

Handicapper's Journal – Doug McPherson

Sunday, October 25th 2026

Race 1

#5 No Hay Dos

#4 Buium

#1 Beyond Adversity

#7 Toronto City

#5 NO HAY DOS ran on well to be beaten a nose for place when travelling 11 furlongs on the inner turf earlier this month. He has raced very well in both of his local starts; we'll see how he likes the bigger turf course. #4 BUIUM exits a chasing third in the Breeders' Stakes over 12 furlongs behind Fire and Wine, who returned to win the Ontario Derby last week. Multiple Stakes-placed maiden figures to be well supported in this return to maiden company. #1 BEYOND ADVERSITY was forwardly-placed and managed to hold place from No Hay Dos on October 4 after having finished another good second over 10 furlongs on this course in September; logical candidate. #7 TORONTO CITY was a half-length behind Beyond Adversity in the 10 furlong September 7 race before returning with a third-place effort for \$40,000 in a Tapeta sprint 20 days later.

Race 2

#4 Niagara Skyline

#6 Forester's Fortune

#2 Armstrong

#3 Gaslight Dancer

#4 NIAGARA SKYLINE raced very well off of the claim for these connections, finishing a game second to his pacesetting stablemate Artemus Citylimits. He shortens up a furlong but should have a very lively tempo to run at. #6 FORESTER'S FORTUNE had a lovely inside tracking trip and powered by in the stretch to win for \$25,000 on September 18. A longtime specialist at the distance, he faces tough here but should appreciate the forecasted hot tempo. #2 ARMSTRONG set fast fractions and was nabbed in deep stretch when favoured for \$25,000 on the Tapeta 16 days ago. He had a good third over this course and distance against some tough foes last year. #3 GASLIGHT DANCER was a \$15,000 purchase in a May digital auction and now is ready for his local debut. He is a back-classy sort who has been very sparingly campaigned the last couple of seasons; we'll see how he fires here.

Race 3

#2 Colonels Influence

#5 Patriotwave

#4 Doyler

#10 Torbato

#2 COLONELS INFLUENCE debuted from a wide post over a mile and ran on well to be fifth, beaten 1 1/2 lengths for place in a race won by the impressive True North Star. He draws a much better post for his second

attempt. #5 PATRIOTWAVE chased a hot pace before flattening out to be sixth in his first try as a gelding on October 4. He adds blinkers and has pedigree to suggest he will like the turf. #4 DOYLER is by 11% juvenile debut sire Street Sense, and is a half to Winterberry, a multiple Stakes-winner who won the Glorious Song as two. Anderson Farms homebred has a steady worktab coming into his debut. #10 TORBATO rallied well to be fourth in his debut on September 26; has a tough post to overcome today.

Race 4

#7 Candy Factor

#8 Francine's Honour

#1 Mandalena

#6 Next of Kin

#7 CANDY FACTOR had a much better break in her second start but gave way early to be last against maiden special weight company on the turf. We'll see if the plunge in for \$25,000 improves her fortunes. #8 FRANCINE'S HONOUR had a wide trip and lacked finish in her debut then again finished evenly when sent off as the favourite for \$40,000 on September 26, finishing a non-threatening fourth; figures to be a factor as she continues to drop. #1 MANDALENA has been picking up minor shares at the OS/\$40,000 level. Her speed figures are competitive here; the blinkers come off for the drop in of \$25,000. #6 NEXT OF KIN disappointed when dropping in for this tag on October 3 but had run a couple of okay races prior to that.

Race 5

#2 Hemlo Gold

#5 Shadow Realm

#1 El Kabong

#7 Malibu Mambo

#2 HEMLO GOLD looks to return to his winning ways after coming up flat on the cutback to seven furlongs in the final leg of the Turf Sprint series. The return to a mile and drop back in for \$25,000 should significantly aid his chances. #5 SHADOW REALM drops in for \$25,000 after finishing a close fourth in an N1X/\$32,000 on September 27. Although primarily a sprinter he did run a respectable third over 1 1/16 on the main track in July; the one turn mile could suit him well. #1 EL KABONG has had back-to-back wide trips in the Turf Distance series and looks to rebound after coming up empty over 10 furlongs on September 27. #7 MALIBU MAMBO is another who failed to overcome a wide trip in the 10 furlong race on September 27. He ran a credible third in a Claiming Crown prep at Colonial two-back.

Race 6

#5 Pepper Brooks

#1 Egbert Who

#2 Awesome Beat

#7 Holiday Snooze

#5 PEPPER BROOKS looks to remain undefeated, having beaten Awesome Beat and Egbert Who in an N2L race on September 10. He catches a field without a ton of speed and could be tough to catch. #1 EGBERT WHO is still eligible for non-winners of two but has been very competitive in his two most recent starts, missing by a nose to Awesome Beat last time. #2 AWESOME BEAT drew in as a main-track-only and was able to prevail over Egbert Who in a tight photo. He was outkicked by Pepper Brooks after making a wide, circling move two-back. #7 HOLIDAY SNOOZE has been racing well in routes this season and has solid speed figures; he will cutback to a sprint for the first time since July 2025 when still a maiden.

Race 7

#5 Flirting With Fire

#4 Maker's Flatter

#8 Imyourmedicineman

#6 Going Platinum

#5 FLIRTING WITH FIRE was part of a pressured early pace, took the advantage on turn but could not hold off the closers when finishing a good third in his return to the races in an off-turf race on October 2. He ran a strong fourth over this distance on the inner course back in July. #4 MAKER'S FLATTER was claimed for this tag on September 13, a race in which he was shuffled back turning for home before running on well again in deep stretch. He was a very impressive winner on the inner course back in July. #8 IMYOURMEDICINEMAN race a credible fourth in the Breeders' after chasing Fire and Wine in the early stages. Aside from the Prince of Wales in which he didn't love the dirt, he has done plenty of good running this year including an absurdly troubled run in the King's Plate. #6 GOING PLATINUM was allowed a 26 second breather in the second quarter mile and was not stopping when breaking her maiden on October 3; has to take on the boys here.

Race 8

#4 Paynes Spirit

#3 Sirius A (IRE)

#1 Laskay

#6 Countryboysurvive

#4 PAYNES SPIRIT deflated to sixth after taking a run at Marshall who was not going to stop on October 3. He has raced well against Stakes-company in the Pink Lloyd and the Elgin; we'll see if he can rebound. #3 SIRIUS A (IRE) kicked off his campaign with a win one the Wolverhampton synthetic but went off form against Stakes company on turf afterwards. Multiple Stakes-placed on synthetic as a two-year-old, he is an interesting new face. #1 LASKAY outkicked Paynes Spirit en route to

a runner-up finish behind Marshall on October 3, his second runner-up effort at this level behind a lone speed winner. Unstarted until this year, he has been very well managed thus far and looks like arguably the one to beat. #6 COUNTRYBOYSURVIVE had hot fractions to run at and was able to mow everyone down to win an N1X/\$32,000 on September 27. A three-time winner at the meet, we'll see if he can continue to move forward.

Race 9

#2 Ciunas - Best Bet

#3 Paramount Prince

#5 Rapid Test

#4 Dark Screen

#2 CIUNAS exits back to back wins over this turf course, both times unleashing powerful late rallies. He has since been privately purchased and now goes for the Clement barn; he draws well and should have a very hot pace to run at as he looks for his first Stakes-win. #3 PARAMOUNT PRINCE nearly scored his first turf win in the Grand Valley last month, getting nabbed at the wire by Wicked Django. He is the class of this field but he may have company on the front end. #5 RAPID TEST was a chasing third, two lengths behind Paramount Prince in the Grand Valley. The defending champion of this race clearly likes the inner turf, and if Paramount Prince is worn down on the lead and Ciunas doesn't fire, he could take advantage. #4 DARK SCREEN prefers proper sprints to this 7 1/2 furlong trip but did manage to run second behind Scorching in the Elgin over seven furlongs on the Tapeta two-back and could hit the ticket at a price.

Race 10

#6 My Justyn Thyme

#10 Too Fab for You

#7 Rockaway

#4 Hypnotizm

#1 Bobbaay

#6 MY JUSTYN THYME drops in for \$25,000 after lacking much finishing kick at the OS/\$40,000 level on October 1. His speed figures are solid for this group. #10 TOO FAB FOR YOU made a bid turning for home and kept on well to be fourth by just a length when dropping in for this tag on October 4; hopefully he can use his speed to find position from an outside draw. #7 ROCKAWAY is by 10-for-89 juvenile debut sire Essential Quality, out of Intanga Rose, who went two-for-two at two and was multiple Stakes-placed. She has produced Gun Fire, a \$20,000 maiden claiming winner at Oaklawn. #4 HYPNOTIZM ran his best race to date when beaten a head for this tag on October 4; we'll see if he can run back to that. #1 BOBBAAY didn't run terribly when fifth of six in his debut for this tag on September 27; we'll see if he can build on that.