



2016

In Focus: Maryland Juvenile Championship Day Stakes



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The Racing Biz

12/10/2016

Maryland Juvenile Filly Championship

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 6 (3:00 p.m. ET), \$100,000 guaranteed purse Maryland-bred or -sired two-year-old fillies, 7 furlongs

LAST YEAR Look Who's Talking scored a 5-1 upset by 1 ½ lengths in 1:25.50.



Figure 1 Look Who's Talking won the '15 Juvenile Filly Championship. Photo by The Racing Biz.

The Picks

1. **#7 – Crabcakes (3-1):** Made short work of a MSW field in racing debut @ Pen receiving 84 Brisnet#, tops among this group while being geared down the final 1/16th just 7 days ago; ships in for trainer Bernie Houghton who has had success @ Lrl (11: 3-2-1) this meet
2. **#2 – Phantom Shot (6-1):** Took four tries to graduate in second start w/ blinkers and taking a huge step forward earning 81 Brisnet#; her tactical speed should allow for a nice stalking trip
3. **#4 – Small Batch (12-1):** Best finish of 5 race career was a neck loss to Item (#6) in here yet only good enough for the Show spot in MD Million Lassie; can turn the tables with added distance but will need Lrl dirt oval to be kind to off-the-pace runners as it has been entire meet, but colder local temps could change that to a speed bias
4. **#8 – Old Line Gal (5-2):** Afleet Alex ownership group paid \$210K for this good-looking Stay Thirsty filly who was heavily backed in first 3 starts on the way to finally earning her diploma; was overmatched in minor turf stakes @ Bel when 84-1; fits better with these after layoff as he has back class, graded stakes placed...

The Rest of the Field

#1 – Happiest Ending (20-1): Pen based runner has 3 races under her belt, all @ Prx; broke maiden in second start over muddy surface then got toasted trying to keep up w/ leader in hot pace first time v. winners in OC\$50kN1X... **#3 – Fear No Evil (6-1):** Still a maiden after 3 starts on 3 different type of surfaces at NY tracks... good, fast and turf; should be part of early pace; two-turn turf try in latest can only help here... **#5 – Lucky in Malibu (7-2):** Most experienced filly in this field w/ 6 starts; fresh off maiden score in first try on dirt after going to her knees exiting the gate; came close on turf at varying distances; cut back to one turn and like the work pattern since last outing... **#6 – Item (10-1):** Tossed in a clunker in PA-bred stakes @ Pen after starting career 2 for 2; her second victorious run came in the MD Million Lassie; needs to rebound

Howard M. Bender Memorial Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 7 (3:30 pm ET), \$75,000 guaranteed purse for Maryland-bred or -sires 3-year-olds and up, 6 furlongs

LAST YEAR First running.



Figure 2 *Sonny Inspired*. Photo by Laurie Asseo.

The Picks

1. **#4 – Struth (8-1):** *Has the potential to be a local sprint star in minor and MD-bred stakes; only a DQ has kept him out of Exacta at this distance (4: 2-1-0); will be just off early speed in his stakes debut stakes and gets first run at likely favorite (#2) to pull the upset*
2. **#2 – Morning Fire (5-2):** *Strange to see in a sprint “Lone Speed” but this colt warrants that label in here; gave up early in latest, a \$100k local stakes when never got lead as an 11-1 outsider; this will be third race after 6-month layoff and recent work indicates a top effort is in order*
3. **#5 – Rockinn On Bye (7-2):** *Record troubling for win bettors (39:6-13-6) and he’s been runner-up in last 3 starts... minor stakes, allowance & G3; never OTB going 6 furlongs (9: 2-5-2) but winless in 10 starts in ‘16; looks like another “late on the scene” run to grab a minor share*
4. **#9 – Sonny Inspired (4-1):** *Stakes tested and graded-stakes placed (3rd in G3 Gen. George in Feb.); wasn’t ready for G3 DeFrancis by trainers own admission plus got caught on a dead rail; willing to forgive that first effort after off 5-month layoff but prefers an off track (3 for 7) v. fast track (1 for 13)*

The Rest of the Field

#1 – Any Court Inastorm (10-1): *Idle since mid-July after being outrun in minor stakes @ Del; prefers Lrl (10: 3-3-2) and this distance (7: 3-2-1) but a couple others in here have always gotten the better of him... #3 – Final Prospect (8-1):* *Fourth by nearly a pole in G3 DeFrancis dash when 40-1; just 1 for 11 at distance and seems to top out v. optional claimers while being worth putting on the bottom in Superfectas at this level... #6 – Jrock (12-1):* *A lifelong allowance and optional claimer takes a shot in this MD-bred/MD-sired stakes; this late running sprinter has been competing on turf in last 5 outings which may give a boost getting back on dirt... #7 – Just Jack (8-1):* *Only 2 dirt, fast track starts in 10 race career w/ a win in racing debut; cut back from two turns in last 3, so any threat to be in the mix would come in the late stages of this contest... #8 – Jack’s in the Deck (20-1):* *Last visited Winners’ Circle 14 months ago when nosing out Ben’s Cat in MD Million Sprint; hasn’t hit the board in 7 races since; last race was on July 17th yet no published works since June? Look elsewhere*

Willa on the Move Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 8 (4:00 pm ET), \$100,000 guaranteed purse for fillies and mares 3-year-olds and up, 6 furlongs

LAST YEAR Odds-on favorite Lady Sabelia won by almost two lengths in 1:10.17, her second straight win in the event.

The Picks

1. **#6 – Hot City Girl (3-5):** *Idle since mid-August with lingering foot abscess but her latest two bullet drills imply she's 100%; won \$100k Safely Kept in her last trip down I-95 from her home base @ Bel; an alert start is imperative as she's never been more than a length off the pace in any of her 6 career wins; only foe that might head her early is #7*
2. **#2 – Sweet On Smokey (8-1):** *Exits a near-win in gate-to-wire fashion vs Starter Allowance foes as 6-5 favorite in first off the bench; runner-up in last 3 efforts, all as beaten fave; only OTB finish @ Lrl came in G2 Barbara Fritchie (4th by 3¼); should get first run at prohibitive favorite after other speed give her their best shot early*
3. **#5 – Athena (6-1):** *Just less than a year ago this filly/trainer duo shipped in from CD to take the Thirty Eight Go Go Stakes over this dirt oval; trainer Helen Pitts makes first trip back to Lrl since that victory; filly seems to fit these minor stakes events as she's hit the board in all 5 starts in such races*
4. **#8 – Lovable Lady (12-1):** *Pretty generous Morning Line for a two-time restricted stakes winner; need to toss her latest when lukewarm favorite going a mile which is an 1/8 further than she prefers; nice spot to bounce back*



Figure 3 Hot City Girl won at Laurel last year. Photo by The Racing Biz.

The Rest of the Field

#1 – She's Hot Wired (12-1): *Invader from Prx, this 5 y.o. mare has found success in the past over the Lrl dirt oval (3: 1-0-2) albeit v. first level allowance and optional claimers; won a minor stakes @ CT two races back and a NJ-bred stakes @ Mth this Spring...* **#3 – Lake Sebago (20-1):** *So much promise early in her career yet hasn't won in over two years when she was never worse than second after 6 starts (6: 3-3-0); still can compete at this level but only for minor awards as she's done v. a few in here...* **#4 – Love Came to Town (8-1):** *Makes third start after layoff following a couple one mile allowance races @ Prx; won Nellie Morse stakes here on Jan. 2 going two turns; will need to take advantage of a hot pace if one develops...* **#7 – Black Mission Fig (15-1):** *This fast filly won a PA-bred stakes prior to being beaten favorite in latest when asked to stretch out to 7 panels; all 5 career wins have come at this events 6f distance; holds the key to how fast the early pace will be*

Maryland Juvenile Futurity

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 9 (4:30 pm ET), \$100,000 guaranteed purse for Maryland-bred or -sired 2-year-olds, 7 furlongs

LAST YEAR Ravenheart (4-1) won by a head in 1:25.64. Inaugural edition (1982) included winners of the following year's Preakness (Deputed Testamony) and Belmont (Caveat) but was won by future multiple graded winner Dixieland Band.

The Picks

1. **#5 – O Dionysus** (5-2): *How good is this son of Bodemeister? He won debut in spite of running off with jock in the irons during the Post Parade; in second outing was much the "second best" to No Dozing who was fourth in next outing, G1 Breeders' Futurity at Keeneland then most recently runner-up in the G2 Remsen; G. Capuano trainee ran career best Brisnet# (95) in latest win, a restricted stake @ Prx*
2. **#6 – Hatteras Bound** (20-1): *Just one of three in here to have beaten winners but did it v. \$25k claimers; just one of two to have won going beyond 6 furlongs; has improved speed figure-wise in each of his 4 career outings; a threat to upset at a huge price*
3. **#3 – Bonus Points** (2-1): *Doubt that there will be a Todd Pletcher (0 for 2 & OTB here) sighting in the Lrl paddock saddling this colt who earned diploma over a muddy Bel surface going two turns on Oct. 1st; lone fast, dirt track try resulted in picking up the Show purse v. maidens at one mile which indicates this middle distance suits him*

4. **#9 – Greatbullsoffire** (3-1): *May be destined to a sprinter's life no further than 6 furlongs unless he's a late developer or trainer "Ham" Smith can build some stamina in him; no excuse in latest when beaten by O Dionysus (#5) as even-money favorite @ Prx*

The Rest of the Field

#1 – Twin Valor (15-1): *Still a maiden after 4 career efforts; has lost ground in deep stretch in all 4 starts going 6 furlongs so stretch out to 7 doesn't seem too promising...* **#2 – Bowspirit** (50-1): *Makes just third start while seeking first win after showing late interest on dirt and turf v. maiden claimers; would need to take a huge step forward to graduate in this contest...* **#4 – Maryland's Best** (15-1): *A game third in MD Million Nursery when 30-1 coming off maiden score v. \$16k MCL; interesting that jock H. Karamanos shows up here after being aboard Twin Valor (#1) in all 4 starts...* **#7 – In Arrears** (15-1): *Was the Wise Guy horse in MD Million Nursery (3-1) after an eye-popping maiden win in second career start but gave way along a dead rail; Blinkers off...* **#8 – Dancing With Maude** (6-1): *Nearly pulled off a 69-1 shocker in MD Million Nursery two back losing by a head to Greatbullsoffire (#9) in big form reversal from debut; still a maiden due to a second best effort in latest in spite of 91 Brisnet#*