

Race 1 Selections

The Horseplayer's Journal by Garnet Barnsdale

#7 INTEL QUEEN showed talent in some of her starts this summer, but she had periodic breaking issues, including three starts back where she jumped it off at the start. She was then a sick scratch a week later, but despite that break and subsequent scratch, she was sent off at only 6 to 1 on October 12th. That action turned out to be smart money as she made a huge 27 3/5 third quarter move to the front to blow the race wide open. She came back last week to race well again, but after moving to the lead first-over in the stretch, she was no match for the rival that followed her and kicked home in 27 3/5 to win going away. Her 1:54 4/5 clocking from that race is the fastest of any in here in their most recent starts, and she gets top billing here to kick off tonight's \$75,000 guaranteed early Pick 5.

#2 WILD ROSE HANOVER appeared to be sitting perfectly racing in the pocket past the half in her last start, but then Intel Queen made that huge third quarter move and this mare and the rest of the field was left flat footed. She moved out first-over and battled on for third, but that race was in effect over at the top of the stretch. This race will likely be raced differently, and she is in with a chance here.

#3 MISS MASS APPEAL is only 1 for 16 so far this season, but she raced well in defeat at this level two starts back where she raced first up in the back half and chased home a dominant 1 to 5 winner. She then tried company that was just too tough for her in the Harvest Series. She gets Doug McNair for a return drive in here, and she is the third one that I would consider using on early Pick 5 tickets.

#4 NICKSIN got a good steer from Nick Boyd, and he got a perfect trip. He didn't need to take one step to the outside as he scooted up the pylons to get up for his maiden breaking score. He is in tougher, but his good tactical speed puts him in the picture for a share despite stepping up to non-winners of two.

Race 2 Selections

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#5 SUMLUCKY LADY is a Muscle Mass rookie filly that broke her maiden in a Grassroots leg at Grand River Raceway in August with a strong third quarter first-over move. She raced great two starts back here where she fell one stride short of winning the \$100,000 Grassroots Final, nailed right on the line by odds-on favorite Stormont Violet, who needed a 26 4/5 final quarter to catch this filly. She was a standout on paper in Leg 1 of this series here two weeks ago, and she dominated at the outset as the 2 to 5 post time favorite. She draws the same good post tonight and she will no doubt get another aggressive Mark Macdonald steer in here. She gets the call to repeat in this \$60,000 Harvest series final.

#1 TH FRANCESCA got a good trip here in Leg 1 of this series two starts back, and she came charging late to get up for second. She then got another good inside following trip last week, and she popped off the pylons nearing the three quarters to follow cover second-over. She tipped off her cover after they straightened out for home, and she had no problem getting past 1 to 5 favorite Jyn Erso. This King Of The North filly has hit her best stride, and she will likely be the one to fend off late here.

#2 JYN ERSO took a big class drop here from the \$350,000 OSS Gold Superfinal into Leg 2 of this Harvest Series last week, and it wasn't surprising to see her get bet down to 1 to 5 favorite. She moved to the front in the second quarter, and she got some good fractions, but she couldn't fend off T H Francesca in deep stretch. She can be a threat again here, but she needs to find a faster final quarter to contend for the win,

#3 OUTLAST was a maiden breaker five starts back, then she moved up to the Gold and Grand Circuit level facing the likes of Major Contender, and she was in just a bit too tough there. She did manage to grab a fifth place cheque in the Grade 3 Champlain three starts back before breaking stride at the start of her 1st next mile. She raced okay to get third last week, and she can get another slice here.

Race 3 Selections

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#5 LIQUID dropped to this \$20,000 conditioned claiming level two weeks ago, and the difference in classes was shown when he paced the exact same 1:52 2/5 mile that only got him sixth (beaten 10 lengths) three starts back, and he was able to go right down the road to take his second win. He drew best for the second week in a row last week, and he doubled up while getting claimed by Jamie Copley. This field looks no tougher than last week's, and he gets the nod to score the threepeat in this opening leg of tonight's early Pick 4.

#8 REVE has taken only one win so far this year, but he has also finished second five times, and four of those runner up finishes have come in his last six starts. He ships in from Quebec in solid form, and he was racing in some decent conditioned races there. He has the gate speed to leave well from his wide post tonight, and he looks like a good fit in this \$20,000 conditioned claimer. He should be the main threat to Liquid in here, and he is the other one that I would consider using on early multi-race tickets/

#2 THE TWIN DRAGON shipped in from Quebec last week and he immediately flashed early speed. He worked his way into a pocket trip following Liquid, and he got a clear run along the pylons in the lane, looking dangerous. He was a bit one-paced in the drive to the wire, though, and he got caught for second. He can get another good trip tonight, but I prefer to use him underneath here.

#9 BUNKHOUSE BOSS gets a barn change here as he returns to the racetrack following a five month layoff, and he comes in off a decent qualifier at Flamboro Downs. He typically shows early speed, so he should be able to get away in the top four or five at the start. He is worth a look for the bottom of the exotics at what should be a square price here.

Race 4 Selections

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#4 BARBARA MAY came into Leg 1 of this series last week looking like the clear filly to beat in coming off two impressive victories. Three starts back, she led all the way, laid down some serious fractions, and smoked a field restricted to Grassroots and Prospect Series starters to the tune of 1:52-flat. Coming off that impressive score, she was bet down to 1 to 5 in the Grassroots Final, and she left no doubt, opening up on the last turn and cruising to an easy win. She was off for 16 days leading up to last week's mile, and she raced first up – which isn't typically her best trip – and she looked a bit short. With \$100,000 on the line here, I think she will be sharper and get a much more aggressive steer from the outside. She gets the nod to bounce back here in the opening leg of tonight's 20-cent Pick 6 wager.

#7 TWIN B SHOWBIZ is 0 for 17 so far this season and 1 for 24 overall, but she has landed in the bottom of the Exacta seven times this year, and she comes off a good effort in defeat in Leg 1 of this series last week. I like that she gets off the rail after drawing that post twice in a row, but she will likely be closing too late if Barbara May trots away from her rivals as expected.

#8 LO AND BEHOLD is a three-time winner this season, and her most recent win came here last week when she drew perfectly, then took over command in the second quarter, and saw it through on the engine. Coming off that victory, she draws wide here, and I don't see her getting the same kind of trip. It seems more likely that she will be closing late and looking to get a share.

#6 SOCIAL WIZARD is 0 for 19 so far this season, but she has taken four slices, and two of those came in her last two starts, so she is racing better as the year is progressing. She gets the best post here and she should get situated in mid pack early. I think she gets another share here tonight.

BEST BET: BARBARA MAY

Race 5 Selections

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#7 SHERRYS FRIEND was a \$7,000 Harrisburg Sale buy, and she is the second foal from her dam. Her half brother by Captain Corey is a four-time winner so far from 21 starts and he has earned more than \$88,000. This two-year-old filly broke in her first qualifier, then she was a dominant winner in the second one. She got a key driver change to Bob McClure for her debut, and after racing from the back to the stretch, she stayed inside and she made a nice late charge between rivals to get up for fourth. She was just starting to find her best stride when she hit the wire. She should benefit a ton from that debut race, and I'll give her the nod here to take her maiden victory in this second start.

#2 IF POSSIBLE comes into this race with a 0 for 8 record, but she has finished second and third three times each, and he has shown herself to be a very consistent performer. She comes out of a race where she followed cover to the stretch then closed to finish a clear second. On paper, she is one of the obvious contenders in here. The only concern is the stale date with her having been idle since October 1st.

#3 HP NESS didn't hit the board in her first three starts, but she started to turn her form around in her fourth start where she sat a trip and closed for third. She got a key driver change to Pascal Berube in her fifth start, and she jogged while knocking more than three seconds off. She was bet down to 4 to 5 in her sixth start, and she got a good trip, but she failed to get the job done. She ships west in good form, and she figures to contend, but she is another one with a stale date. This is not an easy race from a handicapping standpoint.

#8 DS ADDIE showed speed in her last two starts, and while she took only one fifth place cheque in her last start, here 1:57 4/5 mile finished off with a 28 3/5 kicker puts her in the conversation to land in the bottom of the exotics. I think she can work her way into the bottom of the Tri or Super here.

Race 6 Selections

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#1 BISCUITINTHEBASKET is a rookie Cattlewash filly that raced well in several OSS Grassroots legs, and she found herself in a much easier spot here two weeks ago racing in the opening leg of this Harvest Series. Leading driver James Macdonald was back in the bike following a one race absence, and he made a second quarter move to the front with this filly, and she did the rest from there to convert as the public's 3 to 5 choice. She was even better in Leg 2 last week, dominating and lowering her lifetime best mark to 1:51 4/5. The rail post should be no issue for her tonight, and she will take beating in this first leg of tonight's late Pick 5, but she will likely be sent off as a 2 to 5 favorite.

#4 MIDNIGHT MATRIMONY broke her maiden here six starts back with Doug McNair driving and she raced well in her next two starts with that teamster again calling the shots. She lost him three starts back, and she wasn't as good. She got McNair back here for the opening leg of the Harvest Series, and she got an aggressive steer, as expected. She easily converted as the second choice while lowering her lifetime best mark by more than a second. She won on the front end again last week, but her winning mile was two full seconds slower than that of Biscuitinthebasket. She will need to be faster here to take down that rival.

#2 SHOTGUN ANNIE has improved sharply in her last three starts where she dropped more than six seconds in 17 days. She produced a nice late rally to get second behind Biscuitinthebasket last week, and she will likely be racing from the back here again. I could see her splitting the top two with the right trip.

#6 RULING MONARCH finished on the edges in both preliminary legs of this series, and I thought she raced decently here last week considering she started from the second tier. She gets to leave from the best post now, so she should get better position heading into the first turn. She is another one that I would consider for the exotics at what should be a square price.

Race 7 Selections

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#1 COLD CREEK ESPERO hinted three starts back that she was coming around to her best form when she closed from tenth to third in the final quarter, but she was still sent off as a 23 to 1 here on October 5th. Pilot Jody Jamieson worked out a good trip, and this mare did the rest, getting up for a lifetime best score in 1:52 1/5. She came back a week later, and she sat and watched as her rivals set a destructive early pace, cutting a 54 4/5 opening half. She had no problem circling up to take a second straight win. She looks best here and she will likely prove tough to beat as she seeks the threepeat.

#5 HALF FAST came into her penultimate start with four wins in her previous five starts, including a jogburger three starts back racing at this level where she lowered her lifetime mark to 1:51 1/5. She stole a 29-flat second quarter, then she really turned it on, pacing a 27-flat third quarter that left her rivals gasping. In her next start, the pace was different, and cutting a 55 3/5 opening half took its toll late. She was claimed by Kyle Fellows, and she got Doug McNair in the bike for her last start, and she raced great in defeat considering she got no breathers. There is a good chance she will have an easier time on the lead here, and that makes her a big threat to Cold Creek Espero. McNair has clicked for a 27% win rate from 195 drives for trainer Kyle Fellows over the last calendar year.

#7 WHOA BLACK BETTY is interesting here shipping north from New York off a win, moving into trainer Menary's barn, and dropping in for a claiming tag for the first time in her career. She is no stranger to Mohawk Park where she started her career and won on debut in September of 2025. She has a record of 2-0-3 in six starts at this track. She gets the leading driver tonight, and she should be one of the main contenders in here.

#2 THE LIES WE TELL raced well for four consecutive starts at this level leading up to her last start. She was used hard in some fast fractions in her last start, and she faded to a well beaten last. She should be able to work out an easier trip tonight and she can land in the bottom of the exotics.

Race 8 Selections

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#7 TURBO COMPRESSEUR is a homebred son of Muscle Mass that didn't start his career until age four, and he showed some promise in his debut at Hippodrome 3R in August. He raced against some very seasoned conditioned horses that day, and he rallied for third. Since then, he has done nothing but win, and he arrives from Quebec on a five race win streak. He lands in a good spot here and he gets Louis Phillippe Roy in the bike. He gets top billing to start up tonight's late Pick 4.

#9 WHT BLONDE HANOVER brings a 0 for 10 record to the track tonight, but she produced one of her best efforts in her last start, and that stamps her as a contender tonight. In that mile last week, she dropped back to last early, and she moved outside before the half. She found some decent cover to follow, then she closed gradually down the lane to get up for third, and she was still going forward when she passed under the wire. The main concern with her is that she could get too far back starting from a wide post, but I could see her getting the job done here with the right trip.

#6 ILOVEMESOMETACOS is only 1 for 20 coming into tonight's start, but he has also taken four slices and several other small cheques. He has the tactical speed to get positioned close to the front leaving the gate, and getting post six is an added bonus for him. He should be part of the Tri or Super here.

#2 SEVERIAN's form has improved in his past two starts, and he looked a bit dangerous racing first up last week before he tired to finish fifth. He was out too long with no cover that night, and he could work out a better trip here starting from an inside post. He is worth a look in here because he never gets bet and he could boost the Tri or Super payoff.

Race 9 Selections

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#7 PREMIER FIRST STAR got bet down to 5 to 1 three starts back, and he showed little that night, but he was much better here in his next start on October 11th, taking advantage of a fast early pace to pounce and score at 28 to 1. It's unusual to see, but he beat every one of the seven rivals that night that he once again faced last week. He got bet down to 1 to 2 favorite, and he took the bull by the horns taking over command in the second quarter. From there, he left no doubt, driving away for a new lifetime best 1:49 2/5 score. He faces many of the same rivals that he crushed last week. Beat him to greet the cashier.

#3 SHADOW OF AN ANGEL moved into trainer Dave Menary's barn prior to his first local start here on September 6th, and nothing went right in that mile where this gelding broke before the start and was refunded for failing to make it to the fair start pole. After requalifying, he won well racing at the lowest conditioned level. Then, he strung together two more wins, one more impressive than the other. His win three starts back racing first-over at tonight's class level represented a new lifetime best of 1:49 3/5. In his next start, he drew wide and he raced from the back over a sloppy track, and he really had no chance. He got the best post last week, and he raced well, but he was no match for Premier First Star. More of the same is likely for him tonight.

#6 UNCLE SHANK A isn't in the best form currently, and he comes in off a sick scratch, but we know that he will be pointed to the front starting from the best post. Assuming that Premier First Star leaves with him and lands in the pocket, I think that rival will take over command on the backstretch, leaving this ridgling with a pocket trip. He could go better in here and stick around for a share.

#2 WATERLOO worked out a good trip at 55 to 1 two weeks ago, and he slid off the pylons to follow Premier First Star midway around the final turn. He was able to work his way into second then he held off closing Happy In Control to hang on for the runner up spot. He sat a trip and closed for third behind the top two picks last week, and he can get another share here.

Race 10 Selections

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#6 POWNAL BAY BOBBI took a big class drop last week into this Harvest Series after competing against the best sophomore pacing fillies in the country in the \$350,000 OSS Gold Superfinal. She raced really well to get third money in that race when you consider that she raced first up into a 1:21 3/5 three quarters. Off that excellent mile, she got bet down to 1 to 5 last week, and she had no problem overcoming the rail post, taking an easy 1:50 2/5 victory on the engine for her second win of the season in her 17th start. She is in peak form, and she should be very hard to beat here in this \$100,000 final starting from the best post.

#7 LAVENDER SEELSTER last week was another one time winner this year that also dropped out of the Gold Superfinal, and she got a good post to work from. As expected, she was sent forward by Travis Henry leaving the gate, and she worked out the pocket trip following Pownal Bay Bobbi, but she was no match for that rival in the lane. She could get a similar trip tonight and complete another Exacta.

#1 MALICIA SPEED last week came off a mile where she was on fourth-over cover and when she fanned wide in the lane, she was tenth and last. She motored down the middle of the track to finish fourth in a blanket finish. Moving to the best post last week, it was no surprise to see her get a much more aggressive steer, and she looked like a winner until she got picked off by a tripped out rival late. She will likely be racing from farther back here starting from the rail, but she should be able to close to take a share.

#4 JEN TILLY got bet down to 6 to 5 favorite last week after finishing fourth in the Gold Superfinal, and while she didn't get the job done, I thought she raced decently first-over to finish third. She draws a good post here, and while I don't see her beating the top pick, she could better this prediction if she gets a good trip.

Race 11 Selections

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#3 SMORGASTARTA drew the best post, and she worked out a great trip last week, and she won going away to take her fourth win of the season in her 20th start. She steps up one class level here, but she was an impressive winner over a filly that crushed a field in her previous start. Many of her rivals that tonight that have been racing regularly at this non-winners of three level have some chinks in their armor, and I will take a price stab on this sharp class riser to close out late multi-race tickets.

#4 CAPTAIN NATHAN is a three time winner from 11 starts this year, and he comes in off a solid effort where he finished second to 1 to 5 shot Imperative, who has now won three straight and four of his last five. There are no Imperative's in here, so this gelding should have a good chance in here. I don't love that he missed four weeks since his last start though, and I'd be careful to not take too short of a price.

#6 SENDI KA raced against much tougher than these in the Harvest Series last week, and after showing speed, he was in there fighting for a share racing along the pylons in the lane when he jumped it off. He has some obvious risk considering his gait issues, but he draws best, he has gate speed, and he gets the leading driver tonight. He is worth a look at a price tonight.

#7 VISTA VERDE beat non-winners of two here three starts back, then he raced decently in two straight starts to finish third after moving up to the non-winners of three level. He will likely get put into play at the start again tonight, and he should get another slice here.

#5 BUBBLE UP raced okay from post 10 last time, making a late wide move and trotting home in 28-flat. Getting a much better post tonight should mean that he will be placed closer to the front at the start of this mile, and he could better this prediction if he can work out a good trip.

SPOT PLAY: SMORGASTARTA