



2017

In Focus: Fritchie Day Stakes



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The Racing Biz

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Maryland Racing Media Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 5 (2:30pm EST), \$75,000 guaranteed purse for fillies and mares 4yo and up, 1 1/16 miles (dirt). 26th running.

LAST YEAR Pangburn won by a half-length in 1:47.90.

The Picks

1. **#4 - Winter (4-1)** – Lynch trainee was clearly best in what on paper was a wide open Nellie Morse; sat a perfect trip that day and might well find another good journey here under McCarthy. She's never been worse than second at the trip.
2. **#6 - Wait Your Turn (3-5)** – Rudy Rod trainee has logged three wins and a second from four starts. Her only defeat came to Karen's Silk, who won a stake in her very next start, and two back, this runner bested Tale for Ruby, who won the Safely Kept at LRL in her next tilt. Quickened nicely to leave the field gasping in 9-length romp last out, a race that's produced two next-out winners. Like to see Irad Ortiz here; only concern is the outer post and the other speed inside. Could be any kind, but let's take a stand against expected short odds.
3. **#7 - Cayman Croc (5-1)** – Breen trainee has placed twice in five stakes tries and will need her running shoes here. Nothing wrong with her two back effort when fifth, but beaten just less than four, in the G3 Go for Wand; two that beat her won next out with 95+ Beyer figs. With Carmouche in the irons, she'll look to make a run in the lane past tiring speed types at a distance she hasn't been worse than third in six tries.

4. **#1 - Bawlmer Hon (15-1)** – The move to the rail can help, given the short run to the first turn, but first foray into stakes company left a lot to be desired, and she'll need to turn tables on three who bested her there...



2016 winner Pangburn. Photo by Laurie Asseo.

The Rest of the Field

#2 Addibel Lightning (10-1) – None of three to run back from the Nellie Morse has won; this miss rallied well enough, but too late to put a scare into the winner. Note that regular pilot Salgado came down for the Nellie Morse but takes a pass on this one... **#3 Moon Virginia (15-1)** – Longshot won the speed duel with favored Bawlmer Hon in the Nellie Morse but lost the war, fading to third. A similar outcome feels awfully possible here... **#5 - Love Came to Town (20-1)** – NJ-bred mare seems to have lost a step from her best efforts, including a win in the '16 Nellie Morse; last month, she was never much involved in the '17 renewal of that race and must find a way to turn tables on four rivals who finished ahead of her.

Wide Country Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 6 (3:00pm EST), \$75,000 guaranteed purse for 3yo fillies, 7 furlongs (dirt). 24th running.

LAST YEAR Great Soul won by a half-length in 1:27.73. Graded stakes winner Wide Country won 11 different stakes in Maryland.



2016 winner Great Soul. Photo by Laurie Asseo.

The Picks

1. **#2 – Crabcakes (5-2):** *A perfect 3 for 3, this MD-bred daughter of Great Notion should face only mild pressure early conserving energy to go the 7 panels as she did in the MD Juvenile Filly Championship; can handle being high weight (122lb.), spotting all of her rivals 6 lbs.; a couple recent bullet works indicates she's ready to roll*
2. **#3 – Forever Liesl (7-2):** *NY shipper for trainer M. Nevin made the trip down I-95 on Dec. 31, '16 to break maiden in second start traveling one mile following a near miss at The Big A when 20-1; her Brisnet speed figures say she can handle the jump into stakes versus this group; been working consistently in the A.M.; any move forward puts her in the mix*
3. **#1 – China Grove (3-1):** *Makes 3 y.o. debut after deceptively good 6th-place effort in G2 Golden Rod at CD in late Nov. as 6-length winner came back to win Silverbulletday stakes at FG; Kee-based shipper has faced tough company as she's been victim of 5 next out winners in her 8 race career*

#7 – Lucky in Malibu (4-1): *Started career racing on grass (5:0-2-0) but thankfully when turf season ended, she took to dirt quite nicely, immediately getting to Winners' Circle then runner-up to Crabcakes in MD Juvenile Filly Championship and has never been off-the-board (4:1-2-1) on the Lrl dirt; reunited with T. McCarthy*

The Rest of the Field

#4 – Kathleen Elizabeth (30-1): *WV-bred will face open company for the first time in her 7th start, first one not at CT; appears to be best in bull ring dashes as she lost by 8+ in only 7 furlong try; blinkers didn't help in most recent outing but remain on today...* **#5 – So Fancy (10-1):** *Fetches a cool \$500k at Kee '15 yearling sale but not showing it on track needing 4 starts to graduate, albeit sprinting on the synthetic surface at TP; uncoupled entry for Kee-based trainer B. Colebrook; could she possibly be a "rabbit" for her stablemate (#1) with I. Ortiz, Jr. in the irons?... #6 – Squan's Kingdom (8-1):* *Couldn't make up ground on Lucky in Malibu (#7) when third after spotting field a few lengths going 6 furlongs in latest effort; seems to have leveled off after getting diploma 4 races back; candidate to complete Trifecta or Super...* **#8 – Follow the Petals (15-1):** *No blemishes on her two race career; could have been had for \$8k in very impressive debut when 38-1; then toyed with TP OC\$50kN1X foes, so why not take a shot to find her ceiling; could light up tote with just a slight improvement*

Miracle Wood Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 7 (3:30pm EST), \$75,000 guaranteed purse for 3yo, 1 mile. 22nd running.

LAST YEAR Marengo Road won by three-quarters of a length in 1:40.13. Jockeys Julian Pimentel (3) and Forest Boyce (2) have combined to win the last five editions.

The Picks

1. **#4 – O Dionysus** (8-5): *Got beat by High Roller (#7) in local stakes as 2-5 favorite but had a horrific trip, travelling behind rivals under a strangle hold most of the way; prior to that lost by a nose to Irish War Cry who came back an easy winner of the G2 Holy Bull winner; if J. Toledo gives this MD-bred Bodemeister colt a clean trip, the Federico Tesio could be in his future*
2. **#7 – High Roller** (5-2): *Impressive victory in Frank Whiteley stakes when stretched out to 7 furlongs, will meet the runner-up and third place finishers again; a consistent runner thus far (4:1-2-1) whose worst placing came against El Areeb in the James F. Lewis III Stakes; recent A.M. drills indicate he's still on the muscle and should relish the added distance*
3. **#6 – Everybodyluvsrudy** (4-1): *Hard to gauge what class level he belongs, having three runner-up finishes v. maidens before winning and getting buried in two graded stakes races; having lost to the likes of El Areeb, Mo Town and Practical Joker implies talent is there, but is there enough for I. Ortiz, Jr. to get him home first?*

4. **#5 – Butch Walker** (8-1): *Adding blinkers couled provide him more focus and early foot as this field lacks a runner who has ever been on the lead at first call; if there ever was a time to try and change tactics this race is the one to experiment and see how far he can go on the lead; otherwise seems destine for a minor share*



2016 winner Marengo Road. Photo by Laurie Asseo.

The Rest of the Field

#1 – Eastern Bay (12-1): *Making nice progress in his career as the speed figures have ascended through first 3 races; not sure if one mile will be to his liking on top of having to get better than the three others in here who finished ahead of him in the Frank Whiteley...* **#2 – No More Talk** (12-1): *May have bled in debut as he was a completely different animal in game maiden breaker with Lasix in next start; huge jump in class fits the "Go Big Or Go Home" style of owner, Olympic gold medalist Bode Miller...* **#3 – Indominus Rex** (10-1): *This PA-bred tries open company after a getting 2 wins from 3 starts in the Keystone state; latest 5-length score came when blinkers were added; should handle added distance based on decent one mile work ...* **#8 – Poseidon's Prize** (20-1): *Brsinet speed figures have improved in each start after making career debut in WV Futurity; though last two victories look impressive on paper, the reality is they were against WV-breds; cannot fault work tab though, especially the latest going 6f*

John B. Campbell Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 8 (4:00pm EST), \$75,000 guaranteed purse for 4yo and up, 1 1/8 miles (dirt). 63rd running.

LAST YEAR Kid Cruz won by a half-length in 1:52.98.

The Picks

1. **#5 – Turco Bravo (3-1):** *Not many 8-year-olds can win in first start after a 6-month layoff but based on the bullets on this old-timer's work pattern and back class, gets the nod here; circle his last three non-graded \$100k+ stakes races, as this one is, and you find three victories; nice to see NY-based jock R. Maragh will be in the irons*
2. **#6 – Page McKenney (2-1):** *Cross-entered in \$250k G3 General George which he won last year; hard to believe trainer M. Eppler won't take a shot there based on purse difference even though it came up a bit tough, word is "Page" is better than ever; if he goes here it'll be hard to imagine being any worse than runner-up as he's been in the Exacta 10 of 14 over Lrl dirt and never OTB at 1 1/8 mile distance*
3. **#8 – Bodhisattva (12-1):** *Race should set up perfectly for this deep closer due to the fact that the other 8 runners all possess either early or pressing speed; with what should be quick early fractions, this one should have clear sailing entering the stretch to catch leg weary rivals*
4. **#4 – Souper Lucky (5-2):** *Away since mid-March '16, this race seems to be an annual can't miss on this 6-year-olds docket, being runner-up last year and 6th in '15; loves the Lrl dirt (11:6-1-2) but winless going 9 furlongs (5:0-2-1); been training in earnest for this spot since the new year*



2016 winner Kid Cruz. Photo by Laurie Asseo.

The Rest of the Field

#1 – Cosmic Destiny (15-1): *Game third when 79-1 in Native Dancer behind Page McKenney and Bodhisattva; first try at 9 furlongs will test stamina; F. Lynch may need to send early from the rail...* **#2 – Warrioroftheroses (30-1):** *Knows only one way of running and that's fast early; up against it in here as there are plenty of rivals to put pressure on him early to quicken the pace; been off-the-board in 5 previous races at this distance...* **#3 – Double Whammy (12-1):** *Stablemate of Page McKenney steps up into stakes company for first time in 32nds career start; has been sent off as Post Time favorite in last 8 races but only won 3 of them; does love Lrl dirt (13:7-3-1) and is 1 for 2 at distance...* **#7 – Charitable Annuity (10-1):** *An Also Ran v. "Page" & Co. in Lrl debut when laid off the early soft fractions after history of early speed; could benefit from pace meltdown if he can produce another 101 Brisnet# as he did two back...* **#9 – Snuggley Bear (15-1):** *Slim pickin's for races after latest win v. N2X; trainer switch to M. Gorham has paid dividends*

Grade 2 Barbara Fritchie Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 9 (4:30pm EST), \$300,000 guaranteed purse for fillies and mares 4yo and up, 7 furlongs (dirt). 65th running.

LAST YEAR Dancing House won by 1 ¾ lengths in 1:25.23.

The Picks

1. **#3 - By the Moon (2-1)** – *Class of the field owns a Grade 1 win at a mile and a Grade 3 score at this trip. Last out, cleared to the lead nearing the stretch like she would win for fun, but High Ridge Road ground her down for the win. Has tactical speed to make a good trip here – she was up on solid fractions last. Down side: just two wins in 11 tries on a fast main track and one in seven at the distance.*
2. **#8 - Wonder Gal (9-2)** – *Tiz Wonderful mare was fifth in this spot a year ago, but looks better here than she did then; nothing wrong with third-place finish in the G3 Go for Wand – though beaten by High Ridge Road – and follow-up couldn't have been easier. Regular pilot Carmouche comes in, but note she's winless at the trip.*
3. **#1 - High Ridge Road (5-2)** – *Wore down favored By the Moon last out to get up late after coming under the stick mid-turn. Improving mare has won four of five and is spotless in three Laurel tries. May have benefited from the additional furlong last out, but that was a big effort for a barn that knows how to get a horse ready for a big race. Has not won at less than one mile.*
4. **#2 - Rowd E Allie (20-1)** – *As likely lone speed, Breen trainee rates a puncher's chance if nothing else. Threw down a wicked opening quarter last out en route to the win, and that race has produced two next out winners.*

The Rest of the Field

#4 - Regia Marina (12-1) – *Trainer Eoin Harty hasn't run a horse at Laurel in the last five years, so this one's presence here may – or may not – mean something. Three runners from her last race, a November win, won their next start, and top local pilot Trevor McCarthy climbs aboard – but we're not sold that the Mahoning Distaff is the optimal prep for this... #5 - Sweet On Smokey (12-1)* – *Laurel lover owns two stakes wins over the strip and ran willingly at monster odds in this spot a year ago. But she's winless at seven-eighths and note that regular pilot Victor Carrasco chooses the fave in here. Disco Chick, whom she bested last out, ran an ultra-game second to Takrees in her follow-up...*

#6 - Takrees (6-1) – *Deep closer – one of two here from Kiaran McLaughlin's barn – rallied sharply and very late to win the Interborough last out over Disco Chick, second to Sweet On Smokey in her prior. Irad Ortiz retains the mount on a runner who's been second in each of her two local tries but is winless in three tries beyond six furlongs. More bad news: hard to see her getting the kind of pace in front that she'll need to catch 'em... #7 - Clothes Fall Off (8-1)* – *Last year's Fritchie runner-up will need to take a big step forward off her last two to be around here. Following an up-the-track finish in the G1 Madison last April, she got nine months off with minor injuries, but her return – after tossing her head leaving the gate – wasn't much to write home about, beaten a half-dozen by stablemate Takrees last out. Of note: trainer McLaughlin scores at 17% rate with horses making second starts off a layoff in graded company.*

Grade 2 General George Stakes

RACE PARTICULARS: Race 10 (5:00pm EST), \$250,000 guaranteed purse for 4yo and up, 7 furlongs(dirt). 41st running

LAST YEAR Page McKenney won by a head in 1:24.61.

The Picks

1. **#10 - Ocean Knight (10-1)** – Nice bounce-back last out, a front-running allowance score after disastrous G1 Cigar Mile, and if you toss that, he's been solid: third-place finish in the Kelso came behind G3 winner Anchor Down and next-out Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile winner Tamarkuz. Has speed breaking from the outside and still can improve. Upset contender?
2. **#6 - Stallwalkin' Dude (5-2)** – Formful 7yo millionaire just keeps churning out big efforts and might have been best last but for a tough trip. He was fourth in his only prior LRL trip ('15 De Francis). Irad Ortiz makes the trip and figures to try to give this one a mid-pack type of journey.
3. **#4 - Classy Class (15-1)** – Not a terrible try last out for this McLaughlin trainee, but not clear why he was so far out of it. Like to see Maragh come down for the mount, and he can move forward in second off a brief layoff (and just his fourth since late '15). His connections have always treated like a runner, and outrunning expected long odds here would be no surprise.
4. **#5 - Imperial Hint (3-1)** – Back-to-back triple digit Beyers and a dominant win in the Dave's Friend weren't enough to entice rider McCarthy, which makes this one a nice pick-up mount for Pimentel. Speedy sort might control here, owns two wins at the trip, and with just nine starts to his name, retains the right to improve.

The Rest of the Field

#1 - Never Gone South (20-1) – Lynch trainee is working well and has done plenty of nice things in his career – but nothing quite this nice. Only out of the money once in four tries at the distance, and you like to see rider McCarthy stay here, rather than live contender Imperial Hint, whom he rode last out. A sign? Or merely keeping faith with the trainer of Derby contender El Areeb? **#2 - Afleet Willy (12-1)** – Big run last out after stumbling at the start, and those were legit fractions he set after zipping to the front – but he does love him some off-track (4-3-1-0), which may have something to do with that... **#3 - Page McKenney (7-2)** – Veteran, cross-entered in Campbell, returned from a nine-month break to win the Native Dancer pretty comfortably – but that 80 Beyer he received was his lowest in three years. Was it correct? Possibly; the Native Dancer was just a touch quicker than the fillies in the Nellie Morse one race prior. He'll need much better than that to contend here, but he is the defending champ. Check the toteboard? **#7 - Voluntario (15-1)** – This guy's best efforts have been pretty good, but he's winless in four stakes tries, and last out he was thrashed by Ocean Knight. Jock-trainer combo just 1-for-12... **#8 - Grasshoppin (30-1)** – Deep closer's best argument might be his 6-3-1-0 record at 7 furlongs; otherwise, he remains without a stakes win after 30 career starts, most against easier groups than this one... **#9 - Heaven's Runway (6-1)** – Rudy Rod trainee found the best form of his career late last year at 6, with wins in the G3 Fall Highweight and the local Dave's Friend – the first time in his 42-race career he won two straight. Rodriguez has a strong record bringing horses off modest layoffs into graded events, and three of five from last ran second next out. The question remains: can a horse whose only career win beyond six furlongs came on synthetic and as a two-year-old win a graded event going seven?