

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#2 MAXIMUM EXPOSURE raced much better two starts back when he made front passing the half and held the lead to the stretch as a 51 to 1 longshot, and he held on reasonably well to get fourth considering how long he was parked in search of the lead. Despite coming off that improved effort, he was sent off at 48 to 1 last week, no doubt mostly due to him drawing post 10. He sat last to the far turn where he moved fourth-over briefly before moving widest. He dialed up a nice closing effort to get third, now he draws much better tonight. I'll give him top billing to start out tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed early Pick 5.

#4 MISTER MAGIC is an incredibly consistent 11-year-old that turned some heads four starts back when he sizzled his way to a 1:51-flat lifetime best mark racing off the claim. He stepped up to face tougher in his next start and he was nowhere close as good that night as he was in his previous start. Dropping back down to the \$30,000 optional claiming level two starts back gave him a chance to rebound, and he did race much better. He didn't get the best trip that night, though. After starting out at the back of the field, he was parked the entire mile. He did manage to find cover for the opening half, but he lost that cover heading into the last turn, and he was forced to work first-over from there. He got passed by two closers in the lane, but he was well clear in third at the wire. He got a better trip last week and he looked like a winner until a well meant rival circled up from last and passed them all in deep stretch. He is the obvious threat to the top choice here.

#7 GALEN ERSO dropped to this class level last time, but I would argue that he faced tougher that night than he meets tonight. That night, he chased sharp and classy repeat winner What About Elmo who would no doubt be favored in this field. Team McNair has been running hot lately, and I could see this one getting a better result in this spot.

#5 TACTICAL STRIKE left for position from post nine last week then she stayed inside and ended up getting shuffled out of the race. She finished with interest along the pylons in the stretch, now she draws a better post. I could see her closing late to land in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

Race 2 Selections

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#3 LOGAN PARK showed a pattern of alternating wins and ninth-place finishes leading up to his last start, and racing in an eight horse field two weeks ago, something had to give. This classy double millionaire was allowed to crawl through a 1:26 3/5 three quarters and his rivals would have needed to grow wings to catch him once he got that major breather. He faces only five rivals tonight, but one of them is a returnee that won the Canadian Trotting Classic and the Kentucky Futurity last season. Still, this gelding holds a sharpness advantage, and he is the one to beat.

#5 EMOTICON LEGACY is a trotter of the highest quality that earned more than \$1.3 million as a sophomore last season. His biggest wins included several Grand Circuit events. On home soil, he was victorious in the Goodtimes, The Simcoe and the Canadian Trotting Classic and south of the border, he won the Kentucky Futurity and the Zweig. He looks ready to roll based on his most recent qualifier, but it's no easy task facing Logan Park in his first start as a four-year-old. This should be an interesting matchup.

#2 FASHION FRENZIE showed up ready coming off a two-and-a-half month break here on June 14th as he went right down the road for his first win of the season in his third start. Two weeks later, he faced Logan Park and he raced first-over against that tough rival, and that's a trip that rarely works for any trotter on this circuit. He dropped last week and he raced first-over again then tired. I think he will probably look for an inside following trip this time, and I can see him landing in the Tri.

#1 GAINES HANOVER dropped and popped here seven starts back, and since then, he has raced well in five of six starts facing tougher than he beat that night, including a second place finishes to Logan Park. He closed well last week to get second behind classy Osceola. He is another one that will likely look for a trip tonight, and he should be part of the Super, at a minimum.

Race 3 Selections

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#7 BISCUITINTHEBASKET is a debuting Cattlewash filly that is related to 10 winners the most famous of those being her overachieving millionaire half-brother Century Farroh who rose from the Grassroots level after his rookie season to become a Grand Circuit winner at ages three and four. This filly improved in her second qualifier when she took control of the race in the second quarter and drove off to win. She will need to be faster tonight in this first pari-mutuel start, but she might be up to it. I'll take a price stab with her in the opening leg of tonight's early Pick 4.

#2 MAURITIUS is a homebred out of a dam that local bettors will recognize and the first foal that she produced is a full brother to this filly. That gelding Axial has won eight of his first 20 starts and he has racked up more than \$115,000 in earnings. He was also a two-length winner in his debut here last October where he led from start to finish. This filly took a shuffle in her qualifier on June 25th and had to wait before commencing her late rally and she paced well to the wire. She was good in her debut here too, flying home in 26 1/5 only to get picked off late by a rival that rode her cover and paced home in 26-flat. She tested the Grand Circuit waters in her second start, and although she flattened out a bit in the stretch, she still paced a 1:53 and change mile and her two final times are the fastest on the program page. She is the one to beat in here.

#6 REMARKABLE WOMAN is another debutante in here that is worth a look in here. She is by super sire Sweet Lou, and he is a half sister to two that have both taken marks of 1:52 1/5. She qualified once and, in that mile, she took over command in the second quarter then turned it on in the third quarter, opening up a big lead. She coasted to the wire in the stretch, and one sharp rival whittled away at her lead. She prevailed by only a half length, but there was only one rival close to her at the wire. It was nine lengths back to the third place finisher. She draws best and the leading driver chose her over the top pick. She should contend here at first asking.

#3 DUNDEES VICTORY will get a close look from some handicappers and bettors because she dialed up a 53 1/5 back half to finish third at odds of 102 to 1 last Monday. She keeps Doug McNair in the bike and she draws better tonight, so she will likely lay closer to the front early in this mile. She should be good for another share.

Race 4 Selections

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#7 STABLE GENIUS is a classy 16-time winner and earner of more than \$258,000 that has obviously seen better days as he is tagged for \$20,000 here tonight for the second start in a row. He has made only five starts in the past two seasons, two in 2025 and two in 2026. He has a lot more qualifiers this year as he does races for a purse. Still, I thought he raced okay on July 6th chasing classy Private Access who was blitzing the field to the tune of a 1:51 1/5 scorcher of a mile. This Muscle Mass gelding trotted in 1:53-flat which was his fastest mile since August of 2024 when he finished sixth in the Vincennes at the Meadowlands. Come back a week later and now he was chasing a 1:51 4/5 class dropping winner around the track. There aren't any in here that look like they are about to uncork a sub-1:52 mile, and I think Doug McNair will look to send this veteran gelding right down the road tonight.

#1 PATRIARCH HANOVER dropped into the same race as Stable Genius and he drew wide, and his fate was sealed early in that 1:51 4/5 mile when he dropped to the back and was 12 lengths behind at the half. He is in a similar situation as Stable Genius in that he is in easier tonight, and he should get a more aggressive steer in this spot now that he got a clean line down. This 34-time winner needs \$26K more in earnings to reach equine millionaire status, and he should get some of that money here.

#10 GUCCI GUCCI GOO comes in off a win at the \$20,000 conditioned claiming level at Grand River Raceway and that was the second win of his career. He has one other victory this season and it came here at Mohawk Park, and it came in April racing at the lowest condition level. On that night, he passed eight rivals in the back half to get the win. I don't see him as a win threat here, but he could pass enough horses to land in the Tri or Super.

#5 FRENCHY HANOVER raced okay in two straight starts at the bottom conditioned level to land in the Tri, now he steps up one level, although I'm not sure that this field is that much tougher than the last two that he raced in. He can get another slice tonight.

Race 5 Selections

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#2 PRIVATE ACCESS crushed a field of non-winners of \$6,000 last four conditioned trotters here three starts back, then he moved up a couple of classes six nights later and he didn't get an ideal trip after starting from a wide post. He jumped up several more class levels seven days later and he raced well in defeat. After dropping to the back early, he moved onto fourth-over cover, and he ended up in a bit of a blind switch in deep stretch while closing on the leaders. He finished with good energy to get up for fourth. He drops several class levels now and he is sure to be put into this race much earlier than he has been in his past two starts. I imagine that he will be a popular single in this anchor leg of the early Pick 5.

#5 UNGAWA dropped to tonight's class level last time, and he raced okay in defeat. He latched onto the cover of 3 to 2 favorite What About Elmo, but he lost that cover at the head of the lane when that rival took off and sped away from the field. This gelding spun his wheels a bit late, and he came out on the wrong end of a four horse battle for place. He gets a driver change to Mark Macdonald tonight, and he will probably get aggressive early starting from one of the best posts. He can be an Exacta factor.

#7 DISTANCE LEARNING, like Ungawa, took his last win when he raced at tonight's class level and he raced decently when he dropped to this level last week. Undeterred by being sent off as a 71 to 1 longshot, this gelding was sent to the front early. After taking a mid race shuffle, he finished okay, and he was only a neck behind Ungawa at the wire. He could be a good one to use underneath at a price here.

#8 ROXIE HART made an eye catching stretch move last time to get up right on the line to win a Pop Up series final. She got a perfect setup that night though as there was a protracted battle for the lead and the horses in front of her were sitting ducks in the lane. Still, she produced a 27-flat kicker to get the job done in a nice effort. I don't see her getting that same setup tonight, but she could be good for a share in this spot.

BEST BET: PRIVATE ACCESS

Race 6 Selections

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#4 SID THE KID plays the drop and pop game perhaps as good as any racehorse on this circuit. Consider: he has recorded six wins this season so far, and four of those wins came when he dropped in class. Two starts back, he dropped from the Open level to a class similar to tonight's, and he was an easy front end winner at a generous price of 7 to 2. He stepped back up six days later, and he made a rare break in stride, now he drops back down. He faces others in here that also make class drops tonight, but that should help his price. He draws a good post, and I'll side with him to start up tonight's late Pick 5.

#2 STORMONT BEAUTIFUL roared home to take her first win of the season racing in this class last time and she seems to fit okay here. It's interesting that her half sister, Stormont Magenta, made her first two starts here this month and she was an impressive winner in both miles. This mare once again closed with a rush last time, but she was too far back in a fast mile. There should be some action in this race that can set up her late kick, and her sub-27 closing speed should play well in this spot.

#3 PENNTROLLER HANOVER got pilot Louis-Phillipe Roy back in the bike two starts back, and that is a significant switch when you consider that Roy has clicked at a 35% win rate driving for trainer Maguire in the past calendar year from 48 starters for a flat bet profit of 18%. This gelding produced too good efforts to finish second while deploying different racing styles in each mile. He looks like a solid contender tonight, and he is another possibility for the late Pick 5.

#8 R PEAKY BLINDERS is another class dropper in here that merits a look. Three starts back, when he last raced at this level, he was narrowly defeated by Stormont Beautiful who rode his cover and edged past him in the lane. He typically drops back early and looks to pass rivals in the back half, so I'm not really concerned with his wide draw tonight. He should be able to get a piece of this.

SPOT PLAY: SID THE KID

Race 7 Selections

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#4 ISLAND GIRL is a homebred full sister to Bulldog Hanover's second highest money earner to date, Daya who was a Grand Circuit winner at two last year and has earned more than \$589,000 from 18 starts. This Jack Darling trainee kicked off her career in an OSS Grassroots race, and she sat back until the final quarter where she then proceeded to kick home in 26 3/5. She raced okay in her second start when she was third against maidens, then she was better last week when she chased a 1 to 9 favorite home and finished a clear second in a Grassroots race. There are none in here that are as fast as that filly that beat her last week, and this Jack Darling pupil gets top billing here to break her maiden in the opening leg of tonight's late Pick 4.

#6 SELIA SHADOW is a homebred Cattlewash filly that is her second foal from her dam, the first being PNG Shadow, who was an early winner at two last year, taking an OSS Grassroots leg in her second start in 1:52 3/5. This filly was good on debut, but she was bottled up to the eighth pole and when she found clear sailing, it was too late to chase down the top two that were pacing home in 27-flat. She drew best for her second start, and she made two moves in a Grassroots race before tiring a bit in the stretch. She looks like one of the best ones in here and she would be no surprise in this spot.

#7 BABY JANE didn't show much on debut then she got Doug McNair in the bike for her second and third starts and she went close in the first two OSS Grassroots legs. In her most recent start, she was the first leader then she got shuffled back to third. She edged off the pylons on the last turn and she found some cover, then she closed willingly in the drive to the wire. She is another filly in with a shot in a race that lacks a standout.

#3 MANDY MILKOVICH comes off a failed first-over effort in her last start, but she finished only a neck behind Baby Jane at the wire. She can go close here if she can find some cover this time and she is probably a good one to use on the bottom of the exotics.

Race 8 Selections

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#3 TROUBLE WITH NAMES has faced tougher than he faces tonight in many of his recent starts including two Gold races in his past four miles. He got bet down to favorite starting from an inside post at Clinton in his last start and he probably went too fast to the half and that made him soft late. He gets to add Lasix tonight in a spot where he can probably make front again, and he gets top billing here.

#5 ANIBAL DUHARAS had two miles two and three starts back where he paced sub-1:54 miles and trotted home in 26 4/5 and 27-flat. That makes him an instant contender in this field, but he will need to behave coming off a mile where he broke stride. He has enough gate speed to get away in the top three at the start, and I think he gets an aggressive steer from regular driver Louis-Phillipe Roy tonight. He will probably be the one that Trouble With Names needs to beat here.

#7 SENDI KA comes into tonight's mile off three straight good efforts in Grassroots company, and he has been on the front end in his past two starts. Speed is always dangerous and he starts from a post where he can probably clear to the front tonight. He should be able to get positioned on or near the lead in this spot, and he can stick around to take a slice.

#6 THE CONQUEROR broke his maiden three starts back, then he produced two decent closing efforts in Grassroots company. He shows four miles in his last five starts where he trotted home in 28 1/5 or faster and he is a bit sneaky in here starting from the best post. If there was going to be one horse in here that I might use to upset the top two picks it would be this Julie Walker trained colt who picked up the leading driver when Louis-Phillipe Roy sided with the #5 horse.

Race 9 Selections

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#6 UP JOEYS CREDIT ships in from the B tracks for trainer Jacob Roberts and he picks up teamster Trevor Henry tonight, and he comes off two miles where he had an excuse which was simply drawing wide posts in both of those miles. He closed in both of those miles, now he draws the best post on a racetrack where he has taken five of his 16 wins including his 1:50 3/5 lifetime best effort in September of 2024. I think he can get a good trip racing close to the front tonight, and I'll give him the call to upset.

#8 BOLD SPIRIT has one of the best races on the page, a mile four starts back where he was only three quarters of a length behind Dalton Shard N in the Preferred class at Grand River. Since then, he paced three straight miles against tougher than he meets tonight and he paced in 1:51 3/5 or faster in all three of those miles. He will likely look to clear to the front and lead all the way tonight, and he has a big shot to do just that.

#7 DUCK DYNASTY is 0 for 8 this season, but he has taken three shares including a second place finish two starts back where he raced tough first-over at Grand River Raceway. He had Brady Galliers in the bike that night, and he gets reunited with that driver here tonight. He could be a good one to use underneath tonight.

#5 SHOTGUN JERRY is another horse that has yet to win a race this season, but he has taken five slices from 11 starts, including four in his last six. He does his best work when he gets positioned close to the front early in the mile, and he should be able to land in the top three here leaving from one of the best posts. He is another one that merits a look for use underneath.

Race 10 Selections

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#3 P L ROBERT G served notice two starts back that he was approaching his best form when he produced a 26 4/5 kicker in a Pop Up series mile where he closed to take the smallest cheque. He parlayed that improved effort with an even better one a week later when he followed the cover of All Gas No Brakes who he once again faces tonight. He rode that second-over trip to his first win of the season, and he has a good chance to double up her in the finale.

#6 NASEY is capable of better than he showed in his last start, and moving from post nine to the six hole gives him a chance to show what he can do. He should get better positioning early by default leaving from the best post tonight, and he is in with a chance here.

#2 LUVUTOTHEMOONANBAK was good here two starts back when he made front at the start and led all the way to take a new lifetime mark. He wasn't as good in the final of that Pop Up series, but he could get a good trip racing close to the front here, and that makes him a threat. He is the other one in here that I would consider using in the late Pick 4 and Pick 5.

#4 SPARKS FLY lands in a spot where it appears that the early lead will be his for the taking and he could go a long way on the engine tonight. He has only been able to reach the winner's circle once in 26 starts after taking seven victories from 42 starts last season. He is probably best used underneath in this spot.

#5 SHESAMANALISHI has crossed the wire in the top four in five of her last six miles including her most recent start where she finished third but was set back to last for a pylon violation. She had a slim lead in the lane in that mile, but she couldn't finish it off. She is another one with one win that I prefer to use underneath.