Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson Friday, May 23rd 2025

Race 1

#1 Short Story Long #6 Blackhillsherriff #5 Hard Reload #4 Halcon Negro

#1 SHORT STORY LONG raced wide and looked to be holding second well into the stretch before being outkicked late on May 11. He draws a better post this time and should be poised for a good effort. #6 BLACKHILLSHERRIFF debuted in the same race that Short Story Long exits, running evenly on the inside from midpack. He has the right to improve with a start under his belt. #5 HARD RELOAD has shown very little in his career to date but has some speed from the gate and could get a little braver if he can get loose on the lead. #4 HALCON NEGRO picked up a couple of minor shares last year and has some competitive speed figures for this group.

Race 2
#4 Celentano
#3 Its Just Money
#5 Prince Sussex
#6 Souper Iconic

#4 CELENTANO could not overcome early trouble when trying dirt at Oaklawn in March. A regular check-earner at Woodbine, he should be tough taking the drop in for \$7,500. #3 ITS JUST MONEY hopped at the start and never looked fully comfortable in a non-threatening effort for \$15,000 on April 27. His previous speed figures would make him tough here; we'll see if he fires on the drop. #5 PRINCE SUSSEX made only three starts last year, racing decently in each of them. He is capable of showing a bit of speed and catches a field without much speed. #6 SOUPER ICONIC was put on the shelf after breaking his maiden for this price in October. He comes into this race off of a light worktab.

Race 3

#3 Little Alexa

#2 Twisting Pistons

#5 Serious Green

#1 Her Obsession

#3 LITTLE ALEXA is by 11% debut sire Unified, out of a mare who had some speed and has produced debutwinner Shippy. She had a quick gate work on May 10; the main threats look like closers. #2 TWISTING PISTONS was a strong closing second when last racing over a year ago. The lone four-year-old in the field has posted the best Beyer figures here. #5 SERIOUS GREEN ran her best race to date on May 10 when running on to be second behind the runaway Hoodless. She seems like an honest enough filly and is arguably the one to beat in her second start off of the bench. #1 HER OBSESSION ran on decently to be third against \$15,000 three-year-olds on May 10, but catches a field that she does not look out of place with for this move up in value.

Race 4
#2 Scored
#4 Get Out the Vote
#3 Tivali
#1 Sigiriya

#2 SCORED had a couple of good races at Tampa this winter but likely lost her last one before it started when breaking through the gate pre-start. She can show some speed and has good form on the Tapeta. #4 GET OUT THE VOTE got loose on the lead and was never headed when beating \$10,000 maidens 13 days ago. She takes a drop for her first start against winners; we'll see if she gets as easy a lead this time. #3 TIVALI took a couple of months to make the races after being claimed last year and was put on the sidelines in September. Her form early last year would make her a serious threat here; we'll see if the winter off did her any good. #1 SIGIRIYA was an even fifth in her final start of the season for \$10,000. She has never missed a check in eight career starts.

Race 5

#3 Tabloid Material - Best Bet #4 Souper Cop #6 Vandoo

#1 Looks Lucky to Me

#3 TABLOID MATERIAL dueled on the lead before giving way to be fourth when dropping in for \$25,000 for her final start of the 2024 season. This barn has been making plenty of drops this season and they continue the trend here; she looks like the main speed. #4 SOUPER COP ran on well to be second behind a lone speed winner while attracting a \$7,500 claim on May 10. She can be an up-and-down type but her best efforts fit with these. #6 VANDOO had one big effort for \$25,000 in October but otherwise had an unremarkable 2024 campaign. She has tactical speed and could be poised for the hot combo of Kevin and Pietro. #1 LOOKS LUCKY TO ME closed out 2024 with a couple of good efforts against non-threes after a couple of disappointing runs in starter/optional claiming company. She may need a start off of the layoff before she finds her best run.

Race 6
#2 C C's Kingdom
#3 Sunrise Drive
#5 Hemlo Gold
#1 Confusing

#2 C C'S KINGDOM won twice for \$10,000 last year but was competitive at higher levels several times. He draws a good post and should have an honest pace to run at here. #3 SUNRISE DRIVE is cutting back from a solid fourth in a 1 3/4 miles starter allowance at Oaklawn three weeks ago. His synthetic form last year was quite solid and his fitness is definitely not in question. #5 HEMLO GOLD was run down late when cutting back to seven furlongs and dropping in for \$15,000 on December 8. His best efforts definitely put him in the hunt but he may need a start off of the bench. #1 CONFUSING got a start under his belt in a 5 1/2 furlong dash on April 27. Although it looks like there is other speed here, there is a possibility the others could take back assuming he will be too cheap to keep going and allow him a comfortable early lead; at a big enough price I think he's worth a shot on the chance he gets brave.

Race 7

#5 Dissectologist #3 Royal Quality #4 Jmr Speedy Escape #8 Ry Pie #2 Red Sneakers

#5 DISSECTOLOGIST was a good second behind a winter-fit rival while attracting a \$7,500 claim on May 11. He could be the main speed here. #3 ROYAL QUALITY tracked a moderate pace and ran a very good second on May 4, getting back to a suitable distance after a poor winter campaign at Gulfstream. A repeat of that effort will put him in the hunt here. #4 JMR SPEEDY ESCAPE raced in midpack and finished third, 2 3/4 lengths behind Royal Quality on May 4. He is capable of showing more speed and could be the thorn in Dissectologist's side. #8 RY PIE struggled early in 2024 but got into good form for his final three starts of the meet. We'll see if he's ready to fire off of the bench. #2 RED SNEAKERS had a nice twoyear-old season in 2023, winning twice and picking up a few more checks. He did not make the races last year; a wild card off of the layoff.