starts for a purse. That issue resurfaced in her sophomore debut where she jumped it off midway around the final turn just as she had been moved out onto third-over cover. She rebounded 18 days later, rallying from last to third after following fourth-over cover. She was moving best at the wire, just failing to catch two 6 to 5 shots, and she may have cost herself second by running in. If she can get positioned closer to the front tonight, she may be hard to fend off.

#9 SHESAMANALISHI was a bit unlucky when she finished second at this level two starts back, ambushed right on the wire by a rival that stayed hidden on her back until very deep in the lane. She came back to race well in the same Grassroots race that Angelic exits, and she closed to finish ahead of that rival. She will probably be more forwardly placed early in this mile facing maidens again, and that gives her a chance in this spot.

#3 RESOLVED is another one that raced well versus maidens two starts back then stepped up to the Grassroots level and had no luck. She is another that should get placed closer to the front again tonight starting from a good post, and she should get a favorable trip. She isn't without a chance in a race where it makes sense to spread for Pick 5 tickets and the first leg of the early Pick 4 that starts right here.

#5 JOB HUNTER was claimed by Des Tackoor two stats back for himself and a partner, and she has had no luck so far while finishing third in the first two tries since that claim. In her first start for the new connections, she broke at the start then made a nice recovery to hit the board. Last week, she sat the pocket as the 6 to 5 favorite, following the 8 to 5 second choice. It was reasonable to expect that the 41 to 1 shot that challenged first up for most of the back half would eventually back up, but that never happened. Job Hunter finished loaded with pace with nowhere to race as the top two battled for the win, keeping her boxed in. She looks best in here, and I imagine she will try to control this race tonight starting from one of the best posts with Superior Delight not lined up on the gate.

#3 INUKSHUK SALLY came into last week's race sporting a great record this year racing exclusively at the B track in London. She had a 6-3-1 record from 10 starts to that point, but she took no money and was sent postward as a 41 to 1 longshot. She defied that pari-mutuel disrespect by racing huge first-over, giving Superior Delight a scare while keeping Job Hunter locked up tight in the lane. If she can reproduce that effort in this second start over the racetrack, she can be right there again. Her driver Travis Henry continues to drive well, and his drives often go off as overlays with him not being a regular at this track.

#1 YS FLOWERNUMBERTEN can be very good, or she can be erratic. See her last two starts: two starts back, she dominated maidens racing on the lead, never getting challenged at any point on her way to a good mark of 1:53 1/5. She comes back versus non-winners of two and breaks stride before the start. Three starts back, she broke on the lead in the lane. She races for a tag for the first time tonight, and she is fast enough to go with these when she behaves, but I don't love the rail post for her. I would likely use her underneath in this spot.

#2 LILLY CLARE is 0 for 18 this year, but she is a mare that tries hard every week and takes frequent shares. Last week, she stayed covered up to the lane, then rallied for second racing at this class level. That was her seventh share in 18 starts so far this year, and she can take another slice here starting from an inside post tonight. She's a good one to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets.

#7 LASTING DREAM had a terrific rookie season, earning close to $400,000 finishing second in the Mohawk Million and two Grand Circuit races, one by a nose and one by a half length. She clearly improved as the season progressed, and she finished the season just missing a spot in the Breeders Crown final. This non-winners of two race certainly isn't one she has to win with much more important races on her dance card this summer, but trainer Blais has been sending them all ready this spring, and if she gets put into the race, she will probably be hard to beat. She gets the nod in the anchor leg of the early Pick 5.

#1 UNGAWA was carefully driven two starts back after being required to requalify due to breaking stride twice in a row. Last week, he was put into the race on second-over cover, and he was closing quickly at the wire once he got into high gear. He has shown himself to be a relentless closer in races where he behaves and where he is close enough at the three quarter pole. He should be a threat tonight and he is another that merits a close look for early multi-race tickets.

#3 CHICAGO HALL tried racing first-over in a Gold race chasing rapidly improving P L Spencer last week, and that wasn't going to work. He raced much better two starts back as a big longshot in the SBOA final when he was in the flow following cover, eventually finishing third. He should improve tonight, but he has a 1-1-9 record from 17 starts to date and this looks like a spot where there is a good chance of him taking his tenth third-place finish in his eighteenth start. I prefer to use him underneath tonight.

#2 HP LUCAS turned a corner two starts back when he sat a trip and finished second in a Grassroots event. He came back last week and dominated a non-winners of two field racing on the engine, provided with a great steer by J R Plante. He was unstressed and unchallenged for the entire mile, and I don't see him getting that same trip in this field. I would use him underneath in this spot.

SPOT PLAY: LASTING DREAM

#6 INDUSTRIALISTS returned from a break last week, and he raced well in defeat, closing for a share. More importantly, he stayed flat after breaking twice in his previous start for a purse on April 24th. He moves from the worst post to the best one now, and aggressive teamster Billy Davis Jr. will likely get this colt positioned closer to the front leaving the gate. I'll give him the nod is a spot where he has a good chance to break his maiden in this thirteenth start.

#8 RULE THE ROOST blew away a non-winners of two or $12,000 field with the trainer driving two starts back at Hiawatha Horse Park, breaking her maiden in his fourth start. She shipped to Mohawk Park to try her luck on the big track against a tougher field, and she set some strong fractions on the lead before getting picked off by the 3 to 2 favorite who sat the pocket to the final turn than made her winning move. That was a good effort, and this filly is worth a look for the late Pick 5 that starts right here.

#5 SUNDAY SHOES is interesting here going for a high percentage trainer/driver that does well with limited starters. He was a good performer in the Prospect series last year, and he tried the Grassroots in his sophomore debut. He raced first up and made it up to second in the stretch, but he tired late and lost some positions. He adds Lasix now and faces a field of maidens with the exception of Rule The Roost, who is the lone winner for a purse. He is another that is worth a look in a field that lacks a standout.

#3 FISHERMANS BLUES is 0 for 8, but he has taken slices in half of his starts and has yet to miss a cheque. His good gate speed is his best asset as he has been racing in the top three in all of his last six starts. He should get good position again tonight and ride a good trip to a small share. He is a good one to use on the bottom of the Tri and Super.

#3 FLUID showed improvement two starts back, finishing third behind a winner that was taking her second win in two starts. She came back and tried much tougher in a Grassroots race where she left for position then tried racing first-over chasing a 1 to 5 shot that would go on to win by four lengths. She fits well here, and she figures to get a good trip racing on or near the front. She gets top billing to kick off the late Pick 4 that starts here.

#2 TALL DARK LADY is the homebred full sister to double millionaire Tall Dark Stranger that has disappointed so far, failing to break her maiden in 12 tries. She came closest last week, sitting a trip then rallying well along the pylons. It appeared that she held a narrow lead for a couple of strides in deep stretch, but she was eventually outsprinted by a rival that powered down the middle of the track. It would be no surprise to see her take her maiden win in this thirteenth start.

#6 CATCH MY PASSION was one that looked good in her sophomore debut, closing for fourth at 100 to 1 and pacing her final quarter in 27 1/5 while avoiding some confusion. She dropped to 9 to 1 for her second start and she appeared to have pace to offer in the lane, but she got interfered with and broke stride. Trip handicappers were onto that last week where they bet her down to 9 to 2. She was put into this race at the outset, and she simply went too fast, too soon, pacing a 27-flat second quarter to make front in a 55 3/5 opening half. It was no surprise that she faded in the lane. She gets Louis-Phillipe Roy in the bike tonight and she starts from the best post. She can be a speed threat in here, and she is another that is in with a shot.

#8 AMERICAN STARLIGHT is 0 for 45 lifetime but she has taken 16 shares in those races, and she often gets out into the flow and passes horses in the back half. She won't take much action starting from the worst post tonight, but she will most likely be passing rivals in the back half, and she could sneak into the bottom of the Tri or Super.

#6 EUROBANK HANOVER is undefeated racing with trotting hopples on, twice in qualifiers, and a third win last week over a field of maidens. He keeps that equipment on tonight as he tries a tougher group of non-winners of two. This Greenshoe colt still has some upside, and trainer Blais currently has his stable firing on all cylinders. I'll give him the nod to repeat starting from the best post.

#9 LILLY LACE just missed getting a cheque in a Gold race last time in a fast mile after handling non-winners of two in her penultimate start. She had a decent rookie season, but she is clearly faster at three, trotting all of her final quarters in 28-flat or faster. She has been getting good steers from pilot Travis Henry, and he will likely be sending her tonight from a wide post. If she can clear to the front, she may prove tough to catch.

#4 KADIDDLE raced well in two straight starts at this class level, beating the good filly Zette Athena once, then finishing second behind that same filly last week. Two starts back, she used the advantage of racing on the better part of the track to grind out her second win. Last week, with no bias present, she raced first up again, but she couldn't get close to Zette Athena. She is in peak form now, and she is in with a decent shot tonight starting from a good post.

#10 SHAMPOO GIRL qualified well here on April 28th, then tried her luck in the SBOA elimination but she broke in the lane. She came back 17 days later in a Grassroots race, and she stayed flat and raced well, rallying in 27 3/5 to finish third to two good sophomore filly trotters. She showed that she can win from this widest post in her career debut last November, and that makes her worth a look here for late multi-race tickets. If she behaves and gets put into the race early enough, she could beat these.

#1 CORA CORA CORA was a Spot Play here last week, but the trip didn't work out for her. Instead of taking control of the race at the start as expected, she took back then raced first-over. Providing cover for the winning 9 to 5 favorite. This looks like an easier field perhaps with the exception of Jazzville, who beat this mare two starts back. Starting from the rail, she should be able to land in the top three early then make a move to the front on the backstretch then control the race from there. I'll stick with her in a spot where she has a good chance to rebound and take her fourth win of the year.

#4 JAZZVILLE sat a pocket trip two starts back racing in the rain on a sloppy track, then popped out and got past Cora Cora Cora for the win. She has done very well this spring by racing close to the front and getting good trips. Last week, she tried a tough $20,000 conditioned claimer racing off the Auciello claim and she never got close. That line is a toss for me because she is back where she fits best starting from a good post, and she can work out a nice trip tonight. She is the one that will likely be the main threat to the choice.

#6 TIMEWAITSONNOONE has been in solid form racing at Flamboro and London recently, and she returns home with a win and a second from that two-race excursion. She shows a race here five starts back where she closed from ninth to second, finishing ahead of Jazzville in the process. She benefits from drawing best in a short field, and it would be no surprise to see her win from second-over tonight.

#5 SOLIDAZABRICKHOUSE is interesting here because she changed hands on May 26th then was dropped in for $8,000 at Dresden and won immediately despite not having raced in four weeks. Now she ships to the big track and paced to an aggressive score. She gets a good post and the "first time" Doug McNair angle in her favor tonight. She would need to drop several seconds to beat the top two picks, and that might be a bit much to ask, but I won't be surprised if she lands in the Tri tonight.

Race 10 Selections **The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale**

#7 MILLIE MAY HANOVER brings a 0 for 15 record to the racetrack tonight, but based on her first two starts as a sophomore, she stands out in this maiden class. She started the season off with a bang, finishing only a half length behind last year's Horse of the Year in the SBOA final at big odds. Her luck wasn't as good in her next start as Chantilly threw down a sub-1:50 mile. Doug McNair, who drove her in her first start, returns to the bike tonight. I imagine he will be looking to send her right down the road for her maiden score.

#2 TEMPTING is a filly that I was on for two starts in a row after she got taken out of the race three starts back when she was making a move to the front. She disappointed in both starts, breaking in one and failing to get a cheque in the other. The leading teamster picks up the drive tonight with Louis-Phillipe Roy opting for the #8. Maybe James Macdonald can wake her up. I'll try for some Exactor value with her.

#1 SARA B DELIGHT was favored by the betting public and many handicappers last week, and she raced well in defeat, finishing third for the second start in a row. She should be sitting on a win now, but I think she will find the top choice too tough in this spot. I'll try to beat her out of the Exactor understanding she could fill the bottom part of the wager if she gets a good trip.

#3 ETERNAL DELIGHT comes off a nice performance in a Grassroots race where she fell just short of scoring a big upset. After starting third, she stayed in and got shuffled back to last around the last turn. She immediately found a seam when she turned for home, and she closed best to just miss. She fits well here and she should be able to get another good share in this spot.

#8 MARLENES LEGACY gets a key driver change back to Louis-Phillipe Roy here, and he drove her to a maiden win and a Grassroots third right after she shipped north from Pennsylvania. I don't love the widest post for her in this spot, but she should be able to float out and get positioned in the top four or five early then ride a trip to a share.

BEST BET: MILLIE MAY HANOVER