

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

Race 1

#5 Red Weaver

#1 Magic Power

#6 Holiday Snooze

#4 Benny's Jets

#5 RED WEAVER showed speed but was second-best behind another well-meant debuting stablemate in Humber River when debuting on November 24. He earned a strong 69 Beyer for that race and should be tough here. #1 MAGIC POWER took the advantage on the turn but was outkicked and ended up fourth in a race won by Regal Guest, the full-brother to Pink Lloyd, when last competing on November 14. His two races against maiden company have both been respectable. #6 HOLIDAY SNOOZE is by Ami's Holiday, who is 0-for-38 with debuting two-year-olds, and is the second foal to race out of Catch Some Zs. He had a solid gate workout in company on November 17. #4 BENNY'S JETS tried to force the pace but came up empty when finishing sixth in the same race that Red Weaver exits. He ran a decent third before that; fringe player.

Race 2

#2 Restoring Order

#1 Big Lew

#5 Night Striker

#7 Screen Legend

#2 RESTORING ORDER fell back a bit nearing the far turn but ran on again to be a solid third when routing in his first start off of the claim. He should not mind cutting back to a sprint. #1 BIG LEW ran a decent sixth against \$25,000 company on November 24. He should appreciate that drop in for \$15,000 and could be forwardly placed with the stretch out from 5 ½ furlongs. #5 NIGHT STRIKER has picked up plenty of checks this season racing as a front-runner in routes. He is adding blinkers while turning back to seven furlongs; his last start at this distance was an okay fifth where he folded late. #7 SCREEN LEGEND has done some good running since moving into this barn and could be a closer who picks up a minor share.

Race 3

#5 Periwinkle - Best Bet

#7 Nata Trouble

#3 Thread

#6 Madame Obey

#5 PERIWINKLE was a very impressive maiden winner on October 19 after having excuses in her earlier starts, then had a rough break en route to a fourth-place effort in the Shady Well. With a clean trip I think she is as good as

anyone here. #7 NATA TROUBLE chased the winner every step of the way when finishing second in the Shady Well, two lengths ahead of Periwinkle. Her recent speed figures are solid for this group and she should be a pace factor. #3 THREAD was second-best at this level on October 26 behind Pop Idol, who came back to win the Shady Well. Her only poor effort to date came on turf in the Natalma, a cross-out race. #6 MADAME OBEY is a first-time-starter taking on winners. Tiz the Law is 6-for-42 with debut runners so far; the dam was a solid mare who has thrown two debut-winning foals in seven to start, and whose progeny including Grade 2-winner Dixie City and multiple synthetic Stakes-winner Win the War.

Race 4

#9 Double Ride

#6 Last Ride

#4 Glintindaddyseye

#1 Doadster

#9 DOUBLE RIDE exits three consecutive runner-up finishes at this level. He has been forwardly-placed in recent starts and catches a field without a ton of obvious speed; maybe racing on the lead will help get him home. #6 LAST RIDE showed nothing on debut but was making up some late ground when finishing fifth in a race topped by Humber River and Red Weaver at the OS/\$40,000 level on November 24. He is still lightly raced and may be a little overlooked here. #4 GLINTINDADDYSEYE drops in for \$25,000 off of decent form at the OS/\$40,000 level, picking up checks in three of his five starts to date. Blinkers are added on the heels of a closing fourth-place effort. #1 DOADSTER's form has been hit and miss but his better efforts have yielded competitive speed figures; he raced very well when switching to a closing style last time.

Race 5

#3 Moon Landing

#1 C C's Kingdom

#6 Clayton

#7 Penner Ash (IRE)

#3 MOON LANDING was closing late when finishing a decent third for this tag on November 30. He ran a very nice second three starts ago when racing closer to the pace, a position he may have in this fairly paceless race. #1 C C'S KINGDOM rallied from seventh to earn a convincing score against starter/optional \$10,000 routers on November 24. Hard-knocking gelding has had a solid season and did run a decent third at this price at distance back in May. #6 CLAYTON stalked the early pace, took a check heading into the turn and never re-rallied when finishing seventh in the same race that Moon Landing exits. He was in good form earlier in the season and has plenty of back class. #7 PENNER ASH (IRE) races out of condition here but has shown some speed on occasion

and could maybe be a threat to wire them if allowed an easy enough lead.

Race 6

#6 Mister Banjoman

#7 Echo With Laughter

#2 Mannix (IRE)

#3 Fast and Ready

#6 MISTER BANJOMAN made his local debut against a solid group of starter/optional \$15,000 types on November 23, chasing hot fractions and digging in to get third. He could be the main speed here stretching out from 5 ½ furlongs. #7 ECHO WITH LAUGHTER has missed the board just once in eight starts this year, with four wins at the meet including his most recent start on November 17. He should not be too far from the lead and should be a serious player once again. #2 MANNIX (IRE) was claimed back by these connections when winning for \$7,500 on November 24. He was a winner at this level over Echo With Laughter back in October and should be rolling late in this bid for three consecutive wins. #3 FAST AND READY is a non-three taking on older horses but has found himself in improved recent form, earning 70 Beyers in his two most recent tries; minor player.

Race 7

#1 Chamber Music

#5 Yacht Boy

#6 Roi Soleil

#8 Cooler Man

#1 CHAMBER MUSIC was a powerful winner against OS/\$40,000 non-twos in his first start for this barn on November 3, earning an 86 Beyer in the process. His speed figures stand out in this group and he should be poised for back-to-back wins. #5 YACHT BOY has finished no worse than fourth all season, placing in both the Elgin and the Lake Erie Stakes. He was beaten just a half-length at this level on November 3; going to need pace to close into. #6 ROI SOLEIL ran for the \$50,000 tag when facing N2L allowance types on December 1, running a very credible third with a 78 Beyer. He is twice Stakes-placed this season and looks like a logical player. #8 COOLER MAN did not fire when routing in the Lake Ontario but did run on to be third behind the impressive Victory Achieved in an N2L allowance two-back and could close for a minor share here.

Race 8

#6 Highland Blue

#7 Roar of the Crowd

#5 American Decision

#8 Midnight Tempesta

#6 HIGHLAND BLUE was pressed on the lead and found enough to prevail when breaking his maiden for this tag

on December 1. He will likely end up in a stalking spot here and could double up with the right setup. #7 ROAR OF THE CROWD has been racing well at the N2L allowance level, most recently running a decent fourth on December 1, and will now get some class relief. His speed figures fit; a contender. #5 AMERICAN DECISION was a half-length behind Roar of the Crowd when finishing fifth last time. He ran a good third when making a wide rally two-back; he has had a habit of stalling on the turn in the past. #8 MIDNIGHT TEMPESTA had trouble on the backside and failed to recover while attracting a \$25,000 claim on November 8. He had been in good form prior to that effort; maybe a value player off of that poor line.

Race 9

#10 Treason

#2 Boston Tea Party

#4 Gilt Edge

#6 Old Chestnut

#10 TREASON is making his first start since a fourth-place effort in last year's Durham Cup. Grade 2-winner briefly held the track record for 1 1/16 miles back in 2022; he has never sprinted in his career but should be tough as the clear class of this field. #2 BOSTON TEA PARTY does his best running on turf but has shown a couple of times this season that he can handle himself well on the Tapeta, most recently rallying to be a good third behind Souped Up on November 15. He is capable of showing the speed to be much closer to the pace if he wants to be. #4 GILT EDGE was sharp in the paddock, broke like a bullet and was unable to get his preferred covered up, closing trip on November 24. He ran very well to be fourth at two starts ago; a contender if he can get the right setup. #6 OLD CHESTNUT closed nicely to be fifth, a length behind Boston Tea Part of November 15. He has been competitive at this higher levels the last couple of seasons and is not without a shot here.

Race 10

#1 Light the Lamp

#5 Souper Dormy

#7 Hunt Master

#3 Forest Buzz

#1 LIGHT THE LAMP made a bid but emptied out when taking on N2X/\$50,000 types on November 15. He drops back into the level where he has been most competitive and could have a great inside stalking trip in a race with some speed. #5 SOUPER DORMY had not been having any luck in the trip department but finally was able to get some cover and rallied to win at this level on November 24. He could easily get another good trip here and would be no surprise to see double up. #7 HUNT MASTER was able to hold on at the wire to win the restricted Overskate Stakes, then set the pace but was outclassed when

taking on some very nice rivals in an N3X/\$80,000 on November 16. He is aggressively marketed for \$32,000 here but may have to deal with some company on the lead. #3 FOREST BUZZ rallied to win for \$25,000 on November 30. He hooks some tough company here but could get the right pace setup.

Race 11

#9 Rapid Test

#4 Ron's Gizmo

#7 Secret Reserve

#2 Maakwa

#9 RAPID TEST is going to need some luck starting from the outside gate. He exits a nice runner-up finish in an N3X/\$80,000 behind I'm a Gambler, who came back to win again at that level on Thursday. Three-back in the Durham he hounded Paramount Prince on a day where closers were dominant; ignore that effort. #4 RON'S GIZMO took advantage of the closers bias when beaten a head by Dresden Row in the Durham, then lacked much finishing kick off of a good inside trip in an 11 furlong N3X/\$80,000 on the inner turf on November 2. Though the bulk of his wins have come on turf he has done his best running this season on the Tapeta; arguably the one to beat. #7 SECRET RESERVE was only a half-length behind Rapid Test when finishing fifth last time. The defending champion of this race is winless this season but does have some nice efforts on the page including a third in the Grade 2 King Edward. #2 MAAKWA re-added blinkers when cutting back to a sprint and ran a credible second behind Souped Up in an N2X/\$50,000 on November 15. The blinkers are coming back off for this stretch out but he will still be the pacesetter; we'll see how far he can take them.

Race 12

#1 Prideofdistinction

#3 Media Sensation

#9 Nonno's Little Boy

#11 Spring Mountain

#1 PRIDEOFDISTINCTION plunged in to face conditioned \$5,000 company on November 22 and flew home to be third beaten a head for everything. He is a true marathon specialist who has never had to opportunity to go a distance at a reasonable class level over the Tapeta; 10-year-old has found a good spot to potentially go out a winner. #3 MEDIA SENSATION was claimed back for \$15,000, waited the 30 day jail period and has since run two good seconds for \$10,000. He has hit the exactor in six of nine starts this year; this barn has done well identifying long distance runners in their outfit. #9 NONNO'S LITTLE BOY was one of only two who was able to properly stay the two mile trip in the Tour de Fort at Fort Erie on October 22, then came back here with a solid closing fifth-place effort in a starter/optional \$15,000

against some solid foes. He is proven to be able to handle marathon distances and looks like a very logical player. #11 SPRING MOUNTAIN could potentially be a part of the pace from the outside draw in his first bid past 1 1/16 miles. He ran a very game third chasing Frank's Art for \$5,000 on November 22; grinding type has a chance to stay the distance well.

Race 13

#13 Three Sonny Sideup

#7 Mia and Me

#1 Highland Society

#5 Grand Alliance

#6 Tricky Magician

#13 THREE SONNY SIDEUP missed the start and ran on to be fourth behind solid foes like Mannix and Jimmies Big Day for \$7,500 on November 24. He drops in for \$5,000 and should be very competitive with a clean trip. #7 MIA AND ME had a very strong Fort Erie campaign and proved he still fits here when running third behind the pacesetter Highland Society at this level two weeks ago. He should be in decent position in a race that should not have a loose pacesetter. #1 HIGHLAND SOCIETY made the lead and never looked back when winning over Mia and Me two weeks ago. His form has been up and down; we'll see if he can repeat. #5 GRAND ALLIANCE rallied very nicely to be third by a neck in a conditioned race when making his first start since June on November 28. He should have some speed to run at; maybe he can step forward in his second start off of the break. #6 TRICKY MAGICIAN fought the rider, took a shuffle and failed to recover in the same race that Highland Society and Mia and Me exit. He is definitely capable of better than his last two races suggest and should not be overlooked.