

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#3 LASTING DREAM has been a bit disappointing so far this year when you consider her excellent rookie campaign that included a second-place finish against the boys in the Mohawk Million. She did race well in both of her first two starts at the non-winners of two level, but she failed to get the job done at 1 to 2 and 2 to 5 in those miles. Then she tried the Zwieg and she took the smallest cheque as a longshot. She lands in a spot tonight where she will surely get bet heavily again, and this is a field that she should beat. She gets top billing to begin tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed Pick 5.

#1 YOU GUESSED IT raced well enough to win last week, he was just unlucky to run into a colt who is going very well right now. This gelding raced first up chasing a loose leader into the last turn, then he ducked between horses in the stretch. He was nailed on the wire by the onrushing Outbound Train, who got up on the far outside to take the win. That was a good effort, and it followed a decent closing effort behind Cover Band, who has since come back to win again. This gelding is the logical alternative to Lasting Dream in this spot.

#6 FRENCHMONI HANOVER is interesting here moving to the best post after closing close to 10 lengths in a back half that went two seconds faster than the first one in her last start. She also raced okay at 76 to 1 two starts back. Two of the horses that finished ahead of her that night have already come back to win. Her 27 and change late speed will play well in here, and she is a filly that likely won't get bet much again, and I think she gets more aggressive tonight with Billy Davis Jr. in the bike. You could probably land on worse longshots tonight.

#4 STORMONT CHEERIO shows a narrow defeat at this level two starts back, then he finished just behind Frenchmoni Hanover in his next start. He missed more than three weeks now because of sickness, but he might still be able to work his way into the exotics in this field. He makes sense to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets tonight.

Race 2 Selections

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#1 NAUGHTY DELIGHT, a \$40,000 Lexington purchase, was sent out here by trainer Tony Beaton for himself and partners here on July 7th, and she was well prepped for that debut mile in Leg 1 of the Grassroots. The daughter of top stallion Bettors Delight qualified three times for that initial start, and her last qualifier on June 27th was her best one. After dropping in fourth, she followed to the last turn where she latched onto cover racing second-over and looking racy. She tipped off that cover and came on for second while under minimal James Macdonald urging. In that first start, she closed off cover to take the win, pacing home in 27-flat, and off that sharp winning mile she gets the call to double up here in Leg 2.

#6 TALBOT KRISTEN, a \$45,000 Harrisburg buy, got bet down to favorite for her debut coming in off a good qualifier on June 27th. She was much better in that qualifier, closing from fourth to third in the stretch while pacing a 26 3/5 final quarter all on her own, driver Bob McClure a still passenger in the bike. In her debut mile, she made a middle move to the front, but the pocket sitter, who was making her second start, was just a bit better that night. That was a good first start, and she should be the main threat to the choice here.

#2 BRISK SEELSTER had a couple of good efforts against maidens to kick off her career before ambitiously trying OSS Gold company here on July 4th. In that mile, she was in touch on the last turn, making up some ground, but in the lane she couldn't keep up to the strong duo of A Clean Deal and T H Check Me Out who were both well clear of the field at the wire. She fits much better in this Grassroots field and she can rebound tonight and contend in this spot.

#5 PNG SHADOW was bet down to 9 to 2 on debut racing in a tough Gold race where she had to try to keep up in a sub-1:50 mile. She made an outside move and backed up in a mile that was too bad to be true. Doc Moore fires her back in this Grassroots race and its reasonable to expect that he fixed whatever issue caused her to back up so badly. She will probably offer a much bigger price tonight, and I could see her landing in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

Race 3 Selections

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#1 STONEBRIDGE BLUFF came into his second start on July 10th off a good closing effort here two weeks earlier in his debut mile in a strong Grand Circuit field. In that second start, he got a driver change to Jody Jamieson, and he was used more aggressively. He blasted to the front from his wide post, but after two leadership changes, he found himself sitting third at the half. He stayed in and finished evenly to get the smallest cheque. He fits well here, and he can be right there with these if he gets a similar steer. I'll give him a slight nod in this spot to kick off tonight's early Pick 4.

#3 STINGRAY DEO is a \$12,000 Lexington buy that raced well on debut, finishing ahead of Stonebridge Bluff. In that mile, he stayed in around the final turn and got stalled briefly, then he was sent outside, and he closed nicely in the lane, looking good while pacing a 26 2/5 kicker chasing the winning 1 to 2 favorite. Assuming that he gets put into action earlier in tonight's mile, he should be right there with these.

#7 CHOW FOR NOW is sent out by trainer Brethour, who also owns, and like many of his, he kicked off his career at Kawartha Downs where he got in an educational mile racing against some elders. The winner of the race was a four-year-old making his eighteenth start. This colt paced a nice back half with his trainer in the bike, now he gets the leading driver. He is worth a look for early multi-race tickets.

#5 PHILLYS STRANGER, a \$55,000 Harrisburg buy, makes his debut off a good qualifier on July 7th where he was second to a colt that was likely going to win his debut until he jumped off stride on the lead in the stretch. This Luc Blais trainee dropped six seconds in that qualifier, and he probably only need drop a couple more here to be right there with these. The only concern with this colt is the 29 final quarters. He will need to improve his late speed to contend for the win here.

Race 4 Selections

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#5 LAVENDER SEELSTER, a \$30,000 London Classic Sale buy, qualified well enough in June that the connections thought she should try a Gold race on debut. She didn't get off to a good start in that race and she was behind the eight ball and in an impossible spot when the leader clicked off the half in a pedestrian 57-flat. She did close some ground and pass some horses in the much faster back half while pacing her own back half in a snappy 53 1/5. Now she faces easier and draws better. Louis-Phillipe Roy will surely get away much faster from the gate with her tonight and she gets top billing as we kick off the 20-cent Pick 6 bet in this race.

#6 C J DESBI started her career with a dismal effort at 3 to 5 at Georgian Downs where she was nowhere close throughout the mile. She was a much different filly here on July 7th in the first Grassroots leg, though. Starting at 31 to 1, she blasted right to the front from a wide post, then took a mid race shuffle. She was back out at the three quarters, and she closed for fourth behind impressive runaway winner Daya. Assuming she gets sent again tonight, she is a good bet to complete the Exacta behind Lavender Seelster.

#3 CACKLE BERRY's debut race was decent as she sat back and rallied, getting third behind two rivals who had separation on the field at the head of the lane. The daughter of Cattlewash has plenty of room for improvement and lots of upside, and she can contend for more than a third-place finish if she is put into tonight's race earlier, which is a good possibility.

#2 ON FLEEK is another making her second start that can be better and is worth a look for Tri and Super bets. She moved on slowly advancing cover, third-over on the final turn. She was fanned widest in mid stretch and she finished willingly to get fifth. She can improve in this spot, but I prefer to use her underneath.

Race 5 Selections

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#1 COCO JO JO dropped to this level last week, and she was bet down to 3 to 5 favorite. She was raced very aggressively. Despite getting away only fifth, she drove by a hole and continued on to the front. It took her three eighths of a mile to clear, and she set some big fractions that benefitted the other class dropper in the field, Tells On A Roll, who popped the pocket in the stretch and zoomed past to take a new life's mark. Returning to the same class here, she meets a field that appears to have a few rivals lined up to her right that will be blasting off the gate. Starting from the rail, I could see her getting away in mid pack, finding a live helmet, and getting the job done. She gets the nod in this anchor leg of the early Pick 5.

#2 AARDIES MONEY N shoots for three straight wins following a couple of starts where she misbehaved, and she already won at this level two starts back. She looked better last week when she won, not running in down the lane as she has done in many of her previous starts. There are other quick leavers in here, so I imagine she will float out then look to make a middle move to the front. She can be very tough on the engine, and she is a threat to get that threepeat in here.

#10 LANESIDE INCONTROL has been racing terrific lately, taking three wins in her last four starts while missing by a head in the one loss that came at this level two starts back in a 1:49 3/5 mile. She draws worst here, but she showed that she can overcome a wide draw on June 13th when she crushed a field of non-winners of three. After going off at 2 to 5 and 1 to 5 in her last two starts, she will offer a much bigger price tonight. She is worth a look in a field where there are several live options.

#9 ALWAYS DAWN raced well in defeat to Laneside Incontrol here on July 4th when she made two moves and fell just short of catching that rival. That good effort came on the heels of two Stallion Series wins in Pennsylvania. There are several quick leavers signed on here, and I wonder if this filly will get a conservative steer with an eye to the next sires stakes start. I prefer to use her underneath in this spot.

Race 6 Selections

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#1 MCBUBBLES brought only \$12,000 at Harrisburg, and she is already starting to look like a bargain. The daughter of McWicked parlayed a good debut race into a Grassroots win here on July 7th. In that mile, she sat fourth until the final turn where she was sent first up. She grinded slowly towards the front, then was forced three when the pocket sitter pulled. She sailed down the middle of the track for a win that was easier than it looks on paper as driver Bob McClure was statuesque in the bike. She could improve again tonight; I'll give her the nod as we kick off the late Pick 5 in this race.

#7 NO BETTER AIR was bet down to 6 to 5 favorite for her second start, which was the first leg of this Grassroots division. She was driven like she was the best, heading straight to the front, then after getting passed by two rivals in the first quarter, she made quick re move to the front. She brought the lead into the stretch, but she couldn't see it through as both she and the pocket sitter were blitzed by an impressive Bulldog Hanover debutante. She is one of the main contenders in this field, and she might need to only make one early move to the front tonight starting from a post that should facilitate a fast start.

#8 FRONT AND CENTER is a Tony Beaton owned and trained filly that got in an educational debut mile at Georgian Downs on June 28th where she faced some elders and closed for a share. She was then sent off at 19 to 1 in her second start here on July 7th in the first Grassroots race, and she outraced her odds. After getting away fifth, she made a middle move and found the pocket when the filly holding that spot started to back up. She rallied in the stretch to catch No Better Air for second as they both watched Daya pace away from them in the three path. She figures to be one of the main contenders in here.

#4 SAMETHINGONYDIFRNT was good in her debut at 46 to 1, blasting to the lead, letting one go, then re-rallying to finish in the photo with McBubbles. That was a strong effort at an overlaid price, but I'm not sure that she will be allowed to lead in this spot. While there is certainly nothing wrong with her form, I prefer to use her underneath in this spot tonight.

SPOT PLAY: MCBUBBLES N

Race 7 Selections

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#5 SHOOT THE WHISKEY is one of two class droppers from the non-winners of \$9,000 last five level in here, and it's likely that those two mares will fight it out for the win in this spot. This Jodie Cullen trainee had little chance racing in identical 1:49 1/5 miles in her last two starts. She hasn't been leaving at all in recent starts, but if we look back to the last time she raced at tonight's class level, we find that she blasted off from post nine that night when she finished second to Alabama Hannah. Travis Cullen will likely be sending her tonight, and she can get the jump on the other class dropper in here who typically deploys a closing style.

#9 CHIEFS DREAM GIRL is the other class dropper in here that rates highly. The 19-time winner typically deploys a closing style when she races in classes higher than tonight's, and she always tries hard. She gets enough cheques that it often prevents her from dropping into classes where she has a better chance to win, but that is not the case tonight. Last time she raced at a class this low was in February of this year when she was in against non-winners of \$4,000 last five starts. She made a powerful wide late move to get the win that night. She will probably be the one that the choice will need to fend off tonight.

#1 KIERA SEELSTER steps up off a powerful lifetime best winning performance in an overmatched \$20,000 conditioned claimer last week. She was hammered down to 4 to 5 favorite, and she delivered, leading all the way and leaving no doubt. She gets class tested now, and facing the two top choices is a much tougher assignment. I'll prefer to use her underneath in this spot.

#8 KELLINA DIAMOND is another class dropper that figures in here. She has the gate speed to get away in the top flight leaving the gate, and sit a trip racing near the front like she did two and three starts back. I think she will be part of the Tri or Super in this spot.

Race 8 Selections

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#1 CHICANERY had a debut race here on June 27th that was better than it looked on paper, and she parlayed that initial start into a Grassroots win in Leg 1. In that first start, she made a sustained first-over move on the second choice who led throughout. Her task was made very hard when the opening half was cut in 59-flat and the back half paced in 55 1/5. As expected, she was driven much more aggressively in that subsequent Grassroots race, and she always looked like she was going to win there. She looks to double up here starting from the rail, and I think she will make an early move to the front. She gets the nod as we kick off the late Pick 4 here.

#9 CATTLEKISS is a Cattlewash homebred that is a half sister to 20-time winner YS Delight and 18-time winner YS Do It Right. She was well bet on debut in Leg 1 of the Grassroots coming in off two good qualifiers raced at Rideau Carleton where she showed good late speed in both. She raced well in that first start, winning the front end battle but eventually losing the war to a sharp closer. She has the gate speed to overcome this wide draw, and she should be right there again.

#2 LIKE A FINE WINE is the wild card in here, shipping in from the half mile track in Three Rivers, Quebec that doesn't typically yield fast times. She has shown good tactical speed in all three of her starts getting a maiden win and two seconds. She moves into Kyle Fellows barn here and she picked up the leading driver at scratch time. Maybe the tote board may provide some clues with this filly. I prefer to use her underneath in this spot.

#5 FIVE STARR RATING is out of a top class dam that veteran bettors will remember as one that would drift out 10 lanes in the stretch as she was passing the field to win Mares Open Paces back in the day. She has produced many winners prior to this filly, who tried racing first up in Leg 1 after starting second then losing the pocket due to leadership changes. She tired in that mile but still finished fourth. I think she can get another share here, likely sitting then rallying this time.

Race 9 Selections

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#2 GOT SEXY SCARS jumps into this Pop Up series in Leg 2 coming in off two solid efforts in a row when facing much better than these. Two starts back, she was sent off as the 8 to 5 second choice and she led all the way but just failed to see it through. Then she showed early speed, got shuffled back to third and re-rallied for second behind a mare that would be 1 to 9 in this field. She should have a big shot in this field although I find it interesting that the leading driver chose another over her.

#4 MISS CHANTILLY N looked like she was in a good spot in the opening leg of this series when bet down to 6 to 5 favorite, and she took full advantage. Starting from the best post, she drove on to the lead and never looked back, scoring a win that was only one tick off her 1:51-flat lifetime best. Her strategy will likely be the same in this second leg, and she should be the one to catch and beat when they turn for home.

#9 BLINDED BY DELIGHT came into last week's opening leg of this Pop Up series off two strong conditioned races at Kawartha Downs where she raced against males and took a win and a second. She got the leading driver, and she took plenty of action at the windows, and she did race well in defeat. She tracked the leader to the half then moved first-over and kept grinding to the wire to hold second. She retains the leading driver who picked her over Got Sexy Scars, but she is at a post position disadvantage to the mare that beat her last week. Considering that important factor, I'll use her underneath tonight.

#1 FATED FIRE showed big speed in Leg 1 of this series, firing to the front from the widest post and clearing by the time she reached the first turn. She then gave up the lead to Miss Chantilly N and followed that one home. She draws the rail now where she should be less stressed at the start. She can take a following trip and hang around for a share.

Race 10 Selections

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#5 ONE MORE BET got to take a class drop last Saturday, but that non-winners of \$9,000 last five class didn't turn out to be any easier as classy Tells On A Roll was ready to fire a 1:49 1/5 lifetime best effort that night. This mare started out third, then slid off the pylons onto second-over cover around at the half. That cover did not advance, and she fanned wide, but she was just fighting for scraps with the rest of them in the lane. She gets to take a more significant class drop tonight, and she gets Louis-Phillipe Roy in the bike starting from one of the best posts. She is a candidate to go right down the road in this spot.

#3 CAUGHTSTEALINGHOME is one that I thought raced very well in defeat when you consider the trip that she got that night in a fast race. After dropping back to sixth, she commenced an outside move before the half. She got no cover as none of the mares racing in front of her made an outside move. Despite being out a long way taking air, she kept coming and she finished in the place photo behind the open length winner. That was a very good effort, and she could do in here if she can work out an easier trip. She is another that I would consider using on late multi-race tickets.

#7 HES EXPRESS is the mare that raced first-up in the race that the top choice exits, and she had little chance chasing Coco Jo Jo and Tells On A Roll who were accelerating away around the turn. The final margin that she lost by looks ugly, but she had the toughest trip. Three starts back, she was a winner at this level with tonight's driver Jody Jamieson in the bike, scoring a 12 to 1 upset. I think she will rebound here, and she is worth a look for late multi-race tickets.

#6 ALLSMOKEANDMIRRORS had little chance of closing on Aardies Money N last time when that mare was sprinting home in 27 1/5 and this one was camped out at the back. Still, she did pace a 53 1/5 back half to stay sharp, now she draws better. Starting from the best post tonight, she can get positioned closer to the front early in the mile and stick around for a share.

Race 11 Selections

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#8 PIZZAZZ HANOVER was hammered down to even money last week making her second local start after shipping west from Ottawa, and that money proved to be smart as she produced a sharp effort to get the job done. Sitting on second-over cover approaching the top of the stretch, she was sent wide and asked for her best by Louis-Phillipe Roy. She instantly accelerated into a gear that her rivals simply didn't have, and she easily passed the leaders by the time she reached the eighth pole. From there she widened her lead to take a new lifetime mark. If she comes close to replicating that mile, her rivals will be racing for second tonight.

#2 KIKI DEE HANOVER, stablemate to the choice, was covered up and looking for room at the head of the lane while Pizzazz Hanover was getting into her highest gear. She managed to slip off the pylons and find clearance in time to follow her stablemate home and complete the Exacta. She has done well since shipping in from Ottawa, and she should be an Exacta factor tonight again.

#1 YS FLOWERNUMBERTEN was favored by a few handicappers last week, and she showed she was live by making a middle move to the front in a race that featured strong fractions. She eventually tired to finish behind both Pizzazz Hanover and Kiki Dee Hanover, but that was a much better effort. I can see her getting a more conservative drive here and tripping out to take a share.

#6 MARLENES LEGACY entered last week's race stepping up off a nice maiden win, but she drew poorly and could only hope to get a cheque after dropping back early, and that is exactly what she did. She gets the best post now, and she should be closer early this time. That gives her a better chance at getting a bigger piece. She is worth a look for the bottom of the exotics.

#3 WHISKEY BLUE CHIP always puts herself in position to get a good share because her good gate speed typically gets her a spot racing on or near the lead. Starting from a decent post, she will be put into play again tonight, and she should stick around for a slice.

BEST BET: PIZZAZZ HANOVER