



In Focus

Pimlico Race Course stakes

April 18, 2015

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HANDICAPPERS' SELECTIONS

RACE		Ted BLACK	Frank VESPE	DERBY Bill WATSON	Bobby ZEN
RACE 4		1 EDDY GOURMET	BRENDA'S WAY	EDDY GOURMET	EDDY GOURMET
GEISHA S.		2 BRENDA'S WAY	EDDY GOURMET	BAZINGA B	BRENDA'S WAY
		3 CELTIC KATIE	CELTIC KATIE	BRENDA'S WAY	CELTIC KATIE
RACE 6		1 LADY SHIPMAN	HARLAN'S HONOR	LADY SHIPMAN	LADY SHIPMAN
STORMY BLUES S.		2 HARLAN'S HONOR	LADY SHIPMAN	HARLAN'S HONOR	IRISH JASPER
		3 JUSTLOOKATMENOW	JUSTLOOKATMENOW	COMFORTER	STORMALINA
RACE 7		1 WHERE'THER'S FIRE	SHE'S ORDAINED	SHE'S ORDAINED	SHE'S ORDAINED
PRIMONETTA S.		2 TEA TIME	SUSTAINABLE	AIX EN PROVENCE	SUSTAINABLE
		3 SHE'S ORDAINED	TEA TIME	WHERE'THERE'S FIRE	TEA TIME
RACE 8		1 STELLAR PATH	ISTANFORD	ISTANFORD	ISTANFORD
DAHLIA S.		2 LILY CARSTAIRS	STELLAR PATH	STELLAR PATH	STELLAR PATH
		3 JOY	GIANT SHADOW	NELLIE CASHMAN	A LITTLE BIT SASSY
RACE 9		1 BODHISATTVA	NOTEWORTHY PEACH	ALL HANDS	BODHISATTVA
FEDERICO TESIO S.		2 ALL HANDS	ALL HANDS	TOP OF MIND	GHOST BAY
		3 GHOST BAY	GHOST BAY	BODHISATTVA	TOP OF MIND
RACE 10		1 ROADHOG	TALK SHOW MAN	STORMIN MONARCHO	CHAMOIS
HENRY S. CLARK S.		2 CHAMOIS	CHAMOIS	CHAMOIS	STORMIN MONARCHO
		3 AZTEC BRAVE	NORTH STAR BOY	TALK SHOW MAN	SPECIAL ENVOY

OVERVIEW

The six stakes on the Pimlico card present interesting races and handicapping challenges.

The most challenging of the six stakes looks to be the Henry S. Clark, in which our four handicappers came to four different conclusions about the winner. In the Federico Tesio, our four 'cappers chose three different winners, suggesting that that race is complicated, too, despite the compact field.

From a fan perspective, those two races, plus the Dahlia might hold the most interest, since those three are all prep races for Preakness weekend events: the Tesio for the Grade 1 Preakness itself, the Henry S. Clark for the Grade 2 Dixie, and the Dahlia for the Grade 3 Gallorette.

In this document, the horses are discussed in order of consensus preference by our handicappers.

GEISHA STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 4 (2:34), \$75,000 purse, Fillies and mares, 3yo and up, 1 1/16 miles

- **STORYLINE:** If clothes make the man, then perhaps blinkers make the horse -- at least, in the case of Eddy Gourmet, who'll look for a third-straight win in shades.

LOCAL FLAVOR

This race is restricted to registered Maryland-bred fillies and mares.



OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ Odds-on #3 **Eddy Gourmet (4-5)** looks like a handful in here. Five-year-old Eddington mare donned blinkers two back for the first time since she was a grass-running sophomore, and the move paid immediate dividends for trainer Hugh McMahon, as she's recorded two straight wins, most recently a seven-length score in the Conniver against similar. Shows a sharp interim work and retains Sheldon Russell in the irons. Just one question: How will she like two turns? She's never been this far on the main track and hasn't raced beyond seven furlongs since 2013.
- ✓ **#4 Brenda's Way (6-5)**, who seems to have made a career out of grabbing the lead, then stopping, has shown a new dimension in her last two, staying on willingly for the place two back and reprising that with a flashy score last out at a flat mile. In that race, she carved fractions of 23 1/5 for the quarter and 46 1/5 for the half, and the race has produced one next-out winner to date. She figures to grab control early, and if rider Jevian Toledo can get her to relax up front once again, she could take these a long way.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ It's hard to love #5 **Celtic Katie (15-1)** -- the defending champ here -- in the top spot, but she certainly has enough back class to clunk up into the exotics. She hasn't won since that year-ago score here but is two-for-three at Old Hilltop and most recently rallied into fourth in the Conniver... It'll be the first try around two turns for **#2 Bazinga B (8-1)**, a \$15,000 claim who paid immediate dividends for trainer Gerald Brooks by scoring against allowance foes. Her only half-sib to race was winless in four tries at route distances.

RACE FACTS

- ✓ 43rd running
- ✓ Race has been contested at 1 mile, current 1 1/16 miles, and 1 1/8 miles
- ✓ Fastest running at 1 1/16 miles: Any Spray, 1:42 1/5 (1984)
- ✓ Maryland-bred Geisha was the dam of the great Native Dancer.

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ So far at Pimlico... 6 of 17 1 1/16 mile winners broke from the 1-hole.
- ✓ All 17 were in the 5-hole or farther inside.
- ✓ 6 of 17 were on the lead by a half-mile into the race.
- ✓ 14 of 17 winners were on the lead or within four lengths of it after a half-mile and after 3/4.
- ✓ The two- and three-paths seems to have been more favorable of late.

STORMY BLUES STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 6 (3:30), \$100,000 purse, Three-year fillies, 5 furlongs (turf)
- **STORYLINE:** Two runners with proven grass form tangle in a field full of talented runners with questions to answer.

OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ The sky appears to be the limit for **#7 Lady Shipman (9-5)**, who carries a three-race winning streak into this event, with the wins by a combined 23 1/2 lengths, two on the lawn. Among her victims in the streak are a couple of prior stake winners. Regular rider Eduardo Nunez makes the trek from Florida for trainer Kathleen O'Connell. Her last, at Gulfstream against allowance foes, was easy as could be, and a reprise of that could be enough here.
- ✓ **#9 Harlan's Honor (7-2)** may be better than her record looks. She was a flashy winner of the Colleen over the Monmouth lawn back in August, and her follow-up -- fourth as the fave in the Selima at Laurel -- wasn't bad, either. Selima winner Miss Bullistic looks like she could be a killer on the grass, and this runner got caught up in a super-swift pace that set it up for the latecomers. She's been away since a messy try at a mile on the main track in the G3 Tempted in November. But she's training well enough, gets local ace Trevor McCarthy in the irons, and trainer Cal Lynch can get them ready off the bench.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ Rider Eddie Castro had a fistful of horse aboard **#1 Justlookatmenow (8-1)** last out and no place to put her. A clean trip moves her into contention here... **#5 Irish Jasper (12-1)** has won three of four sprint starts on the main track, tries the lawn for the first time...**#8 Comforter (12-1)** has given a solid accounting of herself on the main track, tries the grass for the first time; she's by MGSW grass runner Nobiz Like Shobiz and out of a mare who made only one grass start - but that might have been the best of her career... Trainer Rudy Rodriguez doesn't generally ship to Maryland without expecting to win -- nearly 30 percent here -- and **#6 Stormalina (8-1)** has flashed talent on occasion.

RACE FACTS

- ✓ Florida-bred Stormy Blues won the 1994 running of the Grade 3 Selima at Laurel Park, one of her three graded scores that year.

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ Only one turf sprint has been conducted thus far over the Pimlico turf course.

PRIMONETTA STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 7 (3:58), \$100,000 purse, Fillies and mares 3yo and up, 6 furlongs
- **STORYLINE:** Mixed bag of a race provides the handicapper with plenty of choices.

OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ Hard-hitting six-year-old **#9 She's Ordained (3-1)** seems to have rediscovered her mojo after a winless 2014. Tim Kreiser trainee -- once claimed for the princely sum of \$4,000 -- kicked off the year with a good second behind ultra-talented Lady Sabelia, next-out winner of the G2 Fritchie, and then scored nicely in a \$50,000 allowance. Ten-time winner at the distance has the speed to take 'em all the way, but the tractability to stalk and pounce, and breaking from the outside under Alonso Quinones, could have the option to find her spot.
- ✓ Boy, that last-out win for **#6 Wherethere'sfire (6-1)** was easy; the Mike Trombetta trainee blitzed Penn National allowance foes by 10 mostly under wraps. We're not completely sold on what she beat that day, but she did it like a good thing and retains top local jock Trevor McCarthy. She's been favored in six straight -- a streak that should end here -- and figures to be a forward factor in the early running.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ Favored **#8 Tea Time (5-2)** certainly has the talent to make a statement here. Trained by Michael Matz of Barbaro fame, this runner has won four of 10 and more than \$220,000; four graded tries haven't been kind to her, but that's no worry here. What is a worry is trainer Matz's 20 consecutive defeats bringing horses back off similar layoffs... Fair to say that **#3 Sustainable (9-2)** had a perfect trip in her last-out allowance score, but she did it nicely, and the race has produced two next-out winners. Now looks like the right time to take a shot with this \$200,000 yearling purchase... Claudio Gonzalez trainee **#1 Aix En Provence (6-1)** enters on short rest off an allowance score at muddy Pimlico and has four wins at the distance. Not really buying the Videogenic race, as show horse returned to place for \$8,000. Your move...

RACE FACTS

- ✓ 28th running, begun at Pimlico, moved to Laurel, and now back to Pimlico.
- ✓ All runnings have been at the 6 furlong distance.
- ✓ Fastest running: Cammy's Choice/Access Fee (dead heat), 1:09 3/5, 2009 at Laurel.
- ✓ Primonetta was the champion handicap mare of 1962.

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ 29 races conducted at 6 furlongs in the meet to date.
- ✓ 6 have been won by a horse breaking from the rail.
- ✓ 5 have been won by a horse breaking outside the 5-hole.
- ✓ 15 of 29 winners have been on the lead or within 1 length of it after 1/2 mile.
- ✓ Only 4 have been more than 4 lengths behind.

DAHLIA STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 8 (4:26), \$100,000 purse, Fillies and mares, 3yo and up, 1 mile (turf)
- **STORYLINE:** Good group of runners looking to punch a ticket to the G3 Gallorette Preakness weekend.

OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ **#4 Istanbul (4-1)** is a speedster with class, and she just might have it all her own way here. Her last couple against graded foes haven't been much to write home about, but against more modest sorts, she's acquitted herself well. She owns four wins at the trip, is a multiple graded winner, and figures to control the pace with Victor Carrasco in the irons. Michael Stidham trainee could be a handful here.
- ✓ Trainer Christophe Clement has made a sub-specialty of successfully importing European grass runners, and if she goes postward, new import **#9 Stellar Path (5-2)** figures to have plenty to say about how this race shakes out. French Group 3 winner owns a class edge on the field, and while she hasn't been competitive against the continent's best, she'll fit snugly in here. She's been training well and gets Lasix for the first time, with Kendrick Carmouche lined up to ride. They likely have bigger things in mind down the road for this Astronomer filly.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ Sheldon Russell climbs aboard another import, **#6 Lily Carstairs (15-1)**, conditioned by Niall Saville. First Lasix might help, but her French form's a clear cut below that of the chalk... PA-bred **#10 Nellie Cashman (10-1)** has run some bang-up races for trainer Tres Abbott (including 20-1 G3 Virginia Oaks score) and figures to appreciate a break from graded company, but has just three wins from 18 starts... Maryland-bred **#12 Joy (12-1)** began her '14 season in this race and two starts later won a stake at Belmont. Graham Motion trainee's been working well enough and owns a local win... **#2 A Little Bit Sassy (5-1)** went off form a little bit towards the end of last year but gets Lasix for the first time for her seasonal debut for a trainer, Michael Matz, more known for strong second off the layoff... Trainer Eddie Graham burst on the scene last year with Arlington Million winner Hardest Core, and while **#5 Giant Shadow (30-1)** doesn't figure to be all that, she did post a three-race winning streak last year that was snapped in the seemingly-too-far G3 Long Island, a race in which she finished just ahead of last year's Dahlia winner Embarr.

✓

RACE FACTS

- ✓ 13th running.
- ✓ Has been contested on both the main track and the turf, at both 1 mile and 1 1/16 miles.
- ✓ Though the race started in 1985, it was not run after '87 until 2006.
- ✓ Superstar Dahlia won the Grade 1 Washington DC International at Laurel Park in 1973, one of a passel of major victories in her Hall of Fame career.

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ Four turf routes were conducted in the opening two weeks of Pimlico.
- ✓ All four were won by horses breaking from the 8,9, or 10 posts.
- ✓ All were won by horses third or worse after three-quarters of a mile and spun out 2 or more wide on the turn..
- ✓ Two winners were more than 7 lengths behind after 3/4 of a mile..

LOCAL FLAVOR

Horses bred in the region include:

STORMY BLUES STAKES

- ❖ Julstlookatmenow (MD) -- bred by Mr. and Mrs. Charles McGinnes, in partnership with Colleen Torsney.
- ❖ Spotted Heart (MD) -- bred by Mr. and Mrs. Charles McGinnes.
- ❖ Wildly Good Lookin (NJ) -- bred by John Sessa.



PRIMONETTA STAKES

- ❖ Aix En Provence (VA) -- bred by James Falk, Sr.
- ❖ Where there's fire (PA) -- bred by Jon A. Marshall.

DAHLIA STAKES

- ❖ Nellie Cashman (PA) -- bred by Nelson E. Clemmens.
- ❖ Joy (MD) -- bred by Dark Hollow Farm.
- ❖ South Andros (VA) -- bred by Chance Farm.



FEDERICO TESIO STAKES

- ❖ Noteworthy Peach (MD) -- bred by William M. Steinbuch, Jr.
- ❖ Ghost Bay (MD) -- bred by Howard M. Bender.
- ❖ Slick William (MD) -- bred by Michael J. Harrison, DVM.

HENRY S. CLARK STAKES

- ❖ Jack's in the Deck (MD) -- bred by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowman.
- ❖ Roadhog (PA) -- bred by Ellendale Racing LLC.
- ❖ Echo Libra (PA) -- bred by Julie D. Gordon and Ann Bernecker
- ❖ Talk Show Man (MD) -- bred by Michael J. Harrison, DVM.
- ❖ Sailor's Revenge (PA) -- bred by Randy Knerr.
- ❖ Loves Last Chance (MD) -- bred by Sycamore Hall Farm LLC.
- ❖ Special Envoy (VA) -- bred by Mr. and Mrs. Bertram R. Firestone

FEDERICO TESIO STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 9 (4:55), \$100,000 purse, 3yo, 1 1/16 miles
- **STORYLINE:** Last local prep for the Preakness draws a compact group of sophomores, all with something to prove.

OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ **#6 Bodhisattva (5-2)** probably deserves better than having merely a single stakes placing to his credit. Jose Corrales-trained son of Student Council led all the way in the Miracle Wood only to be beaten half a length, then chased loose-on-the-lead Bridget's Big Luvy all the way 'round in the Private Terms, settling for second. Consistent sort has shown the ability to lead or stalk, and breaking outside the other speed gives Trevor McCarthy some options.
- ✓ Godolphin runner **#2 All Hands (2-1)** dusted Aqueduct maidens last out and did it in a way that makes you think there's more. Kieran McLaughlin trainee is a full brother to tragic Kentucky Derby place horse Eight Belles, which says he's bred to be something. Fernando Jara's in to ride, and this guy's upside is intriguing.
- ✓ No one saw that coming: **#4 Noteworthy Peach (6-1)** was nearly 40-1 last out when he scored against Laurel allowance foes going a mile, including two who are here. Making it more impressive, he found trouble nearing the quarter pole, fanned out well wide, and just got up late. That win was a 28-point jump in the Beyer speed fig, and if he's capable of bringing that sort of effort again, he might be around late.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ **#5 Ghost Bay (12-1)** broke his maiden against state-bred foes in the Maryland Juvenile Futurity in December, found his '15 debut postponed by weather and track conditions, then ran poorly in the race won by Noteworthy Peach after pressing the pace. Look for him to return to more successful ways, taking off the pace and making one run; look for improvement, too... The buzz was out on **#1 Top of Mind (3-1)** when he broke his maiden at 7-5 odds, and he followed that up with a second, to Noteworthy Peach, at even money. He was well wide on the turn that day and just got nabbed late. Rodney Jenkins trainee keeps Victor Carrasco in the saddle, and there's no reason to discount his potential yet.

RACE FACTS

- ✓ 34th running.
- ✓ Contested at both 1 1/16 miles and 1 1/8.
- ✓ Among the major participants: Preakness winner Deputed Testamony, superstar Broad Brush, Preakness runner-up Oliver's Twist, Belmont winner Ruler on Ice, and Magic Weisner, who ran second here and in the Preakness.
- ✓ Named for Italian breeder Federico Tesio, whose homebreds Nearco and Ribot are among the most influential bloodlines in the world.

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ So far at Pimlico... 6 of 17 1 1/16 mile winners broke from the 1-hole.
- ✓ All 17 were in the 5-hole or farther inside.
- ✓ 6 of 17 were on the lead by a half-mile into the race.
- ✓ 14 of 17 winners were on the lead or within four lengths of it after a half-mile and after 3/4.
- ✓ The two- and three-paths seems to have been more favorable of late.

HENRY S. CLARK STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 10 (5:24), \$100,000 purse, 3yo and up, 1 mile (turf)
- **STORYLINE:** Hard-hitters collide in a race expected to produce one or more runners for the G2 Dixie on Preakness weekend.

OUR 'CAPPERS SAY...

- ✓ **#7 Chamois (7-2)** made seasonal debut in the Dixie last year, led at the furlong grounds, but had to settle for third by a length. Likely aiming there again, the consistent Christophe Clement trainee fits in this group and has run very well off the bench before. A repeat of that, with Kendrick Carmouche in the irons, might get the money.
- ✓ Though he's mainly a dirt horse, our 'cappers like **#10 Stormin Monarcho (10-1)** fine on either surface. David Jacobson trainee earned \$266,000 last year over the main track, and while his lone turf try was nothing to write home about, it was two years ago. Breeding doesn't scream grass, but it's not out of the realm either...
- ✓ **#9 Talk Show Man (4-1)** returned to the races in March after a scary fall in a November stake, and all he did was thrash a good allowance group by five lengths while earning a career-top 102 Beyer. That was on the main track, but all available evidence, including a win in the Maryland Million Turf, suggests he prefers the green.
- ✓ If you don't like **#4 Roadhog (6-1)**, you don't like racing. Consistent 8-year-old, who just missed in this event a year ago, saw 2-year Maryland Million Turf win streak snapped when third (to Talk Show Man) in his last, capping off a year in which he added nearly \$100k to his \$621,000 bankroll. Elizabeth Merryman trainee always brings a solid effort and has run well off the bench -- ignore him here at your peril.

DON'T SLEEP ON...

- ✓ **#2 Aztec Brave (12-1)** was a good claim for trainer Joe Sharp, and he's scored twice against allowance foes, but this will test his class... Lightly raced **#13 Special Envoy (12-1)** will have to overcome a challenging post but this Arnaud Delacour-trained Virginia-bred has some talent and looks to be on the improve... Niall Saville's **#14 North Star Boy (10-1)** has given some awfully good efforts and was beaten less than three by Wise Dan last August. Last, in the Claiming Crown Emerald, was only OK, but that race has produced seven horses that won or finished in the money next-out. On best, he's a factor.

RACE FACTS

- ✓ 15th running.
- ✓ All runnings have been at Pimlico at one mile.
- ✓ Mr. O'Brien parlayed a win here into a score in the Grade 2 Dixie in 2004.
- ✓ Fastest running: Private Slip, 1:33 4/5, 2001.
- ✓ Named for trainer Henry S. Clark, "the dean of Maryland trainers," whose Hall of Fame career touched numerous great horses..

TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ Four turf routes were conducted in the opening two weeks of Pimlico.
- ✓ All four were won by horses breaking from the 8,9, or 10 posts.
- ✓ All were won by horses third or worse after three-quarters of a mile.
- ✓ Two winners were more than 7 lengths behind after 3/4 of a mile..