

Race 1 Selections

THE HORSEPLAYERS JOURNAL by Robert Reid Jr.

#1 WINDSONGMAGNIFIQUE is one we will begrudgingly go back to, after disappointing last time as the favorite. She had to start from the second-tier, got away sixth and when it was time to move, she had to do so first-over and was unable to flush any cover. She methodically moved forward but never looked like a winner, having to settle for third beaten less than a length. On the class drop one would have thought she could overcome that type of trip but if she can avoid a similar situation, she should be tough in here. She draws the rail and that should play well in her favor.

#9 WHISTYS PARADISE drops back down to NW6000L5, the level where she got her first win of 2020 just three starts ago. She sat way out of it at long odds in her last couple of efforts, pacing even miles. She typically tries a different tactic at this level, as she got away second from the six-hole in that winning effort on June 19th. It will be a more difficult assignment from the outermost post but against this group she has a winning chance.

#2 OUTLAW FIREBALL performed well at this level three starts back, when she finished second from the seven-hole. Filion was at the helm that night and the pair will be reunited for this effort. She draws an inside post and looks dangerous.

#8 FOOL ME AGAIN dropped into this class from NW12500L5 last time and rushed up first-over in the third quarter of the race. She ended up tiring and finishing fifth but can make her way onto the ticket tonight.

Race 2 Selections

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#2 EIGHTCLOCKSTORM is one that we will try with the hopes of getting some value. He broke stride in both of his starts since the resumption of racing but has since turned in an impressive qualifier. He got away sixth and sat there until the latter stages of the race. He trotted his back-half in 56.1 and his last quarter in 27.2. It appeared to be an effortless move, as the he trotted strong right through the wire with tight lines to Zeron. He has taken support and picked up pieces in this class before but we hope he can take it all down tonight at a nice price.

#1 HIGHLAND DYNAMITE was put into play early by Roy last time from the seven-hole and ended up securing a two-hole trip. She followed Mister Magic but could not stay with that rival in the stretch, as he trotted away as a well-meant winner. She had to settle for third but might continue an upward trend in form with this being her fourth start back off a layoff. She draws inside and should have no issue getting spotted early to have a winning chance.

#4 MONOPOLY got away seventh and was never a factor last week. He has proven to be competitive before at this level but has been an inconsistent type of late. At his best, he is more than capable of beating this group and might offer some value. He picks up Shepherd for tonight's affair and should not be discounted.

#10 MORALLY FLEXIBLE drops down from NW11000L5 but has broke twice in as many efforts after returning after the shutdown. His qualifier was good, as he was never urged in the stretch. The second-tier is not ideal for trotters that are prone to miscues but he is good enough if he stays on gait.

Race 3 Selections

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#1 CAPTAINOFROCKNROLL was a \$50,000 yearling purchase at Harrisburg. He has two solid looking qualifiers under his belt, one of which he scored from just off the pace and the other where he just missed. Two back he won going away, pacing his last quarter in 26.3. While in his most recent, he stayed behind a gapping foe around the final turn and left himself with too much to do. The horse that held him off that day is in here but will have to work from post-eight. He has a good chance to win at first asking for rock-solid connections but do not accept too short of a price.

#6 NO FREE LUNCH took heavy support in a division of the OSS Gold in his lifetime debut. He sat in the three-hole and pulled first-up in what ended up being the fastest part of the race. He lost a position and was beaten by a healthy margin but still managed to come home in 28 seconds flat and salvage a fourth. His two qualifiers leading up to that effort were appealing, as he won both going away and came home in 26 seconds flat on June 20th. He is probably worthy of getting another shot and has a chance today.

#3 NEXT BIG THING exits a division of the OSS Golds, where he finished third beaten three-lengths. He sat fifth throughout and decided to stay inside on the final turn. He ran into some traffic late but managed to shake loose to be third. He paced his own mile in 152.2, with a last quarter of 26.2 and merits respect in here. Playing underneath in the exotics.

#8 HIGHLANDBEACHBEST is a homebred that is being sent out by Amanda Fine for his lifetime debut. He won both of his qualifying efforts and has been impressive in doing so. He will have the difficult task of the eight-hole and with a better starting post, he would have likely been rated higher.

Race 4 Selections

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#1 SUNDAY AFTERNOON drops back down to NW1000L5, after facing much tougher last week. She had to contend with starting from the second-tier and got away seventh and did not made any progress until late in the mile. She gets to return to the level that she was victorious at two starts ago, where she put forth a rock-solid first-over effort. She left from the pole position that night and will get to do so again. This looks like a good spot for her and the price might be right with horses in the middle of the gate expected to take support.

#5 SKATER CHICK is plunging down in class, all the way from the Preferred. She was not a factor in there last week, but you cannot hold that against her. She still managed to pace her own mile in 1:51.3, with a last quarter of 25.3, while finishing ninth. Prior to that she had consecutive third place finishes at the NW1800L5 level, where she closed from a long way out of it on both occasions. She will be heavily supported but will need pace to chase. We give the nod to our top choice, who might get the jump on her, but respect this one by using in exotics and on all multi-leg wagers.

#6 SANDBETWEENURTOES launched a first-over bid around the final turn, after sitting an inside trip in fourth in her most recent. She ended up going by the leader that held her out on the turn but was picked up by foes, on both the inside and outside of her. She is a logical choice to land in the exotics and sports a winning hope with a favorable trip.

#8 DONT STOP BELIEVIN has been consistently picking up pieces in this class, with two thirds and a finish of fifth or better in her last six attempts. She draws outside but can utilize her closing ability to pick up another share tonight.

Race 5 Selections

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#4 ROCKME ROLLME got away fourth last time and stayed inside, to avoid moving first-over against a horse that set torrid fractions on their way to victory. He was shuffled back on the final turn but managed to shake loose late to get up for third. He has been a consistent performer in this class, since returning from the racing hiatus, but has yet to find the winner's circle. He has travelled difficult trips as of late but should be brave off his latest. We expect him to be forwardly placed and firing on all cylinders tonight.

#1 ALWAYS A HOTSHOT is another that has been a consistent performer in this class with two seconds and no finish worst than fourth in his last five. Last time he grabbed the lead early and released the heavy favorite before the half. The winner was much too tough, but he was clearly the best of the rest, as he fought gamely to the wire. He figures to be part of the early speed again and he can work out a similar trip, he will be dangerous. Using underneath in exotics.

#2 TORRIN HANOVER sat a long way out of it last time but had solid fractions up front to chase. He showed some decent late speed to get up for fifth but was only a length out of second. He gets a much more favorable post to work from and should be much closer tonight. With the right trip, he could be a threat.

#3 HIGHLAND TARTAN sat an inside trip last time and managed to shake loose in the lane to grab second. He did not claim that finish with authority though, as he was swarmed at the wire and just held on. He figures to be in the thick of it again tonight, but we only expect a minor share.

Race 6 Selections

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#9 ON THE SLY drops down to the bottom condition and will welcome the class relief. Four of his last five have been at the NW11000L5 class and he has not been competitive. Two starts back in NW6000L5 he showed some life but his best effort on the page came back in February, when he trounced a group of claimers that would rate comparably or slightly higher than this group. He has enough speed to overcome the outside draw and should be able to run this group off their feet. He is our clear top choice but figures to take a lot of support.

#4 HEMI SEELSTER tried to ambush a pumped-up Mister Magic last week, with a first-over rush to the lead but that did not work out well. The winner trotted off to win by open lengths in 1:52, while this veteran faded to finish seventh. He was plunging in class that night and now takes one more dip to the bottom condition, where she should get a much easier time of it. He should be able to step around them for the lead tonight and we are hoping he releases our top choice. He is capable of getting the best of our top choice but we like him better underneath.

#5 CLUB BELVEDERE has raced at Georgian Downs for his two latest and only managed one fourth place finish. He is making his third start back off the bench and might show more life today. His efforts earlier in the year would make him more than competitive with this group and he gets reunited with James MacDonald. He could take a big step forward tonight and has every right to hit the ticket.

#7 MARQUIS VOLO drops to the bottom and is making his third start back off the bench. He has not shown anything to be excited about in his recent efforts, but he figures to take a step forward tonight. He has failed to hit the board in 2020 but it is possible he changes that tonight at what should be a price.

Race 7 Selections

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#6 MATTICULOUS GB drops out of the Preferred ranks and back into NW30000L5. In his most recent, he was sent on a mission to the quarter-pole in 25.2 to secure the two-hold to his favored stablemate. The early speed was too much for him, as he faded in the stretch and finished seventh. He got a week off after that effort and returns to a class that he has been twice victorious at in his last three tries. He gets his favorite pilot back in Bob McClure and is our choice in an extremely competitive installment of this class. We think he is a slight notch better than the rest but there might not be much margin for error here.

#1 LEGION SEELSTER is taking a huge leap in class but merits respect based on his most recent efforts. He was narrowly beaten two starts back, after doing all the work through scorching fractions. In his most recent, he was as dominant as a winner can be. From the half on, he was off by open lengths and scored in 1:49.1. This is obviously a much tougher spot but if he can repeat either of his last two efforts, he should be right in the thick of it. Using underneath.

#5 SPORTS COLUMN has been racing great since returning from a three-month layoff. Like our top choice he drops out of the Preferred, but he might be tighter as he put forth a solid effort in that class last week. He sat an inside trip and finished fourth but appeared to have pace in the lane. We will never know if he would have come forward if given clearance, but his body language was encouraging.

#3 SPORTSLINE moves way up in class but has been nothing short of incredible in his perfect start to 2020 with three wins. He has not had to break a sweat yet but will tonight. Using in exotics at a price.

Race 8 Selections

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#2 INDICTABLE HANOVER paced in 1:49 in just the third start of his life and can you imagine, he finished second. He had no choice but to move first-over against Tattoo Hanover and put forth a gutsy effort to finish second in the first installment of the OSS Gold division. There has been a lot of buzz for this colt and it is well deserved, as he looked lights out in his first two tries and then proved he can perform through adversity in his most recent. He will get a much easier time of it in NW3 tonight and should return to his winning ways at a short price.

#7 VELOCITY RUKKUS made his sophomore debut in an OSS Gold tilt last week. It was not the easiest spot to make his return, after a short but successful rookie campaign. He got away fifth and stayed on the cones, getting shuffled back. He had pace in the lane and ran into some traffic trouble, before angling to the outside. He managed to finish fifth, but it was a promising effort that will likely see him take a big step forward tonight. He gets our nod to complete an ice-cold exacta.

#10 RHYTHM IN MOTION is off to a solid start to his sophomore campaign, as he has yet to miss the board in three starts. He sat the two-hole to Tattoo Artist and did well to finish third, narrowly beat on the line for second by our top choice. He should make his way into the exotics.

#1 ANETO rounds out the four horses that competed in the Golds last week. He finished sixth but still paced his mile in 1:49.2. Other than the three above, he should find this group much more palatable.

Race 9 Selections

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#8 GENERAL JOY A was the easiest kind of winner in his debut north of the border on June 30th. He left hard from the seven-hole and flashed the opening panel in 26.2 before drawing off by open lengths in the stretch to score as a wrapped-up winner in 1:51.3. He moves up to the NW8400L5 level to face significantly tougher horses but it looked like he had plenty in reserve in that effort. If he decides to move forward off the gate again, there should be an opportunity to follow Ideal Jet who has led many of horses to the promised land before. Top call but tread lightly if the price is short.

#7 IDEAL JET dropped down a class last time and was a solid second to Make Some Luck, who came back to win again at this level on Monday. Three starts down the page, he was narrowly beaten to Nickle Bag in this class. He figures to be free wheeling on the front-end again, but we think he will have a hard time holding off our top choice. However, this classy veteran always merits respect at this level.

#6 MAJOR HILL drops back down to a level he was victorious at his last start before the shutdown on March 14th. He was 34-1 on that night and will be nothing close to that price in here. He is plunging in class from NW16500L5 but has been camera shy, with just five wins in 62 starts over the last two seasons. He should take support tonight and we will only be using him underneath for a piece.

#3 ROCK THIS WAY was a winner in this class on June 20th, when he took a new lifetime mark of 1:49.4. He likes to close from the clouds and there might be some hot fractions with the speedsters above. He figures to grab a share late but we think it will be a smaller one.

Race 10 Selections

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#5 SO MUCH BETTOR enters this race off an incredible effort, where he blew up the tote-board at 55-1. He was making his first start under the guidance of Richard Moreau, so the price was almost unprecedented. He was out of it early and did not start moving forward until the three-quarter pole. He looked like a speedboat around the final turn and then effortlessly blew by the field in the stretch under no urging and tight lines to Bob McClure. He came his back-half in 54.1 and his last quarter in 26.3. He also holds a maturity edge as the lone five-year old in the field. All four horses to his inside figure to get support and he might get overlooked to go off a decent price.

#2 BETTOR B GOING does not have the prettiest way of pacing but manages to generate big speed. He was a winner in this class two starts back, after sitting a perfect two-hole trip. He tackled NW11000L5 in his most recent and showed late speed to be third, coming home in 26.1. He fits well in these and could benefit from a favorable trip. The high-profile three-year old's figure to take support but we are siding with the aged horses in our top two choices.

#1 MAYHEM HANOVER was turned away by Beaumont Hanover in a first-over bid in his most recent. He turned in a solid effort and did not get embarrassed. He managed to fend off that same foe in his sophomore debut. He figures to get a better trip tonight and can get a big piece of this.

#3 DENALI SEELSTER has not missed the board in his sophomore campaign. He was third last time in this class, after he was picked up late by our second choice in here. More recently he finished third to Beaumont Hanover in the division of the OSS Golds. He has a chance in here, but we are using him underneath.

Race 11 Selections

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#8 HERVEY HANOVER drops another notch down the class ladder this week and looks like a solid option in a contentious race for the Hi-5 mandatory payout. He was fantastic two starts ago and missed by just half-a-length on the wire to East End and Legion Seelster. In his latest he did not have as much speed to chase and the effects of such a big effort in just his second start back may have hindered him slightly. There is a strong possibility that we see him at his absolute best tonight in his fourth start back and against a group he fits well with. Top call.

#3 ROCKIN N TALKIN probably deserved a better fate in his previous two starts. He was loaded with pace and completely blocked on June 20th and was hindered by a stalled flow in his latest, coming home in 26 seconds to secure the place spot. This is a much stiffer challenge but with the right trip he can add some serious value to the Hi-5.

#2 FANCOURT drops down in class for the second consecutive week. He attended a hot pace set by Legion Seelster last time and it proved too much for him, as he faded to seventh in the stretch. He should have an easier time of it tonight and will likely be pointed towards the lead. He has a winning chance and should get a big piece of it.

#9 PHYSICALLYINCLINED power dropped down to this level last time and was never in it as the even-money favorite. Something must have gone amiss, but it is still difficult to back him with any confidence from the nine-hole. His back-class alone could land him on the ticket. Using underneath.

#1 JULERICA sat an inside trip the last time he was in this class and came home a winner. He figures to sit a similar trip tonight and should have pace late to potentially grab a share.