

Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson
Sunday, June 1st 2025

Race 1

#2 Maryland Spirit

#5 Lemoncella Spritz

#4 Vrana (IRE)

#3 La Ronde

#2 MARYLAND SPIRIT kept on well to be a game third in a five furlong dash two weeks ago. She has some natural speed and should make the lead on the stretch out to seven furlongs. #5 LEMONCELLA SPRITZ stalked the pace and had to alter course in midstretch when finishing in midpack against OS/\$40,000 three-year-olds on May 10. She may be better off trying to come from a bit further out of it. #4 VRANA (IRE) may have an advantage as the only four-year-old in the race. She closed out 2024 with a good third-place effort when setting a slow pace in a route. #3 LA RONDE is by 5% debut sire Shaman Ghost, out of a multiple restricted Stakes-winning dam who has not had a debut winner in three foals to start. \$19,000 purchase is likely starting at the appropriate level.

Race 2

#3 Lonny's Gamble

#4 Scuderia

#2 Wild Card

#5 Last Ride

#3 LONNY'S GAMBLE was very consistent last year, hitting the board in four of six starts and missing a check only once; seems like a safe option. #4 SCUDERIA was a fringe player at best in the maiden allowance ranks last year. He is dropping in for a tag for the first time while racing as a first time gelding; has the best Beyers in the field. #2 WILD CARD made an outside rally to be a distant fourth in a 5 ½ furlong dash on May 17. He can move forward with a start under his belt and should appreciate the added distance. #5 LAST RIDE was never involved when kicking off his season on May 11 but simply may have needed one off of the layoff. He showed he was capable of better last year; blinkers are being added.

Race 3

#1 Dark Danger - Best Bet

#2 Captivating Man

#3 Souper Effect

#6 Its in the Card

#1 DARK DANGER dueled on the lead and had to settle for second behind the well positioned Awesome Empire on May 11. He looks like the clear speed in this field. #2 CAPTIVATING MAN made a stretch bid but had to settle for third in a split of the aforementioned May 11 race. That race has produced next out-winner Deputy Daddy; may have needed a start off of the bench. #3 SOUPER EFFECT swung wide and passed a few tiring foes when debuting against older foes on May 3. The Beyer was light but he could improve with experience. #6 ITS IN THE CARDS was 2 ½ lengths behind Souper Effect when finishing sixth in the same May 3 race; fringe player.

Race 4

#7 Zisisit (IRE)

#2 Shade of Pale

#6 Romantica

#8 Theft

#7 ZISISIT (IRE) was third behind the very in-from Ashima on the Gulfstream Tapeta on April 11. She is a true inner turf specialist and looks live in this spot. #2 SHADE OF PALE was last in her local debut over the Tapeta but was beaten only 2 ½ lengths for second. She raced very well on the Tampa turf two starts ago and could rebound returning to her preferred surface. #6 ROMANTICA ran a respectable race to be fifth at Gulfstream two starts ago but failed to stay the 12 furlongs when setting the pace at Keeneland on April 23. A return to a standard distance should be to her benefit. #8 THEFT rallied smartly to break her maiden against allowance company on March 28. Daughter of Kitten's Joy should not have a problem taking to the turf.

Race 5

#4 Copper Ghost

#1 William T

#3 Gotme Good

#5 Thor's Cause

#4 COPPER GHOST broke slowly and never threatened but started to show some finish and galloped out well when debuting on May 3. He is bred for the added distance and could improve now that he is stabled here instead of shipping in from Fair Hill. #1 WILLIAM T stalked the pace and kept on to be a good second in the same race that Copper Ghost exits. The blinkers are coming off for this stretch out in distance. #3 GOTME GOOD dueled on the lead before giving way to be third for \$40,000 on May 11. He figures to be a pace factor

with William T. #5 THOR'S CAUSE picked up a few small shares last year and even ran a credible seventh in the King's Plate; not without a shot in his first start off of the bench.

Race 6

#5 More Money Hunny

#4 Just a Gem

#10 Nikita's Gem

#1 Ella It Is

#5 MORE MONEY HUNNY was beaten just 2 ¼ lengths for place when finishing a non-threatening fifth in an N2L allowance on May 11. The drop in for \$40,000 should be beneficial and the return to a route distance is not a problem. #4 JUST A GEM kicked off her season in a seven furlong race at this level and kept on to be a decent fourth. She should step forward with that start under her belt and the return to her preferred distance. #10 NIKITA'S GEM was a non-factor in the same race that Just a Gem exits. The route distance is definitely better for her and she was flat in her first start of the campaign last year before winning second time out. #1 ELLA IT IS weakened after showing some tactical speed in a six furlong race on May 3. Multiple Stakes-placed at two, she did run on well enough in the Princess Elizabeth at today's distance.

Race 7

#2 Piper's Factor

#6 Never Surprised

#8 Wolfie's Dynaghost

#4 Society's Thunder

#2 PIPER'S FACTOR kept on well to be a very respectable fourth in the Opening Verse at Churchill on May 1. The Toronto Cup winner is not in easy here but does not look outclassed and draws a good post for his first local start since that aforementioned Stakes triumph. #6 NEVER SURPRISED had a very impressive win at the N2X/\$50,000 level on October 6 before wrapping up his season with a sixth-place effort in the Autumn. Grade 1-placed seven-year-old was gelded over the winter and figures to be competitive off of the layoff. #8 WOLFIE'S DYNAGHOST has not started since disappointing as the favourite in the Kentucky Cup Class in March 2024. Although he has done his best running on synthetic he is a Stakes winner on turf with a very solid record; just a question of how ready he is to fire off of an extended layoff. #4 SOCIETY'S THUNDER was moving like a winner on the turn but was disqualified for stretch interference when facing N2X/\$50,000 foes on May 18. He was a neck away from winning the Overskate over this course last fall; do not ignore.

Race 8

#5 No Time

#2 Double Velocity

#3 Salt

#4 A Little Frisky

#5 NO TIME broke a bit tentatively and was one-paced when last competing at Gulfstream on April 5. She makes her second start off of the layoff; she could be the speed in a fairly paceless race. #2 DOUBLE VELOCITY was an impressive winner of her debut on the Keeneland turf and was quickly sold. She drew a tough post and did not fire in her first try for the new connections at Churchill; draws much better and is likely getting in a bit easier here. #3 SALT was never a factor when returning to Woodbine in the Star Shoot. She had two very nice efforts routing on the Tapeta last fall. #4 A LITTLE FRISKY did not get a win in five starts last year but had some solid performances including a fourth-place effort in the Woodbine Oaks where she was beaten just 1 ¾ lengths. With the right trip I could definitely see her factoring here.

Race 9

#5 Bail Us Out

#4 Last Dawn

#8 Fly the W

#1 Journeyman

#2 Swift Delivery

#5 BAIL US OUT was able to win an N2L allowance over this course in September then missed by just a half-length to the super solid Dresden Row in the Ontario Derby. His effort in the Autumn was not bad at all; returns this year as a gelding. #4 LAST DAWN had three runner-up finishes where he was beaten less than a length last year. He can be tactical and goes for a solid barn who has been knocking on the door and will likely get hot soon enough. #8 FLY THE W was able to run on in the stretch to finish fifth in the Appleton in his first start off of a \$35,000 claim. A starter allowance superstar in Florida for the past few years, he is best on the synthetic but is more than capable on turf and always looks live. #1 JOURNEYMAN never made an impact when finishing third in a short field on the Tapeta on May 10. His form in Tampa this winter was solid and he can be more forwardly placed than last time if desired. #2 SWIFT DELIVERY never reached contention when last racing at Gulfstream on March 29. His local form last year was quite solid including two impressive wins at the lower conditions.