



In Focus

Laurel Park stakes

April 9, 2016

FEDERICO TESIO STAKES

THE FIELD

1. **Flash McCaul (9-2)** – Familiar name hereabouts has made six of seven career starts at Laurel; owns a career record of 7-2-5-0, including seconds in the Private Terms, Maryland Juvenile Futurity, and Maryland Million Nursery. Friesan Fire gelding kept on gamely to be second in the Private Terms, though never much of a threat to winner Abiding Star, who's stuck at Parx because of the EHV-1 quarantine, after a slow pace set by the winner. Notable that Julian Pimentel, who rode him for his first six, jumped off to ride Marengo Road for the Private Terms and stays with that other Trombetta runner here.
2. **Governor Malibu (7-2)** – This'll be the first trip outside of New York -- and first try not against New York-breds -- for Christophe Clement-trained Malibu Moon colt, whose lone '16 start was a win in the Gander at Aqueduct., in which he raced greenly but prevailed. That day's last place finisher Cards of Stone returned to win an allowance by 13 lengths with a 92 Beyer but was the only one of four to run back and win. Improving sort helmed by a patient conditioner looks likes there's more to come.
3. **I Came to Party (20-1)** – First off the claim by trainer Gerald Brooks for this Bold Chieftain gelding, and a win here would be a surprise. Last out runner-up came back to beat claiming company next out. Cal-bred has been claimed twice in his seven-race career. If you're looking for something to hang your hat on, he's won both his natural dirt starts -- but his speed figs are way below the best in here.

RACE DATA

- Race 2, (1:43 pm EDT)
- 3-year-olds, 1 1/8 miles, \$100,000 guaranteed purse
- 35th running of a race named for famous Italian breeder, owner and trainer Federico Tesio, whose homebreds Nearco and Ribot are among the most influential in the Thoroughbred breeding industry.
- For the first time, the Tesio is a "Win and You're In" for the Preakness granting entry to that Grade 1 event to the winner here.
- 2015 winner: Bodhisattva
- Stakes record (for 1 1/8 miles):1:49, Marciano (2001)
- This will be the third time the race has been run at Laurel (1987, 1989). All of its other runnings were at Pimlico.
- Notable: Four of seven are nominated to the Triple Crown, and four have won at least one stake..

4. **Awesome Speed (2-1)** – Alan Goldberg trainee won the Lewis here, narrowly, over Never Gone South, who’s also here, and then looked solid taking the Mucho Macho Man at Gulfstream. He found the company of Mohaymen and others too tough in the G2 Fountain of Youth -- but note that he had a trouble line that day, bumped hard early by a longshot and wide on both turns. He’s one of two in here cross-entered in the G3 Bayshore at AQU.
5. **D T Goodie (15-1)** – Carl Doran trainee has won his last two against PA-bred rivals, including a last-out allowance win by a nose at Parx. This Jump Start colt hasn’t done anything wrong so far, with a record of 5-2-2-1, and he was widest in a small field when winning last out. But he’s another who’ll need to take a big step forward to get the money.
6. **Marengo Road (6-1)** – This Quality Road colt trained by Mike Trombetta disappointed last out when a well-beaten fourth at 8-5 in the Private Terms. This busy runner has already made nine starts, four in stakes company. His breeding says he’ll like the two-turn distance, but his two tries beyond a mile aren’t promising. He’s found himself chasing lone speed sorts in paceless races in his last three, and that might be his fate again here. Regular pilot Julian Pimentel remains aboard.
7. **Never Gone South (3-1)** -- Munnings colts has been odds-on in five of six and has three wins to his credit, including a facile, front-running score in the Whiteley here, but runner-up Marengo Road turned the tables, wearing this one down in the one-mile Miracle Wood, making distance a question here. None of four to run back from that race has won. Regular rider Trevor McCarthy opts for *Flash McCaul* here, so trainer Cal Lynch turns to brother Feargal to ride.

THE PICKS

1. **#2 – Governor Malibu (7-2)**: Patiently handled colts sits the right trip behind early speed and goes on to punch his Preakness ticket here.

2. **#4 – Awesome Speed (2-1)**: Not inclined to hold last out too much against him, and if he posts here, he’s a key threat and probably gets first run at Never Gone South.

3. **#1 – Flash McCaul (9-2)**: Probably doesn’t get everything he needs to win, but all this Maryland-bred does is run good races, and there’s no reason to think he can’t be in the mix here..

4. **#6 -- Marengo Road (6-1)**: Quality Road colt needs a bounce-back effort here if he hopes to be around late.

WEBER CITY MISS STAKES

THE FIELD

1. **Alto Belle (3-1)** – This Todd Pletcher trainee usually gets bet like a good thin but doesn't always run like one. She broke her maiden by 18 lengths in November and won last out against Parx allowance foes, but in between she was beaten by 2i9 in the Busanda. Not sure she beat all that much last out, and the only two to run back have run poorly; plus, she figures to get bet. Trevor McCarthy will ride.
2. **In the Navy Now (2-1)** – There was nothing wrong with this Mike Trombetta trainee's last, a third in the Caesar's Wish behind another Pletcher runner in Sophia's Song. This'll be the daughter of Midshipman's first two-turn try, but her three efforts at a mile have all been solid. Closing sort will probably need some help from the pace and may not get it here. Jevian Toledo will ride.
3. **Redmoor (9-2)** – First time on the main track did the trick for this Michael Stidham trainee, who won by nine in an off-the-turf maiden event after leading throughout. The second- and third-place finishers are the only ones to run back; both finished sixth in their next start. This Speightstown filly likely benefited from an inside speed bias in her win; three of four route winners that day led at every call, and in the fourth, the front-runner missed winning by a nose. Forest Boyce will ride.
4. **Include a Check (10-1)** – Include filly made a game run of it last out to be second to *Alto Belle* in her first try for trainer Hugh McMahan, who

RACE DATA

- Race 4 (2:44 pm EDT)
- 3-year-old fillies, About 1 1/16 miles
- \$100,000 guaranteed purse
- 1st running of a race named for 1980 Maryland-bred winner of the Black-Eyed Susan. The daughter of Berkley Prince-Esimus, by Sunrise Flight was bred by J.P. Rasnick and owned by Allen Joseph and won 17 of 40 career starts (with 17 other in-the-money finishes) while earning over \$687,000.
- The Weber City Miss is a "Win and You're In" for the Black-Eyed Susan granting entry to that Grade 2 event to the winner here.

claimed her for \$40,000 out of her maiden-breaking score. The blinkers have helped, and two turns probably won't hurt -- but she needs to step it up.

5. **Its a Journey (4-1)** – Promising runner was last seen chasing speedy Behrnik's Bank to no avail, finishing second -- beaten by 13 -- in the Blue Mountain Juvenile Fillies. That runner is entered in Saturday's G2 Gazelle at AQU and would be a strong fave here. This filly should handle the route distance -- she's won at a mile -- and trainer Rice does well off similar layoffs (55 percent in the money); she shows a solid string of four-, five-, and six-furlong works in prep. Rice also generally doesn't come to Laurel without a live runner (72% ITM). Horacio Karamanos will be in the irons.
6. **A P Majestic (8-1)** – Runner #2 from the Trombetta barn figures to have her hands full here after a fourth-place finish behind *Alto Belle* and *Include a Check*. Closing sort was left with a lot to do that day after a sluggish early pace. Blinks come off today after two races wearing them, and that may help. She's seen some rough customers -- second to Lexington Street, later first and second in stakes, sixth behind next-out stake winner Mo d'Amour -- but always ended up behind them. Of note: her only win in six tries came via DQ.
7. **Prognosis (12-1)** – Pricey daughter of Tiznow entered the Caesar's Wish with four straight good efforts, including a pair of stakes placings -- but she packed it in readily when Sophia's Song started to pull away and backpedaled to last. Wouldn't be a surprise to see a step forward here after that puzzling effort; owns the only 1 1/16 mile win in the group (and at KEE). Karamanos takes off for Its the Journey, and Alex Cintron takes the reins here for Tim Wooley trainee.

THE PICKS

1. #5 – Its a Journey (4-1): Tactical speed and trainer's acumen give this promising Jump Start filly the edge in her seasonal bow.

2. #2 – In the Navy Now (2-1): If the pace heats up, this runner will be awfully hard to contain late; deep closer enters with best last-out Beyer.

3. #7 – Prognosis (12-1): The talent's there -- we think -- and maybe the third off the layoff, plus the return to two turns, will bring it out.

4. #1 – Alto Belle (3-1): Pletcher runners have to be respected, and the possible off-track would move this one up.