

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#7 OSCEOLA gets a key class drop here after racing against tougher in his last four starts, and he almost surely will be looking for the lead tonight. One only need look five starts back to see what he can do when he is allowed to control the pace. On that night, he led all the way, and he beat a good field that included What About Elmo, who he also faces tonight. Assuming that he is going to clear to the front here, he should prove tough to beat on the class drop, and he gets top billing to kick off tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed early Pick 5.

#4 WHAT ABOUT ELMO has a similar profile as the top pick in that they drop out of the same race (where Elmo finished slightly ahead) and they both jogged when they met easier five starts back. This gelding has the gate speed to facilitate him landing in Osceola's pocket tonight. If he can indeed secure that spot and race in the pocket to the head of the lane, he will have a chance of chasing down the top pick. He is the second one that I would consider using in the early Pick 5.

#3 MONALISHI faced some tough company in many of her miles this year and she has taken only one win, but that victory came at this track three starts back where she beat a good field of male trotters and lowered her lifetime mark to 1:51 2/5. She came off a three month break last week, and raced in a field restricted to mares, and she raced okay in defeat. I think she will have her hands full with Osceola and What About Elmo in here, but she should be able to get a share.

#9 STORMONT BEAUTIFUL raced well in defeat in two mares races in her last two starts and she was aggressive at the start of those miles. Facing some males and starting from a wide post here, she will likely drop back and look to pass them all late. She is one of the best closers in this field, and she can work her way into the bottom of the exotics.

Race 2 Selections

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#8 STICKEMINLETHIMGO was really good here in August where he finished second in two straight starts then he won his next two, and he was exceptional here on August 15th. On that night, he shot straight to the front, cut a 25 3/5 opening quarter, then never looked back on his way to a lifetime best 1:49 1/5 score. Since then, he hasn't hit the board, but he did race a bit better last week. He gets a key class drop tonight, and that should wake him up. I'd be surprised if he doesn't get sent forward leaving the gate here starting from the widest post. If he clears to the front, he will likely prove hard to catch.

#5 TITANIC HANOVER was claimed six starts back and he was elevated in class for his next start and he got bet down to even money favorite. He couldn't get the job done that night, but that was a fast mile, and he was a clear second. He was protected in his next start, and he was too far back to make any kind of impact. He dropped in class three starts back, and he got Louis-Phillipe Roy back in the bike. With a claim entered, he was predictably sent on a speed mission, and he converted while lowering his lifetime mark. He didn't get the trip he needed in his next start on October 5th, but he got re-claimed by his previous connections, and he was a winner six nights later. He steps up now and he draws well but he might find the top pick too tough in here if that one brings close to his best tonight.

#6 FOREFATHER was a big winner here four starts back when everything fell his way. Since then, he has raced okay, now he drops into a claimer. He typically drops back and tries to pass most or all of the field, and it will be interesting to see how he will get driven from the six-hole here, especially if there are claims entered on him.

#7 CHICKEN N DICE is in the exotics mix in almost every start, and he will take very little action in this field. He could be a good one to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets.

Race 3 Selections

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#2 NIGHT PHANTOM changed hands on September 15th and he shipped north, and he has raced four times here. Not much went right in the first three miles, but things went much better in his fourth start here last week. Facing a decent field, he was put on the point immediately, and he led to the final strides where he was eventually nailed by the even money favorite who was winning for the third straight time and fourth time in five starts. He lands in a good spot here, and a similar strategy will likely get him a win. He gets top billing to start up tonight's early Pick 4.

#4 GHOSTLY CASPER dropped to tonight's class level last week and he drew post 10, but despite the poor draw, he was bet down to even money favorite. He cleared to the front on the backstretch, got passed, then immediately re-moved to the front. He came under immediately assault, and he still managed to hold the lead to deep stretch before his earlier exertions caught up to him. That was a solid effort considering how that race played out, and he gets a much better post draw now. He would be no surprise here, and his price should be better.

#6 THE BEAR A CUDA raced first-over in two straight starts, and it didn't go well for him in either of those miles. He draws the best post here so he has some options, and it seems likely that he will look for a helmet to follow. If he can find a better trip tonight, he can hit the board.

#1 MYFRIENDJOSE stepped up to this class level last week, and he made front at the quarter then took a pocket trip, and he stuck around to finish fourth. He probably won't make front tonight, but I can see him getting a good following trip racing close to the lead. He is another one to consider for the bottom of the exotics.

Race 4 Selections

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#6 CRUNCH HANOVER was racing okay down south before he shipped north to Flamboro Downs for his last two starts, and he was decent in both of those miles, too, making late wide moves. He now draws the six-hole, and I think he gets sent forward here, using the best post to best advantage. I'll give him a slight nod to start up tonight's 20-cent Pick 6 in what appears to be a wide-open race.

#2 BAYFIELD BEACH raced okay in the slop here two starts back where he flashed early speed, gave up the lead at the half, then stuck around to finish third. He then traveled to Flamboro Downs, and he sat a nice trip and finished a distant second, but he was following home veteran 1 to 9 No Plan Intended that has now taken 15 wins this season from 32 starts. He will likely get sent looking for the lead again here tonight, and he stands a decent chance in this field.

#9 KEYSTONE DAKOTA is a four-time winner this season that shows a couple decent miles here at Mohawk Park in September where he finished on the edges. He also raced well first-over two starts back at Flamboro Downs where he was a close second to No Pan Intended. He should offer a square price in here, and he is another one that is worth a look for early multi-race tickets.

#1 DR JOE improved in both of his last two starts, culminating in a third place finish in his most recent mile where he made a wide late move. He has failed to land in the Exacta in any of his 14 starts this season, but that was the first time he hit the board, and I could see him landing in the bottom of the Tri or Super.

Race 5 Selections

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#5 STORMONT FRIEDBOY brought a 0 for 12 record to the track on September 24th, but it appeared that he had found a spot here where he could break his maiden as he dropped out of an OSS Grassroots event where he produced a decent closing effort to get fourth. He got an aggressive steer from Trevor Henry and this gelding's thirteenth try was lucky as he easily converted for his first win. Bob McClure then took over the lines for the gelding's next start, and he jogged again over non-winners of two. He steps up again, but he comes off a lifetime best score, and he draws well again. McClure has clicked at a 24% rate from 29 drives for trainer Kevin Benn in the past calendar year for a 12% flat bet profit. I'll give this surging gelding the nod here.

#1 DAFFY HANOVER has been racing well for several weeks, finishing in the money in all of her last five starts. She just took her fifth win of the season in her 35th start, and she worked out a good trip that night to beat a good field of mares. Her drawing the rail here doesn't bother me because she has shown herself to be versatile. She should be right there again tonight.

#8 GETTHEGREEN made a nice late move to score here three starts back, then he raced well again in his next two starts to hit the board in both miles. The problem for him was those miles were simply trotted too fast for him. He will be closing late again tonight, and it's unlikely that this race will get trotted in 1:52 and small change, so that puts him in the picture here.

#9 ILL HAVE THE RED just won at 4 to 5 in a mile where she beat Daffy Hanover, so she should be a contender in here by default. She then scratched sick and she has now missed three weeks. I don't have any doubt that she is good enough to win this race, but I would demand a price with her starting from an outside post considering the sickness and stale date.

SPOT PLAY: STORMONT FRIEDBOY

Race 6 Selections

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#3 WICKED EXPRESS dropped to the \$8,000 conditioned claiming level three starts back and he showed improvement that night, closing some ground late while pacing his own final quarter in 28-flat. He raced again four nights later and he attracted a claim, but he got hung the mile and he was well beaten. He moved into Kyle Fellows barn last week and he got Doug McNair in the bike. That trainer/driver combo has clicked for a 27% strike rate from 195 starts in the past calendar year, and they clicked with this gelding right away last week. He steps up into a claiming handicap from a conditioned claimer now, so he should offer a good price. I'll give him the nod to repeat in this opening leg of tonight's late Pick 5.

#8 YYC ON THE HORIZON dropped, popped, and took a new lifetime mark of 1:51 4/5 here two starts back, then he tried his luck at Flamboro Downs on Thursday night and he had no luck. He gets catch driver J R Plante back in the bike tonight which should be the key to him getting back in form. I expect an aggressive steer, and he should be in the mix tonight.

#4 FLYING ART A brought some good form in from the B tracks last week, and he appeared to be a speed threat in that spot. He blasted straight to the front leaving the gate, and he then sat the pocket once Wicked Express after that one assumed command. He showed some grit in the lane, digging in to make it close at the wire, and he has the look of another one that merits a look for the late Pick 5.

#1 RYLENTLESS got hot in August/September, winning three straight, now he missed the board in his last two starts, but I can see him going better in this spot. In his last mile, he was trying to advance late in a 27 3/5 final quarter, and that wasn't going to go great. Still, he paced his own final quarter in 28-flat, and that late speed can play well in this field. He should improve racing in this second start off the Shayne Barrington claim, and he one to consider for the bottom of the exotics at a price.

Race 7 Selections

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#7 HEAVENS LIL DRAGON came into her mile four starts back having taken only 2 wins in her first 30 starts, and her two wins came at the B tracks, but she did race well in defeat here on September 3rd. After sitting a pocket trip to the top of the stretch, she burst through along the pylons and took a clear lead. She was her rival who came flying home in 27 2/5. This mare finished a clear second that night, then she wasn't as good in her next start, but that mile four starts back was a different story. She made front early and let one go, then she motored in the final eighth of a mile to chase down the 3 to 2 favorite and take a new lifetime mark of 1:52 3/5. She unsurprisingly got bet down to 4 to 5 favorite coming off that mile, but she simply went too fast, too soon two starts back and it softened her up for rival Meilleur Fromage, who chased her down. In her next start, she raced well on the lead again, but she got picked off by a pocket sitter. Then in her last start, she herself got the pocket trip and prevailed. She looks good to score the repeat here.

#8 ACEFORTYFOUR DAISY is the mare that finished second to Heavens Lil Dragon on September 21st and she raced well on the engine that night. She wasn't very good in her next start racing at Flamboro Downs, then she bounced back and raced better on October 11th. She raced Thursday at Flamboro Downs so sharpness will be no issue here. She can be an Exacta factor.

#1 FOX VALLEY REBA started to turn her form around three starts back when she raced tough first-over and finished second at Flamboro Downs. She came back with a decent closing effort racing against some of these mares here, then she took her second win of the season in her last start in London. She can get a piece of this.

#4 MISS SOPHIA ROSE raced okay in two straight starts here to finish on the edges, and she will likely be passing some mares late again in this mile. She looks like one that is good to use on the bottom of Tri and Super bets in this spot.

Race 8 Selections

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#6 STORMONT SHANLYBOY two starts back raced terrific in the \$350,000 OSS Gold Superfinal where he showed early speed, gave up the lead at the half, took a shuffle, then got a seam in deep stretch and flew late to get second behind Strobe Lite. If he had another six feet of real estate, he was an upset winner. Entering this Harvest Series off that excellent mile, he got bet down to the minimum five cents on the dollar last week, and after he took over the lead in the second quarter, he left no doubt. He draws best for this \$100,000 Harvest Series Final, and he should prove very tough to beat here.

#1 STORMONT FAST BOY is the other winner of Leg 1 of this series, and he is having a nice sophomore season having taken three wins from seven starts while only missing the board once, and that came in his opening mile of the year when he was driven conservatively and closed for fourth. He was a Grassroots winner only three starts back and he was a good third in his penultimate start in a two move effort. He looked good closing for the win last week and it seems that Stormont Meadows and trainer Kevin Benn hold all the cards in here with the top two picks.

#3 CRUNCHINTHEODDS raced well first-over last week, but he was simply no match for Stormont Shanlyboy in the final quarter. Starting from the inside tonight, it seems likely that he will be able to find a live helmet to follow, and he should be able to work his way into the Tri.

#8 MIKE ME UP finished third behind the top pick in here in the Gold Superfinal, then he drew best for Leg 1 of this series, so it was no surprise to see him get bet down to 3 to 5 favorite. He got a decent trip on the lead, but he couldn't seal the deal. He will likely get positioned on or near the lead at the start again. He is one that I prefer to use on the bottom in here.

BEST BET: STORMONT SHANLYBOY

Race 9 Selections

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#6 LOGAN PARK is having another tremendous season, taking victories in nine of his first 15 starts while earning more than \$242,000. In his most recent start here, he sat perfectly pocketed to the stretch where he angled out and drove by for an easy win. He missed three weeks, and that is probably the only factor you might lean on here if you are trying to beat him tonight because this Open class seems to have come up a bit light. He probably goes right down the road at a very short price for his tenth win of the year.

#3 NEW RULES is interesting here because he has clearly reached peak form having won two straight and taken a new lifetime mark in his last start. He steps up to the top class now, but he has had some success here racing at the Open level in the past. This past January, he finished second in two straight starts racing at this level. He is the one that I will side with to complete the Exacta.

#7 HASTY BID is having a good 2026 season considering that he has earned twice as much as he did in 2025 in close to the same number of starts. Most recently, he flashed early speed then he spent most of the mile following Logan Park after there were a couple of lead changes. He couldn't gain on that rival in the stretch, and he will likely face the same uphill battle again tonight. Still, he should be able to get positioned close to the front again here and he can get another share.

#4 MAJOR VELOCITY has two wins this year, but he also finished in the Exacta eight other times. He figures to get a good following trip here racing close to the front, and while I don't see him as a threat to Logan Park for the win, he should be part of the Tri or Super.

Race 10 Selections

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#9 ODDS ON BULLFROG's starts prior to last week's mile identified him as a standout. Three starts back, he was an impressive winner of the Grassroots Final, and that victory qualified him for the \$350,000 Gold Superfinal racing against division leaders Redland Rocket Man and Beau Jangles. He raced terrific to get third, closing in 26-flat. As expected, he parlayed that strong effort into a dominant win here last week. I don't mind the wide draw for him here in this final; he can be the last one to clear. From there, he should lead the way to the wire.

#7 WINDOR is one that I thought raced well in defeat here last week, leaving for position then popping out around the last turn to engage the leading 3 to 5 favorite. He got past that rival and got picked off late. He is worth a look in here because he might be able to land in Odds On Bullfrog's pocket leading the gate. He is the other one in that I would consider using on late multi-race tickets.

#2 CHEESE DREAMS raced well last week, and although he was no match for Odds On Bullfrog, he did come on late for second. He hasn't missed the board one this year and having had only six starts, he comes into this Harvest Series Final fresh. He might be a good one to use underneath at a price.

#8 BARRACUDA HANOVER got a great trip last week, and he parlayed that into a nose win over Windor and a new lifetime mark of 1:50 1/5. He is sharp but he draws worse here and he is in a field where a few of them figure to be leaving hard. He will likely be too far back to threaten for the win, but he should be able to close for a share.

Race 11 Selections

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#6 ALL GAS NO BRAKES was right there two starts back racing at tonight's class level where he pulled first-over in the last turn and chased the leader home, but he fell a neck short in the end. He moved up in class last week and after making front early then giving up command, he tried another move and he finished only evenly at 23 to 1. He drops back down tonight and getting the magic six-hole certainly won't hurt his chances. He gets top billing in this finale.

#2 STABLE GENIUS got on a roll here in August and September, winning four straight while he climbed the class ladder. He seemed to meet his class limit two starts back when racing in a \$60,000 optional claimer. He dropped back down last time and raced well on the lead in a fast race; he just got picked off by a relentless closer that trotted a 27-flat closing quarter to get past him. He now missed some time after scratching sick, so beware taking a short price, but he is obviously a good fit in here. Pilot McNair keeps the drive, and he has clicked at a 45% strike rate from 59 drives for trainer Dave Menary over the past calendar year for a flat bet profit of 12%.

#1 PERFETTO is a classy millionaire that just keeps going, and his mile last week when coming off a three month break was decent. The last time he won a race was at this class level starting from the rail five starts back where he was sent off as the 7 to 5 favorite. The tote board may provide some clues here tonight.

#7 MASSTERCRAFT is interesting in here because he showed some late trot last time when coming off a five month break after scratching sick in May. At his best, this is a group he can handle, and he will likely get ignored here with a driver in the bike that isn't a Mohawk Park regular. He is a fresh horse that is worth a look as a potential separator on late multi-race tickets.

#4 LANDING ON TIME raced decently in his last two starts facing tougher where he closed for fourth in both miles. He gets a good draw tonight, and he might be able to lay a bit closer to the pace this time. He should be able to work his way into the exotics again.