

## Race 1 Selections

## The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

**#1 WINDSUN CHARLOTTE** was a winner in Leg 2 of this Grassroots series in 1:50 3/5 which is by far the fastest lifetime mark in this field. Granted, she got a great trip following a speedster that set some wild fractions, but she still had to keep up and rally late. Her start two races back is a toss because she was never put into that race. On July 3rd, she was offered up for a tag in a \$20,000 conditioned claimer, and there were no takers as she absolutely jogged on some overmatched rivals. It appears she has changed hands since that win, and she moves into the Garry Merner barn tonight. She retains the leading teamster, who drove her to her last win, and she gets top billing to kick off tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

**#3 LADY CAFE AU LAIT** tried racing against 2024 Horse Of The Year Chantilly a couple of times in may and she went off at 95 to 1 and 99 to 1 in those miles, and she managed to finish fourth once. When she was more realistically spotted racing against Grassroots types, she started to improve. On June 27th, she was best of the rest at 18 to 1 behind a big favorite. Then, on July 4th, she produced her best effort of the season. She was live following cover on the far turn looking like the winner, but the pocket sitter got a clear run up the pylons in early stretch and sprinted clear. She is 0 for 10 this year with five seconds, but she will get there soon, maybe tonight.

**#5 MANHATTAN MAYHEM** is 0 for 4 so far in 2025, but she keeps kicking home in 26 and change, so it shouldn't be long before she breaks through for that first victory as a sophomore. Most recently, after floating out for position, she stayed in on the turn. In the lane, it took her a while to get into high gear, but she did close well in the final 1/16th. My concern with this filly is the leaders may get away on her. She is in with a chance but I wouldn't take a short price here.

**#8 PARKAVENUEJANET** steps up to the Grassroots tonight for high percentage trainer Dave Menary and she likely deserves the chance based on the success she had in her first three starts versus lesser. In her last start, she was first to move on a leader that had opened up a big lead, and she got past that one but she provided the winning cover for a rival. She should be able to take a share in this initial Grassroots even.

## Race 2 Selections

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**#5 MARS HILL** returns home following a three-race stint in New Jersey where he only took one fifth place cheque. His competition was much tougher than he meets tonight as he was facing the best four-year-old trotters in North America in those Graduate miles. Last time, he had little chance starting from a wide post, and he could close for only seventh while trotting his last quarter in 27 1/5. He is 0 for 8 so far this year, but this is the best chance he will get so far this season to break through. Starting from one of the best posts he should get put into the race early by Doug McNair and he gets top billing here.

**#3 LANDING ON TIME** is a nice sophomore that has been much better at three than he was at two. Last year, he won his debut, then raced in Kentucky Sires Stakes races and a couple of Grand Circuit races and only took a few small shares. This year, back in Rick Zeron's barn, he has been better and faster. He was excellent in his Goodtimes elimination, and that made him second choice in the final. He was only four lengths back in an all-age trotting track record mile, then he came back with another good effort in defeat to Masstercraft, who has been a win machine lately. The leading driver sticks here, and this Tactical Landing colt will likely be the one to fend off late in this mile.

**#7 TACTICAL STRIKE** was sent postward as the 4 to 5 favorite last week and she raced well in defeat. She simply came up against a tough gelding that got a big jump on her in the third quarter and was not going to be caught. She has been around the money in every start except for the Armbr Flight since returning from Kentucky and switching to the Desiree Jones barn. She will likely look to close from the back of the pack again tonight, and she can get up for a share.

**#6 MYRETIREMENTDREAM** is of for 13 this year and 1 for 25 in 2024-25. Those stats don't do justice to how hard he tries every week, and he will likely break through soon, although I don't expect it to be tonight. This is a bit of a tough spot for him, but he will surely be involved in the action and he will likely hang around for a small slice like he usually does.

### Race 3 Selections

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**#7 CAPTAIN CODE** is from the first crop of exciting new sire and Hambletonian winner Captain Corey, who has already been making some waves with some of his two-year-olds. This gelding is a half brother to two that have raced and won, and he looked good powering his way to a first-over crush job in his lone qualifier. He draws perfectly to try for the same trip he got that night. He can float out and get position from the seven-hole then make a backstretch move. He gets top billing in this opening leg of the early Pick 4.

**#3 I TAKE THE CAKE**, another Captain Corey offspring, has an experience advantage over every horse in this field having made two starts already. The 1:57 2/5 mile she produced in his debut in a Grand Circuit race, and she was bet down to even money for her second start, but she blew up while making a first-over move in the third quarter. It looked like she moved too fast, too quick and made a speed break. Assuming she will behave this time, she is probably the one to beat.

**#10 HALTON HILL** is the second Bob Young trainee, both of whom were qualified by Scott Young. Interestingly, that driver chose this gelding over the top choice despite drawing the 10-hole here. This half brother to \$124K earner Mighty Deo (8 wins, 1:56 4/5 H.) is a \$45,000 Lexington purchase that should have enough gate speed to overcome the wide draw. He is one of a few in with a chance in this field of beginners.

**#2 SOLO TO LEXINGTON** is a \$35,000 Lexington buy that is out of a mare that is a full sister to millionaire Caprice Hill. She showed some good late trot in her second qualifier to get up for the win. She is sent out by Team Macdonald here, and she is in the mix for a share at first asking.

## Race 4 Selections

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**#7 ALL MY WISHES** is an improving sophomore that could add some value to early multi-race tickets here with the leading driver choosing the morning line favorite over her. She hasn't missed the board so far this year and her best effort may have come in Leg two of the Grassroots where she closed like a rocket to finish third. She failed as the favorite in her most recent start, but she was absolutely buried with no hope for the entire stretch drive. She is fast enough to beat these with the right trip, and I'll give her the nod here in a good Grassroots field.

**#4 FOREVERAFTERALL** is leading driver James Macdonald's choice in here over three others and the reason why is staring up at you from the program page. The daughter of Stag Party has been on fire this summer and among her four straight wins was a 1:50 3/5 lifetime best score in Leg 2 of these Grassroots. She can race effectively on the lead or she can take air and keep coming. She comes off a vet scratch, but perhaps Macdonald's choice of her is a tell that all is okay. She is the one to catch and beat here.

**#9 SUGAR PIE HONEY** has plenty going for her tonight. First, she brings an unbeaten 5 for 5 record in 2025 to the track. She has already shown that she can overcome this post in Leg 2 on June 16th where she crushed her rivals. She gets Doug McNair in the bike, and she adds Lasix. She is another strong contender that merits consideration for early multi-race tickets.

**#3 SIMPLY THE BEST** raced okay here on July 4th, re-rallying in the stretch after losing some ground on the last turn. She gets a barn change tonight, and she retains the driving services of Louis-Phillipe Roy. She has the tactical speed to get placed in the top four leaving the gate again tonight, and I could see her sticking around for a small slice at a price.

## Race 5 Selections

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**#2 READYFORPRIMETIME** was on a two-race win streak heading into his race against other Grassroots starters on July 5th. He was driven conservatively from an outer post and he stayed sharp by pacing a 53 3/5 back half that featured a 26 3/5 kicker. He was driven with more aggression two starts back when he won a Grassroots point race like tonight's. It's logical to assume that he will get put into this race earlier in the mile tonight. Leading driver James Macdonald chose him over two other contenders in this field, and so will I.

**#1 SILVERWALLS** is having a terrific season having notched seven wins in 10 tries while not missing the board once. In his most recent start, he raced gamely, but his trip was just too tough. He paced a 54 2/5 middle half uncovered on the rim, and he made it to the lead in the stretch before tiring late from those efforts. If he can find a live helmet to follow tonight or race from the pocket, he could resume his winning ways. He is another one that merits a look for multi-race tickets.

**#9 GRIN AND WIN** will be happy to get away from Fifth And Five who beat him in his last two starts but looking back further we see that he was beaten in two straight by Silverwalls. He raced well in four straight starts, but he came up empty and he is 0 for 2025 still. He has the look of a contender for a share, but as the morning line favorite he is one that I have to try to beat out of the multi-race tickets in this spot.

**#6 SHINING MOMENT** is a one-time winner seemingly in a tough spot tonight, but he will get a look here because he paced a 25 2/5 final quarter here last week, and that's something that you don't see every day in a non-winners of \$15,000 conditioned pace. That race followed a qualifier where he won in 1:52-flat, pacing faster than he had for a purse in any previous race. It seems like a lightbulb went off for this Chantal Mitchell trainee and I could see him closing for a share in his Grassroots debut.

## Race 6 Selections

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**#1 RICKY RESOLVE** earned so much money from May 24th to June 30th that he found himself in the top class last week. He is a very nice racehorse that tries hard every week, but he is not a Preferred trotter. The bulk of that money - \$15,000 – was won in the Popup series final on June 30th where he trotted an incredible mile from post 10. In that winning mile, he floated out and stayed parked for the entire mile and he just kept grinding and grinding until he finally got up for that win. He gets to drop back to a level where he fits better, and he can't get parked the mile here starting from the rail. I'll give him the nod to kick off the late Pick 5 that starts right here.

**#4 ALL GAS NO BRAKES** turned his form around when he dropped to the non-winners of \$6,000 last five level here on June 23rd. He left hard that night and found the pocket, then he rallied for the win. This is a horse that when he gets good, he typically stays good for a handful of starts, so it makes sense that he got claimed last week where he was a no doubt front end winner. Coming back at the same class, with the same driver, starting from a good post, he has a decent chance to double up. He will almost surely get put into this race leaving the gate, and he should get a good trip racing on or near the lead. He merits a close look for the late Pick 5.

**#6 WILLOWTIME** crushed his rivals in the two preliminary legs of the Pop Up series and he was logically made the 3 to 5 favorite in the final. But the race dynamics were different then – mainly him getting the rail draw in a race where many to his outside would be blasting off the gate with \$30,000 up for grabs. He got out sprinted into the first turn and he found himself near the back of the back after winning the preliminary legs dominating on the lead. All was not lost, however. He managed to slip out following Ricky Resolve, a horse that always goes forward. He made a break though, and that was that for him. He draws best now, and he is an obvious threat, although I wonder if he will get over bet tonight.

**#7 TRUFFLES TOO**, like many horses, races well with James Macdonald driving. In his past six starts, this gelding has had the leading driver in the bike four times, and he finished second three times and third once. All four of those starts have come at this level and he typically leaves hard for position and finds a good trip. He should be part of the Tri or Super tonight.

**BEST BET: RICKY RESOLVE**

## Race 7 Selections

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**#6 MACAPELO SEELSTER** came into her last start off a dull effort where she raced at the back for most of the mile, finishing eighth. But she turned her fortunes around by blasting off the gate and finding the pocket early in the mile. She followed Stellrmanipulation to the lane, and when that tiring rival tired and drifted out, she shot through along the pylons for a lifetime best score. Leaving from the best post gives her a good chance to work out a similar trip in this Grassroots race, and she gets the call to repeat.

**#4 CATCH MY PASSION** comes into this first Grassroots try razor sharp having broken her maiden here on Friday night. This is a big jump up in class, but the way she won four nights ago suggests that she might be able to handle it. She was out a long way, racing uncovered on the rim pressing slow fractions, and she kept coming, eventually taking the lead in deep stretch then holding off the closing favorite. If she can find a live helmet to follow tonight, she could be an Exacta factor.

**#5 ITHADTOBEYOU** is an improving Millar Farms filly that is worth a look in this spot where it is feasible that she could get a setup for her big late kick. In her most recent start, she – and the rest of the field – got gapped out chasing a runaway leader. She found herself in last on the inside on the last turn. She stayed there and she fired a 27 1/5 kicker closing along the pylons. She needs to stay more in touch with the leaders, something she showed she could do two races back. If this race falls apart late, she could be the one.

**#3 DARLENES ANGEL** is one of the better closers in this race, but she spun her wheels a bit last time when the final quarter was paced in 27 1/5. Still, she did close in 27-flat and 26 3/5 in her two previous starts, one of them a second-place finish in a Grassroots leg. I think she will rebound here and pass some rivals late to find a spot in the Tri or Super.

## Race 8 Selections

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**#1 CARSONSBUCKNGO** is two for six lifetime which is easily the best win percentage in this non-winners of one or \$8,500 field. He comes off a nice closing effort which should set him up for a good try here in a field where he seems to be a good fit. In his two wins at Grand River, he was driven more aggressively than in his two starts racing at Mohawk Park. He gets Doug McNair back in the bike tonight, so maybe he will get positioned closer to the front and make his move earlier. I'll take a stab with him in a field where many seem to be win averse.

**#6 NOVA BLU** is a horse that seemingly always looks like a contender on paper, but he also seems to frequently snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Most recently, he was bet down to even money favorite, and he ruined his chances when he broke stride on the opening turn when he was firing out for the front with two other rivals. He raced tough after he got back on stride because he was hung the mile from that point and he briefly held the lead in the stretch. He will get that maiden win at some point, but it is hard for me to take a short win price on him.

**#4 ALWAYS B SWEETEST** will probably take a lot of action here based on his strong closing effort last week where he powered home in 26 3/5 to finish second. In that mile, he camped out at the back of the pack then he was sent widest by driver Bob McClure turning for home. He lumbered up on the far outside to get second, but he was never catching the winner who was pacing strong to the wire. He is tempting off that mile, but let's remember he is 1 for 50 before we stampede to the windows.

**#6 ROOKIE J** is one that I thought raced decently last week considering he was making his second start of the year and only the fourth of his career. He left hard enough to find the pocket early and he rode that position to the lane. He lacked room briefly then he switched out between horses and raced willingly to the wire. Three of his rivals just had bigger late kicks. He could be a good one to use on the bottom at a price in this spot.



## Race 9 Selections

## The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

**#5 FASHION FRENZIE** was a winner at this top class for older trotters last time Logan Park wasn't entered, and the same scenario presents itself again tonight. In that winning mile on June 16th, the son of Archangel had missed a month, but he worked out a beautiful pocket trip then rallied for a 1:50 2/5 score, equaling the all-age trotting Track Record. He has raced well in two straight since, and there is a decent chance that he can find the pocket again tonight. He is one of three that will likely battle for the win here, and I think he might offer the best price of that trio. I'll give him a slight nod in a race that will likely be decided by trip.

**#7 OSCEOLA** was intent on making front last week and he did just that. Two middle moves from his rivals then relegated him to third on the inside, not an ideal spot in most races. He followed to the stretch and rallied along the pylons to miss second in a three across blanket finish behind winner Logan Park. He gets Doug McNair back here and his strategy is no secret. He will blast off looking to go down the road or work out a winning trip racing close to the lead. His tactical speed makes him a threat in this seven-horse field, and he is the other one that I would consider using on late multi race tickets.

**#4 GAINES HANOVER** is one of the contending trio, and he will most likely get bet down to favorite with Logan Park missing. He is obviously capable, having won three of the last seven Preferred Trots. He comes off a race where he took it to Logan Park, taking the lead off him in the third quarter and bringing a clear lead into the stretch. He tired and drifted out several lanes, making it easy for Logan Park. I don't love the way he drifted in that mile, and I'll play to beat him here, understanding he could prove me wrong.

**#1 NASEY** is in the midst of a good season where he has already earned more than last season in about half the starts. He is in a bit over his head when he gets forced into the top class, but he can sit a following trip, rally and sneak into the bottom of the exotics. He is one that I would consider using in the bottom rungs of horizontal wagers with him starting from the rail. He may never leave the pylons and get a small share.

**SPOT PLAY: FASHION FRENZIE**

**#5 BACKUP PLAN** is a gelding that has caught the eye recently because he is improving rapidly, as many racehorses do as sophomores. His most impressive win came two starts back when he started a move on the final turn only to have a rival pull late in front of him. Undaunted, he immediately pulled three wide, and he sailed past the leaders to win going away. Last week, he tuned up for this first Grassroots race with an easy front end win as the 1 to 5 favorite. Once he was allowed to cut identical 28 1/5 first and second quarters, that race was over. He will likely need to be faster to beat the rail horse here, but I think he will be up to the challenge.

**#1 FIFTH AND FIVE** couldn't be any sharper coming into this third Grassroots leg, and he will be a formidable rival for Backup Plan. He has notched three wins from seven starts so far this year, but he comes in off two in a row, both versus Grassroots rivals. In both miles, he made front early, gave up the lead then re-rallied for the wins. Getting to the front leaving the gate from the one-hole isn't an easy feat at this track, but even if he leaves in the top four, he can make an early outside move to the front. He is the one to beat, and he is hard to leave off late multi-race tickets.

**#6 FUBAR BUNDY** shipped east from the Prairies boasting an unbeaten record at two and one start at three, and he joined the Tony Beaton barn for his sophomore campaign. He has been ambitiously spotted, racing in some Golds and a three-year-old Open against Papis Pistol who won in 1:48-flat on that night and raced in the Meadowlands Pace on Saturday night. This Grassroots race is a better spot for him, and although I don't see him beating the top two in here, I can see him taking a share.

**#7 D A SUPER GLO** hasn't missed the board in any of his five starts so far this year, and I think that streak can continue here. In his most recent start, he used his good gate speed to get position early, then he followed as Backup Plan dominated. He can sit another trip racing close to the front again and land in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

## Race 11 Selections

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**#1 COLD SNAPS** had some gait issues in April and May, and after requalifying, she was raced conservatively in her next two starts where she rallied well in both while trotting identical 27 1/5 kickers in those two races. That set her up for a more aggressive try last week where she made a big third quarter move, trotting a 27 3/5 quarter to press the leader than sail on by for the win. That was a strong winning mile and the step up one level doesn't look that tough here. I'll give her the nod to repeat.

**#4 FLIRTY DANCER** was a winner at this level three starts back where she was raced aggressively from post 10 and she responded with a huge first-over effort to get the job done, taking a new life's mark in the process. She was in tougher in her last two starts and she was raced conservatively. Dropping back down to that level gives her every chance to turn things around. She should be the main threat to Cold Snaps here.

**#5 NO ANGEL LIKE ME** exits a Pop Up series that drew some decent horses and she took a win and a second in the preliminary legs before racing near the front and tiring in the final where the top four finishers all came from fourth or farther back at the half. She was a good second at this level four starts back. After drawing the six hole in four straight races, she leaves from post five this time. She should be prominent from the outset and she should be in the mix for a good share.

**#3 SOUTHWIND DOMINO** comes off a mile where he blew up at the three quarters and took himself out of the race at Grand River. He shows two good miles racing at this level prior to that start, however, and Jody Jamieon returns to the bike tonight. He could better this prediction if he works out a good covered trip, which is possible.

**#2 VILLEFRANCHE AS**, a veteran of the racing wars, makes her 197th start here coming in off two consecutive wins at Kawartha Downs, the most recent victory being a track record equaling performance. She is obviously sharp, but this is a tougher spot. She took 23 slices from 47 starts last year racing mostly at this track, and a smaller share seems likely for her tonight.