

Fort Erie Selections: Monday, July 15th, 2024

Six races on the Monday program, with two extremely competitive dirt events for older runners. Good luck to today's connections and those wagering on the races!

- Ashley Mailloux

Race 1: #5 Bend in the River made his seven-year-old debut on Canada Day and came up short after setting the pace. He was clear for second and figures to improve second time off the long layoff, with that race under his belt. He finds himself against a compact field at the same level, and may be able to get his preferred, forward trip with the outside draw. **#1 Party of No** finish right behind Bend in the River last time out and in that race, he was able to get a better pace setup so that he could pass several runners. He took a solid step in the right direction, as his figures improved by 13 points and if the pace is honest again, he can get claim a share, once again. **#4 Musical Stride** finished last in his most recent outing, but not only was it against considerably tougher competition, it was on the turf. This will be his dirt debut and just his second start since transferring to the barn of Richard Davis, so there is room for improvement, but the price can't be too short, considering he doesn't appear to be the same horse as last year.

Race 2: #5 General Command made his FE debut here on July 8th, finishing third at this level, and today, he finds himself in the same spot. He ran for the same tag at Tampa this winter where he had comparable numbers and did quite well. The barn has had an excellent meet so far, and this gelding will be making just his third start since early April. **#3 Street Serenade** will try to make it three in a row for his connections and in both races, he's rallied from off the pace to cruise to nice wins. He took a step forward figures wise last time out on the stretch out from five furlongs to six furlongs, while also facing winners for the first time. It's hard to keep these types of streaks going, but this gelding has really stepped it up since moving to the Fort and getting on the dirt, plus his connections are spacing his races quite nicely. **#4 Justin's Way** made his first start since October on Father's Day against allowance-level non-winners of three races lifetime and failed to fire. In his defense, the race came up tough and today, he drops down in class. Last year, he raced well against horses such as Victory March and Morning Thoughts, but he hasn't shown the ability to make a late run on the dirt – he typically is chasing from a few lengths off the pace and flattens, but maybe he had excuses – he likely needed a race and maybe the off-track was not his preferred surface back in the fall.

Race 3: #1 Twirling Piper was supposed to race earlier this month but was scratched after becoming loose from the gate and running off. She debuted at Woodbine at odds of 39-1 and surrendered after chasing the pace. It was a maiden special weight event that attracted a big field of 14 and against this group, she figures to take a big step forward. She's had two solid works since that effort and the two-turn seven-eighths distance may play in her favor compared to the EP Taylor. **#2 P T Beaucette** raced well on debut, but was simply no match for the winner, Cherry Gardens, who drew clear by 12 lengths. This filly figures to take a step up second time, especially stretching out in distance, but her most recent race was on the dirt. With that said, the two-turn trip should work well for her stalking style. **#6 It's Me** was second best in the race that Twirling Piper was scratched out of and in the end, simply no one was going to catch the winner, Knotty and Nice who walked on the front end. This daughter of Tiznow stays at the level and distance, for trainer Roy Agostino, who's had a good meet so far. It's unclear where she'll be early, but her turf races show that at this level, she's capable of hanging around for a share.

Race 4: In a competitive race loaded with speed, **#3 Core** may get the right trip just off the pace. Last time we saw him race, he showed a ton of grit and perseverance, fighting with Vinnie Van Go throughout and to the wire. The runner up came back to win nicely in his following start. With that said, this gelding has shown he can sit further back and pass horses, which is likely what he'll do against this group. **#5 Alacritous** had a strong season in 2023, winning three of his four appearances at the Border Oval. This gelding was extremely game on the front end and his lone loss came when he was a few lengths off the pace early while going six and a half furlongs. With that said, it's his first start since September and there is other speed in here, but he has shown the ability to rate in the past, and the five eighths distance is perfect for his return. **#1 Shakoo Makoo** gave the father-son duo of Anthony and Ryan Alderson a win on Father's Day at Ajax and this son of Reload really had to fight to win. His best races have been here at Fort Erie and while he finds himself in a tough spot, he figures to be forward from the rail, fitter with a race under his belt, and this is the perfect distance for him.

Race 5: **#8 Big Ginger** was screaming for room last time out and could not run down her stablemate, Nice Baby because of it. Overall, her dirt debut was a strong one and she showed that she can pass horses. She stays at this level and with speed in this event (Can't Beat the Katz, Forest B, maybe Loaded Vixen), she once again might need to show that ability to close and figures to be a major player, with a better a trip than last time out. **#4 Silver Candice** won her first two starts off the freshening this spring and most recently, was able to capitalize on the speed duel of Forest B and Can't Be the Katz to close late and draw clear by over three lengths. Similarly to Big Ginger, the race flow might suit her well and when she's good, she's very good, as shown by her record. Underneath, just about every filly/mare in the field looks live. With the inside draw, maybe **#1 Cant Beat the Katz** can rebound from an okay performance last time out. She was so gritty in the LongRun Aftercare on June 16th, that maybe it took a bit out of her and hence, the backwards step second time off the layoff – her figures dropped and she tired, but they did go a tad quicker in that race with an additional sixteenth of a mile. She's quick and absolutely loves it here at the Fort and her consistency alone supports her case.

Race 6: **#2 Few Regrets** raced on the turf for the first time in a while, and first time for trainer Kevin Buttigieg and she ran quite well, just missing by a neck in the end. She sat just a few lengths off the pace and rallied late but could not get to Impossible Bertie when it was all said and done. Her figures improved by over ten points compared to the dirt, but even in her dirt race, she faced Chrome's Big Break, who's a three-time winner at the meet. The same trip might work out for her well against this field. **#8 Fixurhairpretty** was two lengths behind Few Regrets last time out and another one that finished up nicely in the race, but unlike her rival, she was much further back. She has shown consistently that she's a deep closer, and she's never in a rush from the gate. She'll need some pace to run at with that running style, but at a comparable level last time out, the tempo played out well for her. **#1 Miss Schiller** was over her head last time out, as it was a race for non-winners of a race in 2024 or four races lifetime, and she's clearly a non-winner of two life. Today, she finds herself where she belongs, and with that said, she showed early last season that she could race well enough and produce figures to be competitive with a group such as this and maybe the rider change will wake her up.