

7 ODDS ON AMETHYST is one of several that we could see winning this race but since he's the only one coming off a win at roughly the same level, we'll give him a slight edge. He had a lot go his way in that 06/10 race, including a break by the leader near three-quarters, but at least he was a handy winner. Unlike many horses on that very windy evening who were 2 or 3 seconds slower than normal in the last quarter, he was on-par with recent efforts. In fact, the wind had picked up considerably by the time he raced in the 8th so that 30.1 last quarter was actually quite good.

5 R FIRST CLASS is the one who had the lead rounding the last turn on 06/10 and whose mistake made things all that much easier for Odds On Amethyst. While he looked okay until the break, he does have a history of giving up the lead and he's now 0-for-21 over two years. He's a better prospect than his record would suggest but I'd sure like to know his odds before investing.

8 ON THE SLY doesn't strike me as one that will automatically move up the ladder for new connections but he's certainly not a cross-off since he's right back in the same class and paired with a trotting specialist in Trevor Henry.

2 MYSTERY BET hasn't raced in a month so we will sit back and watch this first start for trainer Russell Bax. I like the fact that Bax has hired Mike Saftic as he knows the horse but other than that I see no obvious reason to jump on this one just yet.

ON THIS DATE...

1631 – After his wife Mumtaz Mahal died during childbirth, Mughal emperor Shah Jahan spent the next 20 years building her tomb, the Taj Mahal

1837 – Chemist and inventor Charles Goodyear received his first rubber patent

1943 – Barry Alan Pincus (AKA Barry Manilow), musician, born in Brooklyn, New York

Race 2 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Mike Hamilton

2 DUNBAR HALL won the Preferred in December, the NW16000L5 class in April, and now that he has driven that win off his last five he gets to drop all the way to NW10000L5. Yes, he has seemingly fallen on hard times of late but we're banking that it's nothing a little class relief won't rectify. As a multiple winner of the Preferred and starter in last year's Breeders Crown and Maple Leaf Trot, he is clearly the one to beat.

8 MAJOR MUSCLE found it pretty tough sledding when in with trotters who were willing and able to go in 1:53 but now that he's back to the NW10000L5 class he should be a major anger one again. Jody Jamieson treated him to a pocket trip when he was at this level on 04/22 and he came out of that one with a narrow win. Since then he has two of five in very close photos at this level and slightly higher. Had he drawn inside of Dunbar Hall we might have listed him on top but from out here he's not quite as attractive.

1 HEMI SEELSTER isn't one that we can back with complete confidence but he's definitely a threat if he stays trotting. Prior to his bad couple of weeks in mid-May he was a close second against better and race-timed in 1:53.2 in a race that he chopped out.

4 KEYSTONE APACHE has some potential at this level as he was recently third to Preferred starter St James Gate (2-5) and the class-dropping O Narutac Perfetto (9-2). Just two back he took an inside trip, snuck up the cones late, and had the best last quarter closing of any in the race.

6 DERF HANOVER didn't have any real excuse for losing his last race other than the fact that he was in with better. The absence of St James Gate and O Narutac Perfetto bodes well but he's still facing Keystone Apache and there are others that look better on the drop.

ON THIS DATE...

1944 – Dr. Brodie paid \$1,038.60 on a \$2 Win bet at Marion, Ohio

Race 3 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Mike Hamilton

3 MUSICAL RHYTHM is without a doubt the one to beat now that he has reeled off five straight wins including the last in the Preferred Handicap where he was assigned posts 7 and 9. There's not much use writing the race as a "handicap" if only six or seven are expected to start as Post 6 has historically produced the most winners. His win streak will end one of these times and those who figure out exactly when and how will make some money, but until we find one that looks the part we're going to keep on backing MR.

2 B YOYO needed a class drop before he ended an 11 race drought on 05/27 so we're not ready to call for another win as long as he's facing Musical Rhythm. To his credit he did get by seven horses in the last quarter of his most recent race and that was enough to earn second money. He should be closer to the pace now that he leaves from Post 2 in a short field of 6 but even this doesn't guarantee a win.

4 FREE WILLY HANOVER isn't quite as attractive as B Yoyo but like that Richard Moreau pupil, he lacked room in his 05/20 run-in with the Baillargeon crew. Willy did spring loose before the wire but it was simply too late to do anything about Musical Rhythm's fourth consecutive win. Last week Willy was down one notch and raced well but was simply second best to the class-dropping Run Director who also races out of the Baillargeon barn.

ON THIS DATE...

1916 – Ted Atkinson, jockey, born in Toronto, Ontario. As the contract rider for the New York Whitney family's Greentree Stable, Atkinson was North America's leading jockey in both wins and purses in 1944 and in 1946 he became the first rider to win \$1 million in a single season.

1881 – Noah Brusso, boxer, born in Hanover, Ontario. Fighting under the name Tommy Burns, Brusso won the World Heavyweight title in 1906 after going 20 rounds with titleholder Marvin Hart in Los Angeles. He successfully defended the title 11 times and retired in 1920 as the only Canadian to ever hold the world crown.

Race 4 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Mike Hamilton

6 LARRY IS DEBS ROCK looks like a bit of a hard luck case that might be ready to win the NW1 class while he's still eligible. Unlike most classes where allowances are applied to two and three-year-old earnings, there are no allowances at NW1/7000 and this guy just barely fits after having won his 05/23 race at Flamboro. Since then he has come down sick and had to be scratched for the FOURTH time in his brief career. As the homebred half-brother to \$1 million winning filly Lady Dilinger, he definitely has potential.

2 YARIS SEELSTER was given some time off after finishing up the track on 04/11 so who knows if he'll be ready to win first time off the shelf? I suspect that he'll be very competitive but not necessarily a winner. It's worth noting that Phil Hudon bailed on Big Bully and that Yaris is coming off a 1:57.1 qualifier in which another horse set a slow half. He could likely have gone much faster had it been required. Beware!

5 BIG BULLY is 0-for-14 and getting to the point that we're reluctant to call for a win no matter who he's facing. He might attract a little more attention now that Roy is scheduled to drive but before jumping on that angle do consider that regular driver Phil Hudon said thanks but no thanks and instead went with the refreshed Yaris Seelster.

4 POGHEY BEACH was added to our Watch List after the 06/04 race in which he was caught behind stalled cover for much of the way before fanning five wide and making up half a dozen lengths in the last quarter. He was still trying when he crossed the line in 1:55.2.

ON THIS DATE...

1912 – A thoroughbred named Wishing Ring paid \$1,885.50 to win at Latonia, Kentucky

1954 – Rocky Marciano beat Ezzard Charles in 15 for heavyweight boxing title

1953 – Oil was discovered in Drayton Valley, Alberta

Race 5 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Mike Hamilton

3 SHAMROCK SHAKER has made six starts since moving up from NW1 and so far he has handled himself pretty much as the bettors have anticipated. He wasn't much of a factor the first time at 94-1 but he did look better when 4th at 41-1. He raced here on Thursday night and for the third time he a very respectable second, losing only to our top pick Fingals Wave. He's due!

7 SOUTHWIND CASHA is bound to get a lot of respect as she's coming off a wire-to-wire score at this same level and was competitive in Pennsylvania Sires Stakes races in May. The only reason we'd consider playing against her is that she caught several big "breaks" in that 06/10 race when five of the other nine starters made one or more breaks.

8 ANGRY EYES was much the best when she won her way out of the NW1 class on 05/02 and in two subsequent starts she has picked up good cheques. I'll give her credit for a sharp backstretch move to the lead in her most recent even if she did eventually lost to Charmbo Golden and Shamrock Shaker (who she will have to race again in this race).

9 JR PINARELLO was sitting in the deuce when he made the 06/10 break over less-than-perfect footing on 06/10 so if you can look beyond that race it's not too hard to imagine him winning or at least being very competitive in this field where six of the other nine are fillies or mares.

ON THIS DATE...

1946 – Ernie Eves, businessman, politician, 33rd Premier of Ontario, born in Windsor, Ontario

1970 – Scientist and inventor Edwin Land was granted a patent for the Polaroid camera

1972 – Five men were arrested after trying to bug the Democratic National Committee office in the Watergate Complex, Washington, DC

Race 6 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Mike Hamilton

5 TINAS MAJESTY goes to the top of the list now that he has given on the NW5 class and dropped into this race for NW6000L5. Just four back he pulled off a major upset at NW3 and in his most recent he trotted home in 27.1 but was simply too far back after a third quarter shuffle.

6 BANK GUARD is one of two who are moving up off a win at NW3000L5 and of those two he gets a slight edge. The other recent winner is Setanta but if you compare their races on 06/04 you'll see that Bank Guard was just as fast in finishing 9th at NW10000L5 as Setanta was in winning at NW3000L5.

2 MIAMI looks infinitely more attractive at this level than he did from the 10 hole in the NW15000L5 class as recently as 05/27. If you've ever cashed on a class dropping recent addition to the Moreau barn you'll want to give this one extra special attention.

7 SETANTA gets full credit for coming up with a win on 06/04 but it should be noted that it took a class drop for him to get it and here he moves back to a level at which he previously got only minor shares and at double digit odds.

ON THIS DATE...

1978 – Pacer Silver Simile lowered the world record for three-year-old geldings on a five-eighths when he got over Scioto Downs in 1:57.2

1979 – 16–1 shot Composite and trainer-driver Ron Waples took down 1-5 shot Tijuana Taxi to win the Queen City Stakes at Greenwood. Waples owned the horse in partnership with Marshall Dorion of Collingwood and Joe Panaro of Kitchener. Daniel Ben was 3rd and OSS star Dangerfield Bruce was 4th.

5 GALAGHER SEELSTER is one that we rather optimistically went with last week when he moved up from 8K-10K to the 12K-15K handicap. Chalk that up as a colossal mistake as the one that ended up winning and paying \$9.40 was our “One To Watch” selection Pillage And Burn in his debut for Montini. Having said that, Gallagher Seelster looked game when bottled up at the top of the stretch and it wasn’t until mid-stretch that he petered out in a 1:51.1 mile. We’ll give him the edge now that he has returned to the 8K-10K class.

9 WHO SAID NOT TO gets some much needed class relief after giving up ground in each of his four starts in 2019. He might be rounding into winning form after four preps so it’s likely too early to cross him off altogether.

10 WESTERN PHIL doesn’t have a very good overall record (1-for-27 in 2018/19) but at least he’s coming off two of his better efforts. On 06/04 he made two moves before fading to third behind Galagher Seelster and on 06/11 he led at every call but was picked off late by a pocket-sitter who had raced with better until recently.

8 OUTLAW GUNPOWDER is generally good for a top-three finish so that’s just where we’ll rank him in this fairly competitive field of 10. However, he is a 40-time winner and with the right trip he might still be able to get it done.

ON THIS DATE...

1981 – Riina Rekila, trainer-driver, born in Finland

1982 – Genghis Khan paced the first sub-1:53 mile at The Meadowlands, winning the Driscoll final in 1:52.4 for Bill O’Donnell

1995 – She’s A Great Lady (trainer-driver Joe Anderson) lowered the all age world record for fillies or mares on a half-mile track when she won at Maywood Park in 1:51.2

4 DR SPENGLER got a lot more support than we were expecting when he came off a qualifier to face Y C Broadway and Kadabra Queen on 06/11. However, it wasn't a surprise to this 'capper that he simply filed to the back and got the all important "clean line" that will insulate him from another trip to the qualifiers. Picking him over Kadabra Queen in this race might seem like a stretch but if you watched him fire home in 27 seconds you'll know that he can be very dangerous if just a bit closer in the early going and that Post 4 in tonight's field of six might be all he needs. He's tonight's Spot Play.

6 KADABRA QUEEN arguably deserves top billing after the way she went about her business on 06/11. She was sent off as the slight second favourite in that race but didn't let that deter her from taking on the favoured Y C Broadway who had control to the top of the stretch. It was a much better outcome than a week earlier when she lost three positions in the lane and trotted the last quarter in a pedestrian 31.2. Which Kadabra Queen will show up tonight?

1 Y C BROADWAY is one that we "rather tentatively" backed last week when we reasoned that he had likely found a race that would go a little slower than the 1:55.2 mile he was involved in a week earlier. Someone forgot to give that memo to Kadabra Queen. Y C Broadway did get reasonable fractions (three-quarters in 1:26.2) but Kadabra Queen was tenacious from first-over and simply put him away with a last panel in 27.4.

3 SUPERLATIVE got off to a great start in 2019 when she ground out a win in the NW5 class on 06/03. One knock is that she closed into a slowing pace and three of the other seven in that race had already made at least one break.

MIKE'S SPOT PLAY: 4 DR SPENGLER

6 ST JAMES GATE might be moving up and coming off a rather slow win but at least he did win and in the process he beat one of the other contenders in this race, O Narutac Perfetto. And while he is moving back up the ladder for this race, there is only one other horse that is dropping down and he seems to have some issues. There's also the part about the less than perfect track and extremely brisk east wind on 06/10 as both factors contributed to slow miles and particularly slow last quarters that night.

1 EXEMPLAR has made so many breaks of late that we wouldn't touch him with the proverbial ten foot pole had he not dropped from the Preferred to NW18000L5 in the span of a couple weeks. Compounding the problem is that he wasn't all that enthusiastic even before he went to the gallop in his latest. When last at this level on 04/29 he was sent off as the fave and did have the lead when he broke at the quarter pole. It's your call!

5 O NARUTAC PERFETTO might be able to get the best of St James Gate if he can work out a little easier trip than the first-over variety that employed last week while racing a notch lower. Just three back he roared off cover to win at an even lower level but in a snappy 1:54.2 and as the odds-on choice.

4 WILD AND CRAZY GUY doesn't look out of place at this level but we'll add that Fillion dropped him in favour of Mr Contestant.

ON THIS DATE...

1996 – Hard A Lee (Mike Saftic / Gerald Dinelle) won the \$26,500 final of the Maiden Series at Woodbine

1997 – The NHL Board of Governors approved expansion to 4 cities: Nashville, Atlanta, Columbus, and St Paul

2000 – Dragon Again (John Campbell) took 1/5th of a second off Riyahd's Canadian record when he won the \$87,600 Pacing Classic in 1:48.3

9 PRICELESS BEACH has one thing that none of the others have: an air of mystique that goes with an undefeated record in 2019. We simply don't know how good he might. Is he good enough to overcome Post 9 in his first start at NW2? That seems like a tall order but before crossing him off, consider that others set the tempo when he won in 1:54.3 over an off track and that he only went as fast as needed to win by two lengths in his latest at Flamboro. He might have a couple of seconds in him if pressed and 1:52 looks like it would win this race.

7 CAPTAIN NASH could be much, much better than most three-year-olds who qualify over a fast track in 1:57.4. He didn't show much giddy-up-go in the early stages of that qualifier but he sure gobbled up ground in the back half complete with a sweeping move on the final turn. And it's not like he's never been to the winner's circle. Last year he took a division of the Dream Maker in 1:52.2, defeating some decent colts in Twin B Jays, Macs Power, and pacesetter Quatrain Blue Chip who faded to fourth.

10 QUATRIN BLUE CHIP has already won in 1:52.3 so we know that he can go the kind of speed that will make him competitive. But will he be able to hold on if used to make front from way out here in Post 10? He did have the lead before being picked off in the final strides of his most recent race so the jury is still out on this guy.

2 LIFETIME DELIGHT didn't have much trouble with the lower-end horses he faced at Georgian on 06/09 so hopefully he has turned a corner as he sure left a lot to be desired when he raced here on 05/23. I do like the fact that Drury got a chance to see what he's all about and is now back for a second shot.

ON THIS DATE...

2003 – Scotty Bowman conducted the post position draw for Pepsi North America Cup XX. He later recounted a story about his first trip to the racetrack, getting a tip, and winning \$300 on a thoroughbred named Roman Banquet. One piece of advice that he received early in his coaching career: “Never fall in love with hockey players or racehorses.”

2006 – Majestic Son (Trevor Ritchie / Mark Steacy) won the \$280,600 Goodtimes in 1:53.2

2006 – Total Truth (Ron Pierce / Brenda Teague) won the \$1.5 million Pepsi North America Cup in 1:49.1