

## Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson Sunday, May 4th 2025

### Race 1

#### #3 Valyrian Sky

#### #1 Royal Quality

#### #2 Jmr Speedy Escape

#### #5 Canadian Avro

#3 VALRYIAN SKY returns from a winter based at Penn National where his only poor race with a tough trip around the Charles Town bullring. He is probably better on the synthetic and does not hook the toughest group here. #1 ROYAL QUALITY had a poor winter at Gulfstream, routing twice on the Tapeta with no luck and failing to threaten in a 5 ½ furlong dash in the middle. A more standard sprint distance like this suits him better. #2 JMR SPEEDY ESCAPE should definitely be happy to get back to his preferred surface after winter at Penn National. He may not be as good a horse as stablemate Valyrian Sky but he could be a speed threat. #5 CANADIAN AVRO kicked off his season in a starter allowance last week and passed a couple of tiring foes; he should be more at home with these;

### Race 2

#### #6 Thenorthremembs - Best Bet

#### #5 Hey Cue

#### #7 Stylish Gent

#### #3 Kid Forester

#6 THENORTHREMEMBRS was cut off at the start and showed good finish from a long way out of it to be sixth for \$10,000 at Gulfstream on April 6. He gets a class drop for his local debut and should be tough with a clean trip. #5 HEY CUE was a non-threatening third for \$12,500 on the Gulfstream dirt on March 13 after having won a non-three for that price in his previous start. He has some tactical speed and should be well positioned. #7 STYLISH GENT's only two wins last year came in Winnipeg but he did fare well a few times when returning to Toronto, including two near-misses for this price late in the season. He figures to be a speed factor here. #3 KID FORESTER is a back-classy horse with some late closing energy who could pass some tiring foes for a minor share.

### Race 3

#### #5 Pine Knoll

#### #3 Last American Exit

#### #6 Garofoli

#### #1 Bold Reload

#5 PINE KNOLL ran pretty well in his first couple of Turfway starts this winter but was a bit flat in his most recent one on March 1. He is not a horse who wins a ton but on his best day he can throw a big effort. #3 LAST AMERICAN EXIT raced twice in Tapeta sprints at Gulfstream where he was probably more forwardly-placed into rapid paces than he would like to be. He ran well for \$32,000 behind stablemate Super Dormy late last season and looks at home with these. #6 GAROFOLI makes his four-year-old debut here after a respectable

three-year-old season where he won twice and was Stakes-placed in the Elgin. He seems like the type who will transition well into open company, especially after maturing some more over the winter. #1 BOLD RELOAD will be blasting to the lead from the rail and will be trying to hold on for a minor share late.

### Race 4

#### #6 Pluie d'Avril

#### #3 Gizmo's B F F

#### #7 Alberta Be Mine

#### #2 Royal Blush

#6 PLUIE D'AVRIL returned to the Belhumeur barn late last season and was able to win against open \$5,000 company to close out the meet. Nine-time winner is hooking a manageable field for the level. #3 GIZMO'S B F F is also a pretty honest mare with some back class. She went winless in 2024 but had some respectable efforts sprinkled throughout the year; should be able to get a check with these. #7 ALBERTA BE MINE was a winner over Gizmo's B F F back in October. She could be a speed threat in a race without much pace. #2 ROYAL BLUSH did not fare well at Oaklawn this winter but will be dead fit for her return to Woodbine; we'll see if she can turn her form around.

### Race 5

#### #1 Ontario Holiday

#### #2 Attestation

#### #7 Coherence

#### #6 Panyard Tap

#1 ONTARIO HOLIDAY had two good races when dropping in for this tag including an easy maiden win, but faltered after being pressed on the lead over a closer-friendly track on September 27, then was put away. He ran well on debut last year; we'll see what he can do fresh. #2 ATTESTATION broke his maiden against \$12,500 three-year-olds at Gulfstream then made his local debut last week with a decent third behind \$15,000 company. He should fare well halving in value. #7 COHERENCE ran his better races of 2024 in the first half of the season. He was given the winter off and is dropping for a new low tag; at his best he is probably the most talented horse in this field but he is tough to trust. #6 PANYARD TAP was sent into a speed duel before folding in his final start of the 2024 season. He could be a fringe player with a more reasonable ride.

### Race 6

#### #9 Awesome Bourbon

#### #7 Awesome Crusader

#### #5 Its Time to Shine

#### #3 Summer Commander

#9 AWESOME BOURBON returned from a bit of a break in an N1X/\$25,000 at Gulfstream where he ran on from last to be fifth. The winner of that race was Mrs. Tart, a mare who came back to win an N2X/\$62,500 and was entered in Saturday's Whimsical Stakes. #7 AWESOME CRUSADER has raced well in two starts at Gulfstream since being claimed, both against solid company in Florida-bred N1X/\$20,000 races. He should appreciate

getting to face straight non-threes here. #5 ITS TIME TO SHINE ran plenty of good races in 2024 including two wins and a third-place effort in the Lake Erie Stakes. He ran very well on debut; has the speed to be well-placed in his return to the races. #3 SUMMER COMMANDER was a pretty comfortable winner of a non-two to close out his season on November 30. Multiple Stakes-placed gelding hit the board in all but one of his starts last year and should not be ignored.

## Race 7

### #8 Regal Guest

### #4 Shadow Realm

### #5 Your Valentino

### #9 Awesome Rainbow

#8 REGAL GUEST improved with each start at two, closing out the season with a very easy win on November 14. The full brother to Pink Lloyd was gelded over the winter and could have a high ceiling. #4 SHADOW REALM was more experienced than Regal Guest when edging past him to win on October 6, finished midpack in the Frost King then closed the season with a good third in a competitive race at this level on November 16. He was gelded over the winter; comes into this race off of three breezes between April 6 and 20. #5 YOUR VALENTINO ran a good second at this level to close out the Woodbine meet, then shipped from Ocala to Tampa where he ran evenly in his dirt debut. His winter fitness could have him faring well in this wide open group. #9 AWESOME RAINBOW put in a big effort to be beaten a neck in the Frost King, but regressed when beaten by Shadow Realm, My Boy Bruce and Your Valentino on November 16. He has worked quickly.

## Race 8

### #5 Souper Dormy

### #6 Cotton

### #2 Priceless Will

### #1 Moon Landing

#5 SOUPER DORMY returns from Gulfstream where he faced some tough company, finishing fifth in a starter won by Cadamosto, then dueling on the lead and giving way to be fourth in an N1X/\$25,000 on April 3. He should be one of the main speeds here. #6 COTTON looks like the other main speed factor in this field. He made one start at Tampa over the winter, a fourth place effort in a tough \$16,000 starter; he has done very well on the synthetic and could be tough to catch if he makes the lead. #2 PRICELESS WILL closed out 2024 in stellar form with a couple of explosive stretch rallies. He has won at this shorter distance before; will need things to set up well for his first start off of the bench. #1 MOON LANDING never factored while attracting a \$32,000 claim last week; he often has troubles breaking effectively and will likely be trying to run on for a minor share.

## Race 9

### #3 Patches O'Houlihan

### #2 Filo Di Arriana (BRZ)

### #5 Flag of Honour (AUS)

### #1 I'm a Gambler (IRE)

#3 PATCHES O'HOULIHAN lost only once in four starts last year, finishing a close second to Breeders' Cup winner Nobals in the Kennedy Road. Rapid gelding can overcome pressure if someone decides to go with him; tough horse not to like. #2 FILO DI ARRIANA (BRZ) has won half of his 18 career starts, shining especially bright on turf where he has won four Grade 2s and been second in the Woodbine Mile since arriving in North America. He is plenty capable on the synthetic as well; if Patches is a bit short he may be in a good position to overtake him late. #5 FLAG OF HONOUR (AUS) likely would have won this race last year if not for a wide trip. A two-time Graded Stakes-winner since arriving in Canada, he was likely done good by the winter off and will be hoping for a pace meltdown. #1 I'M A GAMBLER (IRE) was a half-length away from upsetting Patches when finishing third in the Bold Venture in August. He closed out the 2024 season with consecutive wins at the N3X/\$80,000 level; very nice horse.

## Race 10

### #6 My Emmy

### #9 Earendel

### #10 Beach Cricket

### #11 Nicki is a Breeze

### #3 Vintage Ring

#6 MY EMMY debuted in the Royal Palm Juvenile Fillies in May where she ran on well to be third behind some solid company, then returned seven months later where she routed on the Gulfstream turf but came up empty off of a wide trip. She gets on lasix here; we'll see if she rebounds in her synthetic debut. #9 EARENDEL showed improved speed in her final start of 2024, getting caught at the wire. An expensive purchase at the local sale, she could be more mature after the winter off. #10 BEACH CRICKET finished up nicely when finishing third on debut but did not get a great trip when routing in the Princess Elizabeth. She will add blinkers here; I definitely think there is ability here. #11 NICKI IS A BREEZE had a couple of good efforts last season including a third in a route on December 7 which was won by War Signal, who returned to win an allowance at Gulfstream. The blinkers will come off today. #3 VINTAGE RING was claimed for \$100,000 out of her debut at Keeneland on April 9 where she ran a non-threatening fifth; we'll see if she can step forward with a start under her belt.