<u>**Fort Erie Selections: Monday, July 29th, 2024**</u>

Another week of racing gets underway with a solid, eight race program. The late pick four sequence starts and ends on the grass and in between, features two excellent dirt races - an allowance event for fillies and mares, followed by a starter optional claiming event for the boys. Good luck to today's connections and those wagering on the races! - Ashley Mailloux

<u>**Race 1:**</u> **#1 October Frost** closed in on some slow fractions in his Fort Erie debut and he came back eight days later in a big way – he was closer to the pace over the slop and ended up drawing clear by over a length. He showed last time out that he could be forward from the gate and that versatility should come in handy against this field. His main rival, **#3 Private Lake**, will look to make in three in a row after winning his lone two appearances here this season. This eight-year-old gelding used a tapeta race at Woodbine as his prep off the layoff and it set him up beautifully for his return to the Fort. He's shown in his two starts this year that while he typically likes to close from of it, he's been able to roll late with a livelier pace as well as a modest one. **#4 Four Knights** has raced twice this season, both at six and a half furlongs. In his first start, he closed from mid-pack to finish third, beaten by half a length and most recently, he dueled throughout, but drew clear in the end by two and a quarter lengths. While his last several routes haven't been the best, he's in good recent form and in the past, similar distances have been quite kind to him.

<u>**Race 2:**</u> **#1 Stormy Soul** finished a game second last time out behind the speedy Red Maple, who was able to take them gate-to-wire in that five-furlong dash. This gelding chased throughout but came up a head short in the end. It appears he needed a few races to get going, as he's really stepped it up in his last two efforts, where he's earned a 63 and 70 Beyer, respectively. He technically takes a bit of a drop down in class on paper and with the inside draw and his early foot, he could slip away from this field early. **#3 Ace Destroyer** faced some tough competition throughout the 2023 season and ended up the meet with an easy win, where he cruised home by over four lengths. Following that effort, his connections decided to send him to Mountaineer, where he won both his appearances. He hasn't been seen since late November but appears to be training well for his return to the races and considering how he performed last year against tougher rivals, he's worth a long look, even in his first start off the bench. **#5 Great Go Go** enters this race off his best performance this year – a third-place finish, where he missed by just a head. It was a huge improvement compared to his other races, and maybe the slop aided his performance, but he could try to shake things up from a pace perspective and he's cutting back slightly in distance today which figures to benefit him.

<u>**Race 3:**</u> **#6 Awesome Spirit Gal (FR)** last raced at Jebel Ali, where she finished seventh in a seven-furlong event over the dirt. Today, she'll return to the turf and will cut back to five-eighths. Her full sister, Spirit Gal (FR) broke her maiden spiriting on the grass at Naas and followed that up that with a stakes win on the synthetic. Her three works have been extremely sharp over the dirt. **#3 Bad Zeze** ran a strong second in her career debut at this level and distance over the turf and followed it up with a third-place finish on the dirt. Her figure was strong over the turf, and she'll reunite with Alexis Sanchez, who was aboard for her debut. Of the horses with experience over this turf course, she does have the best figure and finish. While her two dirt efforts this season have been lackluster, **#4 Miss Singh Angel**'s lone turf start this year resulted in her career best effort. She was able to make up some ground to finish third, beaten by less than two lengths and the fractions weren't that quick and she wasn't as close to the pace as her rivals. She gets Kirk Johnson, who over the past five years, has done well with trainer Michael Cohen, winning 7 of 35 starts (40% ITM).

<u>**Race 4:**</u> **#7 Bait N Switch** made the first start of his four-year-old season on July 2nd and unfortunately, he got a rough trip. He drew post nine in the field and went wide into the first turn, which put him towards the back of the pack and that sort of trip was just not ideal, losing so much ground. He now returns to the dirt, where he's just had two starts and is in for a tag. With that in mind, both of his dirt efforts were quite strong, and he figures to be better second off the layoff. **#8 Thy Kingdom** certainly outran his odds last timeout, finishing third in the same race that Bait N Switch exits. It was his first start of the year and now he'll return to the dirt, which is the surface where the rest of his in the money finishes have occurred. He drops in class as well and looks to have some upset potential in the exotics. **#2 General Command** has raced well in his two appearances over the main track, finishing in the money in both. Most recently, he was simply second best behind Heezespeedy, who snuck away on the front end. He figures to get a trip stalking the speed and should have first run on several in here.

Race 5: In a wide open $4k maiden claiming event, **#4 Fraulein Victoria** is worth a look based on the fact that she'll get back around two turns on the turf for the first time in a while. Her two-turn turf events were last summer and, in those events, she raced fairly well – her figures were stronger than her most recent turf sprints and in her debut, she showed she could be more forward. She keeps Cheyenne Kerr in the irons, which gives her ten pounds and she may be able to work out a different trip at this extended distance. **#6 Always's Rosie**'s career best performance came around this time last year around two-turns over the turf course – she finished second, beaten by a length and a half. She's an inconsistent filly, but once in a while, she throws a decent race. Similarly to Fraulein Victoria, maybe she can improve returning to the seven-furlong distance. **#9 Calm Cool** failed as the favorite in her most recent start and was quit even throughout. She stays at the level but stretches out today. With that in mind, she's shown some early foot in her other starts this year and with the outside draw, Kirk Johnson may send her early, as she can muddle the pace, and maybe hang around for piece.

Race 6: **#3 Mountain Sound** has been a fun filly to watch since transferring to the dirt. Her pedigree suggested she could handle the dirt and she's certainly done that, winning both of her starts for trainer John Simms. In her first race on June 25th, she was much the best, but last time out she jumped up to allowance-level competition and circled the field to pick up her third lifetime win. The six-and-a-half furlong distance works well to her, where others may be getting weary late and if she's able to close in on the speed, she could be tough. **#4 Cant Beat the Katz** looks to be the lone speed on paper and when she's uncontested, she's dangerous on the lead – her easiest wins have been when she's loose on the lead. She's had company in her last two, which may have hindered her performances and while most of her races have been at shorter distances, she does have a win at the distance from two tries. **#1 J M R Gemma** has been third best in each of her races this season and has faced several of these fillies and mares before. She'll get a new rider today and with that in mind, it wouldn't be shocking to see her a touch closer in the early stages of the race. The pace figures to be quick enough for her to make her late run.

Race 7: While **#5 Grainger County's** lone win this year came in gate-to-wire fashion on the turf, he followed that effort up with a solid second place finish on the dirt behind the speedy Vinnie Van Go, who rattled off fractions of 22 and 44.3 for the six-furlong event. He now reunites with his former connections, who reclaimed this gelding for more than they lost him for. He's a hard knocking type, who figures to get the perfect trip just off the pace early on. **#2 Core** is coming into this race with a ton of confidence, as he's won his last two efforts and has been extremely game in both. He's been closer to the pace this season than last year, and he's shown a ton of fight in the stretch. He beat Vinnie Van Go two starts back and most recently beat Alacritous against similar competition to today's. He's fired in just about every single start the past two seasons and could be tough if engaged in a stretch battle. From a pace perspective, **#4 Mister Banjoman** figures to be in the mix early, as he's been forward in just about all his starts this year. He failed to fire on June 4th in his Fort Erie debut, but he had a tack adjustment before the race after breaking equipment and was just geared up. He rebounded a month later, wining a starter optional claiming event, leading throughout the race. He will likely play a game of catch me if you can.

Race 8: **#9 Dot's Vision** has improved with each of his starts this meet and will look to find the winners' circle for the first time this year. Last season, he was extremely competitive against starter optional claiming competition, winning three races at the level, two on the turf. His final win of the year came while in for $6.25k, and that's where his current connections scooped him up. This year, he's faced tougher competition in each of his starts and on the drop in class alone, he's worthy of a long look. He's handy enough to sit close to the pace or off the pace and is the class of the field. **#4 Union Colonel** likely needed his first race of the year, then failed to fire on the dirt, which wasn't necessarily shocking based on his dirt record. In his most recent start, he stepped up, finishing third in a turf sprint. The winner, Quarky, was much the best, drawing clear by nearly five lengths and received a 78 Beyer for his victory. He takes a slight cut in claiming price today and stretches out around two turns for the first time this year. Last season, he recorded one victory at this distance, and he did that on the frontend. Today, he figures to get a forward trip once again, but may have some company as others, including Half Lit and Heezespeedy have shown early foot. **#3 Sensible Portions** exits the same race as Union Colonel, but he may have needed a race to get going, as it was his first start since late September. Last season, he performed well at the distance, and while he's technically eligible for non-winners of three races lifetime, he may be able to get a piece against this field, as he's drawn well, has a race under his belt, and most importantly, figures to be close enough to the action.