

Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson

Saturday, September 5th 2026

Race 1

#1 Benka

#5 Next of Kin

#3 Hot Gyal Mossop

#4 Stiletto Vixen

#1 BENKA has raced well, hitting the board in both of her starts to date. She adds blinkers and figures to be very live in her third attempt. #5 NEXT OF KIN raced wide and finished third, a neck behind Benka when last racing on August 8. She also adds blinkers for the first time; note that she was a vet scratch on August 23. #3 HOT GYAL MOSSOP lacked early speed but ran on well to be fourth, a length behind Benka and Next of Kin when debuting on August 8. The blinkers are being added. #4 STILETTO VIXEN was scheduled to debut on August 23 but was fractious and got loose behind the gate and had to be scratched. Cyberknife is a first crop sire who is 5-for-36 with first timers so far; the dam was a Group 3 winner in France who has produced the Stakes-placed Mia Familia.

Race 2

#3 Tiho Srce

#4 Howsitgoinowen

#1 Lohan

#6 Dwight

#3 TIHO SRCE raced very well in his first two starts but broke a bit slowly and never got involved when taking a shot in the Lake Superior on July 26. He adds blinkers for his turf debut and could land a very good stalking trip if Howsitgoinowen and Lohan duel on the front end. #4 HOWSITGOINOWEN came up empty after battling with Lohan in an off turf race on August 2. His best effort to date by far was his lone try on the turf; we'll see if the return to the grass improves his fortunes. #1 LOHAN put away Howsitgoinowen but was run down at the wire when beaten a half length by Slayster on August 2 when coming off of the layoff. He tries turf for the first time here in his second start off of the bench. #6 DWIGHT has been gelded after two dreadful efforts and drops in for a tag here in his turf debut.

Race 3

#2 Mathematical

#1 Let's Go Souper

#5 Hymn to Her

#3 Tan Toast

#2 MATHEMATICAL dropped in for this tag on August 8 and raced very gamely to be beaten a head. Stakes-placed filly looks like a like a very logical option. #1 LET'S

GO SOUPER dominated against \$25,000 maidens on July 18, then rose to this price on August 8 but stumbled out of the gate and never got involved. With a clean break she figures to be the pacesetter here. #5 HYMN TO HER is win shy but has been a consistent check-earner, most recently missing place by a half-length when finishing fifth on turf on August 20; should be in the money getting back to the Tapeta in this short field. #3 TAN TOAST was nearly 10 lengths behind Let's Go Souper when finishing second on July 18, then dropped in for \$15,000 and crushed the competition while attracting a claim on August 6. She is still lightly raced and could keep improving.

Race 4

#5 Karat Gold - Best Bet

#1 Leg Up Gizmo

#2 Matoaka

#6 Mandalena

#5 KARAT GOLD raced wide from the 10 hole and finished midpack in a turf maiden special weight on King's Plate day. Already with three starts under her belt, she should fare well with the drop in for \$40,000. #1 LEG UP GIZMO is by 1-for-15 juvenile debut sire Amis Gizmo, out of a mare who has had one juvenile winner out of five foals to race at two. She goes for a solid debut barn. #2 MATOAKA was more forwardly placed than Karat Gold but faded in the stretch to be seventh on August 15. She drops in for \$40,000 and tries the Tapeta for the first time. #6 MANDALENA showed some finishing interest when fourth at this level on August 8 but will likely need to improve to be a serious win threat here.

Race 5

#8 Unforgettable Face (IRE)

#9 Onehotmess

#7 Scotch Mist

#1 Appreciatively

#8 UNFORGETTABLE FACE (IRE) has not had the best luck in the trip department since arriving at Woodbine but has still shown interest in all three of her local starts. Irish-bred filly catches a field with speed to run at and should handle the 10 furlong trip. #9 ONEHOTMESS rallied well after a stumbling start to be fifth, beaten 1 ½ lengths for place when travelling 11 furlongs at Saratoga on July 26. She has only missed one check on turf, in her second lifetime start when she got a very tough trip from the 13 hole, #7 SCOTCH MIST was rank in her seasonal debut then ran a much better race in her second start off of the bench to be second, rallying from the back. We'll see if she appreciates the longer distance and bigger turf course. #1 APPRECIATIVELY is a bit of a wild card here trying turf for the first time and stretching out from 6 ½

furlongs. She figures to be sharp from the gate but with the other speed here, could easily take a hold and land a very good inside stalking trip from the rail.

Race 6

#5 Annastaij

#2 Hope Is a Breeze

#7 Laikipia

#3 Sunday Finery

#5 ANNASTAIJ was entered to debut at Kentucky Downs on Labour Day but has scratched and opted to debut locally instead. From the first crop of Dubai World Cup-winner Mystic Guide, she was a \$95,000 purchase from the Maryland two-year-old in training sale and seems likely to have some potential if they were looking at going to Kentucky Downs with her. #2 HOPE IS A BREEZE debuted on King's Plate day with a solid effort, battling on the lead through quick fractions before fading in the final furlong to be fifth. She could be tough to run down if she gets an easier lead. #7 LAIKIPIA is by 15% juvenile debut sire Omaha Beach, out of a dam who has had a debut winner in two foals to race. She had a fast gate work on August 22. #3 SUNDAY FINERY ran a decent third on debut on July 18 but came up empty when returning in the same turf race that Hope Is a Breeze debuted in. We'll see if she's better with the return to the Tapeta.

Race 7

#6 Hemlo Gold

#1 C My Meister

#5 Cornwall

#4 Peja Du

#6 HEMLO GOLD was dropped in for \$15,000 on August 9 and scored a comfortable win while attracting a claim. He likes the inner turf and should be tactically positioned early. #1 C MY MEISTER is a hard-knocking turf who has raced well in both of his starts over this course this season. In search of his first win since 2024, he draws well and should be running on well in the stretch. #5 CORNWALL was a rallying third behind Hemlo Gold while also attracting a claim on August 9. Although winless on turf he did have some good efforts over this course in the Turf Distance series last year and would not be a surprise today. #4 PEJA DU figures to be the pacesetter here but has been struggling to finish effectively lately. He did have an improved effort last time when fifth by 2 ½ lengths; we'll see how far he can take them.

Race 8

#8 Dancin in Da'nile

#6 Side Street

#2 Mesero

#9 English Actor

#8 DANCIN IN DA'NILE put in two very good efforts behind Burnham Square in Kentucky to start off his campaign but didn't have his strongest kick when finishing fifth in the Niagara at this distance on the inner turf on August 8. Surprisingly still in search of his first Stakes win, I wouldn't be surprised to see him rebound with the move to the EP Taylor course. #6 SIDE STREET finished gamely but could not get by his pacesetter stablemate when finishing second in the Niagara. He has always shown the potential to be a very solid turf distance runner and he is on the improve this season. #2 MESERO was an N2X winner on the Keeneland turf in April and has since ran a strong second in the nine furlong Texas Turf Classic at Lone Star. He draws well and does not look out of place with these. #9 ENGLISH ACTOR set the pace and found enough to hold for a win in the Niagara. We'll see if he is allowed to control the tempo again.

Race 9

#6 Princess Rainbow

#9 Winning Agenda

#2 Lazy Y Collection

#8 Whiskey Over Wine

#3 Perfect Ring

#6 PRINCESS RAINBOW made a bid in the stretch but flattened out when seventh against maiden special weight company over this course on July 25. She has done her best running on turf and should be very live with the drop in for \$40,000. #9 WINNING AGENDA was battling on the lead through moderate fractions, putting away the other speed but being run down by a half-length over this course on August 14. She has a tough draw here. #2 LAZY Y COLLECTION chased a fast early pace before stopping on the far turn when facing maiden special weight foes on July 25. Her first two starts were solid; we'll see if the class relief and surface switch help. #8 WHISKEY OVER WINE tracked the pacesetter but was outkicked by Backstretch Emma when finishing second in her turf debut over the outer course on August 14; hopefully she can work out a trip in her inner turf debut. #3 PERFECT RING has not missed a check in four starts to date and figures to be able to grind out another smaller share here.