Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson Sunday, September 15th 2024

Race 1

#8 Hammerhead #5 Niigon's Law #2 War Warrior #7 Accelerando

#8 HAMMERHEAD broke slowly and was quickly taken to the outside, racing four-wide on the far turn and keeping on decently in the stretch when finishing sixth on debut at Saratoga. He could step up with a better trip. #5 NIIGON'S LAW ran a credible fourth when debuting in an off-turf race on August 18. Son of Grade 2-winning turf mare Niigon's Eclipse seems like a logical option in his second attempt. #2 WAR WARRIOR added blinkers and did not fire when competing in the same off-turf race as Niigon's Law on August 18. The blinkers remain on; he has had two turf sprints with respectable results. #7 ACCELERANDO dueled on the lead and was outkicked in the stretch when debuting at a mile on the inner turf August 30. He returns on fairly quick rest and figures to be forwardly-placed again.

Race 2

#6 Journeyman

#2 Meyer

#3 Twowaycrossing

#1 Prideofdistinction

#6 JOURNEYMAN was able to respond to every challenge kicked clear in the stretch when winning the first leg of this series impressively on the front end. If he is allowed to dictate the pace again he should be able to double up. #2 MEYER sat towards the back and rallied nicely to be second behind Journeyman. Stalwart of this series over the past few seasons, he looks like the nextmost-logical choice behind Journeyman. #3 TWOWAYCROSSING made an early, three-wide move on the second turn and kept on fairly well in the stretch to be fifth in the first leg of this series. Lasix is added for the first time; with a better trip I could see him hitting the ticket, #1 PRIDEOFDISTINCTION kicked off his season for \$25,000 on the Tapeta, showing some late run in a fifth-place effort. 10-year-old is a marathon specialist and could wake up in his second start off of the bench.

Race 3

#7 Skylight Caper #4 Super Supreme #1 I Love to Win #2 Ella It Is

#7 SKYLIGHT CAPER raced wide and finished gamely despite never really threatening Super Supreme in the Muskoka. She adds blinkers for the first time and could be more of a threat if she can save ground. #4 SUPER SUPREME exits back-to-back impressive front-end score, taking the Muskoka by 4 ¼ lengths while never truly being threatened. If she takes to the turf she is the clear one to beat. #1 I LOVE TO WIN rallied to win her debut over next-out winner Onejabtoomany, then finished

an even sixth in the Muskoka when racing wide. She is out of a turf-winning dam and should be able to save ground this time. #2 ELLA IT IS made an early move and was able to edge clear in the stretch to break her maiden on August 23. Her second dam was a multiple Stakeswinner on turf.

Race 4
#2 He's Not Joking
#1 War to Remember
#5 Drexel Hill

#7 Mister Monoclonal

#2 HE'S NOT JOKING debuted on August 4 with a very game runner-up finish behind Kokomo, who already had three starts under his belt. That race has produced nextout winner Notorious Gangster; should be tough here. #1 WAR TO REMEMBER is by War of Will, who is 2-for-40 with first timers, out of a mare who has thrown one debut winner in four foals to start. He has had plenty of breezes south of the border and should be more than ready. #5 DREXEL HILL raced three-wide and showed some finishing interest when finishing a distant fifth behind the runaway Winterberry on August 24. She will need to improve but at least has shown some potential. #7 MISTER MONOCLONAL took a while to get going but ran a decent fourth when debuting in an off-turf race at Aqueduct back in May. Blinkers are added for his return to the races.

Race 5
#2 Lady Iona
#3 Painted Glory
#1 Nantuckets Day
#5 Lemon Sweets

#2 LADY IONA broke slowly, advanced into the pack but had to steady a couple of times on the turn when debuting in a five furlong sprint at Gulfstream in June. There appears to be ability; we'll see how she handles stretching out to a mile. #3 PAINTED GLORY has been second best in three of four starts this year with two very close efforts coming into this race. Her speed figures are solid; logical. #1 NANTUCKETS DAY made a rally but was shrugged off by European import High Handed and had to settle for second when racing on the inner turf on August 24. She should have a good trip from the inside. #5 LEMON SWEETS has been an improved horse in her two most recent starts, finishing an okay fifth and beating Nantuckets Day by 1 ½ lengths on August 3. Blinkers are added for the first time.

Race 6

#1 Regal Guest #3 Conacher #2 Lasting Silence #6 Drop Your Gloves

#1 REGAL GUEST has been breezing steadily coming into this debut, with a sharp gate work as his final drill on September 5. The full brother to Pink Lloyd does not appear to be hooking an overly-tough group for his debut. #3 CONACHER never really got involved when debuting in a solid maiden special weight on turf, topped by

Soaring Free-winner Cairo Caper and next-out-winner Kokomo. He has since been gelded and should appreciate the drop in for \$40,000. #2 LASTING SILENCE had a much improved effort on August 18, making the lead and being run down in the final furlong. He would not be a big surprise here. #6 DROP YOUR GLOVES passed tiring foes when finishing a distant fifth on turf on August 24. He ran a solid second over the Tapeta two-back and could get back to form.

Race 7
#3 Kekoa
#5 Dewolf
#4 Awesome Rainbow
#1 Shadow Realm

#3 KEKOA was second-best behind an impressive Scorching in the Simcoe on August 25. If his synthetic form translates to the turf he will be tough to beat here. #5 DEWOLF raced well against eventual Soaring Freewinner Cairo Caper when debuting with a fourth-place effort, then dropped to the OS/\$40,000 level and looked very good when winning with a 76 Beyer on August 24. Based on that speed figure and the turf experience he could be favoured over Kekoa. #4 AWESOME RAINBOW rallied to win on debut then had some trouble on the backside but finished well to fourth, 4 1/4 lengths behind Kekoa in the Simcoe. His speed figures are a bit light but they can change quickly with two-year-olds. #1 SHADOW REALM was a neck behind Kekoa in the Simcoe last time out. Son of Signature Red does not have that sire's typical speed but should have a good ground-saving trip from the inside draw.

Race 8
#1 Zisisit (IRE)
#2 Miss Roberts (GB)
#7 Devil's Bit
#5 My Girl Sky

#1 ZISISIT (IRE) has had two impressive wins in as many starts over this inner course this season. She was able to beat her back-classy former stablemate Perhaps Tonight in the Midsummer Handicap on August 2 and may find this move to the N1X/\$32,000 level to be easier company. #2 MISS ROBERTS (GB) made an eyecatching move late on the turn and led in late stretch but was outfinished when sprinting on the Tapeta on August 18. If she can get comfortable in the early running and wait to launch her rally she could be very live. #7 DEVIL'S BIT never really got involved when finishing sixth over the squishy surface on August 17, the cancelled King's Plate day. She drops in for \$32,000 and gets back to her preferred surface. #5 MY GIRL SKY makes a delayed 2024 debut here and finds herself eligible for this easier class now that her win in the Thunder Bay no longer counts against her. She may need a start to be at her best but could be along for a share.

Race 9
#1 Border Town - Bes
#6 Town Cruise
#3 Mason's Gamble
#2 Twin City

#1 BORDER TOWN could not make the lead against Patches O'Houlihan and came up empty in the Bold Venture on August 23. He was a winner at this level twoback and should be the main speed here. #6 TOWN CRUISE gets a late start to his nine-year-old campaign here. His only bad race of 2023 came with a wide trip in the 10 furlong Singspiel; he will go with blinkers today which he wore back when he was at his best including his 2021 Woodbine Mile win. #3 MASON'S GAMBLE passed a couple of tiring foes while never threatening in the Vice Regent on August 25. I've always considered him an underrated runner; often sent off at decent odds and picks up a lot of checks against quality company. #2 TWIN CITY got onto turf for the first time on August 25. sitting a few lengths off of a hot pace and getting up to win at the N2X/\$50,000 level. He hooks some solid company here but could run another competitive race.

Race 10

#3 Monday Morning #1 Cabernaydo #9 Quiet Knight #7 Saint Templar #6 Rebel Faith

#3 MONDAY MORNING dropped in for \$25,000 and ran a game second in a sprint on August 17. He stretches back out to a route while trying turf for the first time; I wouldn't be surprised to see him fare well with the rise back up in class. #1 CABERNAYDO moved early and tired hard when beaten a half-length over this course in his local debut, then cut back to a sprint and finished strongly though belatedly to be second again. He looks like the one to beat. #9 QUIET KNIGHT was two lengths behind Cabernaydo when racing over this course on August 4. He will have to work out a trip from a tough post but is not impossible. #7 SAINT TEMPLAR raced wide and finished midpack when kicking off his season in a maiden special weight route on July 19. He drops in for \$40,000 and will try turf for the first time in his second start off of the bench. #6 REBEL FAITH made up good late ground to be third, three lengths behind Cabernaydo when sprinting on August 18. He makes his second start with blinkers; on the edges.