



LAUREL PARK HANDICAPPING GUIDE for Saturday, Jan. 17

First post is **Noon ET** with 12% takeout on Value Pick 5 wagers (first five races; last five races). **\$23,023 CARRYOVER** into today's **EARLY Value Pick 5 (Races 1-5)**.

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TODAY'S SELECTIONS FROM THE TMJC TEAM



KEITH FEUSTLE



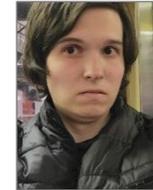
KALI FRANCOIS



DAN ILLMAN



MACK PFEIFFER



JOHN PIASSEK



DAVE RODMAN



TIM TULLOCK

RACE 1:	5-4-1-3	4-2-3-9	5-4-7-6	3-5-4-2	8-5-10-4	6-1-8-4	4-6-1
RACE 2:	8-7-1-3	1-7-2-8	6-8-1-2	1-8-7-2	1-6-7-3	7-6-1-8	2-1-4
RACE 3:	3-1-6-4	3-1-5-8	3-4-6-2	7-3-6-4	6-3-1-2	6-3-2-1	3-7-6
RACE 4:	3-2-7-5	2-3-6-8	1-2-3-5	3-8-2-6	3-8-5-7	7-5-6-2	3-1-7
RACE 5:	2-3-4-8	4-8-2-11	7-3-4-2	4-11-1-3	7-4-11-10	4-3-5-2	3-1-7
RACE 6:	7-1-4-3	7-3-5-2	7-5-3-2	7-3-5-1	7-3-5-8	7-2-8-1	7-3-5
RACE 7:	7-4-3-2	4-3-7-8	3-4-7-6	7-4-3-1	7-4-2-3	4-7-6-2	4-2-1
RACE 8:	6-4-3-2	6-2-4-3	3-6-1-5	6-4-7-3	6-4-2-7	6-2-4-7	6-4-3
RACE 9:	7-8-9-5	4-8-7-9	9-8-5-7	8-4-9-7	8-2-6-7	5-2-8-4	8-2-5
RACE 10:	4-8-5-2	6-2-4-3	4-8-5-7	8-6-3-5	6-5-8-2	5-6-7-4	8-5-6

TODAY'S ANALYSIS - by Dan Illman

>> RACE 1

1. MASTER OF NONE

2. MISTICAL CURLIN

3. MARTINI MARTIN

First post is NOON with a LOW 12% takeout on "Value" Pick 5 wagers (first five races; last five races). **MASTER OF NONE** hopped at the start and was off slow, saved ground at the back, pulled his way along to race in the pocket, eased out on the second turn, and failed to threaten. He sometimes outruns his odds, reunites with a rider who piloted him to two previous victories, and has enough tactical speed to adapt to the race flow. **MISTICAL CURLIN** drops in class after being wired over a speed-friendly track by a horse that returned to place in a quarter "beaten" claimer at Penn National with a 70 Beyer. Tracked three wide and in between, made a three-wide bid, then flattened out. Barn went 5 for the last 24 (21%, \$2.10 ROI) in the third start following 61-120 day layoffs. Hazlewood lands here instead of Collection Day. **MARTINI MARTIN** was wired by the favorite over a speed-friendly track in his first start following a 79-day layoff, then never threatened odds-on winner Waldrip. Perhaps he's racing himself back into shape for this, his third start off the layoff. **STRIKING SPARKS** should show speed stretching out in distance. He seems more effective at this longer distance. **COLLECTION DAY** takes deserved class drop for his third start following a summer layoff. **TIBERIUS MERCURIUS** seems well-entered for circuit debut.

>> RACE 2

1. EIMEAR

2. BELLE'S BABY

3. BACK WALL BANDIT

EIMEAR was wired at Penn National. Stalked in between rivals, made an inside bid on the turn, eased to the three path in midstretch, then finished evenly in between. Expecting some early speed for a barn that sent out a 7-1 winner at Turfway on 1/10. **BELLE'S BABY** (\$25,000 short yearling; \$17,000 June juvenile) breezed a furlong in 11 flat prior to the most recent auction, and is a half-sister to a debut winner out of a half to Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner Storm the Court (won debut). Barn generally gives them a race or two before they strut their best stuff, but did send out debut winner Momaxie at 10-1 on 12/19. Hazlewood lands here instead of lamdependingonyou and Naomi and Ruth (\$8,000 RNA yearling). **BACK WALL BANDIT** raced in between rivals at the back behind a moderate pace, swung five wide into the stretch, then finished evenly behind a runaway winner that returned to place in a quarter claimer with a 47 Beyer. Perez and Lopez swap Back Wall Bandit for Stylish Gem. **IAMDEPENDINGONYOU** was overmatched against runaway Velocity Girl, and will benefit from this class drop.

>> RACE 3

1. JUNIPER'S JUBILEE

2. ITTY BIDDY CITY

3. PROFOUND CHANGE

JUNIPER'S JUBILEE bobbled badly at the start, settled in midpack behind a hot pace, advanced along the rail to track from a loose pocket, went on a hard chase after the stubborn 9-1 pacesetting third-finisher, then was kicked down late while drifting in just a bit. Shouldn't be too far off the lead for a barn that went 8 for the last 21 (38%, \$2.70 ROI) with experienced horses racing with Lasix for the first time. **ITTY BIDDY CITY** deserves a look after a speedy debut at Penn National. Broke inward from the rail draw, set a quick pace along the fence, opened a clear lead on the turn, then tired in the final eighth. She looks very quick from the gate. **PROFOUND CHANGE** tracked a slow pace from the fence, scooted up the rail in the stretch, then placed to a more-experienced, odds-on pacesetting winner. **STERLING CAT** (\$40,000 yearling) is a half-sister to multiple stakes-placed turf sprinter Abyssinian (89 turf

Beyer) out of Grade 3-placed dirt sprinter Shesakitty.

>> RACE 4

1. CERTIFIED LOVERBOY

2. NATIONAL LAW

3. PHANTOM SPEED

CERTIFIED LOVERBOY pressed a three-ply pace from the rail through fractions of 23.39 and 23.60, then understandably tired in a race that went to closers (the top-three finishers were seventh, tenth, and eleventh after the opening half). Don't think he'll have to work as hard to grab the lead after breaking from the advantageous inside post for a barn that went 4 for 13 (31%, 10 in the money, \$3.24 ROI) between 12/28 and 1/11. **NATIONAL LAW** ran well in his only other start with Lasix. Broke a beat slow and was pinched back early, he stalked 3 to 4 wide, made an outside bid under urging on the turn, then was game for second behind the favored winner. Going to toss the recent synthetic try. **PHANTOM SPEED** sat a loose pocket behind a fast pace in the Richard W. Small, was herded in by the odds-on winner at the seven-sixteenths pole and steadied slightly, urged along three wide on the second turn, and stayed gamely for the runner-up position. Barbadian Runner next placed in the Robert T. Manfuso Stakes with a 107 Beyer. Gets Lasix and blinkers with the tactical speed to stay close to the pace. SPOTAFREEONE was pinched back at the start of the City of Laurel, then was completely outsprinted through fast fractions. Made up some sneaky late ground against the likes of Chipotle, who then won a high-level allowance with a 90 Beyer. Unbeaten from five starts around two turns, he races for a barn that went 9 for the last 19 (47%, \$2.98 ROI) in the third following a 61-120 day layoff. IN THE DANCE has won three of his last four. The fifth-finisher from his last race then scored a state-sired allowance with an 82 Beyer. Kicks in the stretch.

>> RACE 5

1. BLO BY THE FIELD

2. AGGRO

3. STRESS RELIEVER

BLO BY THE FIELD broke a beat slow at Penn National, stalked outside at the back, made a three-wide bid while remaining covered up until upper stretch, altered course four deep in the lane, and finished well for second behind Query, who then placed in a state-sired allowance at Parx with a 62 Beyer. Lightly raced performer with upside potential and tactical speed. **AGGRO** saved ground in midpack behind a fast pace over the synthetic at Turfway, was urged along on the fence, cut the corner, and finished evenly with a solid gallop-out. The third-finisher then took a \$50,000 "non-three" claimer there with a 79 Beyer. He can get closer to the pace as he stretches out in distance and returns to his preferred dirt surface. **STRESS RELIEVER** received a nice second-quarter breather in 24.32 when sparring with the 34-1 third-finisher, then was no match for an odds-on runaway while splitting two next-out winners. Boutwell Time repeated in the Mrs. Claus at Parx with a 78 Beyer. Another that can get close to the pace for a barn that went 6 for the last 11 (55%, \$4.11 ROI) with horses moving from sprint to route following a top-three finish. Hazlewood lands here instead of Fabia. LORD'S LADY, listed as a Laurel vet scratch (sick) on 11/28, is a late-runner that would take advantage of a fast pace. Finished ahead of Got Game last time, and that foe then took a \$12,500 "beaten" claimer by eight lengths at Parx with a 65 Beyer.

>> RACE 6

1. TAKETHEMONEYHONEY

2. LATE NITE CALL

3. ONCOURTCOMMENTATOR

TAKETHEMONEYHONEY tracked from the pocket, bulled his way out three wide and in between in upper stretch, then scored despite being late to change leads. She's proven at the distance and is quick enough to get up close to the pace. **LATE NITE CALL** set a four-ply pace from the rail, shook loose on the lead after a half-mile, tried to steal away through the third quarter, and was just pipped on the wire while hopping back to her left lead. The fourth-

finisher next placed in a restricted \$50,000 optional at Parx with a 74 Beyer. Might be more effective at one turn, but appears to be reaching her potential for a barn that went 4 for the last 16 (25%, \$2.81 ROI) in the third start following 180-365 day layoffs. **ONCOURTCOMMENTATOR** must deal with a 364-day layoff after finishing second in this race last year. Pulled hard to race at the back, made a four-wide bid into the stretch, and grabbed second despite being very late to change leads. Barn went 45 for the last 147 (31%, \$2.32 ROI) with horses returning from 180-365 day layoffs.

>> RACE 7

1. BOLD DIVERSION

2. QUINT'S BREW

3. MACLEAN'S ROOK

Taking a chance with **BOLD DIVERSION**, who wheels back on short notice after a solid second-level allowance win. Broke slow, recovered to track from the pocket, eased outside in the stretch, then ran by the leader in the final sixteenth. He's won going from sprint to route before. Lyapustina lands here instead of Formal Affair. **QUINT'S BREW** tracked a slow pace from the pocket, was in behind horses turning for home, angled three wide to split rivals in the upper stretch, then stayed for second despite hopping back to his left lead. That was a good effort in his first start following a 230-day layoff, and he should be up close to the pace here. **MACLEAN'S ROOK** won both dirt starts by a combined 13 1/2 lengths, and deserves his chance against stakes company. Found a good stalking position last time, saved ground in midpack, made a three-wide bid to target the leaders, then drew away without much fuss. Might have the most upside of any in this group for a barn that went 9 for the last 38 (24%, \$3.12 ROI) with last-out winners removing Lasix.

>> RACE 8

1. THINK FAST

2. HOLD YOUR BREATH

3. DISCO EBO

THINK FAST made a nice impression in his first start following a private purchase. Pressed the pace while four wide, made a three-wide bid on the turn, then stayed on gamely from in between foes. Up in class against older horses, but has upside potential, and can adapt to any race flow. **HOLD YOUR BREATH** seems like a must-use in multiple-race wagers, although it must be noted she controlled slow fractions in the Garland of Roses, a race where they ran 1-2-3 around the track. Set the pace from in between horses, found the rail on the turn, then rebuffed the favorite in ridden-out fashion. Figures close to the pace for a barn that went 10 for the last 34 (29%, \$2.53 ROI) on dirt in Maryland. **DISCO EBO** returns from a seven-month layoff after a better-than-it-looks effort at Parx. Hopped in the air and missed the break by 7-10 lengths, raced at the back behind a slow pace, made a three-wide bid, and passed some tired foes when wired by the odds-on-favorite. The runner-up then placed in a high-level allowance there with an 81 Beyer. With a clean break, she can show good early foot. **VIEUX CARRE** repeats the route to sprint move that resulted in her last two wins, and kicks late if the pace is hot.

>> RACE 9

1. CHIPOTLE

2. PETINGAS TWIN

3. FULL MOON MADNESS

CHIPOTLE sped to the front through a quick opening quarter, dropped the anchor to the tune of a 24.12 second quarter, then gamely fended off the odds-on runner-up in a race where they ran 1-2 around the track. Figures close to the pace again for a barn that went 4 for the last 18 (22%, \$3.27 ROI) with horses exiting a Beyer top. Also want to use **PETINGAS TWIN**, who tracked from in between in the Dave's Friend, made a four-wide bid into the stretch, and just got up at the wire. The runner-up then finished second behind the top pick with an 89 Beyer. Expect a late kick for a barn that went 5 for the last 15 (33%, \$2.12 ROI) with horses adding Lasix. **FULL MOON MADNESS** was wired by the favorite in the Grade 3 Elite Power, a race where they ran 1-2 around the track. He's won his last two starts with Lasix. **TWISTED RIDE** beat a good group at Parx, as the runner-up then placed in the Blitzen Stakes

there with an 86 Beyer. He has good early speed. LATTA rallied from off the pace to take a two-turn heat that went to closers (the top-three finishers were eighth, eleventh, and ninth after the opening quarter). Needs a hot pace cutting back to this sharp sprint.

>> RACE 10

1. HAPPY JAUNT

2. STRATEGIST

3. BIRRAVINO BLVD

HAPPY JAUNT pressed the favored runner-up from the outside, was hard-ridden on the far turn, and steadily tired in his final start of 2025. His best races on turf came when allowed to rally from off the pace, and he might be more patiently handled in the early going this time around. **STRATEGIST** set the pace inside the top pick, was somewhat awkward with his lead changes on the second turn, then stayed on for second. Has enough speed to find a good position from this outside post for a barn that went 6 for the last 25 (24%, \$2.32 ROI) in the second off the claim after a Beyer top. Want to use **BIRRAVINO BLVD** in multiple-race wagers despite beating a weaker group at Penn National. Broke well, stalked outside, made a three-wide bid on the second turn, then drove clear. Barn went 5 for the last 16 (31%, \$3.53 ROI) with last-out winners racing second off the claim on dirt.

KALI'S KEYS – by Kali Francois

Box with the Favorite:

Race 7: #3 Bold Diversion

I'm still hanging onto the City of Laurel effort for a reason. Lackluster and a bit put-out in Bender Memorial. The sell for me was a rocket-like gallop out in that effort last out - physically, this one is absolutely ready for this distance.

Race 9: #4 Twisted Ride

This race is likely going to be determined by the first 1/8th, and Twisted Ride finds himself in a position familiar with last time out: going the 6.5 on an inner post. He needed a couple of jumps to get up there, but once he's locked in, he's able to sustain and he loves the fight.

Race 10: #6 Sincerito

Already proven at the mile, but again, on a visual standpoint and whittle way this one is finishing/galloping, out, frankly asking for he distance. The Dam loved the 7f distance, and as she aged she went from front running to coming form of the pace. This one has already learned that preference, and for the better, will be perfectly applied here.

MACK'S FACTS – by Mackenzie Pfeiffer

R1: Gangly looks to be the speed of the speed in this group, should he choose to use it. Returning to a routing distance and fast track may benefit him as we saw in the 2-back effort. Master of None is the horse to beat on paper with his recent class relief and troubled last outing. His last out Beyer fig is the only 70+ last out amongst this group.

R2: Back Wall Bandit has yet to find a clean trip but class relief could be the key to putting things together here. Worth noting, she did the dirty work for the eventual winner 3-back, against much tougher on that day. Debut runner Belle's Baby might benefit from the outer post and Hazlewood aboard. The mare was good on debut and the half sibling won going away at first asking.

R3: Get a good look at Sterling Cat in the paddock, this first time starter is out of a mare who managed to overcome trouble on debut at 4.5f and went on to earn a graded stakes placing in her second outing. Half siblings have been competitive early on and the work tab catches my eye. Juniper's Jubilee looks the one to beat after four very convincing efforts. I find it hard to trust her as a short price who has faced gate trouble in the last two starts.

R4: Phantom Speed made put together a huge effort in his last outing, posting a career best 89 Beyer. I would have forgiven him for packing it in after the steady along the far turn, yet he chose to rally and was gaining ground to the wire. Omaha Omaha returns to 2-turns and should benefit from racing fitness in his 3rd start off the bench. Overall, this makes for a great handicapping race.

R5: Stress Reliever looks plenty attractive in this spot while returning to the mile distance, she has made positive improvements since returning from a late summer freshening. The last out winner returned to score stakes win in the next outing, bodes well for an improvement here. Keep an eye on Bourbon N Lace, she looks to prefer the middle distances and has been improving throughout the fall after her try in NY. Stretching back out should suit her.

R6: Even money is no problem for me when it comes to Takethemoneyhoney, you never need to make an excuse for her, and the connections make sure she is always ready to run her race. Oncourtcommentator returns from her lengthy break but we know how well the barn prepares these types.

R7: It is always tough when two horses you really like end up in the same race, Quint's Brew and Maclean's Rook prompted me to consider flipping a coin. Ultimately, I land with the better price in Maclean's Rook. His 93 Beyer last out and open length victories on the dirt prompt you to ask whether we have seen his best yet...I think he has more to offer. Quint's Brew was completely stuck leaving the turn, a clean trip is likely all he needs to defend his title here.

R8: Hold Your Breath dazzled in her last outing, scoring a 94 Beyer after kicking clear of the field in NY. A 4x winner, she is 3/4 on the dirt and looks well positioned to take this group all the way. I look to Passage East to challenge convincingly, she has held very strong form throughout 2025. Worth noting, she has never been worse than 3rd in all 12 career starts, and finds the winners circle 50% of the time.

R9: Petingas Twin answered every question I had in his last outing, solidifying the 93 Beyer from his 2-back. His tactical speed could be the key to this race, especially since he arrives fresh. I can't ever count Twisted Ride out, keeping Lasix on for this event could be advantageous.

R10: Strategist shortens up and lands outside, perhaps a similar setup to the 3-back effort. Sincerito outran his odds last out and gets back to a preferred distance, reason to believe he continues improving with a few races under him after the late summer break.

TODAY'S HOT TRAINER STATS

RACE 1

#4 - Mistical Curlin

Trainer: Jamie Ness

Third After 61-120 Days: 5 for 24 (21%, \$2.10 ROI)

RACE 3

#3 - Juniper's Jubilee

Trainer: Gary Capuano

Experienced Horses, First-Lasix: 8 for 21 (38%, \$2.70 ROI)

RACE 4

#5 - Spotafreeone

Trainer: Jeff Runco

Third After 61-120 Days: 9 for 19 (47%, \$2.98 ROI)

#1 - Certified Loverboy

Trainer: Fernando Abreu

Between 12/28 and 1/11: 4 for 13 (31%, 10 ITM, \$3.24 ROI)

RACE 5

#4 - Stress Reliever

Trainer: Jamie Ness

Sprint to Route After Top-3 Finish: 6 for 11 (55%, \$4.11 ROI)

RACE 6

#5 - Late Nite Call

Trainer: Niall Saville

Third After 180-365 Days: 4 for 16 (25%, \$2.81 ROI)

RACE 6

#2 - Northern Glow; #3 - Oncourtcommentator

Trainer: Brittany Russell

First After 180-365 Days: 45 for 147 (31%, \$2.32 ROI)

RACE 7

#7 - Maclean's Rook

Trainer: Mike Trombetta

Last-Out Winners, Lasix Off: 9 for 38 (24%, \$3.18 ROI)

RACE 8

#6 - Hold Your Breath

Trainer: John Servis

Maryland, Dirt: 10 for 34 (29%, \$2.53 ROI)

RACE 9

#8 - Petingas Twin

Trainer: Anthony Farris

Lasix On: 5 for 15 (33%, \$2.12 ROI)

#9 - Chipotle

Trainer: Michael Gorham

Exiting a Beyer Top: 4 for 18 (22%, \$3.27 ROI)

RACE 10

#8 - Strategist

Trainer: Rodolfo Sanchez-Salomon

Last-Out Winners, Second Off Claim, Dirt: 5 for 16 (31%, \$3.53 ROI)

TRIPS AND TIPS – by Will Humphrey, *In The Money Media*

Trip Notes - Recent performances that deserve an asterisk. All others: trust the past-performances.

Race 1: Claiming 7.5k, 4YO+, 1 1/16 Miles, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#1 KEEPING IT COUNTRY** gave away real estate swinging very wide into the lane when racing on the slop here at Laurel 7-days ago. It likely cost him a position or two (suspect he'd have finished 5th or 6th with a more ground saving trip), but no more than that.
- **#4 MISTICAL CURLIN** was caught 3-4W on both turns when finishing 6th as the 8/5 favorite at Penn National (11/28/25). While the wide trip didn't help him and his effort is worthy of a (small) UPGRADE, it a stretch to say that it cost him a place; he underperformed, period, and will likely need to bounce back today.
- **#5 MASTER OF NONE** was slightly bothered at the break racing over 1 1/8 Miles here at Laurel last out (12/13/25). However, he also broke slowly himself and quite honestly, factoring in his typical running style as well, it made no difference to the result. What did make a difference, however, was that his rider was slow to react to the increase in tempo entering the far turn – he sat fairly motionless while the others quickened away from him, arguably costing him 3rd.
- A wide trip (UPGRADE) and inadequate 6F distance seemed to be the factors behind **#10 STRIKING SPARKS'** sub-par effort here at Laurel last out (12/26/25). (He visually didn't look to have regressed; he was just outpaced throughout). A stretch back out in distance and more ground saving trip should see him get back on track today. (Although he'll need to work a trip to save ground from his wide post).

Race 2: Maiden Claiming 16k, 3YOF, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#1 BACK WALL BANDIT'**s last start over 5 1/2F here at Laurel (11/29/25) is worthy of a small to medium sized UPGRADE. She was shuffled back a little ~9/16 pole in just a modestly paced contest, then lost real estate when caught 4-6W on the bend. Her finishing effort to snatch 3rd was creditable (and offered hope she'll improve for today's distance) and more can likely be expected of her, granted a clean ground saving trip, with Lasix on first time.
- With blinkers removed (noteworthy), **#5 QUEEN VALENTINE** stayed on well enough over 6 1/2F at Charles Town last time (01/02/26), despite racing ~5W+ on the far turn (UPGRADE), to suggest that today's stretch out in trip would be to her benefit.

Race 3: MSW, 3YOF, 5 ½ Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#3 JUNIPER'S JUBILEE** slightly lugged in through the stretch when racing over 7F here at Laurel Park last time (12/12/25) which impacted upon her momentum – costly when beaten by just half a length. She also stumbled slightly at the start, but owing to the pace of the race and her overall trip, that seemed negligible.
- **#4 ITTY BIDDY CITY'**s debut effort over 6F at Penn National (12/05/25) is worthy of a notable UPGRADE as she set very fast closer-friendly fractions in front on a track that presenting a strong closer bias. She was only collared deep inside the final 1/16 and is eligible to take a notable step forward in start number two today.
- **#5 AQUA BLAZE'**s debut effort over 6F here at Laurel Park (12/19/25) was full of promise and room for improvement. Having been unhurried after an alert break from gate two, she absolutely hated her first experience of kickback as the field bunched entering the turn, throwing her head violently while losing ground and momentum. She then shifted out into the clear 3W, advanced into 3rd and finished with credit to hold the show behind a more experienced rival (**#1 MY GIRL BACK HOME**) and a talented wire winner who followed up last weekend. She was better than the result/fig suggest and with blinkers on today, one imagines she'll be sent to avoid the kickback (expect her to be a pace factor), helping her take a large step forward in her second start with Lasix on.
- After showing early speed, **#8 TRULY THRILLING** was not hard ridden in the stretch when beaten over a difficult debut distance (7F) here at Laurel Park last time (12/12/25). Second start with Lasix on and a cut back to 5 1/2F, improvement is expected.

Race 4: OC40k/N2X Allowance, 4YO+, 1 1/16 Miles, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- Prior to being outclassed at 30/1 in a stake on his synthetic track debut last time, **#2 NATIONAL LAW** had endured a wide trip on both turns (UPGRADE) when returning from a layoff going 1 1/16 miles here at Laurel Park on 11/14/25 (his last start on dirt). Back to the main track for his third start of the form cycle today, it wouldn't be a surprise to see him produce a better effort than he has in either of his last two starts. Blinkers back on today.
- **#3 PHANTOM SPEED** had to steady off heels at a crucial stage of his last start going 1 1/8 miles in the Richard W. Small Stakes here at Laurel Park (11/22/25). He lost both ground and momentum and did very well to finish 2nd – UPGRADE this effort and expect more with blinkers on first time today.
- **#5 SPOTAFREEONE** had a very troubled start in the 7F City of Laurel Stakes here at Laurel Park last out (11/29/25) which left him racing much further off the pace than ideal. He stayed on late in a manner to suggest today's trip will suit him and a bounce back to form looks likely.
- **#6 CROSSLAND** found himself in tight ~1/8th pole when battling gamely for the lead between rivals over 1 1/16 miles here at Laurel Park last time (11/14/25). He had to briefly check his momentum which didn't cost him the win but almost certainly cost him 2nd against the re-opposing **#2 NATIONAL LAW**.
- Although there was a closer bias present, **#7 IN THE DANCE** was much the best when winning over a mile here at Laurel Park last time (12/13/25), swinging 5W into the lane, inhaling his rivals and drawing off by 4L. No need to downgrade this effort.

Race 5: OC20k/SAL20k, 4YO+F, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#2 THE GODDESS FACTOR**'s last start when finishing 3rd over 1 mile here at Laurel Park (11/28/25) is worthy of an UPGRADE. She was bumped very hard at the start which left her racing in a detached last early; had to work early to get back into contention, then gave away real estate by racing 3-5W all the way around the far turn. Mark up this effort and expect more today.
- **#5 GOURMET** was caught in an awkward, undesirable spot contesting the pace tight between horses early here at Laurel Park last time (12/12/25); it might have been a factor in her regressive effort.
- Speed held very well in the 6F race that **#7 BLO BY THE FIELD** exits at Penn National (12/18/25) which makes her effort worthy of an UPGRADE; she was pinched at the start and had to take up, instantly putting her on the back foot as she got away slowly in last before rallying against the race flow. Her finishing effort suggests today's stretch back out in trip will be to her benefit and more can be expected.

Race 6: Geisha Stakes, 4YO+ RF, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- The slow early pace in last year's renewal of the Geisha Stakes here at Laurel Park (01/18/25) held well, compromising **#3 ONCOURTCOMMENTATOR**'s chances as a deep closer. Still, she closed against the pace flow while wide on the far turn for 2nd - her effort is worthy of an UPGRADE. Returns from a year layoff today.
- **#5 LATE NITE CALL**'s last effort in the 1 1/8-mile Carousel Stakes here at Laurel Park (12/20/25) is worthy of a fairly sizable upgrade: the track was presenting a closer bias and she set a fast pace in front that played into the hands of the closers; still managed to hold 2nd, beaten just a neck – it was a huge run. She also endured some bumping with the eventual winner in the lane, but it was mostly her own doing and it impacted the winner equally as much as her.
- **#7 TAKETHEMONEYHONEY**'s win in the 6F Politely Stakes here at Laurel Park last out (12/20/25) was more impressive that the PPs suggest owing to the fact that she was boxed in under a tight hold behind rivals for the majority of the far turn (when she'd ideally have been building momentum) and then found herself short of room/briefly blocked ~3/16 pole – she was more than 1-length the best. She hit the line in a manner to suggest today's trip will suit and another improved effort third off the bench looks possible.

Race 7: Jennings Stakes, 4YO+R, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- There was no visible reason for **#2 BLUE KINGDOM**'s sub par effort last time; he needs to bounce back.
- **#4 QUINT'S BREW**'s return off a 230-day layoff in the 7F Howard and Sondra Bender Memorial Stakes here at Laurel Park on 12/20/25 was more promising than the PP's suggest: after breaking from the inside post, he took a firm hold and over-raced slightly behind horses into the turn, then had to wait in traffic racing to the ¼ pole (when he really needed to be building momentum). This allowed the talented winner, **SLAM NOTION**, to get the jump on him; despite then finding clear sailing at the top of the lane, the

slow early pace meant that 'SN' was not for catching in the lane, yet 'QB' still gave game chase to the wire and galloped out okay – his trip and the race flow arguably cost him the win. Provided he settles (because he was keen last time), a notable step forward can be expected second out with a better trip forecast.

- **#7 MACLEAN'S ROOK**'s win over 1 1/16 miles here at Laurel Park on 12/06/25 was visually very impressive: despite racing slightly wide on both turns (small UPGRADE), he cruised into the lead from ~10L back under minimal urging into a pace that held well (another small UPGRADE); he only came off the bridle ~1/8th pole; he only received two (unnecessary) taps with the crop; and he hit the line and galloped out with great energy, indicating he has more to offer again. Don't be surprised if he posts a new career best today.

Race 8: The What a Summer Overnight Handicap, 4YO+F, 6 Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#1 DISCO EBO**'s last start in the restricted Unique Bella Stakes (6F) at Parx on 06/15/25 can be tossed. She reared as the gates opened giving the field a large head start and prevented herself from adopting her preferred forward position; the early pace was then very modest, allowing the top three finishers (at odds of 2/5, 11/1 and 11/1) to run 1-2-3 throughout, so she was also pace compromised; plus, she was also forced to race ~5W into the lane. All things considered, she did well to finish 4th and if ready off the bench today, an improved bounce back to form can be expected.
- **#2 DWELLING LEGACY** won well despite failing to switch leads over 5 1/2F at Laurel Park last time (12/07/25).
- **#7 VIEUX CARRE** lost more ground than the head she was beaten winging wide into the lane and then shifting to the center when making up an impressive amount of ground to finish third over a mile here at Laurel Park last time (12/19/25). Although she produced an eye-catching closing effort, her overall trip was fine, and her performance doesn't need to be upgraded. However, her recent form figures should probably read 3,2,1, not 3,2,3.

Race 9: The Fire Plug Overnight Handicap, 4YO+, 6 ½ Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#3 ONE MORE SCOOP**'s last effort going 6 1/2F at Parx lacked a visible excuse but was too bad to be true and followed by a layoff; he never ran a step, and something was seemingly amiss; he's best judged on his prior form.
- **#5 FULL MOON MADNESS** had a slightly troubled trip in the G3 Elite Power Stakes (6F) at Aqueduct last time (12/06/25): he was caught very tight between foes and bumped around as the field scrummaged for position through the opening furlong, then he had to take up and check slightly ~9/16 pole as the leader crossed to the rail; following that, he found himself boxed in rounding the home turn when he really needed to be building momentum; speed also held well in this race which didn't help his chances. A clean trip with Lasix back on can surely see him improve today.
- **#8 PEGASUS TWIN** overcame a slightly wide trip when gamely scoring by a nose over 6F at Laurel Park last time (11/22/25) – he was arguably a little better than the nose margin of victory suggests.

Race 10: Claiming 12.5k (12.5 – 10) N3L, 4YO+, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- **#3 DOCTOR'S ORDERS** lost a length or so racing wide into the lane when finishing 4th over 6F at Penn National last time (12/19/25); he was also not hard ridden through the final 100yds and it's easy to argue that he should/could have finished 3rd (tiny UPGRADE). There was a closer bias present at the track this day which possibly aided his chances, though. The "shuffled start" highlighted in the chart comment was inconsequential.
- **#5 BIRRAVINO BLVD** overcame a slightly wide trip (4-5W first turn, 3-4W second) when winning at Penn National last time (12/04/25) – very slightly UPGRADE this effort.
- **#7 AMAZING BERNIE** raced wide on the far turn when finishing just behind #4 HAPPY JAUNT (4th & 5th) over 1 1/16 miles here at Laurel Park on 12/27/25; easy to argue he was best of the two.

Horses to Follow

R3: AQUA BLAZE (6/1 ML)

Although JUNIPER'S JUBILEE very much stands out as the horse to beat in today's third and could easily blow this field away for the Hazlewood/Capuano team, AQUA BLAZE is worthy of a second look — especially if playing this race vertically. Trained by Michael Trombetta, the 3-year-old daughter of FLAMEAWAY strongly resented her first taste of kickback on debut here at Laurel Park 29 days ago, throwing her head violently entering the turn and losing ground, momentum, and position. However, after shifting out into the clear three-wide on the bend, she regathered her stride and ran home with credit to finish third behind a more experienced rival (MY GIRL BACK HOME) and the talented wire winner MOMAXIE, who followed up last weekend with a 63 Beyer. It was an eye-catching debut from AQUA BLAZE that pointed toward her being better than either the result or speed figure suggest. Now making her second start with both Lasix and blinkers on, she's eligible to take a considerable step forward today, and with scant speed drawn outside her, a kickback-free trip could see her go close.

R6: LATE NIGHT CALL (15/1 ML)

Following a productive and progressive 3-year-old season that saw her record two wins and a career-best 74 Beyer when beaten just 4 3/4-lengths by FONDLY in the G3 Delaware Oaks, LATE NIGHT CALL built nicely on her comeback effort when stretched back out to two turns and re-fitted with blinkers in the Carousel Stakes last time. Setting an honest pace on the front end at odds of 47/1, the daughter of AUDIBLE was only just collared on the wire by the talented COMPLEXITY JANE, despite the track presenting a significant closer bias and the race completely falling apart around her. The winner, third, fourth, and fifth place finishers were positioned 5th (beaten 6 1/2L), 7th (10 1/2L), 8th (14 1/2L), and 9th (18L) at the second call—she did remarkably well to only just be touched off and her effort can be upgraded. Now making her third start back—often when horses peak—she looks set to be well positioned in a race that isn't chock-full of speed, and provided the track is playing fair, an improvement on her latest 73 Beyer looks within reach. She may have a tough time beating the favorite TAKETHEMONEYHONEY, but at 15/1 she makes plenty of appeal as a horse to use underneath in vertical wagers.

R9: FULL MOON MADNESS (4/1 ML)

In a wide-open renewal of the Fire Plug Overnight Handicap, FULL MOON MADNESS offers appeal at morning-line odds of 4/1. Shipping in from New York for trainer Michelle Nevin, the G3-winning 6-year-old endured a tricky trip in the G3 Elite Power Stakes last time, getting jostled around early before being forced to steady and then finding himself boxed in on the far turn. That trip didn't allow him to show his best and his resulting 84 Beyer can be upgraded. Now getting some notable class relief and Lasix back on — significant given he's won his last two starts with Lasix, posting Beyers of 88 and 91 — a bounce-back to form looks likely, and the predicted fast pace is only going to help.

FUTURE HORSES TO WATCH

CHESAPEAKE DREAM *(Breezed 3F - :38.00 at LRL on 8/24)*

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Last Race: April 25, 4th race

Finish: 3rd by 3

Sent up between horses early through a white-hot first quarter, then continued to duel through a strong half, tiring in the final sixteenth. Tab back in dirt allowance sprint up to 7 furlongs.

LYUDMILA *(Breezed 4F - :49.00 at TAM on 12/20)*

Trainer: Justin Nixon

Last Race: Nov. 21, 6th race

Finish: 1st by 6

Gun Runner filly sold for a million dollars as a yearling, and was a professional debut winner. Pinched a bit at the start, recovered to track the pace outside, then ran by the odds-on favorite in the stretch. Expect her to winter at Tampa Bay Downs.

READY FOR MAGIC *(Breezed 4F – :49.80 at LRL on 1/15)***Trainer:** Somraj Singh**Last Race:** Dec. 7, 3rd race**Finish:** 2nd by 3

Bumped lightly from in between rivals during the opening furlong, she tracked three wide and in between, attacked the winner from the outside on the turn, then tried her best for second money. Her tactical speed works well in similar dime "non-two" claimer going short.

SUMMER VIBES *(Breezed 4F – 49.80 at LRL on 1/6)***Trainer:** Lacey Gaudet**Last Race:** Dec. 13, 6th**Finish:** 4th by 6 1/4

Stumbled after being bumped and sandwiched at the break, regrouped and settled well back and off of a contested pace around the turn, cut the corner into the stretch, remained inside past mid-stretch, finished with good energy, and continued nicely through the gallop out.

HEY ALEXA**Trainer:** T J Aguirre**Last Race:** Dec. 21, 1st race**Finish:** 4th by 8

Dropped in class after almost a one-year layoff, rallied up the rail with late interest behind the winning favorite. Looking for some improvement at the same level, going a bit longer, perhaps the one-turn mile.

POWER GRID**Trainer:** Jerry Robb**Last Race:** Dec. 27, 8th race**Finish:** 5th by 9 1/2

Appeared on the upswing, but threw in a puzzler in the Heft Stakes, where the pace situation was not to his liking. Forced to chase the gate to wire winner while 3 wide early, raced 4-5 wide leaving the 3/8 pole, then flat when asked.

SCULCOS FOLLY**Trainer:** Rick Dutrow**Last Race:** Jan. 9, 8th race**Finish:** 2nd by 3/4**BETTER WATCH IT****Trainer:** Madison Meyers**Last Race:** Nov. 16, 1st race**Finish:** 5th by 9

Sent off the favorite in a "non-two" starter allowance, he was bumped at the start and steadied in behind horses heading into the first turn. That left him saving ground in midpack behind a glacial opening quarter in 25.15. By the time he got a seam in the upper stretch, the runaway winner was long gone.

DON'T WAIT UP**Trainer:** Kieron Magee**Last Race:** Dec 7, 4th race**Finish:** 2nd by 2 1/2

Tracked the pace while hung four wide on the backstretch, went after the class-dropping, pacesetting winner on the turn, then tried hard for second. Nine-time winner fits at the \$20,000 starter allowance level between six furlongs and one mile.

WATCH YOUR TONE**Trainer:** Jonathan Maldonado**Last Race:** Dec. 26, 9th race**Finish:** 2nd by neck

Seven-time Laurel winner just missed while battling to the wire with Skip thru Da Fire, posting her best Beyer speed figure since 2023. Looking for the same late run, preferably 6 furlongs to the mile distance.

LADY LYDIA**Trainer:** Brittany Russell**Last Race:** Jan. 9, 7th race**Finish:** 4th by 13 1/4

Favored early in the wagering cycle, this Quality Road filly was caught in close quarters leaving the starting gate, taken to the 6 path in upper stretch, then came up empty late while continuing wide vs. romping 10-length winner Velocity Girl.

Beat slow to start, edged up into a sharp pace 4 wide around the turn, finished strongly in top effort. This colt has shown steady improvement since adding blinkers and should be dangerous at a mile.

JOCKEY CALLS

At Laurel Park, jockeys can be named on more than one horse on the original overnight.

Race 1 - Yedsit Hazlewood: #4 - Mistical Curlin; #6 - Collection Day >>> **Hazlewood chooses MISTICAL CURLIN**

Race 2 - Yedsit Hazlewood: #3 - lamdependingonyou; #4 - Naomi an Ruth; #8 - Belle's Baby >>> **Hazlewood chooses BELLE'S BABY**

Race 2 - Carlos Lopez: #1 - Back Wall Bandit; #7 - Stylish Gem >>> **Lopez chooses BACK WALL BANDIT**

Race 2 - Xavier Perez: #1 - Back Wall Bandit; #7 - Stylish Gem >>> **Perez chooses STYLISH GEM**

Race 5 - Yedsit Hazlewood: #4 - Stress Reliever; #6 - Fabia >>> **Hazlewood chooses STRESS RELIEVER**

Race 7 - Tais Lyapustina: #1 - Formal Affair; #3 - Bold Diversion >>> **Lyapustina chooses BOLD DIVERSION**

FRIDAY'S ROUND-UP - by John Piasek, *The Racing Biz*

A recap of Friday, Jan. 16 action at Laurel Park. Visit theracingbiz.com for John Piasek's FREE full analysis of today's Laurel card.

Race 1: Wiffleball certainly knocked it out of the park as the even-money favorite. He broke on top and never gave the others a chance, drawing off to an impressive 9 ½-length victory. Runner-up Summer Vibes made a solid move from last to grab second in the final stages; look for him next out first off the Anthony Farrior claim.

Race 2: 10-pound apprentice Pedro Pena earned his first career victory aboard **Diamond N Dress**, who pulled off a shocking 15-1 upset. She pressed the pace and made a surprisingly strong move to the lead on the final turn, and neither of the favorites could make a dent. It was a surprising result for the Tom McMahon-trained filly, who was well-beaten in her previous four starts.

Race 3: Blinkers on proved to be the winning move for **Disney Belle**. After showing speed and stopping in her previous four starts, this time she made the rail and the lead from the far outside post and kept on going to win emphatically. Fourth-place finisher Emma Mermaid, in her first start off a 4 ½-month layoff, acted up in the gate, then made a strong move on the turn and flattened out. Still, she should improve next time out.

Race 4: For the second time on the card, the biggest longshot in the field won. 11-1 **Why Not Grace** saved ground all the way and rallied up the rail to get up in the final strides. Runner-up A Cozy Thing looked as if she would stop badly at the top of the stretch, but held on well and gave Why Not Grace a brief scare.

Race 5: It was a tough beat for whoever was alive to Heat Check for the entire early pick 5 pool. He set the early pace and determinedly fought on in the stretch, but ultimately ended up second to **Mister Roscoe**. He sat a great trip just off the pace under Yedsit Hazlewood, who got everything he could out of his mount in the stretch and prevailed by a half-length in a race where no one made up any ground from off the pace. His win ensured an early pick 5 carryover of over \$23,000 for Saturday's card.

Race 6: This race was altered at the start when potential early speed Albert Finnegan acted up and unseated his jockey. That allowed **Christmas Spirit** to take early command along the rail. He dug in and fended off favored Imperial Spy to win in an exciting stretch duel.

Race 7: First time out, **Top Manipulator** stalked the pace and faded. This time, he stalked the pace and converted, improving sharply at second asking to win at 9-1. First-time starter Sujo took tons of early money, and closed strongly up the inside after getting sandwiched at the start.

Race 8: Work Hard had done great work against lesser in his last few starts, and handled the jump from conditioned claimers just fine. He rallied from last to first to win at 5-1 for the dream team of Gary Capuano and Yedsit Hazlewood. Second choice Waldrip pressed the early pace and fought off Work Hard as best he could, but could only manage second. Favored Alvy was pulled up after checking very sharply up the backstretch; he walked off.

Race 9: Built by Khozan zoomed to the early lead and opened up a clear advantage, with a line of four runners in close pursuit. One of them, Suremeanttoobe, made the first move after the leader, who remained clear at the top of the stretch. Under vigorous urging from Ismerio Villalobos, Suremeanttoobe wore down Built by Khozan in the last sixteenth of a mile for the 17-1 upset win in his first start since mid-September. Favorites Winning Trip and Prado Road were also in that line of four, but had little late punch and finished third and fourth, respectively.

Race 10: The classy veteran Pit Stop Man set the pace towards the inside and won gate-to-wire first off the Anthony Farris claim, resulting in a late pick 5 scoop of over \$28,000. 25-1 Let's Have a Party showed late speed for the first time in months and rounded out the exacta. Co-favorite Alilnalot checked sharply on the far turn and completely dropped out of contention, but did not look like a serious threat to win prior to his trouble.

PAST TRACK TRENDS

Nov. 1 – Fair
Nov. 2 – SPEED BIAS
Nov. 7 – CLOSERS BIAS
(OUTSIDE LEAN)
Nov. 8 – SPEED BIAS
Nov. 9 – Fair
Nov. 14 – Fair
Nov. 15 – Fair
Nov. 16 – Fair

Nov. 21 - CLOSERS BIAS
Nov. 22 - Fair
Nov. 23 - CLOSERS BIAS
Nov. 27 – Fair
Nov. 28 – Fair (stiff tailwind
backstretch; headwind stretch)
Nov. 29 – Fair
Nov. 30 – Fair
Dec. 5 – Fair

Dec. 6 – Fair
Dec. 7 – Fair
Dec. 12 – Fair
Dec. 13 – Fair
Dec. 14 – Fair
Dec. 19 - Fair (stiff tailwind
backstretch; headwind stretch)
Dec. 20 - CLOSERS BIAS
Dec. 21 - Fair

Dec. 26 – Fair
Dec. 27 – Fair
Dec. 28 – Fair
Jan. 9 – Fair
Jan. 10 – Fair