



# In Focus

**Laurel Park stakes**

**January 2, 2016**

## What A Summer Stakes

- Race 4 (1:55)
- Fillies and mares, 4yo and up
- 6 furlongs, \$75,000 purse
- 30th running
- 2015 winner: Lady Sabelia
- Stakes record: 1:09 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>, Xtra Heat, 2003
- Maryland-bred What a Summer won the 1977 Eclipse Award as top sprinter.

### THE SCOOP

1. **Medaglia d'Argento (6-1 morning line)**  
-- 5yo mare has been out of the money seven straight, thrashed in her last four; but you could argue she's kept better company than this modest group.
2. **Eddy Gourmet (10-1)** -- It's a long time since this runner ran away and hid from rivals in the state-bred Conniver in March; not a terrible effort last out going 5 1/2f, beaten three lengths though seventh after leading for a long time; first off the claim for Mary Eppler, who's won with 10% of similar starters in last two years. An off track wouldn't hurt..
3. **Sweet On Smokey (2-1)** -- Improving sort has been in the money five straight and eight of nine; undefeated at the distance and last loss was to next-out winner Four Inch Heels; wheels back on short rest.
4. **Deliver Me (20-1)** -- 6yo mare is winless in 11 tries on dirt; tough challenge here.
5. **Raging Smoke (5-2)** -- Nothing wrong with last try, beaten just four by Lady Sabelia, who'd be odds-on here; prior defeat came to Stonetastic, recently second in G2 event; PA-bred has been in the money 10 of 13 at the distance.

### SELECTIONS

1. #7 – E Dubai's Humor (5-2): *Bested ML fave Sweet On Smokey in last start and has right to continued improvement.*

2. #1 – Medaglia d'Argento (6-1): *Bad starts have been an issue, but let's not judge two straight drubbings by Lady Sabelia too harshly.*

3. #3 – Sweet on Smokey (2-1): *Undefeated at the distance; game try when third to top choice after getting the squeeze at the rail..*

4. #5 – Raging Smoke (5-2): *Nothing wrong with recent form; tactical speed an asset in a race light on early types.*

6. **Charm City (12-1)** -- Eppler trainee's best efforts have come on the lawn, owning just one win from 11 dirt tries; go-to rider Karamanos has the mount here, and if she could figure out a way to transfer turf form to dirt, she's right there.
7. **E Dubai's Humor (5-2)** -- Donald Barr trainee's done nothing wrong to date, with three wins from five starts and lone out of the money effort on turf; ran second in '14 Smart Halo, beaten 1/2 length; continued improvement a distinct possibility, and she's shown the ability to stalk and pounce or close successfully.

## Native Dancer Stakes

- Race 7 (3:25)
  - 4yo and up
  - 1 1/16 miles, \$75,000 purse
  - 48th running
  - 2015 winner: Elnaawi
  - Run at 6f, 1 mile, 1 1/16 miles, 1 1/8 miles, and at LRL, Bowie, and Pimlico
  - 1 1/16 mile stakes record: 1:43 3/4, Decent Davey (1982) and Bold Curlin (2014)
  - Alfred Vanderbilt's "Grey Ghost" Native Dancer won 21 of 22 career starts, with only a second in the Kentucky Derby to blemish his record, and continued his dominance in the breeding shed.
1. **Page McKenney (7-5)** -- Ultra-consistent warhorse has earned nearly \$1 million winning races just like this and hasn't finished worse than third in 21 starts.
  2. **Warrioroftheroses (20-1)** -- Damon Dilodovico trainee has one and only one hope: get loose on the lead and take 'em as far as he can.

### SELECTIONS

1. #1 – Page McKenney (7-5): *Still waiting for this guy to do something wrong. Just a nose away from a four-race win streak.*
2. #3 – Indycott (12-1): *Recent form's on point, and a horse he beat in Claiming Crown came back second in a Fair Grounds stake.*
3. #8 – Catron (7-2): *Good effort when third in Swatara behind #1 here. Needs a step forward to catch that runner, but that's not out of the question for lightly raced Pletcher trainee.*
4. #7 – Strong Stipulation (8-1): *Good try to be second to #1 here last out and shows good interim works.*

3. **Indycott (12-1)** -- Generous odds on a runner who was dead game in winning over the strip two back; among his beaten rivals that day was Noteworthy Peach, next out winner of the Jennings; closed from a mile back to be fourth in Claiming Crown at long odds.
4. **Bellarmine (6-1)** -- Where'd that come from? Ran away and hid from a decent group including three of today's rivals last out at long odds; a repeat makes him a contender, but that feels tough to predict.
5. **Ever Rider (20-1)** -- 8yo is winless at the distance and has done his best running at longer distances; last win came in '14 Temperance Hill at 13 furlongs.
6. **Monkey's Medal (15-1)** -- Toss three back dud when thrashed by Social Inclusion and this runner has been in solid form; emerges from nice closing win over decent group, but none of five to run back has won
7. **Strong Stipulation (8-1)** -- Improving Motion trainee ran second last out when never a threat to winner (and fave here) Page McKenney, but Lemon Drop Kid gelding is still eligible for N2X.
8. **Catron (7-2)** -- Pletcher runner has to be respected - trainer is 7-for-31 at Laurel in the last five years - and this guy ran a big one last out to be third, beaten just two lengths, by the favorite after a wide trip
9. **Golden Glint (10-1)** -- Prior stakes tries aren't promising, and rider in last two jumps ship to the fave; thrashed last out by #4 Bellarmine

## Nellie Morse Stakes Facts

- Race 8 (3:55)
- Fillies and mares, 4yo and up
- 1 1/16 miles, \$75,000 purse
- 33rd running
- 2015 winner: Star Pearl
- 1 1/2 mile stakes record: 1:43 3/4, City Fire (2004)
- Named for the 1924 Preakness winner, one of five fillies to win the event

### THE SCOOP

1. **Love Came to Town (4-1)** -- NJ-bred's lone stake try was pretty dismal but also against G3 rivals; has been stalled three straight at N3X level, but with only 13 tries to date, still has right to move forward

2. **Primo Via (8-1)** -- Exits a Claiming Crown event which has not produced a next out winner from three to run back; rallied smartly to win prior in first over the strip and one prior was 2nd to Bound, a good 2nd last week in the Thirty Eight Go Go
3. **Playful Love (6-1)** -- Motion trainee is moving in the right direction, and it's hard to fault her too much for 7th place finish last out behind ultra-talented Taris; 6th place finisher that day won next out, and this runner crushed N1X rivals at PEN prior
4. **Hot Trial (20-1)** -- Last was a mess but prior efforts were solid enough; none of six to run back from last has won but two, including Bound (in a stake) ran second
5. **Rapid Repair (6-1)** -- Improving sort posted two straight dominant wins before an OK second last out; never out of the money in three tries at the distance
6. **Rare Medal (12-1)** -- Enters off a 13-lengths win against N1X runners in a career-best effort; show horse beat similar next out; top local rider Julian Pimentel takes the mount
7. **Samantha Nicole (9-2)** -- Kieran McLaughlin trainee passed on last week's Thirty Eight Go Go for this spot but has been away since dubious turf try in October; McLaughlin hitting at 37% at LRL last five years and it's safe to say he's bringing this full sis to Rachel Alexandra here with the intention of getting black type.
8. **Miss Mischief (5-2)** -- Dale Capuano trainee is a killer on synthetic, where she's earned almost \$400,000 and last out won the G2 Bessarabian at Woodbine; she's lost her last 5 on dirt and is winless on the surface since 2013, including 0-for-3 over the strip
9. **Brenda's Way (12-1)** -- Need-the-lead sort lost by 22 last out, and regular rider Jevian Toledo jumps ship to #5; best tries aren't far off, but she'll have to hope to control the pace and hope for the best

### SELECTIONS

1. #7 – Samantha Nicole (9-2): *Golden chance for Rachel Alexandra's sis to get black type.*
2. #3 – Playful Love (6-1): *Only horse to run back from last won, and 5yo's recent races fit here.*
3. #8 – Miss Mischief (5-2): *Can't quite throw G2 winner out in this group - but can't endorse her in top spot with middling dirt record.*
4. #2 – Primo Via (8-1): *Veteran has a win in only local try, and that 2nd in the Plum Pretty looks better because of winner's recent work; inclined to forgive last.*