

Fort Erie Selections: Tuesday, September 26th, 2023

The Tuesday program features eight races with some big fields, especially in the late double. Good luck to today's connections and those wagering on the races!

- Ashley Mailloux

Race 1: #2 Fajardo made his dirt debut earlier this month and attempted to reel in the leader in the stretch but was second best. He now makes his first start for Dale Powell and stretches out slightly in distance to six furlongs, which figures to help his chances. Also, it's a positive sign to see the hot hands of Jeffrey Alderson booked to ride. **#3 Whisper Me a Song** drops from \$6.25k to \$4k after a strong second behind Honey's Diamond, who was a gate-to-wire winner. The winner was able to catch a bit of a breather at the half which didn't help this filly, but she still made-up ground. She will tackle male rivals for the first time today. **#4 Blasito** will drop in for the lowest tag of his career after failing to hit the board in five starts this year. This will be his first start on the dirt, but the barn does well with new acquisitions and have had a great meet so far. His pedigree doesn't necessarily scream dirt, but he still may be able to get a piece against this field.

Race 2: #5 Lil Green Machine will make his first start for owner/trainer Gary Chudobiak, who claimed him six weeks ago. He drops in class and will return to the main track, which seems to be his preferred surface. If there's a duel early on, this son of Ride On Curlin figures to be in the perfect spot, ready to pounce. The speedy **#4 Soup Spoon** was able to get his first win at the Fort last time out in a five-and-a-half-furlong event over the main track. He took command early and his lead was never threatened, as he cruised to a three-length victory. If he is able to shake loose once again, he could be dangerous, especially at today's distance. **#6 Naval Officer** is another runner in the field that exhibits a front-end running style and last time out, he tried to steal a seven-eighths event on the turf but came up a tad short and surrendered in the stretch to finish third. His local win this season came at a longer distance, when he was uncontested early, and here at the abbreviated distance, there could be a battle, but this gelding can stick around for a piece.

Race 3: #8 The Newfie Express has raced well in routes this season, both on turf and dirt. Two starts back, he finished second over the mud at a mile and seventy yards against \$7k claimers. It was a good effort, and he just couldn't get to Half Lit, the winner. While he's still looking for his first win of the year, the slight drop should aid him, and he started to come around a little later in the season last year. **#2 Hiatus** is also looking for his first win this year, after hitting the board in half of his starts. In his only dirt route over a fast main track, he finished second at this level after setting some strong fractions at the distance. On paper, it looks as though if he wants the lead, he'll have it which makes him a danger from a pace perspective. If he can harness his speed early and set reasonable fractions, he has shown that he can get the job done. **#3 Crumlin Experience** is a true closer and in his local dirt starts, he's been quite consistent, especially in routes. His most recent start was on the turf and can be disregarded, but his races prior to that, he was rolling late, even with normal fractions set early on. Look for him late to sneak into the bottom of the exotics.

Race 4: #5 Eye Got It Good was able to put it all together on the cutback to five furlongs last time out and broke her maiden by two and a half lengths. This is a logical spot for her to face winners and if she somehow is loose early, the repeat is within her reach. **#4 Unable** was claimed two starts back and made her first start for her new connections on August 24th up at Woodbine. She pressed the pace, but tired late to finish fifth. In her local appearances this season, she's tired late to claim minor shares and has failed as the favourite each time. She does get a five-pound weight break today with Sanchez in the saddle and will try the Fort Erie turf course for the first time. **#6 Only Believe** hasn't hit the board in her three career turf tries, but this year, she's been such a consistent mare who at least tries every start. She figures to be a price in this spot and could potentially get a piece.

Race 5: With some speed in this race, **#4 Zippity Day** might finally get the set-up she needs. In her Fort Erie appearances, she's attempted to close from off it and has made up ground but hasn't been able to find the winners' circle. Last time out, she dropped down to this level from allowance-level (N2L) and was second best behind Jolene Jolene. That was over the slop and with a fast track, she might be able to make more of an impact. **#3 Tequilas Melody** put it all together in career start number five - she went to the lead and battled it out throughout to get the job done by a head over Kimono Kate. It was her second start with blinkers and first start with them on the main track. Today, she sticks with the six-and-a-half-furlong distance and Mailhot is in the irons again. There is other speed in here, but she sure was gritty last time out. **#9 Hermoine Granger** hasn't fired in her last two, but both were against allowance level competition at the distance. She was the pacesetter in both races but backpedaled in the stretch. The drop figures to help her and she also reunites with Juan Crawford.

Race 6: #1 Heading West has yet to finish worse than second at Fort Erie and she really has taken to the dirt quite nicely. Last time out, she equaled her career best Beyer speed figure of a 64 when she cruised to an easy win against allowance competition (N2L). Earlier on in the season, she seemed as though she was more eager from the gate to be on/near the lead, but in her last several starts, she's been forced to rate, and it's worked out well for her. She draws the inside and figures to be close to it early on, with a couple of speedsters drawn more towards the outside. **#5 Getting Ahead** is one of the likely pacesetters - this daughter of Souper Speedy enters this race fresh off a fourth-place finish in the Horsepeople's Luminary Cup. Prior to that, she surrendered late in a tough allowance event that included horses such as Shebatown and Gimbala, who ended up being the top two finishers in that cup race. She's been consistent throughout the season and is a major player against this group. **#6 Spirit Belle** has rattled off back-to-back victories at the Fort. She was able to graduate around one turn against maiden special weight competition and then last time out, she stretched out to a mile and a sixteenth and took them gate-to-wire again. The track conditions probably helped her last time out, but it looks as though she's in excellent form and can muddy the pace scenario today.

Race 7: #5 Turf and Surf was claimed last time out for \$7k and now will make her first start at the Border Oval for the Agostino barn. Two starts back, she graduated on the Woodbine turf against maiden claiming competition at a distance of one mile with ease - she sat in second early on before making a move and continued to open on the field. Last time facing winners for the first time, she lost a bit of ground and was further back, but still managed to pick up third. She's been coming around, especially in her last three starts. **#3 Isa Breeze** looked good winning on debut sprinting on the dirt, but since then, she's been just okay. Last time out her connections tried her long on the dirt and she was an even third. This will be first start on the turf and that may make a difference. **#10 Smarty Illusion** has raced at the Fort before, but never over the turf course. In her three starts this year at Woodbine, she's raced on the turf at a comparable distance, but typically has had too much work to do late. She could step up in this spot, but she'll need to work out a trip from post 10.

Race 8: #5 Miss Lindysue made up ground late in a turf sprint here on August 21st in her first start for trainer Julie Mathes. It was her best finish to date and now, she drops down in class while tackling the dirt for the first time. Her local dirt works are respectable and she's out of a mare who won on the dirt and has foaled several dirt winners. **#8 Lemonsanddiamonds** finds herself back on the dirt after not handling a turf route last time out. In the past, she has run well in dirt sprints at both Delaware Park and Mahoning Valley but hasn't been able to graduate in fourteen starts. With that said, this is arguably the softest group she's tackled to date. **#3 Pick a Penny** finished third last time out as the favourite against one level higher. The winner stole the race on the front end, which didn't help this filly's chances. Her best race was by far her first start here, when she was second behind Heading West, and while it's unappealing that she's failed as the favourite in her last two, she has some of the best figures in the race. If playing the super or super hi-5, take a look at **#10 Alway's Rosie**. This filly tired last time out going a mile over the turf course last time out, but she's shown glimpses of potential in a handful of her starts and could get a minor share here at a decent price.