

Fort Erie Selections: Tuesday, October 26th, 2021

We wrap up the 2021 season with a ten race card with some big, competitive fields. The nightcap is one of our yearly traditions, the Tour de Fort at two miles and seventy yards on the main track. Good luck to today's connections and those wagering on the races! Congratulations to the horsemen on another great season and thank you to everyone who supported the Fort all season long. - Ashley Mailloux

Race 1: #2 Eight Speed has been quite strong since making her way onto the Fort Erie dirt - she's yet to miss the board and comes into this race fresh off a win. Her best asset is her early foot and while it's likely she'll face some pressure early on, she's been gritty before. She moves up in claiming price today, but finds herself in a good spot today -she's one of two horses that have won two races this year. **#4 Diamonds in here** figures to be another horse that will be forwardly placed - in fact, her best races are when she makes an easy lead. With that said, she's going to have her work cut out for her and may just have to settle for a minor share. **#1 Blonde Attitude** figures to benefit from the speed in this race. While she fell flat last time out, she was able to close nicely two starts back after breaking slow. She's picked up minor shares in a majority of her starts over the main track and can pick up the pieces late.

Race 2: #6 Out At the Speedway was claimed three starts back for \$5k and in her two efforts for her current connections, she's yet to finish worse than second. She won first off the claim and last time out, they dropped her claiming price and she was second best behind Cassie's Rainbow. There's a fair bit of speed on paper and she's rallied late in her two efforts quite nicely - figures to do the same today and it doesn't hurt that she drops one step down in claiming price. **#3 Laxmi** broke her maiden earlier this year and after having some inconsistent form, last time out, she took them gate-to-wire and picked up her second lifetime win. In fact, the second place and third place finishers of that race came back to win next time out. If she can replicate her most recent, she could be tough. **#4 Pastel Emily** finished second behind Eight Speed last time out in a race that played well to speed. In a majority of her races this year, she's needed more in the stretch so she seems to be a horse to use for a minor share.

Race 3: #2 Beau's Beauty has hit the board in all of her starts this year on the main track - her only off the board finish was over the tapeta at Woodbine. Last time out, two runners in this field, Rosie Jewel Dancer and Miss Tea Blonde beat her. With that said, she's capable of better than she showed last time out and now she'll be making her third start off the layoff. With the recent wet weather, if the track is muddy or sloppy, I think her chances improve. **#6 Rosie Jewel Dancer** picked up a win last time out after setting the pace at this same level. She kicked clear in the end and it seemed that the class relief was exactly what she needed. This filly may attempt to steal this one on the front end like she did last time out. **#5 Miss Tea Blonde** has proven this season that she can't be left out of the exotics when she races on the dirt. She's yet to finish worse than second on the main track this season and she always tries to hang tough. Six furlongs is her best distance and she should get a nice trip just off the pace.

Race 4: #5 My Boy Christian didn't take to the tapeta up at Woodbine, but in his most recent start, they stretched him out on the dirt and after setting the pace, he just missed in the end by a neck. That was against slightly better and at a similar distance and if he can replicate that performance, he'll be tough to get by today. **#1 Flex** has finished third in his last three starts, two of which have been for his current connections over the dirt. Last time out was his first start going long on the dirt locally and he didn't have enough late. He was over eight lengths behind My Boy Christian. He can get a share here, but in order to win, he's going to need more. The other runner from the Julie Mathes barn, **#9 In Search Of**, is pretty similar to his stablemate. He's run well in his two starts for the barn, finishing third in both, and last time out, he handled the slop on the stretch out quite well. The second place finisher two starts back ended up winning In Search Of's most recent race. He'll get a new rider today, Sunny Singh, who is two for nine the past year when teaming up with Julie Mathes.

Race 5: #7 Glitter Mountain broke his maiden decisively in his second career start and since then, he's raced six more times and has finished third four times. He's faced tougher competition in all of his starts since that maiden victory and today is certainly a drop in class. He's had to face horses such as Where's my Halter as well as \$80k stakes runners. His new rider today, Chris Husbands, wins at 25% locally with trainer Des Maynard. **#1 Trinity Thundah** was the runner-up several starts back twice in a row, but two starts back, he broke his maiden with authority. Last time out, he could not catch up to the speedy De Only Solution, who swept the field off their feet early and drew clear by almost seven lengths. He finished second though, and he was clear of the field. Off his last several starts, he's a must use in the exotics. After struggling in his first appearances at the Fort, **#8 Put a Hemi** in Her is trending in the right direction: she's hit the board in her last two starts, one of which was this level. Last time out, she raced with blinkers for the first time and showed some early speed for the first time in her career. The equipment change seemed favorable and once again, she'll race with blinkers today.

Race 6: #4 Jess for Kicks is a first time starter from the Kevin Buttigieg barn who has a string of solid works over the main track. This daughter of Noble Bird is going to tackle the boys today, but she's had plenty of prep for her debut which is plus. While the barn is only one for twelve with first time starters the past three years, they are in the money 75% of the time. **#2 Strapping** has four races under his belt and while he hasn't shown much, he's going to try the dirt for the first time in his career. Two starts back, he showed a ton of early foot, but could not sustain his run at seven furlongs and on the cutback today, it wouldn't be surprising to see his rider, Helen Vanek send him to the front. **#1 Libertyinblue** is another filly tackling the boys with a string of strong works. Her most recent drill was 48:80 breezing from the gate. Unlike the other filly, she has a tough assignment breaking from the rail.

Race 7: #2 Four Knights has technically won two of his last three starts, but last time out, he was disqualified due to a whip infraction. His best races have been when he can make the lead early on, which looks possible today against this field - not too many horses have been on the lead in their last several starts. It bodes swell for him that he drops in for the lowest tag of his career and that his only poor performances this year were in some of the deepest waters here this season. **#3 Badjeros Boy** tried the dirt in his last two and second time out over the surface on the drop in class, he improved drastically and only missed by a length. He drops again today and Omar Moreno stays in the iron. **#6 Am Prepared** is interesting in a lot of ways - pedigree wise, he is beautifully bred. He's out of a Dylan Thomas (IRE) mare, Tannery who was a G1 winner on the turf. In fact, she was a MGSW and won 7 of her 25 career starts (~\$873k). She's only had two foals, one of which never made it to the races. With that said, the mare's side of things screams turf, but looking at this group and his numbers, he's had some big figures compared to the others and warrants a look. His lone win this year was when he was involved early going a mile on the turf.

Race 8: #3 Red Mercury almost broke his maiden here on opening day, but he surrendered in the final few jumps and missed by a head. His only on the board finishes have been here over the main track at Fort Erie against this level. He figures to improve second off the layoff as well as on the return to the dirt. **#8 Calming Influence** was claimed in his debut for \$7.5k and while he didn't show much, his next two starts were here at Fort Erie and he hit the board in both. The most recent effort was a second place finish against maiden special weight competition and a mile and a sixteenth and he was simply second best behind Careful Java. He showed some early foot and now, the cutback to six and a half furlongs should suit him well. **#1 No Easy Road** debuted at this level and distance on September 27th and finished fourth in a six-horse field. He was beaten by five and a half furlongs and never really fired - he was quite even throughout. He'll get blinkers today which might be exactly what he needs. Certainly room for improvement in just his second career start.

Race 9: The late double gets started here and this is certainly one of the two toughest races on the program to handicap. **#6 Seau** is \$980 shy of reaching the \$200k mark and will be looking for his eleventh-career win. So far this season, he's won both of his local dirt starts and in his most recent, he was exceptionally game in a cup race. He's beaten several in here and figures to be tough. Other horses maybe to consider include **#1 Bangor Ridge**, who may offer some value here. In his first two races of the year, he overcame nearly a 15-month layoff and won back-to-back races. His next two starts were lackluster, but since apprentice Michael David has been in the irons, he's run two solid seconds. He'll need to find a bit more, but an intriguing horse to use in exotic wagers. **#4 Western Trouble** is the 2/1 morning line favorite and while his last two races have been some tough beats, his dirt races are good, but they're not great. On his resume, he has a 0-1-2 record from five attempts on the dirt. His most recent dirt efforts were at the Fair Grounds and resulted in distant thirds. He hasn't missed the board this year, but he also hasn't won this year.

Race 10: A season at Fort Erie wouldn't be complete without our annual Tour de Fort - a two mile and seventy yard event on the dirt. This year's eleven-horse field is quite competitive and difficult to handicap. Do you use someone like **#9 World of Prospects**, who won the exhilarating 2018 edition of the race and edged out his stablemate, or another horse that has experience at the distance such as **#2 Seventyseven Stone**? **#2 Seventyseven Stone** is where I turned to - this seven-year old gelding has two wins this year and he's closed from the back of the pack in both. He typically shows a mild run late and runs out of distance, and today, he'll get a LOT of distance. Last year, he finished third in the race behind Auntie Katherine and World of Prospects. **#1 I Idolize You** has had an excellent season, winning two races from seven starts and the only race he missed the board was simply at a distance that was too short for him. He's stamped himself as a two-turn horse and he typically hits his best stride late. He seems to be intriguing on the stretch out today. **#6 Ice Challenge** won the mile and a quarter race this season, which figures to serve as a nice prep for this race. He too, like the others, has raced his best races at two-turn distances. He'll pick up a new rider today, Chris Husbands, who's had a sensational meet with a 26% win rate. Since there is a mandatory payout in the 20 cent jackpot high-five, one more horse to mention is **#11 Classy Mistress**. Her connections opted for this spot over a race yesterday on the card. She won last time out by over sixteen lengths in a race on the main track at a mile and a sixteenth. Her late energy is quite strong and to me, she seems like the type that might be closer to the pace early on, which could put her in a good position to strike late.