

Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson
Thursday, July 16th, 2026

Race 1

#4 Albie First

#6 Lady Dayrells

#2 Precious Kid

#3 Flightmare

#4 ALBIE FIRST ran on to be second when making her seasonal debut for \$15,000 on May 22. The winner of that race has come back to race well against tougher company. #6 LADY DAYRELLS had a wide trip and came up empty when shedding the blinkers against \$25,000 foes 12 days ago. The blinkers are re-added here and she's getting in much easier; we'll see how she handles the two turn distance. #2 PRECIOUS KID was never a factor when debuting against OS/\$40,000 company on June 27. She plunges right in for \$10,000; hopefully she can figure things out here. #3 FLIGHTMARE is a plodder who has shown nothing in three career starts. She makes her second start of the season here and could maybe grind her way to a minor placing.

Race 2

#4 Too Many Amy's

#2 Crumlin Fashion

#6 Can't Argue That

#3 Butterfly Billie

#4 TOO MANY AMY'S was in good early position on June 20, then looked like she was being eased turning for home before flying home to re-rally for fourth with a strong gallop out on June 20. I don't know what happened that day but I definitely think she warrants a look here. #2 CRUMLIN FASHION ducked at the gap and never got involved when facing OS/\$40,000 foes in her seasonal debut on June 6. She had some good efforts last year and should be competitive with the drop in class for her second start off of the bench. #6 CAN'T ARGUE THAT debuted for \$10,000 on June 25, rallying from last to finish third in a race where the runner-up came back to win a maiden allowance at Fort Erie. We'll see if she can step forward off of that debut. #3 BUTTERFLY BILLIE could not get by the pacesetting Sunnyville in a four-horse field for this price on June 25; minor player today.

Race 3

#5 Moventothecountry

#4 Makayla

#3 Sight to See

#1 Amazin Queen

#5 MOVENTOTHECOUNTRY made a wide bid on the far turn before flattening out to be distant fifth on June 25.

She has done her best running in race where she has sat close to the early pace, and the lack of speed in this race could put her in that position. #4 MAKAYLA kicked off her season in a seven furlong race at this level on June 18, stalking the pace and chasing through the stretch to be fifth by just three lengths. She is better suited to two turns and looks competitive here. #3 SIGHT TO SEE tried front end tactics on June 18 but wilted turning for home. Both of her wins have come around two turns; this will be her first two turn trip since her last win in April 2025. #1 AMAZIN QUEEN took on the boys in her return from an extended layoff on June 12 and was never involved. At her best she was more talented than most of today's foes; we'll see if she is more competitive with that start under her belt.

Race 4

#4 Empty Gesture

#3 Rock Hard Rose

#5 Souper Sunday

#1 Genius of Love

#4 EMPTY GESTURE has been unable to run down the speedy Soupergirl in two tries over the Fort Erie dirt but has tried hard and raced well both times. A winner at this level here last year with a good run over this course last August, she is not catching the toughest group for the level. #3 ROCK HARD ROSE tracked the pacesetter before drawing clear to an easy \$15,000 win on June 13. She has not been at her best on turf in the past but may simply be a better horse at this stage in her career. #5 SOUPER SUNDAY faced \$15,000 boys in her first start off of the bench on June 19 and ran second behind the very in-form Lazio. She has had turf success in the past; not out of the question. #1 GENIUS OF LOVE rode a live rail to a \$7,500 starter win in her first start off of a \$15,000 claim on June 27. She draws inside again and had a good runner-up effort on the bigger turf course last year.

Race 5

#4 Where's Samnbailey

#7 Midnite Sadie

#3 Jinx Me

#5 Serious Green

#4 WHERE'S SAMNBAILEY missed second by two heads when taking on the boys for this price on June 5. A lack of early speed in this race could be a problem for her but I do think at her best she's the most talented mare in this field. #7 MIDNITE SADIE dropped in for \$10,000 and was a comfortable winner on June 25 over Silverdart, who came back to win a maiden special weight at Fort Erie. She drops again for her first try against winners and should be well positioned early. #3 JINX ME added

blinkers while facing \$15,000 company for her first start of the year on June 18 and ran on to be a non-threatening third. Claimed for \$4,500 last year, they get her back in her \$7,500 today; looks competitive. **#5 SERIOUS GREEN** broke her maiden for \$10,000 in her 2026 debut but has found the \$15,000 non-twos too tough; she halves in value looking to get back to form.

Race 6

#1 Indian Peak - Best Bet

#5 Arabian Prince

#2 Poseidon Steel

#4 Pine Knoll

#1 INDIAN PEAK had a troubled trip but ran a good third, 1 ¼ lengths behind **Arabian Prince** when kicking off his season on June 21. He was consistently competitive at this level last year and looks live in his second try off of the bench. **#5 ARABIAN PRICE** battled on the lead and was able to put away **Pine Knoll** but could not fend off **Last American Exit** when finishing second on June 21. His last two efforts have been very strong; an obvious contender. **#2 POSEIDON STEEL** had a wide trip and never got involved when facing **N1X/\$32,000** foes on June 21. Plodding type takes the drop in for \$25,000 and should have more finishing kick if he can save some ground this time. **#4 PINE KNOLL** dueled with **Arabian Prince** up front before giving way to be fourth on June 21. He does not need the lead and could benefit by sitting just off of the pace this time.

Race 7

#6 Starship Salute

#5 Pepper Brooks

#3 Auntie's Bambino

#1 Slightly Naughty

#6 STARSHIP SALUTE is by 12% debut sire **Mitole**, out of a mare who has been an honest producer, throwing juvenile Stakes-winner **Gun Society**. The worktab looks steady and this is not a stellar group for the level. **#5 PEPPER BROOKS**, another debut runner, is a half brother to **Patches O'Houlihan**, by 13% debut sire **Souper Speedy**. We'll see if he shows any glimpse of his brother's talent. **#3 AUNTIE'S BAMBINO** ran on to be fourth in the **Lake Huron** on the inner turf on June 21. He seems to want more distance and probably isn't a true maiden special weight horse but has run enough good races to make him a consideration with these. **#1 SLIGHTLY NAUGHTY** showed speed before quitting when shipping up from **Fort Erie** to try the **Tapeta** on June 28. He has a start over the surface now and could be loose on the lead if the first timers aren't quick to break.

Race 8

#6 Always a Way

#7 Highland Life

#3 Napa Spirit (IRE)

#4 Banker's Hours

#8 Harper City

#6 ALWAYS A WAY looked dangerous in midstretch but could not get by in a good third-place effort on June 28. This race looks like it will have a hotter pace for him to run at. **#7 HIGHLAND LIFE** showed brief speed en route to a non-threatening third behind the very in form **Lazio** for \$15,000 on June 19. He probably wants to be a bit further off of the pace and could fare well with the class drop. **#3 NAPA SPIRIT (IRE)** was sent into a wicked pace duel with **Endrick** on June 6, understandably fading to be sixth, then was vet scratched on June 28. He returns off of an easy training track breeze; he does his best running when he can make the lead without over exerting himself early. **#4 BANKER'S HOURS** had a rough break and fell well out of it before rallying to be fifth in the same race **Always a Way** exits. With a better start he should be more competitive. **#8 HARPER CITY** was an easy front-end winner of his seasonal debut on May 31. Why he hasn't raced since then is a bit puzzling but he's definitely worth consideration in this bid to double up.