



HANDICAPPING GUIDE for 🌸 FRIDAY, MAY 1 🌸

TODAY'S SELECTIONS FROM THE LAUREL PARK TEAM



KEITH FEUSTLE



DAN ILLMAN



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JOHN PIASSEK



DAVE RODMAN



TIM TULLOCK

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

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 ANALYSIS - by Dan Illman

>> RACE 1

1. LUCKY TIN TIN

2. LOAF OF SOF

3. BARBED WIRE BARBIE

First post time is NOON ET, and there is a low 12% takeout on both "Value Pick 5" wagers (first five races; last five races). Although her sire hasn't had much success with turf sprinters, and the barn usually gives them a race or two before they strut their best stuff, **LUCKY TIN TIN** is kin to eight winners (one debut; one on turf). The 4/26 gate workout matches the barn's 4-year-old Red Sea (59 turf Beyer top). Perhaps they breezed in company. Hazlewood departs for Barbed Wire Barbie. **LOAF OF SOF**'s dam won sprinting on turf, and she was wired by the favorite in a slow-paced debut on dirt. The barn scored last year with newly claimed Lift the Lid (11-1 odds), who was also taken from Brittany Russell. **BARBED WIRE BARBIE** (\$4,500 May juvenile) is out of a dam that won two turf sprints. The second dam was a stakes-placed dirt sprinter (81 dirt Beyer top). The 4/17 bullet workout matches the barn's 3-year-old filly Red Drapes (26 Beyer when tenth in a \$16,000 maiden claimer on turf on 4/25). Perhaps they breezed in company. **BELLINI GOLD** switches surfaces as a half-sister to stakes-winning turf sprinter Into the Sunrise.

>> RACE 2

1. COSTA LINDA

2. ENGAGE AT WILL

3. REBELKA

It's the first 2-year-old race of the year in Maryland! **COSTA LINDA** is a three-quarter sister to juvenile stakes-placed dirt sprinter Tartabull (74 dirt Beyer) out of multiple stakes-winning dirt sprinter Anna's Bandit (won debut; 89 dirt Beyer). That dam is herself a half to stakes-placed dirt sprinter Itsamonstamash (87 dirt Beyer). The second dam was a juvenile stakes-winning dirt sprinter (won first four starts; 91 dirt Beyer). This barn went 4 for the last 13 (31%, \$2.08 ROI) with juvenile debut runners. **ENGAGE AT WILL** (\$22,000 yearling) is a half to a juvenile debut winner out of a winning half to Grade 3-placed synthetic router Eagle Hall (94 turf Beyer), and multiple stakes-placed dirt router Jasmine Gardens (101 dirt Beyer). The third dam was a Grade 3-winning turf router. Expecting some speed from the inside draw. **REBELKA** (\$3,000 weanling) is out of a turf-route winning half to multiple stakes-winning turf router Sister Lou Ann (92 turf Beyer), and stakes-place dirt router Hop Kat (in Puerto Rico; won debut). The second dam was a juvenile stakes-winning turf router (93 turf Beyer). Barbosa departs for **THE STORK CLUB**, who is a half to juvenile stakes-winning dirt sprinter Do It For Michael (won debut; 80 dirt Beyer).

>> RACE 3

1. FREE COSTS TO MUCH

2. POTCAKE

3. ROYAL RENEGADE

Merely taking a guess with **FREE COSTS TO MUCH** (wore a hood last time), who switches surfaces with enough speed to get close to the pace. The 4/23 workout matches older full brother Karma's Inthehouse (64 turf Beyer). Perhaps they breezed in company. Also want to use **POTCAKE** in multiple-race wagers after a good effort to close out his 2025 campaign. Pressed a three-ply pace from in between, was bumped from the outside entering the turn, and finished evenly for second. The third-finisher then won his next two with Beyers of 62 and 63. Seems adaptable to any race flow. **ROYAL RENEGADE** never received a breather going two turns on 11/27; Prompted a fast pace (23.61; 23.99) from in between, went after the 6-1 ninth-finisher after a half-mile, made the lead, and tired. The fifth-finisher then placed in a \$16,000 maiden claimer with a 60 Beyer. Perhaps he'll be more effective as a late-running sprinter. **BAND TOUR** deserves a look if able to escape the Also Eligible list. **TYRUS** returns from an eight-month layoff with new Lasix after facing two

next-out winners (the runner-up won two in a row in New York, including the restricted Notebook Stakes with a 77 Beyer). GATORS REIGN has early speed and might have faced tougher on synthetic and turf earlier in his career.

>> RACE 4

1. TUNED TO THE MOON

2. SPENCERIAN

3. SHKHARA FIRE

TUNED TO THE MOON bounced right to the front going two turns over an inside, speed-friendly Charles Turn surface, turned back a challenge from the 5-1 seventh-finisher, and stayed strong. Must prove that career-best Beyer wasn't a bias-induced fluke, but has enough tactical speed to sit just off the early leader(s) for a barn that went 8 for the last 23 (35%, \$3.27 ROI) with last-out winners. **SPENCERIAN** drops after being wired by 2-1 Double Air. Tracked from in between, went on a hard chase, and tired. She has enough speed to stay within stalking range, and seems very well-entered at this lower level. **SHKHARA FIRE** hopped at the start and was bumped inward, settled at the back, raced over in behind rivals in the upper stretch, altered course outside, and finished evenly without threatening. Late-runner needs pace help for a barn that went 14 for the last 54 (26%, \$2.13 ROI) with horses racing third after layoffs of 61 and 120 days. SUSAN'S MULE settled off the moderate pace, made a three-wide bid on the turn, then was rebuffed by odds-on Back Forty, who next won a restricted \$40,000 optional claimer at Penn National with a 75 Beyer. Expect speed from the rail.

>> RACE 5

1. CHA CHA CHUKKA

2. QUEEN ROCKET

3. HOCKEY

CHA CHA CHUKKA saved ground in midpack, gradually altered course to the outside in the stretch, and rallied for second behind the favored winner. Finished ahead of five of today's rivals, and is expected to provide a late kick for a barn that went 3 for the last 12 (25%, \$3.60 ROI) with turf runners in the third after 180-365 day layoffs. **QUEEN ROCKET** returns from a six-month layoff after rallying from well off the pace to beat three next-out winners (ninth-finisher took a \$16,000 starter with a 66 Beyer). This mare runs very well fresh and should be charging in the stretch. **HOCKEY** tracked the early leader, took over in the stretch, then finished just behind the top pick when returning to turf. This barn sent out 7-2 winner Kohoutek on turf on 4/26.

>> RACE 6

1. TUFF LUCK

2. BLUE KINGDOM

3. NO MORE CALLS

TUFF LUCK broke poorly from the inside post, but immediately got into the race to prompt a slow pace from the outside. Attacked in between horses on the turn, and kept trying all the way to the wire to just miss. He has excellent tactical speed, but likely must improve in this tougher heat. **BLUE KINGDOM** seems like the most likely winner as he drops in class and adds Lasix after four consecutive stakes placings. Pushed the odds-on winner's very slow first quarter (24.05) in the Frank Y. Whiteley, and couldn't sprint with that foe when it counted. He's won around two turns in the past and should be in the thick of things when they turn for home. **NO MORE CALLS** didn't break very well earlier in the month, but that actually might have worked in his favor, as he received a fast pace to attack in the stretch. The runner-up then placed in a \$40,000 starter at Parx on Tuesday. Tackles older foes for the first time here. ALBERT FINNIGAN battled for the lead with the favored third-finisher before faltering. Expect an aggressive early ride this afternoon.

>> RACE 7

1. TIDEWATER

2. GOLD TRUST

3. WHERE'S RAY

TIDEWATER received the right ride in the Maryland Million Turf Sprint, as he tried to take advantage of a slow opening quarter mile before tiring. That race hasn't come back strong just yet, but the gelding will get Lasix again, and will likely revert to the stalking tactics that worked well for him two back. He scored off a 259-day layoff in 2023. **GOLD TRUST** won two in a row in New Jersey before going to the sidelines for seven months. Worked out a nice inside-out closer's trip to win his seasonal finale, and that tactical speed is a potent weapon for a barn that went 4 for the last 14 (29%, \$5.12 ROI) with last-out winners returning on turf. **WHERE'S RAY** tracked outside, made a three-wide bid, then swapped leads several times in the stretch. He's paired up Beyer tops in his last two races for a barn that sent out a 13-1 and a 7-1 winner on 4/25. **TALENTED MAN** was wired in his final start last year, a race that produced two next-out winners (the winner then hit the board in his next three starts with 95 Beyer top). He should show good early speed here. **STUDLYDORIGHT**, listed as a Laurel vet scratch (sick) on 3/15, returns from 293-day layoff, and would benefit from a quick pace up front. In tough in lone turf start against Soleil Volant, who then ran third in Monmouth's Tale of the Cat Stakes with an 81 Beyer. **JEAN VALJEAN** battled with the favored last-finisher through quick fractions when returning from a lengthy layoff in the King T. Leatherbury.

>> RACE 8

1. INTREPID'S LEGACY

2. HAILEYSFIRSTNOTION

3. HOWGREATISNATE

INTREPID'S LEGACY pressed the pace while racing three wide and in the four path, made a three-wide bid to the lead and stayed well off the rail, then drew off in the stretch. Expecting an outside tracking trip for a barn that went 5 for the last 11 (45%, \$2.62 ROI) with last-out winners returning from 61-120 day layoffs. Stablemate **HAILEYSFIRSTNOTION** showed good speed over a closer-friendly track, then lasted for third in a race that produced three next-out winners (Slam Notion grabbed the Howard and Sondra Bender Memorial with a 95 Beyer). Expect good speed for a barn that went 7 for the last 18 (39%, \$2.43 ROI) when adding Lasix. **HOWGREATISNATE** didn't break the best last month, then was the only one making up serious late ground. The barn went 4 for the last 13 (31%, \$2.51 ROI) with dirt horses making the third start following a 61-120 day layoff.

>> RACE 9

1. FREDERICKA'S ROSE

2. HOTTER THAN FIRE

3. KELSEY HILL GIRL

FREDERICKA'S ROSE (\$4,000 yearling; \$20,000 RNA April juvenile; \$17,000 June Juvenile), listed as a Laurel Park vet scratch on 4/18, breezed a quarter mile in 21 3/5 prior to the most recent auction, and is out of a stakes-winning dirt sprinter (81 dirt Beyer). This barn usually gives them a race or two before they display their best form, but they did send out 10-1 debut winner Momaxie here on 12/19. Hazlewood departs this one and I'mamaterialgirl for **HOTTER THAN FIRE**, who broke in a bit when making her debut around two turns at Parx, tracked from the pocket, advanced three wide after a half-mile, was urged along on the turn, and didn't threaten after being late to change leads. Expect an outside stalking trip while clear of traffic. **KELSEY HILL GIRL** did not have the easiest trip last month. Tracked five wide at the back behind a solid pace, raced from that path through the turn, then made up late ground despite hopping back to her left lead. Kicks late for a barn that went 4 for the last 11 (36%, \$3.05 ROI) with horses going third after layoffs between 61-120 days. Vargas departs for I'M A LIL WICKED. **ELITE MISS** ships in from Indiana with the speed to get up and on the pace.

MACK'S FACTS – by Mackenzie Pfeiffer

R1: Barbed Wire Barbie is out of a speedy turf mare and the work tab suggests it was worth waiting for turf season for the debut. Weight off and outer post may allow her to kick on early here. Fortune Garden could be overlooked here at 15-1, the mare was a solid turf runner and the 2nd dam was a stakes winner as well. Change in surface and 2nd time Lasix could work out well.

R2: Costa Linda is out of the super mare, Anna's Bandit, and a half to Tartabull. Connections certainly know how to win early. Experience can count for quite a bit in 2 y/o races, Engage At Will may end up wanting a bit more ground, but the half siblings have been good on debut and the steady work tab counts for quite a bit in my eyes.

R3: King of Fog returns to the turf in very different company than he faced in Saratoga last year, lasix and Hazlewood on could prompt a big step forward. Gimme Two Shots showed a bit of speed on debut, no surprise based on the morning works. A bit of experience could carry this one further today.

R4: Tuned to the Moon may have the opportunity to take an early command in here off of the confident win at CT last out. Glows in the Dark may have an opportunity to run things down if she jumps back into form here, Boyce looks like she could fit this filly well.

R5: Cha Cha Chukka did everything right when returning to the turf last out, and finishing ahead of five rivals here. Once she found the right gears, she had dead aim on the even money favorite taking class relief. Third off the bench should help her move forward today. Bella Estrela comes out of the same race, where she put together a nice finish but didn't have much room until late. She should have more to offer here.

R6: Blue Kingdom is a true standout in this group, the recent company goes a long way, as does his more versatile style in recent efforts. Returning to two turns shouldn't be a problem here. No More Calls is a perfect 2/2 with Lasix on and a fast main track. A half to Feeling Woozy, he was visually impressive last out and could be on the improve at a price.

R7: Jean Valjean returns second off of a lengthy layoff, offering plenty of room for improvement. His first out resulted in a big effort in the King Leatherbury Stakes, where he put away the world record sprinter Doncho and was swarmed by closers in the end. With speed to the inside, he finds a similar setup here. Where's Ray picked up right where he left off, the pace setup should suit him extremely well.

R8: Gary Capuano is well positioned to steal the exacta here with Haileysfirstnotion and Intrepid's Legacy. I lean a bit more towards Intrepid's Legacy with the outer post, a position that should minimize the time this large gelding spends in the gate and gives him plenty of running room. All three wins since November came with a similar trip, cruising along on the outside.

R9: I try to beat the favorite with Fastfeld, who hasn't had much racing luck since adding Lasix and taking a bit of class relief. Despite the troubled trips, the willingness is there and this distance looks to be her best fit. Hotter Than Fire keeps Hazlewood aboard for this cutback in distance and class relief. She has every reason to improve but the DQ on debut makes me look for a better price.

TODAY'S HOT TRAINER STATS

RACE 2

#4 - Costa Linda/#5 - The Stork Club

Trainer: John Robb

2-Year-Old Debut Runner: 4 for 13 (31%, \$2.08 ROI)

RACE 4

#2 - Tuned to the Moon

Trainer: Joanne Shankle

Last-Out Winners: 8 for 23 (35%, \$3.27 ROI)

#5 - Shkhara Fire

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Third After 61-120 Days: 14 for 54 (26%, \$2.13 ROI)

RACE 5

#2 - Cha Cha Chukka

Trainer: Jamie Ness

Third After 180-365 Days, Turf: 3 for 12 (25%, \$3.60 ROI)

RACE 7

#6 -Gold Trust

Trainer: Mike Dini

Last-Out Winners, Turf: 4 for 14 (29%, \$5.12 ROI)

RACE 8

#1 - Haileysfirstnotion

Trainer: Gary Capuano

Lasix On: 7 for 18 (39%, \$2.43 ROI)

RACE 8

#4 - Howgreatisnate

Trainer: Andrew Simoff

Third After 61-120 Days, Dirt: 4 for 13 (31%, \$2.51 ROI)

RACE 9

#5 - Intrepid's Legacy

Trainer: Gary Capuano

Last-Out Winner, 1st After 61-120 Days: 5 for 11 (45%, \$2.62 ROI)

RACE 9

#5 - Kelsey Hill Girl

Trainer: Mike Gerialis

Third After 61-120 Days: 4 for 11 (36%, \$3.05 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: Maiden Claiming 16K, 3-6YO (F), 5 ½ Furlongs, Turf			
Horse	Race	Trip	Notes
#8 LOAF OF SOF	Maiden Claiming 12k, LRL, 5 1/2F, Good Dirt, 03/27/26 – 4 th	Broke slowly from rail, then resented the kickback and dropped herself out into a hopelessly detached last approaching the far turn; shifted out 5W to avoid kickback racing to the top of the lane, then finished up with decent energy but had way too much to do. Galloped out well thereafter.	Clearly resented the kickback early and threw away any chance she had as the 9/5 fav, then lost further ground racing wide on the far turn; this was far from an accurate reflection of her ability; late energy and gallop out suggest we should see much more from her switched to turf without kickback (assuming she handles surface) as she makes her debut for McFarlane today.
Other notes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - #1 PONEY ISLAND raced slightly wider than ideal at Charles Town last out and then lost a little ground drifting out in the lane too. She wasn't wide enough to earn a notable upgrade speed figure wise, but she did lose more ground than the 1/2L she was beaten. - #6 FORTUNE GARDEN showed a likable attitude to hold 4th last out after being caught notably wide on the turn – tiny upgrade. 			

Race 2: MSW, 2YO (F), 4 ½ Furlongs, Dirt**Other notes:**

- All debutants.

Race 3: Maiden Claiming 16K, 3-6YO, 5 ½ Furlongs, Turf

Horse	Race	Trip	Note
#4 ALL FRUITS RIPE	Maiden Claiming 16k, LRL, 1 1/16M, Firm Turf, 04/19/26 – 8 th	Away alertly; crossed to rail, then settled ~5L off runaway leader (fast pace) entering back stretch; lost a position but remained 5L off lead racing into far turn, then steadied a little 5/16 which shuffled him back a length or so; took another noteworthy bump upper stretch, then lacked room inside ~3/16 pole and had to switch out when all his momentum should have been going forward; from there, he remained at an even pace.	Not sure how he'd have faired with a clean trip, or how this race translates to today's 5 1/2F distance, but he did suffer a troubled trip in this race and is deserving of a slight UPGRADE. Potential to step forward second off the layoff today.
#9 ROYAL RENEGADE	Maiden Claiming 16K, LRL, 1 1/16M, Good Turf, 11/27/25 – 7 th	Took strong hold contesting fast pace between horses 2W to far turn; dismissed of pace rivals and briefly took lead on the run to the top of the lane; lost lead to winner upper stretch but continued battling hard for 2 nd until inside the final 1/8, then faded.	Racing on a 'good' listed turf course, he formed part of a fast pace (23.61, 47.60) that eventually collapsed and actually did well to still be there battling for a share inside the final furlong (he did by far the best of the three speeds). Being sandwiched between horses for the first ½ of the contest didn't help his chances either. He's deserving of a small PACE UPGRADE for this effort and if ready off the bench, could prove that turf sprinting is his best game.

Other notes:

- **#1 POTCAKE** ran a very likable race when last seen in October, doing best of the leading trio who contested a solid early pace (one pace rival was the 3/5 fav) despite having been caught in an often-unfavorable spot between horses throughout. Returns off layoff today.
- **#2 KING OF FOG** lugged out badly on the turn and through the lane (causing him to bump a rival hard in upper stretch) during his last turf race (08/22/25). He then checked hard at the start when last seen on the dirt in December, but we cannot fully use that as an excuse for his defeat at odds of 1/1. Returns off layoff with lasix added today.
- As highlighted in the chart comment, **#7 SIR LOMAX** had a little traffic trouble at the 3/8 pole last out. It was extremely minor trouble, though, and inconsequential in the grand scheme of things. Cuts back making debut for Keil today. Note: his debut (closed into pace that collapsed over closer friendly track) needs to be downgraded.
- **#10 GIMME TWO SHOTS** showed speed, a likable attitude and overall promise on debut with a slightly wide trip until tiring late on. Interesting second out switching to turf on debut for Geralis. Drops.
- **#13 BAND TOUR (AE)** was caught very wide on the far turn when going two-turns off the layoff last time. Cuts back in distance today.

Race 4: Claiming 30K, 3YO+ (F), 6 Furlongs, Dirt**Other notes:**

- Nobody can argue with the fact that **#2 TUNED TO THE MOON** was much the best when winning by 6 1/4L with a career best 75 Beyer at Charles Town last time. It should be noted, however, that he was fully extended and had ridden the strong speed bias present this day. Therefore, although he could, it's far from certain that he'll replicate that same speed figure today.
- After suffering a wide trip at Colonial two-back, **#5 SHKHARA FIRE** was arguably ridden with too much patience in a race where horses really struggled to improve their positions (running order hardly changed throughout) last time, settling 7L off the even pace early and largely remaining under a hold in last until reaching upper stretch. Feel that she can offer more than this.

Race 5: Claiming 16K, 3YO+ (F), 1 Mile, Turf

Horse	Race	Trip	Note
#4 QUEEN ROCKET	Starter Allowance, LRL, 1 1/16M, Firm Turf, 11/02/25 – 1 st	Step slow break; traveled strongly ~7L off even pace behind horses in rear racing to far turn; waited in traffic when still ~6L off lead far turn before briefly checking off heels upper stretch; finally got out and into the clear ~3/16 pole when in 8th, then launched a power-packed finish in the center to get up on the wire before galloping out nicely.	She won this race despite having had to wait in traffic on the far turn when she'd ideally have been advancing into the even pace that slightly benefited forwardly placed runners. Her effort (supported by a strong gallop out) was better than the winning margin and speed figure suggests. Returns off layoff today.
#5 BELLA ESTRELLA	Claiming 16k, LRL, 1 1/16M, Firm Turf, 04/10/26 – 4 th	Tracked even pace from ~4L down on rail; crept closer under hand ride far turn, then steadied slightly when running up on heels ~1/8 pole; regathered herself quickly and then continued to fight gamely but did not have enough.	She hardly lost any ground when steadying ~1/8 pole and had sat a good trip up to that point, so it's hard to upgrade her effort too much or say that she'd have won with a clean trip. But still, she did have her momentum slightly halted at an inopportune moment and considering it was her first start off the layoff, granted a clean trip, we should see more from her today.

Other notes:

- **#8 IMPETUS ECHO (GB)** was racing on a sloppy and heavily speed biased track that may have been unfavorable to her when last seen. She'll still need way more today.

Race 6: Allowance, 3YO+ ®, 1 1/16 Miles, Dirt**Other notes:**

- **#7 BLUE KINGDOM**'s two-back effort in the 6F Not For Love Stakes is deserving of an upgrade as he sat a slightly wide trip (widest of the four runners) while closing from furthest off pace over a heavily speed bias track. While he did also look to hang a little late on, it was a solid effort under the circumstances. What's more, his last effort going two turns (10/11/25) in which he set the pace before fading to 3rd is also deserving of an upgrade, as there was a significant closer bias present that day. Looms a logical win contender stretching back out in distance with Lasix on.

Race 7: Allowance, 3YO+, 5 ½ Furlongs, Turf

Horse	Race	Trip	Note
#4 JEAN VALJEAN	King T. Leatherbury S., 5 1/2F, LRL, Firm Turf, 04/18/26 – 7 th	Took strong hold contesting very fast fractions 2W into and around the turn; took over upper stretch and gamely held the advantage deep inside the final 1/8, then faded grudgingly.	This return effort off the layoff is deserving of a PACE UPGRADE – he was in front until late on and only beaten 3 1/4L despite having contested unsustainably fast (22.08, 44.08) fractions early (other pace setter – the 2/1 fav DONCHO – faded to last). Second off the layoff today and with Lasix back on, he could strip fitter and be tough to peg back if rationing out his speed just a fraction more efficiently.

Other Notes:

- **#1 PRINCE OF JERICHO**'s turf debut in the King T. Leatherbury Stakes is not deserving of an upgrade because he had a wicked pace to close into (22.08, 44.08) and overall, his trip was fine. However, he was roughed up at the start somewhat and therefore ended up racing out of his preferred position (on the lead). Therefore, with Lasix back on, provided he can get away from the rail, there is a chance that he'll be more comfortable back up front early today and improve on his last effort.
- After setting hot fractions in front, **#3 NORMANDY HERO** was very game to hold on for the win in his last turf start (11/23/26) and if returning to that level of form, he should play a role today. A possible concern, however, is that he did only just hold on that day (was all out late and in 2nd one stride after the wire), raising the question as to whether he can do the same again today without a recent run behind him?
- **#8 WHERE'S RAY** was promoted to 1st via DQ last time after he was floated out by the first-past-the-post finisher at the 1/16 pole. While this interference did cost him more than the nose he was beaten by and therefore made the DQ understandable, it did not impact him enough to warrant a speed figure upgrade. Saying that, though, he was a little wider than ideal (4W) racing off the turn and into the lane, and he was returning from a layoff too, so he may well be able to improve today still. Note: he flopped leads a couple of times in the stretch as well, but that's not uncommon for him and seemingly doesn't dent his finishing effort.

Race 8: Allowance, 3YO+, 6 Furlongs, Dirt			
Horse	Race	Trip	Note
#1 HAILEYSFIRSTNOTION	Maryland Million Sprint S., 6F, LRL, Fast Dirt, 10/11/25 – 3 rd	Bumped hard start but still well into stride; set pressed pace on rail to ¼, then met bid and briefly dueled upper stretch before fading very grudgingly late on.	A huge effort to finish just 1 1/2L 3rd after setting a pressured pace over a track present a strong closer bias – UPGRADE. Returns off layoff with Lasix added today.
#3 DON'T WAIT UP	Claiming 30k, LRL, 6F, Fast Dirt, 04/10/26 – 4 th	Tracked modest pace 2W between horses early; dropped back a little turn, then lacked room approaching the ¼ and had to angle off heels into the 5P, costing him a little momentum while the wire winner was spotting clear; turned for home ~3-4L down, then offered a mild rally for 2 nd but did not have enough.	A tiny UPGRADE can be awarded here because he didn't quite have enough pace to run at (does best closing into fast fractions like two-back; he was never catching in-form wire winner after a 46.79 half) and he also lost some momentum/ground racing into the stretch. Makes debut for Perri today.
#4 HOWGREATISNATE	Allowance, LRL, 6F, Fast Dirt, 03/15/26 – 3 rd	Step slow from rail; lacked room inside ~5 ½ and had to ease back when already in rear; this left him racing ~7L off the even pace early; angled outside ~5/8 and chased the pace into and around the turn before losing ground when floated out 5W approaching the ¼; ducked back inside and then launched a late rally but had too much to do.	He did best of the closers in this race that saw speed hold relatively well (top two finishers filled those positions throughout; winner was 20/1) despite experiencing some trouble early after a rail break and ending up further back than necessary, and losing ground with a wide trip on the turn. He galloped out in front, and his effort is deserving of an UPGRADE.
Other notes:			
- None			

Race 9: Maiden Claiming 12.5K, 3YO (F), 6 Furlongs, Dirt			
Horse	Race	Trip	Note
#5 KELSEY HILL GIRL	Maiden Claiming 12k, LRL, 6F, Fast Dirt, 03/20/26 – 4 th	Broke from outside post; chased honest pace 5-6W into the lane, then stayed on gamely on her left lead.	She arguably lost more ground with this very wide trip than the 1 1/2L margin she was beaten, and her effort is worthy of an UPGRADE. A more productive trip (and preferably a lead change in the lane) can see her step forward making her third start of the form cycle today.
Other notes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - #2 ELITE MISS seemed to be unsuited by the mile distance last time and should be more competitive back sprinting and down in class today. She wasn't had ridden when beaten last time either, exacerbating the margin of defeat. Returns on relatively short rest. - We may be able to excuse #3 FASTFIELD for her dull last effort as she was left racing against a speed bias after taking an extremely hard bump at the start – one that could have knocked the wind out of her. Cuts back in trip today. - #7 HOTTER THAN FIRE was DQ'd on debut after causing interference at the gate. She didn't really do enough running to earn an upgrade in that start; however, it should be noted that she was running against a speed bias throughout, entitling her to offer more today. Cuts back in distance this afternoon (didn't particularly look like a sprinter on debut). 			

Horses to Follow

R1: LOAF OF SOF (6/1 ML)

Following four consecutive bullet drills at Fair Hill Training Center, LOAF OF SOF was sent off at 9/5 on debut, but failed to handle the kickback and was forced wide on the turn, effectively ending her chance. That run is best forgiven. She still showed some late interest to pick up fourth, however, and could take a notable step forward now switching to the grass, which her pedigree suggests could suit. Making her first start off the claim for McFarlane, she's one to keep onside in the opener.

R7: JEAN VALJEAN (5/1 ML)

Making his first start in 525 days off a limited series of workouts, JEAN VALJEAN didn't fare badly at all in the King T. Leatherbury Stakes last time, holding the lead into deep stretch after being part of a frenetic early pace (22.08, 44.00) that ultimately favored closers. Now dropping back into allowance company and getting Lasix again, he should strip fitter for that return and could prove hard to peg back under Karamanos.

FUTURE HORSES TO WATCH

BETTER WATCH IT *(Breezed 4F - :51.00 at LRL on 4/22)*

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.

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.

LADY ZETA *(Breezed 4F - :49.80 at LRL on 4/25)*

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.

BRUNO *(Breezed 4F - :49.40 at LRL on 4/11)*

Trainer: Daniel Eubanks

Last Race: March 20, Race 3

Finish: 2nd by 1 1/4

Independence Hall colt showed promising workouts prior to his debut, then hooked up in an early speed duel before succumbing to a late runner that benefited from the quick pace. Earned a respectable 69 Beyer Speed Figure, and will be tough right back against maiden special weight company.

LYUDMILA *(Breezed 4F - :50.80 at TAM on 4/26)*

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.

SUJO *(Breezed 4F - :48.20 at TAM on 2/22)*

Trainer: Greg Sacco

Last Race: Jan. 16, 7th race

Finish: 4th by 4 3/4 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.

KISS THE RING *(Breezed 4F - :50.00 at KEE on 4/19)*

Trainer: Jesus Cruz

Last Race: March 20, Race 3

Finish: 4th by 6 1/2

Caught a pretty strong field for his second lifetime start, and was bumped shortly after the start after breaking slowly. Tracked outside, tried to advance in between rivals, but flattened out in the stretch. Might need a class dip into state-sired company, and has enough pedigree to appreciate more distance.

MAXPOWER *(Breezed 4F - 51.29 at BEL on 4/18)*

Trainer: Panagiotis A. Synnefias

Last Race: Nov. 29, Race 6

Finish: 7th by 14 1/2

Outrun in the early stages of a \$16,000 maiden claimer, this 2-year-old was three wide and in between horses on the turn, then finished deceptively well while being over in behind horses in the stretch. This is a sprint family, but he might move up with more distance.

CLEARLY SOPHIA

Trainer: Michael Gorham

Last Race: April 10, Race 6

Finish: 3rd by 1 1/2

Away from the gate with speed, then drafted back off the speed of eventual winner Erice. Chased willingly on the turn, and kept trying with a slight shift in mid-stretch. Should move forward in her second start of the year.

J C'S BOYS (*Breezed 4F - :50.20 at LRL on 4/24*)

Trainer: Robbie Bailes

Last Race: April 12, Race 6

Finish: 3rd by 5 3/4

Strong effort for the Maryland-bred first-timer. Breaking a bit outward from post 12 of 12, settled early well off the rail, gained mid-turn while four wide, angled six wide into the stretch, and stayed on for an even finish to the ground-saving winner, R J's Ice.

ROCKER ROLLER

Trainer: Brittany Russell

Last Race: April 17, Race 3

Finish: 3rd by 9 1/2

City of Light filly wasn't away the best from the rail draw in her career debut, saved ground in midpack, then never threatened along the inside. Think she gained a good amount of experience from this effort, and she acts like she'll appreciate longer distances.

FLYING TO WORK (*Entered at Laurel – SUN 5/3, Race 8*)

Trainer: Rodolfo Sanchez-Salomon

Last Race: April 24, 2nd race

Finish: 2nd by 1/2

Tracked the pace from in between horses, made a solid bid to the lead on the turn, and was kicked down in the final furlong. Seems comfortable at the bottom maiden claiming level between six furlongs and one mile.

ROSIE'S FORTUNE

Trainer: Irvin Flores

Last Race: April 25, 6th race

Finish: 10th by 11 1/4

The running line doesn't look pretty, but this one was pressured on the lead through solid fractions when making her turf and route debut. Didn't have anything in the tank when it mattered, but think she deserves another opportunity sprinting on the lawn against bottom maiden claimers.

LANNISTER

Trainer: Jonathan Maldonado

Last Race: April 25, 2nd race

Finish: 8th by 26

Lacked speed on turf for the first time, saved some ground early, then angled widest of all for the final furlong. Good late interest, beaten a little more than one length for all the money. Tried dirt last time out, and didn't run well at all. Would like to see him try another grass sprint.

BALTIC

Trainer: Cal Lynch

Last Race: April 17, Race 1

Finish: 2nd by 3/4

Kantharos gelding ran well in turf debut when dropped into a \$35,000 maiden claimer. Showed good early speed, opened a clear lead in the upper stretch, and was kicked down in the final furlong. He looks like he's found his niche sprinting on grass.

LOVELIEST

Trainer: Eddie Kenneally

Last Race: April 17, Race 7

Finish: 8th by 6 3/4

Class drop might be in order after filly tired badly in a first-level allowance sprinting on the grass. She was bumped during the opening furlong while pressing the winner from the rail before giving way. She is quick from the gate, and that speed would play well at a lower class level.

DISCO RULES

Trainer: Flint Stites

Last Race: April 24, 9th race

Finish: 3rd by 7 1/2

Raced in between horses for most of the way, was lightly bumped from his inside entering the turn and briefly raced on hold behind foes, angled three wide into the stretch, and churned on for a minor placing. Not sure he cared for the deep, sealed track that afternoon, and deserves another chance around two turns against allowance competition.

JOCKEY CALLS

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

Race 1: Yedsit Hazlewood - #3 - Lucky Tin Tin; #7 - Barbed Wire Barbie >>> **Hazlewood rides BARBED WIRE BARBIE**

Race 2 - Jeiron Barbosa - #2 - Rebelka; #5 - The Stork Club >>> **Barbosa rides THE STORK CLUB**

Race 3 - Jose Vargas - #6 - Broadside Salvo; #7 - Sir Lomax >>> **Vargas rides SIR LOMAX**

Race 6 - Yedsit Hazlewood - #4 - Tuff Luck; #7 - Blue Kingdom >>> **Hazlewood rides BLUE KINGDOM**

Race 9 - Yedsit Hazlewood - #4 - I'mamaterialgirl; #6 - Fredericka's Rose; #7 - Hotter Than Fire >>> **Hazlewood rides HOTTER THAN FIRE**

Race 9 - Jose Vargas - #1 - I'm a Lil Wicked; #5 - Kelsey Hill Girl >>> **Vargas rides I'M A LIL WICKED**

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

A recap of **SUNDAY, APR. 26** action at Laurel Park. Visit theracingbiz.com for John Piassek's FREE full analysis of today's Laurel card.

Race 1: Elvis Himself did what was expected of him, which was go to the front, open up a clear lead, and hold on as long as he could. He almost polished off the gate-to-wire win, but **Kohoutek** rallied in the two-path and got up in the last few jumps.

Race 2: Overspent raced wide on the backstretch, then engaged the leaders in the three-path on the turn. He had to fight hard to get past Set for Life, who saved ground while racing on the pace, but ultimately did so and won by a half-length. He was probably several lengths the best, however. Tethered Soul crossed the wire second, but was disqualified to fourth for causing interference up the backstretch.

Race 3: The 10-month layoff was no problem for **Dad Joke**, who rallied three-wide and wore down longtime leader Golden Descent to win. Goodluck Road raced close to the pace throughout and managed to hold third.

Race 4: Cupid's Choice went off as the slight favorite in a race that looked wide-open on paper. On the track, she made her 2-1 odds look like a gift. She chased early leader Weather Beater, who had to work hard to get to the rail and the lead in her career debut. When that one tired, Cupid's Choice took advantage and never gave the rest a chance, crossing the wire 8 ¾ lengths in front.

Race 5: Big Tankness took all the late money, going off as the 11-10 favorite. It proved to be smart money. He enjoyed a great trip in the two-path off of early leader Sinetic, then held off the late challenge of Rye Diggitydog. He gave Jamie Ness his first grass winner of the meet from 10 starters.

Race 6: Return Fire led them a long way, and at one point looked like he was in prime position to pull a 64-1 shocker. However, **Italiano Kid** poked his head in front on the final turn, opened up a clear lead at the top of the lane, and held on from there.

Race 7: Make it a training double for Jamie Ness. **Paco the Taco Man**, whom he reclaimed from his last start, set the pace on the rail and held sway throughout. Favored Creed's Vision pressed him in the two-path throughout, but wasn't able to make a dent and did no better than second.

Race 8: Determind Princess got away with easy early fractions, and was 3 ½ lengths clear in the stretch. Any of her backers who counted their money at the eighth pole did so prematurely, as **Nick's Notion**, in her first start since June 25, overcame those slow fractions to rally from last and win in a 10-1 upset.

Race 9: Babble got first jump on the embattled early leaders, took control when they tired, and never gave favored River City Runner much of a chance to catch him.

PAST TRACK TRENDS

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 (speed lean)

Feb. 6 – Fair

Feb. 12 – CLOSERS BIAS

Feb. 13 – Fair (slight speed lean)

Feb. 14 – Fair

Feb. 15 – Fair

Feb. 20 – Fair

Feb. 21 – Fair

Feb. 22 – Fair

Feb. 27 – Fair

Feb. 28 – Fair

Mar. 1 – Fair

Mar. 6 – Fair (slight outside lean)

Mar. 7 – SPEED BIAS

Mar. 8 – Fair

Mar. 13 – SPEED BIAS (strong crosswind)

Mar. 15 – Fair

Mar. 20 – Fair

Mar. 21 – Fair (perhaps outside lean)

Mar. 22 – Fair (perhaps outside lean)

Mar. 27 – Fair

Mar. 28 – Fair

Mar. 29 – SPEED BIAS

Apr. 3 – Fair

Apr. 4 – Fair

Apr. 10 – Fair

Apr. 11 – Fair

Apr. 12 – Fair

Apr. 17 – Fair

Apr. 18 – SPEED BIAS

Apr. 19 – Fair

Apr. 24 – Fair

Apr. 25 – SPEED BIAS

Apr. 26 – Fair