

Fort Erie Selections: Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023

Happy Opening Day! The 2023 racing season gets underway with an eight-race program that includes two competitive turf events. Good luck to today's connections and those wagering on the races!

- Ashley Mailloux

Race 1: #4 Joe Chrome flashed speed in his only race this season up at Woodbine when blinkers were put back on, but he faded to finish seventh. He'll take a substantial drop in class and while this is his dirt debut, both his pedigree and most recent performance suggest he'll be just fine. **#1 Best and Final** has had his fair share of chances to graduate, but his efforts locally have been quite respectable. Last season, he hit the board in three of his four appearances and has four works in preparation for his five-year-old debut. He figures to be closing from off the pace. **#2 Papa's Silver** was eight for ten in the money last year. He may need a race off the layoff, which is something he's shown in the past, but his consistency suggests he can get a piece. Chris Husbands is set to ride for trainer Des Maynard, who teamed up last year to win three of fourteen starts and were in the money 71% of the time.

Race 2: #3 Gunzig Stinger consistently tackled allowance-level N2L company in his local races since graduating in the 2021 Sprint Into Summer Cup. Today he'll drop in for \$6.25k. In the past, he's been sharp out of the gate and could potentially flash some early foot against this group and he's been able to fire a strong effort fresh off the layoff. **#4 Cant Glide by Katz** has a fitness edge over several in here, with six starts under his belt in 2023 which resulted in a pair of second place finishes. He raced extremely well against \$8k N2L competition at Tampa back in February – he split the field early on and kicked on gamely in the stretch to finish second beaten by a neck. Last season, Melanie Pinto and Julie Mathes teamed up to win at 25% from a sample size of 36 starts. **#6 Four Bounce** made his dirt debut in his final start last season at this same level, but routing. Unspeakable, the winner of that event, was much the best, but Four Bounce ran quite the race and nearly equaled his career best Beyer speed figure. Ultimately, he may want to go further than today's five furlong distance, but deserves a long look based on his lone dirt performance.

Race 3: #3 Jungle Goddess made her five-year-old debut on the first of the month at Mountaineer and was able to take them gate-to-wire on an off track. When she's been able to get an uncontested lead, she's recorded some of her best performances. She may get some pressure from Easy Access in this spot, but her fitness may give her an edge. **#2 More Savvy** made two appearances here last season, one of which resulted in her third lifetime win. She rallied from the back of the pack and closed quickly in the stretch to win by nearly three lengths. She now joins the barn of Josh Robillard, who does quite well with new acquisitions. **#6 Pluie d'Avril** was claimed last fall up at Woodbine for \$5k after consistently racing against SOC competition and it's worth noting she was never in for a tag in those races. She has been working quite well for John Simms, who recorded eight wins last year at the meet (17%, ITM 52%).

Race 4: #7 Freret really turned it around last season – after posting a 0-0-1 record in 2021, 2022 included two trips to the winners' circle and only two out of the money performances. This six-year-old daughter of Senor Swinger can be tactical early on and while her workouts aren't flashy, she's never appeared to be much of a workhorse. Last season, she won a five-furlong turf sprint and **#3 Ms. P's Bella** finished second. Ms. P's Bella's best races have been over this turf course and in her lone start this year, she was able to steal a four and a half furlong event. **#6 Savvy's Sister** is another runner in the field who has performed well over the Fort Erie turf course. Her form trailed off at the end of the year, but two of those races were up at Woodbine and the other was on an off track in the Molson Cup. Jockey Isabelle Wenc has done a great job with this mare the two seem to get along quite well. Based on her most recent workout, she has some upset potential.

Race 5: The Summer Solstice Cup is the first of two cup races on the program and features a field of eight. **#8 Heading West** is a three-year-old filly by Klimt, who started her career in the barn of Brian Lynch. Her best race to date was her debut, which was a five-furlong sprint on the tapeta at Gulfstream. She will wear blinkers for the first time and the jockey-trainer duo of Myckie Neubauer and Melanie Pinto is one to always watch at the Fort. **#6 Feel Like Guessing** enters this race off her best performance of the year – she finished second against \$10k maiden claimers down at Tampa Bay Downs. She dueled throughout but ended up losing the battle in the stretch. Trainer Richard Davis had an incredible season last year, winning 17 of 60 (28%). **#5 Charming Affair** is a Chiefswood homebred who has a slew of works under her belt. This four-year-old filly is by Lemon Drop Kid and out of a Giant's Causeway mare, who won the Edgewood at Churchill Downs and has been a solid producer.

Race 6: #1 Venomous State is a nine-year-old PA bred with an impressive resume – he's a 21-time winner from 69 starts. Last year, he recorded five wins and today, he'll make his first start for his new connections. Nick Mileni Jr. and Helen Vanek had an extremely successful meet in 202 – they teamed up to win 12 of 30 races together. This gelding can be exceptionally fast out of the gate, but he's also been able to sit just off the pace. His versatility and resume make him a logical player for the top spot. **#6 Shakoo Makoo** won half of his starts last season and went off as the favorite every single time. He's another speedster in this spot and last season, he came up just a tad short in his first start off the layoff, but that was going a touch further. Trainer Roy Agostino will send out **#8 Big Time Louie**, a son of Second in Command that has rallied off six wins at the Fort. Last season, in his first start off the layoff, he closed in deep stretch to win by a nose and his form was quite consistent throughout the meet. He went on to win two more races and, in those efforts, he was closer to the pace. Looking at the potential pace scenario, he may look to reel them in late.

Race 7: Two starts back, the ten-year-old **#8 Vettori Kin (BRZ)** picked up his eighth career win at Turfway Park against \$5k claimers. In his last appearance, while he did cross the wire first, he drifted and caused interference which led to a disqualification. He was claimed out of that race and now joins the barn of Anthony Adamo. Looking at his recent form at Turfway as well as his turf races at Gulfstream, he looks extremely tough. **#3 Dot's Vision's** two wins last season came over this turf course at today's distance and in both races, he was able to secure a good position early on, close to the pace. His record on the Fort Erie turf is extremely impressive - 5-1-1 from seven starts. In his lone appearance this year, he outran his odds of 39-1 and finished fourth, beaten by just three lengths. It's likely he needed that race and now, he gets back to his preferred track. At 8-1 on the morning line, **#6 Fade Away** is worth a look. He finished second last time out due to a disqualification and was game in the stretch run of that \$7.5k claiming event. Looking at his form here last season, while he was unable to pick up a win, he raced well around two turns on the turf against comparable competition.

Race 8: The Sprint Into Summer Cup features a big field of eleven maidens and **#4 Bajan Bullet** looks to be training extremely well over the Fort Erie main track. His most recent drill was a bullet work – he covered four furlongs from the gate in :48 flat. Just over a year ago, he made his career debut as a two-year-old and after breaking just a tad inward, he never got going from there. He's had time off to develop and recently was gelded. Melanie Pinto and Sue Squires have done well together from a limited sample. **#6 Gus's Gamble** has the best Fort Erie form in the field – last season, he finished second twice and recorded a 56 Beyer speed figure in both of those starts. In his last three appearances, he was sent from the gate and tired late while going longer, which suggests today's five-furlong distance might be the right distance for him to graduate. Trainer Joe Humber sends out three firsters in this race and **#7 Grey Deception** is intriguing - this three-year-old son of Seattle Serenade is a half to Dani's Victory, a nine-time winner and all five siblings to race are winners. This gelding appears to be working well in preparation for his career debut and gets the services of Omar Moreno. Watch the tote action on this one.