

Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson  
Sunday, December 17th 2023

Race 1

**#7 Topsy Fox**

**#6 He Shoot He Wins**

**#5 Night Striker**

**#1 Needs Fulfilled**

#7 TIPSY FOX is by 14% juvenile debut sire Frac Daddy, out of a dam who's lone foal to race is debut-winner Ante Up Alex. He has been working steadily and debuts for a tag. #6 HE SHOOTS HE WINS set the pace but was run down late when finishing second behind the class-dropping Fabelman in a race that has produced two next-out-winners on November 17. He has the strongest speed figures of the experienced runners in this field. #5 NIGHT STRIKER was a distant second behind a runaway Valyrian Sky on November 26. He has hit the board in half of his six starts to date and is probably facing the easiest group he's met to date. #1 NEED FULFILLED did not have a clean start and was never in contention when dropping in for \$15,000 on December 1, but could run on for a minor share on one of his better days.

Race 2

**#7 Race for Pinks**

**#4 Dragon's Brew**

**#8 Kid Forester**

**#1 Blue Max**

#7 RACE FOR PINKS was no match for a runaway Bachelor Pad when facing starter/optional \$15,000 company two weeks ago, missing place by 3 ¾ lengths. He drops back to the level at which he was a winner two-back. #4 DRAGON'S BREW has been showing consistent finishing interest of late despite not finding the winner's circle yet this year. He seems to be at his best at shorter distances and may be a victim of a lack of pace here, but he should be closing at the end. #8 KID FORESTER stalked the pace and kicked clear to a 6 ¼ length romp for \$7,500 last month. A repeat of that effort would obviously be good enough to win, but he faces tougher and has been beaten by several of these in the past. #1 BLUE MAX has only avoided Bachelor Pad once in his four starts since being claimed by these connections, and that one start was by far his best, a good runner-up finish. He drops in for \$10,000 to avoid that foe and could get back to form.

Race 3

**#6 Hardware Gap**

**#2 Echo With Laughter**

**#4 Jmr Speedy Escape**

**#7 Spanish Serenade**

#6 HARDWARE GAP had an empty effort racing on the lead two-back, but got back to his stalking/closing style on December 1 and ran gamely to be beaten a head. He seems to be at his best at these shorter distances and should have fast fractions to follow. #2 ECHO WITH LAUGHTER rises in value after being run down late by longshot Highland Society for \$5,000 nine days ago. He has the best recent speed figures of this group; we'll see if he's quick enough to make the lead here. #4 JMR SPEEDY ESCAPE did not break well before racing wide and coming up empty against \$15,000 company on

November 17. He draws a better post this time; he has had plenty of strong efforts this fall and looks like an obvious player. #7 SPANISH SERENADE was a game maiden winner for \$7,500 two starts ago. Though he may not be a serious win threat, he looks like a closer at this distance who could get up for a minor share late.

Race 4

**#2 Sassiness**

**#4 Junipero Serra**

**#5 Legal Catch**

**#6 Painted Glory**

#2 SASSINESS is one of several fillies taking on the boys here. Though disappointing in her local debut she has come back with two solid efforts, including a game third with a wide trip behind repeat-winner Financial Advice in her October 7 Tapeta try. She draws well and could break through. #4 JUNIPERO SERRA made a wide, circling rally but came up a head short behind a beautifully tripped Wicked Django on November 19. He has not had a bad effort this year and is capable of being more forwardly-placed if desired; the one to beat. #5 LEGAL CATCH had some traffic in the stretch when finishing third, 2 ¼ lengths behind Junipero Serra last time. Stakes-placed gelding has hooked some tough maiden special weight groups this season; overdue for a breakthrough effort. #6 PAINTED GLORY took on the boys on November 19, forcing the pace before giving way to be fourth, a head behind Legal Catch. She was able to outkick Sassiness when finishing second on October 7.

Race 5

**#10 Indy One**

**#6 Monday Morning**

**#1 Roar of the Crowd**

**#4 People Are People**

#10 INDY ONE is by 1-for-15 juvenile debut sire Seattle Serenade, out of a dam who has produced multiple Stakes-winner Ultimate Destiny as well as Grade 2-placed Dolce Sopresa. He worked in company from the gate with Pierre, who showed ability in his debut last week. #6 MONDAY MORNING dueled on the rail and looked like he may be empty but showed some grit in the final furlong when finishing sixth in a solid maiden special weight last week. He gets to face OS/\$40,000 here and could be a little overlooked. #1 ROAR OF THE CROWD is by Reload, a 23% juvenile debut sire, out of Uproar, a 1997 mare who is best known for producing Pender Harbour. He outworked a filly who won her debut for \$15,000 on Thursday from the gate on December 3. #4 PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE debuted at this level on November 9, finishing gamely up the rail to be beaten a half-length. He could step forward with some experience under his best.

Race 6

**#8 Jokestar**

**#1 American Decision**

**#10 Ecstasy**

**#9 Catch the Drift**

#8 JOKESTAR finished a bit evenly when finishing fourth behind repeat-winner Dresden Row on November 5. The blinkers are removed here; his best effort to date was a runner-up finish behind the talented Piper's Factor when

racing without blinkers. #1 AMERICAN DECISION wheels back in a week after being beaten a nose in a very solid-looking group sprinting. He had a wide journey at this distance when attracting a \$40,000 claim two-back; should be saving ground from the rail. #10 ECSTACY takes on the boys while making her route debut here. She has shown interest in both of her starts to date, most recently finishing second behind the more experienced Lunch With Bernie; the dam's best foal was a sprinter but she has thrown a handful of route winners. #9 CATCH THE DRIFT is another filly who will try her hand against the boys here. She raced wide and showed some finish when third behind pacesetting stablemate Logistics on November 18; the dam was a Grade 3-placed turf router.

#### Race 7

##### **#3 Bachelor Pad**

##### **#2 Reload's Rascal**

##### **#11 Hilarious Affair**

##### **#5 Long Pond**

#3 BACHELOR PAD has been an absolute monster in the starter/optional \$15,000 ranks of late, winning his last two starts by a combined 10 lengths. He took a shot at this level on November 5, though in a 5 ½ furlong fash where he could not make the lead and was racing wide against a rail bias; things could play more in his favour this time. #2 RELOAD'S RASCAL probably should have won his last start quite comfortably but had a rough break then was being steadied for a significant portion of the turn before missing by a head to the very in-form Light the Lamp. If he is ready for another peak effort he could prove to be quite tough here. #11 HILARIOUS AFFAIR had knocked on the door in a couple of OS/\$40,000 non-threes before breaking through in a big way two weeks ago, racing on the lead and drawing away to a 6 ½ length romp, although that margin is mainly due to an accident. He has the speed to find position but is at the risk of a wide trip from this post. #5 LONG POND was game in the stretch to edge by the pacesetting Amber Light in a \$25,000 non-three on November 23. He hooks a much tougher group here but is a pretty honest horse and could earn a minor share.

#### Race 8

##### **#1 One Bay Hemmingway - Best Bet**

##### **#5 Hall of Dreams**

##### **#6 Moon Landing**

##### **#7 Jamiesta**

#1 ONE BAY HEMMINGWAY returned from a near-three-month layoff in a very salty N2X/\$50,000 on December 7, sitting midpack while racing wide and failing to threaten. The move to N2L/\$50,000 company is significant; could rebound. #5 HALL OF DREAMS stalked the pace from the inside but could not quite reach the pacesetting Romeo Yankee when routing at this level last week. The 2022 Queen's Plate favourite was a disappointing favourite in his lone sprint try as a maiden, but the cutback may be what he needs to break through for his second career win. #6 MOON LANDING beat a pretty manageable field at this level when cutting back to a sprint on November 26. He returns for a tag; we'll see if he can repeat against some solid rivals. #7 JAMIESTA figures to be overlooked based on the \$5,000 tag he was taken for on December 1, but has been running against

some very salty older foes. Three-time-winner returns to a barn who had success with him; has more class than he will be given credit for.

#### Race 9

##### **#3 Clear Destination**

##### **#7 J P Hellish**

##### **#1 Lac Macaza**

##### **#5 Mighty Sea**

#3 CLEAR DESTINATION hooked a very solid group in an N3X/\$80,000 sprint on November 18 where he drew the 10 hole on an inside/speed favouring track and failed to threaten. Since winning at this level over eventual Valedictory winner Conglomerate, he has been facing the likes of Tyson and Artie's Storm; should be much more at home here. #7 J P HELLISH has yet to be worse than third in four starts since arriving at Woodbine, most recently finishing third at this level behind the solid Cruden Bay on November 19. He has solid speed and may land in a good spot behind a couple of the rapid types. #1 LAC MACAZA made a wide move before flattening out and ending up seventh in the same race that J P Hellish exits. He is capable of racing closer to the pace than he did last time. #5 MIGHTY SEA is taking a significant rise up in class from the OS/\$40,000 ranks, but figures to be a closer in a race with a couple of strong speed types and goes for a barn which has been very live lately; could hit the bottom of the ticket at a price.

#### Race 10

##### **#1 Guns n' Rojas**

##### **#8 Jimmies Big Day**

##### **#5 Rookie Radar**

##### **#11 Amber Light**

##### **#9 Kinetic Stone**

#1 GUNS N' ROJAS missed place by two lengths when being benefited by circumstance against OS/\$40,000 types two weeks ago. He should appreciate the drop and there should be some speed for him to run at. #8 JIMMIES BIG DAY burst clear to score an easy win against non-twos for this price on November 19. He has improved a bit with each start this season; looks like a very live contender here. #5 ROOKIE RADAR rallied from last to finish third at this level in his first start for this barn on November 23. He does not run many bad ones and could be live with the right setup. #11 AMBER LIGHT decimated \$5,000 non-twos on November 3, then came back for \$25,000 and was picked up late when beaten a neck, two lengths better than Rookie Radar. He draws a wide post and may have other speed to deal with; we'll see if he has another big one in him. #9 KINETIC STONE gets some much needed class relief after taking on N2X/\$50,000 types on December 7. Rapid type is good enough to win this on his best day but has not quite been as good in the back half of the season; we'll see what we get today.