

IN FOCUS – LAUREL PARK “CLASS ON THE GRASS” STAKES

June 24, 2017

RACE 3 – EDWARD P. EVANS STAKES

- 3YO and up, VA-bred/Sired
 - 1 mile turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#3 – Rose Brier** (2-5): *Mth shipper is defending champ who is a perfect 4 for 4 in these stakes races at Lrl restricted to VA bred/sired runners; has placed in multiple graded stakes but this 8-year-old is winless after three starts in '17 albeit while facing much better than he will today*
 2. **#4 – Special Envoy** (2-1): *Appears to be one in here with the best chance to upset the top pick but has finished 1-3 lengths behind that one in all four previous meetings; will need to be more forwardly placed with anticipated slow early fractions*
 3. **#1 – Speed Gracer** (15-1): *Lightly raced 3-year-old hasn't finished better than sixth since maiden victory that came 5 races back sprinting on Lrl lawn last Oct.; in most recent two outings stretched out to longer distances for which he was bred and showed improvement*

RACE 5 – NELLIE MAE COX STAKES

- 3YO and up fillies and mares, VA-bred/Sired
 - 1 mile turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#8 – Queen Caroline** (7-5): *Won this event last year following her maiden win then reeled off two more victories but has failed to hit the board since while facing much better than she will in here*
 2. **#1 – Armoire** (9-5): *Made MD racing debut a winning one on Blacked-Eyed Susan Day v. a salty group of optional claimers; 3 wins*

from 6 career starts and a trainer who does best work with turf runners (22%)

3. **#5 – Secret Or Not** (12-1): *Makes third start after a 7-month layoff as speed figures continue to climb; runner-up in this event last year when 13-1 going 1 1/16 miles at Pim; 1 for 1 at this one mile distance; prefers a little “give” in the turf grass and gets HOF rider E. Prado back in the irons who may put this gal on the early lead without much pressure and make every pole a winning one*

RACE 6 – JAMEELA STAKES

- 3YO and up fillies and mares, MD-bred/Sired
 - 6 furlongs turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#1 – Everything Lovely** (9-5): *Bridesmaid in this event last year behind #8 Lovable Lady but can turn the tables as this field came up light on early speed so jock D. Centeno should have her on early lead with enough in the tank to hold off late comers*
 2. **#5 – If I Was a Boy** (20-1): *Making turf debut when she's flourished so far on dirt (15: 2-7-2) though needs to overcome “Second-itis”; past grass works indicate this is not a “shot in the dark” try as trainer is 2 for 6 with runners in turf debut; could surprise at a price*
 3. **#3 – Devilish Love** (6-1): *Tough spot for '17 debut but trainer A. Dutrow will have her fit based on work pattern at her Bel home track; won MD Million Ladies last Oct. but that was going 3 furlongs further; was runner-up in minor stakes at Bel in lone 6 furlong turf try*

RACE 8 – WHITE OAK FARM STAKES

- 3YO and up, VA-bred/sired
 - 5 ½ furlongs turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#4 – What a Wildcat (5-1):** *Appears to have drawn in with half dozen others who all will be forwardly placed and reunited w/ jock S. Hamilton who will take back early and unleash a furious rally in deep stretch trying to catch the leg-weary leaders; ran career best speed figure over this Lrl turf course*
 2. **#7 – Two Notch Road (4-5):** *Defending champ has raced just three times since and might be asking a lot for a 10-year-old to be in top form in first race in 7-months; only OTB finish on Lrl lawn in 6 starts was on a good v. firm turf*
 3. **#1 – Available (7-2):** *Hard to like this gray for the WIN due to 2 for 32 career mark on turf; has a runner-up and two SHOW efforts in the three VA bred/sired turf sprint stakes on his resume'; usually keen out of the gate, jock F. Boyce may want to avoid getting caught up in suicidal pace and make late run which he's shown in the past*

RACE 9 – M. TYSON GILPIN STAKES

- 3YO and up, fillies and mares, VA-bred/sired
 - 5 ½ furlongs turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#7 - Rapid Rhythm (4-5):** *Winner of last year's Oakley at 1-2 odds figures to see similar action here. She's been keeping much, much better company than these; two-back winner Lady Aurelia dusted males in the Group 1 King's Stand Monday at Royal Ascot and last out winner Mississippi Delta now has four stakes wins. Figures to be rolling late and tough to contain under Feargal Lynch.*
 2. **#2 - Do What I Say (15-1):** *A return to best form required to contend here but not out of the question on second off lengthy layoff. First two turf efforts suggested genuine talent, plus flexibility to lead or chase. Four to run back from her last all finished second or third in their follow-ups.*

3. **#6 - Ring Knocker (6-1):** *Half-sis to Early Grey, who won but was DQed from a maiden score on last summers Virginia/Maryland day, but she and her sibs are winless in 11 turf tries. One of her two turf tries wasn't bad, beaten three lengths by the stakes-placed Tizanillusion, and this miss did win a stake earlier this year. On her second off a brief layoff, this Gary Gullo trainee has a chance to run well here.*

RACE 10 – MR. DIZ STAKES

- 3YO and up, MD-bred/sired
 - 6 furlongs turf, \$75,000 purse
1. **#9 Phlash Phelps (3-1):** *Multiple stakes winner on the turf, though all going long – but note that he broke his maiden off an off-season layoff sprinting on the lawn, and that the runner-up that day has gone on to win a turf stake. Training ledger since he returned mid-April shows three bullets, and it's likely that all systems are go.*
 2. **Grandiflora (10-1):** *Made some progress late after being pretty much out of it most of the way last out in the Jim McKay Turf Sprint, but maybe the better race for comparison purposes is two-back third place effort – beaten a head – in an allowance race which included two of today's rivals. Will need a pace to materialize in front of him.*
 3. **Ben's Cat (7-2):** *It's clear this old-timer – 11 years old! – isn't the horse he was a year ago when third in this event at 7-10 odds, but he's still good enough that a seventh win in this event isn't out of the realm. His two efforts this year are just OK, and two that finished ahead of him in the allowance test are both here. He'll need some things to go right, and for the first time since '15 will have a rider other than Trevor McCarthy aboard, in the form of Horacio Karamanos.*

