

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#6 TOSS OF THE DICE takes one of the bigger class drops tonight, moving from an OSS Gold race to face a group of maidens tonight. The \$25,000 London Classic Sale purchase qualified fast enough on July 4th to suggest that he could be competitive in that Gold race. But he started slowly which put him behind the eight ball. He trotted a 56 1/5 back half, finishing willingly, but far back. Starting from the best post here facing maidens, tactics will almost surely change. I could see him blasting to the front and leading all the way tonight. He gets top billing to kick off tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

#2 GREENARROW HANOVER is a \$35,000 Harrisburg buy that merits a look here on debut. Being a half brother to Open trotter Gaines Hanover, who is poised to become a millionaire this summer, this Greenshoe colt has potential, and he showed that he might be ready to show it right off the bat here when he qualified well on July 11th. His 28-flat kick would play well here if he can repeat it, and he is another one to consider when you fill out your Pick 5 tickets.

#5 TOTALLY ICONIC, like the top pick, drops to face a group of straight maidens, but this Muscle Mass gelding made his first start in a Grassroots race. Unfortunately for him, he came up against a Green Manalishi rocket that dominated and won easily. He did close to finish in a three-horse pack for second, and he landed fourth. I don't see any like The Green Gazoo in here, and that gives him a chance in this second start.

#8 GREEN MAFIA is a Green Manalishi homebred, the fourth foal from the dam with the first three all being winners. He took some action on debut, being sent off at 6 to 1, but he blew up at the start. Once you get past the top three picks here, it's hard to gauge how good the rest of them are. I could see this gelding taking a share if he stays flat tonight.

Race 2 Selections

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#6 RISING INTEREST was a sharp Grassroots winner here three starts back, taking his first victory as a sophomore, then he ran into Go Blue for two straight starts. He was behind the eight ball when he drew poorly in both of those races and did okay to close for shares. This is an easier spot, and he should get put into this race early leaving from the best post. He gets Trevor Henry in the bike tonight which also leads me to think he will be more aggressive early in this mile. He gets top billing to kick off tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

#3 DAY came out for his sophomore debut here on May 10th and he beat multiple OSS Gold winner Galen Erso in an SBOA elimination, and he took a new lifetime mark. That colt that he beat came back to win the final while Day broke just after the start, squandering his chances. Since then, he has raced twice with limited success, now he comes into this race off a stale date, having missed five weeks of action. He is tricky in here because he is the fastest horse in this race when he is at 100 per cent. But the time missed is concerning. I would be careful to not take too short of a price here.

#1 MANFORCE shows an interesting, if not unusual pattern in his last six starts, He has an alternating pattern of missing cheques racing here at Mohawk Park, followed by dominating wins racing at various B tracks. His most recent race here two starts back, though, gives some hope that he can break the pattern tonight. He had an excuse in that Grassroots race, getting parked the route from the nine-hole. Drawing the rail now guarantees that he won't get parked the mile. He is one of the contenders in here, but it's interesting to note that he wasn't close to Day in the SBOA elimination here on May 10th.

#4 BLUE HERON is still winless, but his form is improving, and he could be a good one to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets in this spot. On June 19th, he raced at the back and got a needed clean line in. Then he raced better here five days later when he motored home in 27 2/5 when he closed from ninth to fourth in a good effort in a Grassroots race. In his most recent start, closing late was made impossible by the slow early pace, but he did manage to land in a dead heat for fourth. I'll use him underneath in this spot.

Race 3 Selections

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#6 EASY STATION is a \$45,000 Lexington buy that was much better in her second qualifier where she made the winning move first-over then held off the pocket sitter in a good effort. The daughter of Captaintreacherous then had a start for a purse where she followed in third then closed in 26 4/5 for naught because the leader wasn't slowing down. She is the third foal from the dam, and the first two have combined for 12 wins and have taken marks of 1:52 1/5 and 1:53 2/5, respectively. I can see her being more aggressive in this spot, and I'll give her a slight nod.

#4 LDS KIMBERLY, a \$30,000 Lexington buy, kicked off her career in the Grand Circuit Tompkins-Geers pace, and she acquitted herself well, taking a share behind a filly that is one of the favorites in a Gold race tonight. A trip to The Meadows for a start in their Stallion Series went awry and here she is now facing maidens. Assuming that she stays flat tonight, she should be one of the main contenders in this field, and she is another that merits consideration for the early Pick 5.

#5 ADINA HANOVER is a \$110,000 Harrisburg purchase that will get some attention here being a full sister to \$2.49 million earner Allywag Hanover (28 wins, 1:46-flat). She made a natural progression in her second qualifier, leading most of the way to take the win. She will probably need more than a 28 and change final quarter to break her maiden in this spot tonight, but we haven't been given any indication that she can't do it yet. She would be no surprise if she broke her maiden at first asking.

#7 LYONS HUNGRY APPLE is just a \$9,000 Harrisburg buy that might turn out to be a bargain based on what she showed in her second qualifier here on July 4th. She absolutely dominated her rivals that morning while dropping close to four seconds. Trainer Harris is a feelgood story having recovered from a medical condition and sending out his first winner in 10 years recently. I can see this filly contending tonight.

Race 4 Selections

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#4 THE TIME MACHINE is an improving gelding that lands in a good spot tonight to potentially get his second lifetime win and first OSS Grassroots victory. He turned the corner three starts back when he blasted to the front from post nine, then sat a following trip and re-rallied for his maiden victory. Then he raced okay, closing for fifth in a tough Grassroots field. In his most recent start, he made a move to the front in the first quarter then was overtaken by the overwhelming 1 to 5 favorite. He was no match for that rival, but he stuck around for second. He has a decent chance in here and he should offer a square price tonight. He gets top billing.

#1 CHICAGO HALL shows a 1:53 2/5 clocking in a winning mile three starts back that is the fastest mark of any in this race. He was provided with a great trip that night by Jody Jamieson, who has been on a tear here the past few weeks. The gelding that he beat that night has recently won two straight, including a Grassroots leg at Clinton on July 6th. He is a good fit in here and he has a good chance to take his fourth win tonight.

#8 ARTFUL DODGER looked like a good fit in last week's non-winners of two field and here is why he was bet down to 3 to 2: After trying the Goodtimes elimination on June 7th and racing against arguably the best sophomore trotting colt in North America, he was more reasonably spotted in his next start in a Grassroots race, and he finished much closer after passing some rivals in the back half. In that start two races back, he chased a strong leading favorite and took a run at him in the stretch but was rebuffed. He was driven aggressively last week, and it didn't pay off. Perhaps he trotted too fast to the three quarters. I think he will be raced more conservatively here, and he could do if he gets an easier trip. He should offer a better price tonight.

#6 ARMSTEAD FIREBALL comes into this race off two decent Grassroots tries since shipping west from Ottawa. He notably changes barns tonight, moving into Chantal Mitchell's stable, and he reunites with driver Louis-Phillipe Roy, who drove him to a fifth-place finish on June 24th when he returned to Mohawk Park. His 1:55 3/5 clocking on that night was by far the fastest of his career. He should be blasting off for position at the start of this mile, and he is another in with a chance at what looks like a wide-open race.

SPOT PLAY: THE TIME MACHINE

Race 5 Selections

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#2 GOAL DIGGER is a homebred Wheelin N Dealin gelding that had only one start at two last year and it came late in the season in December. After drawing post 10, he broke before the start and then was put away for the season. He returned to the races with a solid qualifying win on June 25th at Grand River then showed up in tonight's class here two weeks ago. He landed in the pocket then followed well, but there was no catching a much more experienced rival who went off as the 4 to 5 favorite who controlled the race from start to finish. This is a good spot for this gelding, and he gets top billing.

#4 KAMA makes his fifth start of the season having taken shares in all of one of those races. He raced well in his first two starts to get two seconds and he was raced aggressively in both of those miles. In his third start back, he was again raced aggressively, but he wasn't up to making two moves. So last week, he was raced more conservatively, and he followed along in a fast mile to take third. This is a spot where he can use his good gate speed to get positioned near the front, and he would be dangerous if he finds the pocket early. He is another one to consider for use in the anchor leg of the Pick 5.

#9 MEADOWVIEW ROTHY started her career at four coming off three qualifiers where she was driven by her trainer, who also handled her in her debut. She broke at the start of that first race, losing all chance. In her second start, with a catch driver in the bike, she raced much better, rallying for second in a good time for this class. She will likely offer a good price starting from a wide post tonight, and she can be a factor if she stays flat again tonight.

#1 WISDOM HANOVER comes into tonight's start off four solid miles in a row after getting soundly beaten racing over an off track on debut on May 24th. He has been learning well how to race at Kawartha Downs, and on July 5th he was put on the lead for the first time, and he passed that test by seeing it through on the engine. He gets a key driver change to leading teamster James Macdonald tonight, and that makes him interesting. I can see him getting a trip and landing in the Tri or Super.

Race 6 Selections

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#6 GRAND CIRCUIT absolutely jogged two starts back over some of these when claimed, his second blowout win in a row. She entered last week's Pop Up series final as an overwhelming 1 to 5 favorite, but she was over bet when you consider the \$8,000 claimers were racing for \$16,000 in the final of that series. Almost guaranteed there was going to be a lot more action, and they did mix it up on the engine, to her detriment. She made a middle move to the front, but she got no breather, and she was ripe for the picking at the head of the lane. She got claimed that night and she gets Louis-Phillipe Roy in the bike tonight. She should be blasting off for the front leaving the gate, and she gets the call to rebound in this opening leg of the Pick 5.

#4 HILLBILLY JET was no match for Grand Circuit two starts back when that rival cut a 55-flat opening half then bottomed out the field when claimed. Last week was a different story as many mares left hard forcing Grand Circuit to take back then move on the backstretch. This mare didn't sit long after she relinquished the lead, making sure she had clear sailing in the stretch. She had a sharp second move to win well taking a new season's mark with her fifth win of the year. The dynamics change a bit now with Grand Circuit and her starting this race as stablemates. It seems likely that one of them will win this race.

#5 KATYS DELIGHT started in every leg of the Pop Up series that Hillbilly Jet won, and she took shares in every leg, including a closing second last week in the final, capitalizing on a setup after watching a big pace battle in the opening half. Her phone is improving, and she should be closing for a share, although she likely won't get the same setup again that she had last week. I'll use her on the bottom of the Tri and Super.

#1 DOLLYDAYDREAM comes in from Georgian Downs off four solid efforts in a row where she closed from the back to finish in the top three in all of the races. She is no stranger to Mohawk Park, having taken a taken a two length 13 to 1 upset win here eight starts back in a \$8,000 claiming handicap. She will be passing some horses late in this mile, and she is another good one to use underneath.

Race 7 Selections

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#4 OUTBOUND TRAIN comes into tonight's race having taken three wins in five starts after starting the season 0 for 2 and he is sharp and dangerous. Last week, he was conservatively driven, and he looked like he was up against it racing sixth and well back through a 59-flat opening half. He showed that he is a good horse by producing a furious late rush to get up for the win. Now, he is back in a Grassroots points race where he almost surely gets a more aggressive drive, like he did when he won in Leg 2 of this series. Coming off that impressive score last week, he gets the call to repeat tonight.

#5 GO BLUE brought a string of five second-place finishes in a row to the track on Canada Day here when he was facing a field of Grassroots starters. He was coming off a narrow loss in leg 2 of the Grassroots where he was put on the engine that night and he came close to holding on for the win, nailed late by Outbound Train, who made two moves and outsprinted him late. He has since taken two wins in a row, including a 1:53 2/5 lifetime best score. He races better freewheeling on the lead, and he should be the one to catch here, but he will probably need to deal with Outbound Train again in the stretch, and that rival has already shown he can get past this gelding when he beat him in Leg 2.

#3 FIRST CLASS RULE, like Outbound Train, comes into tonight's race having won three of his last five starts, including wins in the first two legs of this Grassroots series. Interestingly, all three of the wins have come on half mile tracks, but he did take a Grassroots win here at Mohawk Park last September. He likes to race on the lead, and I don't see Go Blue giving up the front to him in this spot. I prefer to use him underneath.

#2 ALIMONY MIKE is 0 for 5 this year, but he has improved in his last two starts, so he is likely at his sharpest now. He finished second racing aggressively – once on the lead in Grassroots Leg 2, then first up at Clinton – showing some versatility. He will most likely get relegated to looking for a spot early and trying to pass some rivals late. I think he can do that and finish in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

BEST BET: OUTBOUND TRAIN

Race 8 Selections

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#3 A CLEAN DEAL was a sharp maiden breaking winner at first asking on June 27th where she moved to the front in the second quarter when the pace slowed, and she then held the tactical advantage in that race. She jumped right into an OSS Gold race on July 4th, and she showed out, making several moves to get the job done over another Cattlewash offspring in a sparkling 1:50 4/5 clocking, finishing off her mile pacing a 26 1/5 kicker. She faces a couple of new rivals in here, but coming off that terrific Gold win, she gets the call to repeat.

#5 DAYA is a homebred from the first crop of World Champion Bulldog Hanover, who was bred and is owned by Bulldog's trainer. She was unveiled here on July 7th, and she took some action at the windows, going off as the 3 to 1 third choice. She couldn't have looked more impressive moving up in the third quarter then tipping three wide at the head of the lane and blitzing an overmatched field of maidens. She will probably need to be faster to beat A Clean Deal tonight, but it won't be a surprise if she shows that she is up to that challenge.

#6 TH CHECK ME OUT looked good kicking off her career with two wins, including a Grand Circuit victory here on June 26th. I imagine the connections would have thought that she would be a winner if she paced in 1:51-flat in her first Gold race on July 4th, but A Clean Deal was just a little better than her on that night. She draws best here, and it is very likely that she will get sent forward leaving the gate again. She raced great off a helmet in her debut, and it's possible she could turn the tables if she got the following trip this time.

#7 JAY is another Cattlewash filly in here that should be a factor. This \$95,000 London Classic Sale purchase was immediately thrown into a Gold race by Doc Moore off two good qualifying wins, and she closed in 53 4/5 to take third behind A Clean Deal and TH Check Me Out. She had her momentum stalled briefly on the last turn when the filly racing first-over broke and she this filly had to duck back inside. That was a solid debut race, but she is in tough again. I'll use her underneath.

Race 9 Selections

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#4 ULTRA MYLES got a good tightener in for this Grassroots leg last week when he led to deep stretch but got nailed last by two rivals. I could chalk that loss up to two factors: he was probably a bit short having missed 17 days between starts, and, he may have just slowed the pace down too much in that race which left his rivals loaded for a big stretch rush. He gets Bob McClure back tonight, and he has been white hot recently, having won five out of 10 races here on Monday night. I think he finds the winning trip for this gelding tonight.

#5 GET THE GREEN is a bit of an enigma in this race, because in his last two starts, we see a tale of two different racehorses. On June 12th, he dominated here, beating non-winners of two in 1:54 1/5 which is the fastest mark of any horse in this field. He was then scratched sick out of a Grassroots race, and he put a qualifying mile in at Grand River last Wednesday where he made a break with the trainer in the bike. The leading driver gives him a vote of confidence here, choosing him over the top pick and one other. That makes me think all is okay with him and that he will be a contender tonight.

#2 SUNDAY SHOES has taken small shares in each of the first two legs of the Grassroots, and he has raced well in two subsequent starts. Last week, he made a power move first-over to take the lead, but he got nailed by a sharp filly that was taking her fifth win in five starts this year. That was a fast mile, and this gelding should be able to work his way into the Tri in this spot.

#1 THE GOVERNOR is 0 for 9 this year, but he has taken cheques in every Grassroots race to date, and he has shown better tactical speed in his last two starts. With four slices taken in nine starts so far this year, he makes sense as one to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets in this spot.

Race 10 Selections

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#7 SARA B DELIGHT is one of several fillies that exits the same race where they all finished within less than a length of each other, and she will get some attention by handicappers and bettors because of the trip she got. She sat a good following trip, and she searched for room in the lane, but she was surrounded by rivals that weren't dropping back. She finished with pace behind a wall of rivals, crossing the wire on the helmet of the winner in the three path. I don't think there is any question that she would have been right there if she found room. I'll give her the nod tonight assuming that she will find clear sailing tonight.

#4 ILL BE ALRIGHT finished a half length ahead of the choice in that race after leading from before the half. She stole some slow fractions, and she probably backed the pace off too much, which would explain five fillies being in contention at the wire. She dug in but got out paced late by a couple of rivals. I could see her leading all the way in a faster pace and getting the job done this week.

#5 WHO ARE YOU was bet down to 5 to 2 favorite in that same race, and she was good in defeat. She followed the cover of the winner, and she got into high gear late in the mile to get up for second while pacing her final quarter in a snappy 26 4/5. She is 0 for 14, but she is clearly improved, and she should contend right back. She is yet another possibility in a race that will likely be decided by pace and trip.

#1 WICKED WORDS is a fourth filly that was in the blanket finish with the three fillies above and she had one of the better trips. After blasting to the front, she sat the pocket tracking the slow pace set by the leader. She cut inside the leader in the stretch, and she got clearance halfway down the stretch, but she could do no better than fourth. She is one that I will use underneath tonight.

#3 GOONED AGAIN has only missed the top five once in her last six starts, and in that race, she finished sixth in a fast race here on June 26th. She will likely be positioned in the top three or four leaving the gate then take a following trip. She can round out the Super of High-5.