



LAUREL PARK HANDICAPPING GUIDE for Saturday, Feb. 21

First post is **Noon ET** with 12% takeout on Value Pick 5 wagers (first five races; last five races).

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

TODAY'S ANALYSIS - by Dan Illman

>> RACE 1

1. PRINCESS LUCIA

2. ECLIPTICAL GINA

3. ARISE MY LOVE

First post is NOON, with a LOW 12% takeout on "Value" Pick 5 wagers (first five races; last five races). **PRINCESS LUCIA**, listed as a Laurel vet scratch (sick) on 2/13, was bumped at the start last month, then raced in tight on the first turn. Wisely advanced through traffic to prompt the 8-1 runner-up from the outside, attacked that foe on the second bend, then scored despite getting out a bit under left-handed urging. Figures close to the pace for a barn that went 4 for the last 11 (36%, \$3.35 ROI), with last-out winners making the third start after a two-month layoff or greater. **ECLIPTICAL GINA** tracked between horses, grabbed the pocket on the second turn under urging, then stayed well for second when returned to dirt at Penn National. This seems more like a lateral class move than a true drop, and the late-runner could use a bit of pace aid. **ARISE MY LOVE** prompted a slow five-ply pace from the rail, settled into the pocket after a half-mile, snuck through along the fence turning for home, then scored in "ridden out" fashion. The runner-up returned to place in an open first-level allowance with a 59 Beyer. Expect fresh early speed from MOON CACHE, who returns from a 146-day layoff after being wired at Delaware. The runner-up then finished third in a first-level allowance at Churchill with an 80 Beyer.

>> RACE 2

1. BRING THE SMOKE

2. MOMENTUM FILES

3. SUMMERINTHECOUNTRY

BRING THE SMOKE, listed as a Laurel vet scratch (sick) on 2/5, broke well, then leaned in and was pulled off outer rivals to track from a tight spot in the pocket. Saved ground behind a moderate pace in midpack, raced on hold behind horses, then finished evenly behind an impressive runaway winner that returned to take a first-level allowance with a 98 Beyer. He likely learned a great deal from that outing for a barn that went 3 for 12 (25%, \$2.32 ROI) between 12/28 and 2/14. **MOMENTUM FILES** deserves strong consideration adding blinkers in the first start off the Rudy Rodriguez claim. Tracked from the pocket at Aqueduct, advanced to push the pace from in between, seemed a bit green in the upper stretch, then dug in gamely inside the winner to just miss. Kicks late for a barn that went 4 for the last 13 (31%, \$3.89 ROI) with newly-claimed horses returning from a 61-120 day layoff. **SUMMERINTHECOUNTRY** went on a hard chase in his final start last year before faltering behind the top pick. Expect him to get close to the pace for a barn that went 7 for 27 (26%, \$2.60 ROI) between 1/9 and 2/15. **KARMA'S INTHEHOUSE** (wears a hood) should show good speed after facing two next-out winners. The third-finisher returned to place in a maiden special weight with a 73 Beyer.

>> RACE 3

1. STRAIGHT TO WATER

2. ROLL ON JESSE

3. DOLICE VITA

STRAIGHT TO WATER looked good winning two back, then might have found six furlongs a bit sharp last time. Wasn't away the best last month, stalked between horses at the back, altered outside to split foes four wide, maneuvered sharply to the fence when likely already beaten, then finished evenly with an okay gallop-out. Don't mind him stretching out to a one-turn mile, and he can stay within striking range of the leaders. Dismiss **ROLL ON JESSE**'s last race, as he was simply in too tough in the Jennings Stakes. Broke well two back, although a bit outward, stalked off the rail, split rivals turning for home, then finished evenly on the fence. Late-runner could use some pace help, but the barn sent out a 6-1 "Lasix On" winner on 1/16. **DOLICE VITA** stumbled at the start, saved ground at the back, then scooted up the inside to score over this course and distance. The last-finisher returned to take a \$16,000

claimer at Parx on Wednesday. GUAPONESS should show stretch-out speed after being wired in a race where they ran 1-2 around the track. JOE THE JET was wired by stakes-bound Lonesome Road. The fourth-finisher then ran third in an open first-level allowance with a 73 Beyer. Hazlewood lands here instead of FORMAL AFFAIR.

>> RACE 4

1. TENEBRIS

2. RADICAL RIGHT

3. INTREPID'S LEGACY

TENEBRIS broke sharply, battled with two outer foes, was outpaced in a quick second quarter in 23.59, then steadily tired along the fence. Like him cutting back a furlong this afternoon, and he might not have to work as hard to grab the early advantage for a barn that sent out a 5-2 winner on 2/12.

RADICAL RIGHT tracked from the pocket while the jockey briefly adjusted his left iron, eased out to split rivals, then finished evenly to place ahead of the top pick. Seems adaptable to any race flow for a barn that had a couple of winners since 2/6. **INTREPID'S LEGACY** finished ahead of three of these, including the top two picks, when beaten by favored Gordian Knot. Broke slow, saved ground in midpack, advanced to confront the winner turning for home, then flattened out in a solid try for a trainer-jockey combination that had two winners last Saturday.

>> RACE 5

1. PRINCE OF JERICHO

2. IT'S HAMMERTIME

3. DEAN DELIVERS

PRINCE OF JERICHO broke sharply, prompted the 4-1 winner through a quick opening quarter in 22.27, went on the attack on the turn, and just couldn't get by when it counted. Chipotle then placed in the Fire Plug Overnight Handicap with a 96 Beyer. Expect rail speed from a barn that went 8 for the last 21 (38%, \$2.16 ROI) with dirt horses returning from 61-120-day layoffs. **IT'S HAMMERTIME** is a very talented colt, but he's only raced once in the past 476 days. Pressed the 6-1 fourth-finisher through slow fractions over a speed-friendly track last time, took command under a confident ride, and was on his merry way. This barn went 59 for 169 (35%, \$2.40 ROI) on dirt between 4/26 and 2/14. Hazlewood lands here instead of Hedwig. **DEAN DELIVERS** tracked four wide along the back of a compact field, advanced outside on the turn under urging, then flattened out in the stretch. The runner-up then placed in Parx's Blitzen Stakes with an 87 Beyer. Cruz departs for NO CENTS.

>> RACE 6

1. IN AWE OF JUJU

2. MAD FOR MADDY

3. KRISSI N

IN AWE OF JUJU set the pace from the fence, received a nice breather through a second quarter in 24.56 seconds, then tired over muddy going in New York. She should be in the thick of things when they turn for home and seems well-entered for her circuit debut. **MAD FOR MADDY**, listed as a Delaware vet scratch (sick) on 8/27, returns from a 198-day layoff. Prompted the favored sixth-finisher going two turns at Delaware, pressed that foe after a half-mile, and tired in the final furlong. The winner then placed in a second-level allowance at Parx with a 76 Beyer. Curious to see if this distance is a bit sharp for a barn that went 10 for the last 33 (30%, \$2.79 ROI) moving route to sprint. Cruz departs for Esroh. **KRISSI N** prompted a slow pace from the outside, was outpaced on the turn, steadied between horses, found a split in upper stretch, and tried hard to just miss. Finished ahead of three of these and should receive an honest pace to attack. Sanchez departs for TIZ PURPLE, who drops into a strict "non-three" claimer after facing seven-time winner Miss Easy at Parx.

>> RACE 7

1. LAW SCHOOL

2. PEACH TIE

3. MOMAXIE

LAW SCHOOL tracked the 7-2 runner-up from the outside, took the lead on the turn, then drew away to win the Parx Future Stars Fillies by seven lengths. This might be a tougher spot, but she's won her last two races by a combined 21 2/4 lengths and is a proven commodity over this course. **PEACH TIE**, unbeaten in four dirt starts, pressed a quick pace from between horses, then drew away in the Gin Talking despite being late to change leads. Drew nicely outside the other speeds and can work out a nice tracking trip while clear of traffic for a barn that went 4 for the last 14 (29%, \$2.47 ROI) with dirt horses exiting a victory and a Beyer top performance. **MOMAXIE** tracked between horses, split horses on the turn after making an early lead change, then got away from the field despite swapping back to her left lead. Expect a late bid for a barn that went 10 for the last 46 (22%, \$2.06 ROI) with dirt horses exiting a last-out win and a Beyer top performance.

>> RACE 8

1. LET'S GO LANDO

2. CLOSE THE GATE

3. TAJ MAHAL

LET'S GO LANDO tracked a slow pace from the pocket in a race run in driving sleet, eased outside turning into the long stretch, and drew clear despite hopping back to his left lead. Kicks late for a barn that went 4 for the last 12 (33%, \$2.23 ROI) with horses exiting a Beyer top. **CLOSE THE GATE** broke sharp in the Spectacular Bid, prompted the 5-2 winner through moderate (24.17; 24.49) fractions, battled in the stretch, and just came up short. Respect his tactical speed, and the barn went 3 for the last 11 (27%, \$2.27 ROI) with experienced horses routing on dirt for the first time. **TAJ MAHAL** broke slow in his debut, pulled his way along to race at the back behind a slow pace (24.25 second quarter), made a strong four-wide bid into contention, and was too good for that group. Gets a class and pace test for a barn that went 9 for the last 41 (22%, \$2.79 ROI) with last-out winners removing Lasix on dirt. **HIGHER SENSE** set a slow, uncontested pace when graduating in "ridden out" fashion over course and distance. Expect him to try to make the lead once again.

>> RACE 9

1. KINDA KRAZY

2. HOOF AND BOOTS

3. NOTHINGLESSWILLDO

KINDA KRAZY wheels back on short notice after a good run following a 190-day layoff. Sideswiped a bit leaving the gate, she tracked a quick opening quarter from a tight spot in the pocket, eased three wide into the stretch, and finished evenly. Figures close to the pace this afternoon as she stretches out in distance. **HOOF AND BOOTS** stalked a swift pace outside, made a four-wide bid on the turn, then rallied for second behind the odds-on winner despite being late to change leads. Villalobos departs for Honor Thy Cookie. **NOTHINGLESSWILLDO** has a tendency to get fractious behind the stalls, but she passed some tired rivals when second to runaway Velocity Girl, who is entered in today's Wide Country. She has more experience than the top two picks at today's distance, and the barn sent out a 9-2 winner at Gulfstream on 2/15. **AQUA BLAZE** drops in class with the speed to get up and on the pace. The third-finisher from her last start then graduated in a \$40,000 maiden claimer with a 57 Beyer.

KALI'S KEYS – by Kali Francois

Race 1: #6 Meg - 4/1

The Keefe and Cruz factor stands strong as this one gets back to a distance that eluded her as a 3yo. As there is no doubt a big difference between a 3- and 4-year-old runner, she looks every bit of the part that was asking to stretch out. One of those that seemingly 'flattened out' down the lane but then had a little bit of energy after the wire. Half-sibling Top Manipulator won last weekend as well.

Race 4: #2 Cadeau d'Argent - 6/1

Just to jog your memory, this one won on Preakness day in the first race and paid \$137.40. The goal is always to potentially stretch out with this one, as with that route win first time against winners, but this is just a potential prep to get the cobwebs off. Russell and Saville have been teaming up well together with this one, and while they won't rush him, we should be seeing results.

Race 6:

#3 Devastating - 6/1

#4 Tuned to the Moon - 5/1

#5 Krissi N - 6/1

In this leg of the LVP5 at the low 12% takeout, go wide. Especially with these three. With the blinkers on, Sheldon's is going to definitely take back and make one run after what happened last out (he was on an inside spot, protecting the rail, but got shut off because he needed just a little more horse in that moment. Blinkers on will make her brave), #4 Tuned to the Moon was a little too enthusiastic first off the layoff last out and paid the price at the end. #5 Krissi N dealt with plenty of noise mid-race, and came flourishing at the end.

Race 8:

#3 G Q Worthy - 8/1

#5 Taj Mahal - 5/1

Getting right to it, #5 Taj Mahal's dam made herself respectable in a good second going a longer distance first out - a stake, the Barely Even at Gulfstream Park. Sheldon gave just barely a good enough dirt schooling before going wide but I can't necessarily blame him - he was dealing with a lot of horse in his hands. Speaking of dirt schooling, #3 G Q Worthy got a stinger of a mud schooling last out and needed to adjust. Outside of that, goes fine over a wet surface. Lopez took him out wide and it was a touch of an uphill battle from there onwards. Not to take anything away from Carlos, but Xavier gets his first try routing on this one, and he knows exactly what G Q Worthy needs.

Race 9: #2 Kinda Crazy - 5/1

Similar to the Meg situation, the half siblings with this one didn't really start winning until they at least hit the middle distances - this one won't have to work too hard like they did last time out. Had to rush up there into a spot, then had to start asking early...every indicator that longer distances are what she's seeking. Too much rushy energy for this one - she'll appreciate being able to relax and just be allowed to breathe easy into the race.

MACK'S FACTS – by Mackenzie Pfeiffer

R1: Arise My Love arrives off of a win in open allowance company and shortens up to the mile here. The gutsy rail trip from last out might be repeated here. Princess Lucia is the only 4x winner in this group, with the questionable pace scenario, she could take an early command against this group.

R2: Momentum Files transfers in from NY for his first start off the bench and after being claimed, this could be a strategic move to protect him in MSW company. Blinkers go on for this 6 y/o gelding, a repeat of his last outing could best this group. Bring the Smoke makes his second start after an imperfect trip on debut. Likely improvement after facing the quality runner Lonesome Road.

R3: Joe the Jet worked an impressive trip 2-back at this distance, with the outer post and inside speed today, he may be able to work a similar trip again. Restricted allowance company on the dirt should fit well. Dolice Vita is the only 10x winner of this group, his last outing impressed with a ground saving trip and strong finish.

R4: Tenebris is the only 8x winner of this group and looks to be the controlling speed. If you can draw a line through the last outing, the 2-back effort is good enough to best the field here. Intrepid's Legacy could pose the largest threat to the early pace. While recent efforts have shown him to be strong in the early going, he certainly could best this group with a straightforward trip.

R5: Prince of Jericho returned from a lengthy layoff to run a winning race and just miss at the wire. His second start off the bench looked to be the same story. Third time should be the charm here. It's Hammertime was very impressive in his lone start as a 3 y/o, and ran just as well in his 2 y/o year. Bullet works leading into nice maintenance pieces suggest he might pick up right where he left off.

R6: Krissi N overcame a messy trip overall to keep finding her way in the last outing, she might benefit from the stalking trip here. Jockey change could benefit. Keep an eye on Mad for Maddy on the outside, this will be her first try sprinting since adding Lasix and blinkers. Overall, a strong handicapping race to play a few ways.

R7: While I find myself a bit suspect of the 80 Beyer from Law School in her last outing, she certainly has a chance to get loose here. With a bit of inside speed, she could move into things early and not look back. Peach Tie has been far more impressive to me than her figs suggest, proven with tactical ability, the outer post sets her up for her preferred trip.

R8: Taj Majal is the least experienced runner in this group but his debut effort looked to have several lessons combined in one trip. While he looked to win going away, it wasn't a wrap up job. Russell kept this one to task all the way through the wire, perhaps gaining as much fitness and experience as possible to be prepared for today's company. The value play could be Close the Gate, who took it to Hollywood Import in the Spectacular Bid and just missed at the wire. He has held strong company in all three starts.

R9: Nothinglesswilldo arrives for her second start off the bench and should be on the improve. Last out she was chasing gate to wire winner Velocity Girl, now in stakes company, and still bested a maiden winner who had previously been DQ'd.

TODAY'S HOT TRAINER STATS

RACE 1

#3 - Princess Lucia

Trainer: Hugh McMahon

Last-Out Winners, Third After 61+ Day Layoff: 4 for 11 (36%, \$3.35 ROI)

RACE 2

#1 - Momentum Files

Trainer: Rudy Rodriguez

First After Claim, First After 61-120 Days: 4 for 13 (31%, \$3.89 ROI)

#3 - Bring the Smoke

Trainer: Lacey Gaudet

Between 12/28 and 2/14: 3 for 12 (25%, \$2.32 ROI)

#4 - Summerinthecountry

Trainer: Hugh McMahon

Between 1/9 and 2/15: 7 for 27 (26%, \$2.60 ROI)

RACE 5

#1 - Prince of Jericho

Trainer: Brittany Russell

First After 61-120 Days: 8 for 21 (38%, \$2.16 ROI)

#2 - It's Hammertime

Trainer: Gary Capuano

Between 4/26 and 2/14, Dirt: 59 for 169 (35%, \$2.40 ROI)

RACE 6

#8 - Mad for Maddy

Trainer: Ned Allard

Route to Sprint: 10 for 33 (30%, \$2.79 ROI)

RACE 7

#1 - Momaxie

Trainer: Jose Corrales

Last-Out Winner with Beyer Top, Dirt: 10 for 46 (22%, \$2.06 ROI)

#4 - Peach Tie

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Last-Out Winner with Beyer Top, Dirt: 4 for 14 (29%, \$2.47 ROI)

RACE 8

#4 - Close the Gate

Trainer: John Salzman Jr.

Experienced Horses, First Route, Dirt: 3 for 11 (27%, \$2.27 ROI)

#5 - Taj Mahal

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Last-Out Winner, Lasix Off, Dirt: 9 for 41 (22%, \$2.79 ROI)

#7 - Let's Go Lando

Trainer: Gary Capuano

Exiting a Beyer Top: 4 for 12 (33%, \$2.23 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: MD-Bred Allowance, 4YO+F, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- The chart comment notes how **#2 ARISE MY LOVE** was in “narrow quarters 1/16” last out (1 1/16M, LRL, 12/27/25) but this does not mean he had a bad trip/stretch run (he was simply tight against the fence when slipping through a narrow opening but never had to check and had sat a perfect ground saving trip throughout). Note: she was only hand ridden through the lane, so possibly has a tiny more to offer.
- **#6 MEG** raced widest of all (3-4W turn), then stayed on gamely through the lane and closed strongly for 2nd before galloping out well last out (6F, LRL, 02/13/26); provided she can cope with the sharp turn around (8 days rest), it wouldn't surprise if she ran at least equally as well at a mile today, especially if allowed a more ground saving trip.

Race 2: MSW, 4-6YO, 6 Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- Maybe harsh, but **#1 MOMENTUM FILES** didn't look fully committed to getting the 'W' last out (1M, AQU, 11/16/25) and he also showed a small tendency to lug in slightly in through the lane; he gave the impression that today's addition of blinkers will help him as he makes his debut for Rodriguez off the bench.
- **#3 BRING THE SMOKE** lost ground breaking outwards from the rail and racing awkwardly for a few strides on debut last time (6F, LRL, 12/26/25); he then traveled well into contention along the fence but was boxed in slightly on the turn (when he'd ideally have been building momentum) and then forced to wait and (very, very) slightly steady/shift off heels ~1/4 pole; he ran a promising race behind a monster (in LONESOME ROAD) and a more experienced rival (STANZA) and can likely build on this effort with Lasix on today. Player.

Race 3: MD-Bred Allowance, 4YO+, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- Up in class, **#1 STRAIGHT TO WATER** was outrun and never truly competitive sprinting last out (6F, LRL, 01/23/26); however, he did stay on evenly enough through the lane (with a good attitude) to suggest that he can compete at this class level at 1M, which he gets today. Wouldn't be surprised if he was to run a nice race this afternoon.
- There was no visible reason as to why **#2 GUAPONESS** ran below expectations last week (5 1/2F, LRL, 02/13/26); he was under pressure throughout and although he looked to be trying, failed to respond. Stretches right back out in distance on a short turn around today.
- **#3 DOLCE VITA** stumbled a little leaving the gate last out (1M, LRL, 12/26/25); usually, that would warrant an upgrade, however, he never lost contact with the field and sat a perfect trip on his way to a convincing win thereafter; the speed fig is fair and not worthy of an upgrade. though that's not to say he's without a major shot today. Can be more forward than he was last time.

Race 4: OC40k/N2X Allowance, 4YO+, 6 Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- The chart comment mentions how **#1 RADICAL RIGHT** was “bit tight 5/16” last out (7F, LRL, 02/05/26) but this really was inconsequential and overall, his trip was fine and he had no excuse. Cuts back to 6F today which looks to be his sweet spot.
- Not sure what happened with **#2 CADEAU D'ARGENT** last out (1M 70Y, PEN, 07/17/25) but he just never lifted a hoof, and the effort was then followed by a layoff - we can probably assume something was amiss and draw a line through it, judging him on his prior two starts instead. Cuts back in trip off the bench today.
- There was no visible reason as to why **#3 TENEBRIS** ran below par last out (7F, LRL, 02/05/26); he was done early on the turn and had nothing for the stretch; less rival speed and a cut back to 6F today should help him as he makes his debut for Vera, but he does now have a question or two to answer.
- The chart comment notes how **#4 ALL THE HARDWAYS** met “traffic ¼, altered course upper” when underperforming last out (7F, LRL, 02/05/26); sure, he did meet brief traffic when trying to close into the hot pace from rear, but it was fairly minor and he didn't lose much momentum at all; he then failed to find enough when clear in the lane to upgrade his performance and even with a 100% clean trip, he wasn't getting to the re-opposing 3rd place finisher **#5 INTREPID'S LEGACY**.

- **#5 INTREPID'S LEGACY** broke in a tangle and got away slowly last out (7F, LRL, 02/05/26), then pulled and made an early advance into the fast pace (not ideal) before racing slightly wide on the turn – it wasn't a disastrous trip, but it didn't see him to best effect either and an improved showing from his wide draw today seems possible.

Race 5: OC 55k/C Allowance, 4YO+, 5 ½ Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- As the 3/5 fav, it was a little disappointing that **#1 PRINCE OF JERICHO** didn't go past CHIPOTLE in the lane last time when it appeared he had every chance to do so; maybe he was just beaten fair and square by what is clearly a nice horse (ran a 96 Beyer next out), but it wouldn't be completely out of place to suggest POJ hung a little. On the contrary, he was beaten just a neck having raced a path wider than the winner on the turn, which, considering the small margin of defeat, could have been the difference between winning and losing. Massive player today, whatever the case.
- As impressive as **#2 IT'S HAMMERTIME** was winning last time (6F, LRL, 04/13/25), it should be noted that he had plenty of room to work forward having drawn the outside; he then formed part of an early pace that was not overly fast; and the track was presenting a speed bias this day too – he had everything in his favor and (mainly due to the track bias/early pace), might need his effort DOWNGRADING. Still, there's no denying that he's massively talented and he visually he passed the eye test again with an authoritative win off the bench this day. Returns off another lengthy layoff following some swift morning works.
- **#6 HEDWIG** faded into 8th through the lane last out (6 1/2F, TP Synth, 01/22/26) despite having been part of a slow early pace that held very well in front (DOWNGRADE); he has plenty to prove switching to the dirt today.

Race 6: Claiming 40k, 4YO+F, 6 Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- As highlighted in the chart comment, **#1 DON'T FOOL WITH ME** was bumped at the break last out (7F, LRL, 12/28/26) and then steadied shortly after. Both of these things did happen and didn't necessarily aid her chances as a 35/1 long-shot; however, it wasn't major interference at all and her trip thereafter, though a touch wide on the turn, was fine. The result and speed fig are about fair.
- **#2 ESROH** acted up in the gate and then reared as the gates opened last out (6F, LRL, 02/06/26), giving the field a 2-3L head start; she then rushed up into the slow pace outside horses approaching the far turn, chased the pace while ~3W on the bend and stopped. Her gate antics and slightly wide trip didn't help her chances, but it's hard to say that either of those factors were the reason as to why she ran quite so poorly as the 1/1 fav; questions to answer.
- Having broken from the rail, **#3 DEVASTATING** was just starting to struggle to hold her position heading into the far turn (possibly as a result of the slow pace slightly increasing around her) when she was put in tight and forced to check ~7/16 pole, losing momentum, ground and her winning chance last out (6F, LRL, 02/06/26); she then stayed on evenly under a half-hearted ride but was never getting back on terms. A clean trip with blinkers now on and a stronger pace forecast should help her improve on second start or Farring today.
- Maybe harsh to knock her too much considering it was her first start for 182-days, but **#4 TUNED TO THE MOON** did get away with relatively slow fractions on an uncontested lead last out (6F, LRL, 02/06/26), likely aiding her finishing position (DOWNGRADE). Still, it was a solid return, and she's entitled to strip fitter today.
- **#5 KRISSI N** ran a slightly odd race last out (6F, LRL, 02/06/26): she showed speed and attended the modest pace early, then dropped back and looked to be done on the home turn before she jumped back on the bridle but lacked room between foes ~1/4 pole and had to wait for a number of strides; she then found room again and rattling home for 2nd. Suspect that if she'd remained engaged on the turn and not dropped back and/or not met brief trouble at the top of the lane, she'd have gone very close to winning. Seems she's capable of more than she showed this day; switches jock this afternoon.
- **#8 MAD FOR MADDY** ran a nice race in defeat last time (1M, DEL, 08/07/25) having pressed the pace between foes on a closer friendly track (ran against track bias – UPGRADE); cuts back in trip off lengthy layoff today.

Race 7: Wide Country Stakes, 3YOF, 7 Furlongs, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- After sitting a good trip ("light steady ¾" and "fanned wide upper" mentioned in the chart comment were negligible) **#1 MOMAXIE** drew off in the lane under firm ride to score in the slop last out (1M, LRL, 01/10/26), despite having made an undesirable early lead change on the turn (switched to right lead before entering the lane) and then having flopped leads again in deep stretch. Either you can take that [the leg changing] as a sign that she has more room to grow and improve today or be concerned about the fact that she'll likely need to race more professionally if she's to remain unbeaten against tougher foes.

- **#2 VELOCITY GIRL** established an uncontested lead early last out (1M, LRL, 01/09/26), set even fractions in front, then drew off under strong handling in the lane before coasting through the final ~50Y; it was a nice effort but she's unlikely to garner the same lose lead today cutting back to 7F (reducing the scope for improvement as she was essentially fully extended), and it does seem as though the addition of Lasix last time (off today) helped her.
- Although we only have a very brief camera shot, it appeared that, after drawing off to win under a ride with good energy last time (7F, PRX, 12/30/25), **#3 LAW SCHOOL** took some pulling up on the gallop out; she certainly won in a the style of a runner who had some energy left in the tank anyway.
- **#4 PEACH TIE** dueled through fast fractions between foes last out (7F, LRL, 12/27/25) which is not an ideal scenario to find oneself in, so it was commendable that she was then able to pull away in the lane. It should be highlighted, however, that she was only facing two rivals; and she was fully extended to record her 69 Beyer before offering not much of a gallop out; she's definitely worthy of respect today, but she didn't leave the impression that there was a *massive* amount of improvement to come from her. (Not at this stage of her career, anyway). Respected, nonetheless.
- **#5 STRIKE A POSE** ran a nice race to break her maiden on debut last out (6F, AQU, 012/23/26); she did sit a dream trip on debut though, ran very professionally, showed no signs of greenness, and she was fully extended to the wire (was allowed to coast final ~40Y but that made no difference) with lasix on (off today); she didn't leave as much room to step forward second out as other second time starters would have done/do. Respected, nonetheless.

Race 8: Miracle Wood Stakes, 3YO, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- Last out (1M, LRL, 01/23/26), **#1 NO MORE CALLS** was heavily restrained to settle well off the even pace in last; he then coasted into contention while under a hold heading into and around the far turn; straightened for the drive still under a hold just 2L off the under pressure leaders; tipped out and drew level with them ~1/8th pole, then came under a hand ride and spurted away to win easily going away. Not sure he quite has the step up in him to compete for win honors today with Lasix coming off as he makes his debut for Frock, but he certainly won last out with gas left in the tank and seems capable of more than the 54 Beyer he earned.
- **#2 HIGHER SENSE** was much the best when breaking his maiden last out (1M, LRL, 02/04/26) so whether the fact that he was gifted an uncontested lead early and set slow fractions of 25.09, 49.65 made much difference to the result is debatable. It certainly didn't hurt him though, and the potential concern is that he's not going to find himself receiving the same luxury today (if that matters too much to him). Note: although the chart comment mentions how he ran to the wire under a "steady hand ride", the rider wasn't exactly just sitting there, and he looked to be running pretty hard through the line. Lasix off.
- **#3 G Q WORTHY** was caught 4-5W on the turn last out (1M, LRL, 01/10/26) which possibly dented his finishing effort some – small UPGRADE. Lasix off.
- Owing to a wide draw that resulted in no cover, **#4 CLOSE THE GATE** sat close to a slow early pace before finishing 2nd in the Spectacular Bid Stakes last time (7F, LRL, 02/04/26). Usually, that would result in a downgrade; however, he'd seemed to relish coming from off the pace in his two starts prior, so it's hard to say that this pace/race setup actually benefited him, especially as the eventual winner was the one doing the actual pace setting on the lead and saved ground inside CTG throughout - CTG didn't have an edge on that runner. Whatever the case, he ran well again and will demand respect again today. Note: his gallop out last time was okay at best.
- **#5 TAJ MAHAL** won impressively on debut last out (6F, LRL, 02/06/26) despite having been forced to close into a slow pace while giving away ground circling the field 4-5W on the turn – UPGRADE the effort. He hit the line hard in a manner to suggest he'll handle today's stretch out just fine; only concern would be how hard he pulled in hind horses on debut – he looked to drag Sheldon Russell up and around horses approaching the far turn and might need to settle better to see out the distance against tougher foes with Lasix off today. A very promising debut from a live contender, nonetheless.
- **#6 BALBOA** sat a good trip in the Jerome Stakes last out (1M, AQU, 01/03/26) but was run down late; speed fig seems fair.
- **#7 LET'S GO LANDO** never had to check but was absent of a clear path on the far turn last out (1M, LRL, 01/10/26) which forced his rider to wait much longer than he seemingly wanted to; he then drew off in the lane, despite flopping leads, to score easily; wonder whether he'd have won by further if he'd managed to have begun his run earlier (because he was only widening away from the field at the wire); potentially more to come. Lasix off.

Race 9: Maiden Claiming 40k, 3YOF, 1 Mile, Dirt

Replay Notes:

- Granted, she had a pace to run at, but with Lasix on, **#1 HOOF AND BOOTS** once again showed a very determined attitude in defeat last week (6F, LRL, 02/14/26) as she overcame a 4-5W trip (UPGRADE) to run on into 2nd. A more ground saving trip and step up in distance could potentially unlock more improvement again. Gallop out last time was good.
- **#2 KINDA KRAZY** looked flat out and was being ridden from the word go last time - she had every reason to tire on her first start back from a 190-day layoff but gamely kept responding and trying to the wire, staying on well for 3rd. She gave the impression that she could be effective at today's mile trip where a slower early tempo will allow her to

travel more easily early and take a breath before the stretch drive; based on her return effort, stamina shouldn't be too much of an issue. Quick turnaround today might be a concern, though.

#3 AQUA BLAZE was slightly interfered with ~1/8th pole last out (5 1/2F, LRL, 01/17/26) but was heading backwards at the time and it made no difference to the result. Note: she showed a dislike for kickback on debut and was ridden forwardly to avoid it last time; expect speed from this filly again today.

#5 NOTHINGLESSWILLDO got up for 2nd in a bunch finish last time despite having lost ground racing widest off all into the lane – UPGRADE. She wasn't beating the winner but was more comfortably second best than the margin suggests.

#6 PIE PHI ended up further off the pace than ideal having drawn the rail last out (1M, LRL, 01/09/16), then looked to be coming with something of a run to contend for place honors in the lane but was hounded against the rail and then bumped twice ~1/8th pole which did for her chances of hitting the board. Granted a cleaner trip, we can expect more from her second off the bench today.

Horses to Follow

R2: BRING THE SMOKE (5/1 ML)

In-form trainer Lacey Gaudet has a superb 44% strike rate (8-for-18; \$3.04 ROI) with MSW runners who hit the board last out, including 4-of-6 (67%; \$3.50 ROI) making their second career starts. BRING THE SMOKE therefore deserves an additional dose of respect in today's second following a promising debut in December, in which he lost ground shortly after the break and found himself in tight on the rail rounding the home turn, yet still stayed on well to finish third behind the very talented LONESOME ROAD, who returned to earn a 98 Beyer next out. With Lasix added, the son of PRESERVATIONIST projects to step forward from his 72 Beyer, and three good-looking recent works only strengthen that case. He should give the favorite plenty to think about.

R9: NOTHINGLESSWILLDO (5/2 ML)

With a sufficiently strong pace forecast, NOTHINGLESSWILLDO looks well positioned to collect in today's nightcap. The daughter of CROSS TRAFFIC was no match for Wide Country Stakes entrant VELOCITY GIRL last out but still managed to get up for second ahead of the re-opposing HONOR THY COOKIE and PIE PHI, despite losing considerable ground when forced widest into the lane. That effort continued a consistent string of MSW placings, and now dropping in for a tag second off a brief freshening—with Hazlewood aboard to take five pounds off—she should be able to convert that reliability into a first career win.

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.

POWER GRID

Trainer: Jerry Robb

Last Race: Dec. 27, 8th race

Finish: 5th by 9 1/2

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.

BETTER WATCH IT

Trainer: Madison Meyers

Last Race: Nov. 16, 1st race

Finish: 5th by 9

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.

SUJO (*Breezed 4F - :48.40 at TAM on 2/14*)

Trainer: Greg Sacco

Last Race: Jan. 16, 7th race

Finish: 4th by 4 ¾ lengths

First-time starter was pinballed from in between horses at the start, and dropped all the way back to last. Started to kick in at the eighth pole, angled to the fence, and just missed getting third on the wire with a nice gallop-out.

TAJ MAHAL (*Entered TODAY at Laurel – Race 8*)

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Last Race: Feb. 6, 3rd race

Finish: 1st by 4 1/4 lengths

Expensive first-time starter worked well leading up to his debut. Broke slowly, but was allowed to find his stride before sweeping into contention with a wide run on the turn. Took over turning into the stretch, and drew away in the manner of a horse that can successfully step up in class next time.

HELDISH

Trainer: Robin Graham

Last Race: Feb. 5, 6th race

Finish: DNF - lost rider

Looked to be sitting on a good performance, but stumbled at the start and lost the rider before running away from the field. Multiple stakes-placed gelding has a good amount of back class, and is a snug fit at the \$7,500 "beaten" claiming ranks.

KINDA KRAZY (*Entered TODAY at Laurel – Race 9*)

Trainer: Lacey Gaudet

Last Race: Feb. 13, 6th

Finish: 3rd by 4 1/2

Gave a solid try following a lengthy layoff. Sideswiped leaving the gate, then raced in a bit tight from the pocket entering the turn. Angled outside in the stretch, and finished evenly for a minor award.

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.

LADY LYDIA (*Breezed 4F - :50.40 at LRL on 2/5*)

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.

LADY ZETA

Trainer: Lacey Gaudet

Last Race: Feb. 4, 1st race

Finish: 5th by 5 1/2

Expected to be one of the speeds, she instead broke poorly and was last on the rail entering the turn. Swung widest into the stretch, and was no match for the pacesetter winner, but did show some interest on the gallop-out. Thirteen-time winner deserves another shot in a \$7,500 conditioned seller.

DON'T WAIT UP

Trainer: Ferris Allen

Last Race: Feb. 13, 3rd

Finish: 2nd by 3/4

Bumped lightly at the start, then took plenty of dirt in his face while racing at the back. Split rivals turning into the stretch, and rallied nicely inside the winner. Reclaimed out of that race, he fits at the \$20,000 starter-optional level.

BARBADOS BULLDOG (*Entered SUN 2/22 at Laurel – Race 3*)

Trainer: Jose Corrales

Last Race: Feb. 14, 4th

Finish: 3rd by 2 1/2

Appeared to steady slightly at the three-eighths pole, then made a three-wide bid into contention before flattening out slightly in the final furlong. She fits best between \$20,000 and \$40,000 sprinting against fellow 3-year-old fillies.

JOCKEY CALLS

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

Race 3: Yedsit Hazlewood - #4 - Formal Affair; #6 - Joe the Jet >>> **Hazlewood rides JOE THE JET**

Race 4: Xavier Perez - #2 - Cadeau d'Argent; #4 - All the Hardways >>> **Perez rides ALL THE HARDWAYS**

Race 5: Yedsit Hazlewood - #2 - It's Hammertime; #6 - Hedwig >>> **Hazlewood rides IT'S HAMMERTIME**

Race 5: Angel Cruz - #4 - No Cents; #5 - Dean Delivers >>> **Cruz rides NO CENTS**

Race 6: Angel Cruz - #2 - Esroh; #8 - Mad for Maddy >>> **Cruz rides ESROH**

Race 6: Mychel Sanchez - #5 - Krissi N; #7 - Tiz Purple >>> **Sanchez rides TIZ PURPLE**

Race 9: Ismerio Villalobos - #1 - Hoof and Boots; #4 - Honor Thy Cookie >>> **Villalobos rides HONOR THY COOKIE**

THE ROUND-UP - by John Piasek, *The Racing Biz*

A recap of **FRIDAY, FEB. 20** action at Laurel Park. Visit theracingbiz.com for John Piasek's FREE full analysis of today's Laurel card.

Race 1: Jolly by Golly pressed early leader Bob Marco in the two-path, took advantage when that one tired, and held on down the long one-turn mile stretch to win. Aztec, who defeated Jolly by Golly in their last meeting, had him in his sights in the stretch, but drifted out late and could do no better than second.

Race 2: Second to Barbara Fritchie Stakes champion Passage East last out, **Dwelling Legacy** found her opposition much easier to deal with this time. She broke on top and never gave her two rivals a chance.

Race 3: 7-10 favorite **Impressiveness** ran off briefly in the post parade. That didn't slow him down, as he took advantage of a perfect trip and broke his maiden going away. Flying to Work rallied from last and got second with a ground-saving trip.

Race 4: This is a classic example of the importance of saving ground. In the stretch, rail-hugging **Seven's Eleven** and Beach Cowboy, who had raced wide throughout, were heads apart. Seven's Eleven ultimately prevailed by a neck, with his ground-saving trip making the difference.

Race 5: Curlene's Spirit sat off the pace in the four-path and kicked by the embattled pacesetters to win going away. Hotmessness ran the best of the three early leaders, holding on to second over a fast-closing Secret Oaks.

Race 6: Refund alert: Davyjonz was scratched as the field was approaching the gate. **Crab Daddy**, second to Lonesome Road last out, took advantage of class relief this time. He sat off the pace and rallied up the rail to win as the even-money favorite.

Race 7: Another refund alert: Map to the Moon was also withdrawn as they were going to the gate. **Cocktail Humor** pressed early leader Tierra Santa, took control on the far turn, and drew off to give Jamie Ness a training double.

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
Jan. 16 – Fair

Jan. 17 – Fair
Jan. 23 – Fair
Jan. 30 - (only 1 race)
Feb. 4 – Fair
Feb. 5 – Fair
Feb. 6 – Fair
Feb. 12– CLOSERS BIAS
Feb. 13– Fair (slight speed lean)
Feb. 14– Fair
Feb. 15– Fair