

## Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson

### Sunday, May 18th 2025

#### Race 1

##### #5 Citori

##### #8 Saucy Name

##### #3 Aint No Girly Girl

##### #4 Maryland Spirit

#5 CITORI showed speed but was outdueled by the eventual winner when debuting for \$40,000 on opening weekend. She has reason to step forward off of that effort and could be tough to catch. #8 SAUCY NAME has been beaten at a short price too many times to count but rarely misses the board. She re-adds blinkers after trying to go without them in her final start of last year; perhaps as a four-year-old facing mostly three-year-olds she could have an advantage. #3 AINT NO GIRLY GIRL is by 13% debut sire Souper Speedy and is the first foal to race out of First Girl, a quick mare who did her best running in turf routes. She was the second best in a set of three when working from the gate on May 11. #4 MARYLAND SPIRIT arguably could have won her November 28 race where she moved to the lead a bit prematurely and was caught late. We'll see if she shows some improvement from two to three as she goes for new connections.

#### Race 2

##### #11 Bella Future

##### #3 Moon Over Egbert

##### #4 Told It All

##### #5 Grand Alliance

#11 BELLA FUTURE led briefly turning for home but was outkicked by Ship Cadet and ran a solid fourth against open \$10,000 company at Gulfstream on April 6. He takes advantage of the non-winners since condition offered here and should find this to be significant class relief. #3 MOON OVER EGBERT's only poor effort at Oaklawn this winter came in a \$20,000 route where he had a claim voided by the vet. His Tapeta form last year was very solid. #4 TOLD IT ALL had a couple of starts in the mid-Atlantic this winter to no avail. He was racing well last fall and should be able to fare well returning to his home track. #5 GRAND ALLIANCE had a tough trip when finishing fifth in his final start of the 2024 season. He is lightly-raced for an eight-year-old but I thought all four of his starts last year were respectable in their own right.

#### Race 3

##### #9 Ontario Holiday

##### #6 Coherence

##### #5 Forest Woodsman

##### #8 Panyard Tap

#9 ONTARIO HOLIDAY did not have a great start and ran a very good second behind the winter fit Attestation when kicking off his season two weeks ago. If he can find position from the outside draw he looks solid here. #6 COHERENCE trailed early but ran on to be fourth, 2 ¾ lengths behind Ontario Holiday on May 4. You could make a case that he is the most talented runner in this field but is pretty win shy and is tough to love on top. #5

FOREST WOODSMAN closed out 2024 with a maiden win for this price. His better speed figures put him in the hunt; he now goes for the Fort Erie-based Daniel Wills barn. #8 PANYARD TAP was entered in the previously mentioned May 4 race but scratched and now returns here. He was sent to the lead in his final start of 2024 which is not his preferred style; could improve with a more patient ride.

#### Race 4

##### #4 My Boy Bruce

##### #7 Roar of the Crowd

##### #8 Humber River

##### #9 Flirting With Fire

#4 MY BOY BRUCE hooked a solid group of three-year-olds on May 4 and ran a respectable second behind Regal Guest, the full-brother to Pink Lloyd. He catches a group with lots of speed to close into. #7 ROAR OF THE CROWD is one of three four-year-olds in this field. His seasonal debut was a well-beaten fourth in an tough N1X/\$32,000 won by multiple Stakes-winner Junior Hot Shot; he ran a game third at this level on December 15. #8 HUMBER RIVER was an impressive winner on debut but regressed a bit in his second start when favoured on December 13. His two most recent breezes have been quick; lasix is added for his return to the races. #9 FLIRTING WITH FIRE was a dominant debut winner over a nice horse in Kekoa back in July but was sidelined after a couple of breezes in August. We'll see if he can outspurt the other speed types here from the outside draw.

#### Race 5

##### #4 Lady Iona

##### #1 Flashy Motor

##### #7 Texas Holiday

##### #6 Biles (IRE)

#4 LADY IONA ran well in spite of a slow break and a not ideal trip when making her Woodbine debut over a mile on the turf in September. She adds blinkers for her return to the races and her first try on synthetic; could be worth a look at a decent price in a race with no true standouts. #1 FLASHY MOTOR was a chasing third as the favourite when making her local debut on April 27. All three of her sprint races have been good efforts; she may appreciate a little extra ground with the blinkers going on. #7 TEXAS HOLIDAY will sprint and try synthetic for the first time here after a disappointing effort in her first start for these connections at Gulfstream. Her speed figures are very competitive; we'll see if she likes the turnback. #6 BILES (IRE) is a four-year-old first timer by expensive Irish stallion Night of Thunder; her breezes look like they have been steadily improving.

## Race 6

### #9 Florida Vacation

### #6 Just Pray

### #1 Saratoga Holiday

### #7 Wild Red

#9 FLORIDA VACATION is by 16% debut sire Signature Red. Full-sister to talented mare Cara Cara was the fastest in a set of three from the gate on May 11. #6 JUST PRAY trained at Palm Meadows over the winter and has a few solid local works coming into her debut. Reload is a 14% debut sire; Saint Judy has produced two debut winners in six foals to start including the very talented Rockcrest. #1 SARATOGA HOLIDAY was a non-threatening third in a race won by stablemate Rhaenyra when kicking off her campaign on April 27. She has raced well in all three of her career starts but her speed figures are a bit light. #7 WILD RED was caught at the wire and beaten a head in her second career start on December 14, earning a solid 61 Beyer in the process.

## Race 7

### #5 Giant Teddy

### #1 Its Time to Shine

### #2 Highland Life

### #6 Souper Dormy

#5 GIANT TEDDY dueled on the lead but was outkicked by multiple Stakes-winner Giant Teddy when racing at this level on April 27. With a less pressured pace scenario he could make all the running this time. #1 ITS TIME TO SHINE was very well-rationed on the lead and kicked on to win his OS/\$40,000 non-three on May 4. He steps up in class here but should be confident and looks capable of moving up. #2 HIGHLAND LIFE ran on well to be third in a race won by a speedy Florida-invader Speed Figures on April 27. If the pace is too quick up front he could be a live closer to consider. #6 SOUPER DORMY set a comfortable pace and spurted clear to win the Welcome Back Handicap two weeks ago. He seems unlikely to make the lead here and does his best off the pace running when covered up on the rail; we'll see what kind of trip he gets this time.

## Race 8

### #3 Madame Obey

### #5 Church and State

### #2 Incoming

### #1 Hibiscus

#3 MADAME OBEY was cross-entered in yesterday's Ruling Angel Stakes but finds a much shorter field here. Expensive daughter of Tiz the Law was able to beat winners on debut before running a credible third at Turfway and has solid speed figures for this group. #5 CHURCH AND STATE was an impressive winner of his first two starts before heading to Turfway for a try in the Leonatus where he finished an even fourth. He was scratched from the Woodstock and now returns here; obviously talented and the only two-time winner in this field. #2 INCOMING had some trouble and was placed third in the Woodstock. He may end up with better early position with the stretch out to seven furlongs. #1 HIBISCUS is another Josie Carroll-trainee who was

entered against fillies in the Ruling Angel but has been cross-entered here. She faltered in the stretch after dueling for the lead when debuting in a turf route at Keeneland; potential speed factor.

## Race 9

### #7 Junior Hot Shot - Best Bet

### #3 No More Options

### #1 Crumlin Lad

### #4 Boston Tea Party

#7 JUNIOR HOT SHOT kicked off the season with a front-end win against N1X/\$32,000 types going 5 ½ furlongs. He catches a field without much true speed and could double up if he can control the tempo. #3 NO MORE OPTIONS had a more advantageous trip when winning the Lake Ontario over Junior Hot Shot, then took on some very nice older Ontario-sired rivals and ran a close third in the Steady Growth. Although he is better around two turns he did win the Frost King at 6 ½ furlongs as a two-year-old. #1 CRUMLIN LAD raced very well to be second behind the lone speed and winter fit Poulin in O T on opening weekend. Hard-knocking five-year-old hit the exactor in half of his 10 starts last year and seems to be back in good order. #4 BOSTON TEA PARTY was winless in 2024 but hit the board in four of his seven starts against some very solid competition and does not look out of place at all here.

## Race 10

### #2 Bachelor Pad

### #9 Souper Success

### #4 Long Pond

### #6 Thenorthremembers

### #12 Mannix (IRE)

#2 BACHELOR PAD had some big efforts in the first half of the 2024 season but seemed to be getting a little worn out towards the end. Speedy gelding should have appreciated the winter off and could fire off the bench. #9 SOUPER SUCCESS caught a very manageable group of optional \$15,000 foes on April 27 and was able to kick clear to an easy win. He takes a drop in search of his 12th lifetime win. #4 LONG POND had a nice win off of the claim for these connections in October, then narrowly missed third to Bachelor Pad after some backstretch traffic on December 5. He did not run a truly bad race last year when you look at the trips in some of the less standout efforts. #6 THENORTHREMEMBERS was a stewards scratch from a \$7,500 race on May 4. He was cut off at the start and showed good finish from a long way out of it to be sixth for \$10,000 at Gulfstream on April 6; definitely worth consideration. #12 MANNIX (IRE) disappointed in his final start of the 2024 season after two consecutive wins before that; closer could run on for a share if he is not hung too wide from the 12 hole.