



A CLOSER LOOK

by The Professor

In-depth analysis of races at The Meadows

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

RACE 1 – 12,500-15,000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – NATHAN FEELSGOOD – Last two starts have both been good in conditioned levels. Moves back to the claiming ranks today and draws a good inside post. Could be a factor here if he can stay close to the frontrunners early.

2 – RIP THIS JOINT – Made his return last week after 7 months off, and looked very good. Took a conservative route early then rallied late to finish third at a 20-1 price. Should be stronger today in his second start back.

3 – UNCLE COZ – Drops from an effort in the 20,000 optional claiming class on 10/20. Was entered last week but scratched, leaving him as a bit of a mystery today. Finished second in this class and second in the higher level, so if he's in top shape after the scratch, he should be a factor in here.

4 – DRUNK ON YOU – Was an easy winner last week, but that was in the 7,000 claiming class. He jumps two levels this week, which isn't easy to do. Has gate speed and prefers to use it, so look for him to get close to the front early. However, he will have better horses on his back this time.

5 – ULTIMATE G – Finished second in this class last week with a good closing effort, taking advantage of a slower final half mile. Doesn't appear to have much early speed, plus he'll have a speed horse to his left at the start in #4, so he'll likely race from behind again.

6 – MAYTIME TERROR – Took last week off after winning two straight. He has a lot of starts this year and hadn't missed a week in a while, so the extra days off likely will help him more than hurt. He's still the one to beat.

7 – P H KENNY – Has gone in for the higher price tag the last couple of weeks, and does so again today, which means he gets an outside post draw. Hasn't been better than fifth in this class in three efforts, so he'll likely be a longer shot.

8 – JUMPIN JAKE FLASH – Drops to a claimer today for the first time, at least in a long while. He has faced much tougher classes this season, but hasn't been able to contend in a higher conditioned class the last couple of weeks. It's tough to know how he will fit with this group due to the outside post.

SELECTIONS: 6-2-3-1

RACE 2 – NW 3500 TROT

1 – CALL TO POST – Got to the outside flow on Monday but wasn't able to make up a lot of ground last time. Draws inside today, and will need to hold his position as best as he can at the start.

2 – COUNTRY PROPHET – Broke last time and had equipment issues, so he's tougher to handicap today. Raced very well in a claimer two starts ago and was bet to 4-5 last time, so if you can dismiss last week's effort, you may want to use him on the ticket today. I am concerned about the risk level.

3 – ROCKEFELLER LINDY – Parked early and faded late last time, but that was in a higher level. Drops in class today and logically should be a factor in this level, however, he does come with risk due to the 32 second final quarter last start.

4 – NEEDNORESTRICTIONS – A good closer, he passed a few horses last week to finish 4th. Has been stuck in this level for a while, so he may not be a big factor to win in here, but can definitely be part of the superfecta thanks to a decent post draw.

5 – MUSCLE HIGH – Had missed 4 weeks prior to his start last time, and put in a big effort in his first start back from Canada. Off that line, he deserves to be the favorite today, as he should be much stronger.

6 – THANKS FOR PLAYIN – Shows a fourth place finish in this class two starts ago, but never was able to get involved from an inside post last time. He's mostly a closer, so look for this one to sit near the back and hope for fast fractions.

7 – PATIENT I D – Moves from the bottom level for fillies and mares into the lowest open company level today. Shows a win in this class on September 17, but only managed a 7th place finish in here a couple of weeks later. The outside post doesn't help her cause today.

SELECTIONS: 5-4-3

RACE 3 – NW 1 PACE

1 – CEMETARY OAKS – Faded last time to a 19+ length loss after making a move into the third quarter. He's still learning, but just hasn't come back to the line he showed for a previous trainer in late August in Kentucky.

2 – THE REAL PRIZE – Nearly pulled off the upset at 75-1 on October 16, but wasn't able to follow it up last time. Made an outside move but the trip was a little too tough for her and she was only able to pace home in 31.1. She needs to avoid a first-over move this week.

3 – ANTIQUE MASTER K – Had post 9 last week and was never able to get involved. The previous week, he finished second in a close finish. His previous lines fit more in line with that race rather than his 9th place finish, so you should most likely just ignore last week's race and give him another look today.

4 – CINCO DE DRINKO – Passed a few horses late last time, but was just too far back early. Hasn't tried to leave the gate in quite a while, but I wouldn't be surprised if he tried to step out a bit today from this post, which is the best he's drawn in over a month.

5 – SERGEANT DINGER – 0-for-11 this year, but has paced a few decent miles. He won't likely be a contender for the win, but could add value to the superfecta ticket.

6 – GENTLEMAN GEORGE – Finished a distant second last time behind a runaway winner, so he was the best-of-the-rest in that field. Logically, he should be a contender today.

7 – UGLY HEAD NED – Comes off his best finish in quite some time, and it was in his first start back after missing 2 months. Paced a better final quarter than he had been showing before the layoff, so he's showing signs of improvement.

8 – NATIVE'S PRIORITY – Draws another bad post this week after sitting at the back of the pack last time. It looks like he needs to be a little more involved early, so he will likely be a high price today.

9 – STRANGER THINGS – Makes his second career start, and is now 2-for-2 at drawing the worst post. Watch him today for signs of improvement, but he'll be a longshot in here.

SELECTIONS: 3-4-2-6

RACE 4 – NW MORE THAN 4 PACE

1 – IVEGOTAGIRLCRUSH – Much better mile last week, racing from the back of the pack. Draws inside today, which may not be a good spot for him. Likely to get away mid-pack, so he'll need to work his way to the outside, hopefully with cover.

2 – SIN CITY BOOGIE – Very good effort last week, parked early then making a second move to the outside in the third quarter. Finished with a 28-second final quarter, his fastest in a while, and it was on a sloppy track. Definitely can win this race today.

3 – WINBAK WILLY T – Newcomer raced in a series at Yonkers back in March but has been on the shelf since then. Requalified at Harrah's Philly for a different trainer, and now moves to yet another barn this week. The qualifier was good, but he'll likely need a start or two.

4 – ARTISTS RUFFLES – Comes off a win in this class last week, off a pocket trip. However, he doesn't have to get the same trip this week. He showed some versatility two starts ago and raced very well, but has also put in good miles on the front. His versatility should serve him well today.

5 – MARVALOUS ARTIST – Former stablemate of #4, this one made a huge move last week to get the win in the conditioned claiming level. Steps back up in class today, to a new level that he hasn't yet tried. Should fit well in here.

6 – DRAWING DRAGONS – Moves up in class today from the 17,000 conditioned claiming level, where he's been putting in some very good miles. Two starts ago he put in a very game effort, taking a lot of air on the outside. Last week he was a solid second place finisher behind a horse that has since won in a higher level. He can be good here if he works out the right trip.

7 – SCRUB HANOVER – Drops a bit from the NW5 level, but doesn't come off his strongest line. He'll likely be a longshot in here.

8 – KEYSTONE STEAM – His win streak ended last time out as a 3-5 favorite in a lower level. Moves up in class today and goes back to an outside post. He won from post 8 a couple of weeks ago, but if he goes to the front today, he'll have better horses sitting on his back.

9 – HEZASHININGKNIGHT – Very sharp right now, coming off two wins and a solid second place finish. The second place finish last week was in this same class, right behind Artists Ruffles. However, he gets the worst of the post draw this week, which will make things very difficult for him.

SELECTIONS: 5-2-4-6

RACE 5 – 7000-8000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – FOX VALLEY CADET – Parked last time in his return to the 7000 level. His previous effort in this class was a near-miss, only losing by a half length. With the rail today, he should be much better and of course isn't likely to get parked.

2 – BERGERAC – Here's a classy old veteran that is 0-for-27 on the year but has been putting in some good miles. It's early November, and he isn't likely to get to the end of the year without a win, so he may be worth a small wager to win if the price is right. He can definitely be on the ticket.

3 – HONEEMOON SUITE – Put in a career-best effort three starts ago at Northfield, but hasn't followed it up with a win, despite being bet to 4-5 last time. Nonetheless, a second place finish isn't bad, and he'll be a contender again today.

4 – MYSTERY ISLAND – This one is overdue for a win, and didn't miss by much last time. He battled as the 4-5 favorite and only lost by a half length. Last week was the first time he left the gate in a few weeks, and it resulted in his best finish so look for him to get one of the first calls out of the gate.

5 – PRINCE PALANI – Had missed 4 weeks prior to last week's effort, and came back with a very good third place finish. He's another one that has some back class and yet after a 9-win season in 2017, he has yet to get a win this year. As I said above with Bergerac, I'll be surprised if this one ends the season without a win, so there could be one coming soon.

6 – P L DRAGON – This one is always at the mercy of the fractions, and lately his final quarters just haven't been as quick as they need to be in order to make up the ground. If he has any gate speed at all, he needs to try using it one of these weeks to mix things up.

7 – MANOLITO MONTOYA – This one makes the race tougher to handicap. He got very sharp in August and early September, then after making a break on 9/22, he bounced back with a win the following week. His last three starts have gone the opposite way, and he has dropped from a 20,000 claimer to the bottom rung last week. Naturally he took a lot of play last week but got parked from post four.

8 – NATURALLY BAD – This one is tougher to recommend off the current lines. He will be a longshot again this week.

9 – DUNSIDE ART – Parked for the mile last week, from a better post than he has today. With the outside post, this one will also likely be a longshot in this group.

SELECTIONS: 4-1-3-2

RACE 6 – NW 11,800 PACE

1 – ARTHUR PENDRAGON – Makes his return today after three months off. Qualified well, but will likely need a start or two before he's in top race shape. When he's fully ready, he will likely be racing at the top level, so he could be good enough today to hit the ticket.

2 – ATTA BOY DAN – Gets a class drop from the top level, where he's been a bit overmatched. He won in this class three starts ago, so he should be a contender in here again.

3 – ROYALTYHASARRIVED – Also won his last start in this level, and paced a quick final quarter in the top group last week. He's a big factor in this group today.

4 – WARP FACTOR THREE – Won two straight in lower levels, but jumped two classes to this group a few weeks ago and has finished 5th in back to back efforts. He appears to just be a bit overmatched in this class at this time.

5 – MISTER VIRGIN – Has put in some tough miles in recent weeks, and today picks up Jim Pantaleano for the first time. He'll draw some attention, and deservedly so. This one has the speed to win in this group, especially from this post.

6 – CAPTAIN VELOCITY – Finished second in this class two starts ago, but drew the outside post last time and was parked. Ignore that mile. Today, logically he should have a better chance, but this is a very tough group and I like others a little better in here. Tony Hall chose to drive this one over #7 today.

7 – A REAL MIRACLE – Won in the lower level, but also found himself parked in this class last week. The post will make things difficult again, as he draws the same starting spot as last week. Look for a more conservative trip early.

8 – GALLANT SEELSTER – Northfield invader comes off a win in a lower level last time, so he's stepping up in class and will have to deal with the outside post. He has plenty of gate speed to overcome the post, but could end up using a lot of energy in the first quarter.

SELECTIONS: 5-3-1-2

RACE 7 – NW 3500 PACE

1 – KNOCKING AROUND – Gets a class drop today and a better post, two very positive factors. Finished fourth in a higher group last week from an outside post. He should be a big factor in here today.

2 – CRANKIN' IT UP – Has been stuck in this class for a while, but comes off a good line. Took advantage of a slower final half last week and passed several horses in the final quarter. Could be a factor here if the trip works out the same way.

3 – DAFINATY – Has tried to go to the front the last couple of starts but hasn't been able to finish quite as strong. Is now 0-34 on the year. Will be a longshot.

4 – THREE RIVERS DELL – Got away close to the front then moved to the outside in the third quarter, but was unable to make up ground. It was an aggressive drive on a horse that hadn't raced in 5 months. He definitely should improve this week.

5 – ALLIE'S CRUISER – Made an outside move but faded to a 31.1 final quarter last week. Only has 1 win this season, and hasn't cracked the top 3 in a while, so he'll likely be a higher price today than last time.

6 – BROOKLYN FLIGHT – Game effort last week, parked for the mile and only losing by less than 5 lengths at the wire. This one has been putting in some decent effort, so he's not out of the question to be on the ticket today with an easier trip.

7 – CYRUS SEELSTER – Closed nicely to get 5th last time even though the second half was quicker than the first. He's not out of the question if the fractions are swift.

8 – STARTHIMUP – Only lost by a length last week despite sitting 10th at the $\frac{3}{4}$ pole. His story is always the same...a lack of early speed leaves him playing catch-up late, but he has a ton of late speed, so he'll be passing horses in the stretch.

9 – TSM CRUSIN USA – Was been well supported on the tote board in both of his local starts, but has struggled. He'll be a longer shot today with post 9.

10 – DOCTOR RJ – Improving, and now has 2 starts under his belt after 4 months off. He should be in peak form now, but post 10 will make it interesting. He'll need to work out a trip, but can definitely contend here.

SELECTIONS: 1-8-10-2

RACE 8 – NW 3 TROT

1 – SHELOVESUTWO – Moves up in class after a 7th place finish. Likes to race close to the front, but I'm not sure how quickly she can get out of the gate from the inside post.

2 – WIN TREASURES – Made a strong move in the third quarter last week and went on to get a win in NW2. Steps up today, so this group could provide more of a challenge.

3 – WHITE LIE – This one has had excuses in most of his recent starts. Has had some bad posts, both too far inside and too far outside. Draws a very good spot today and could be a factor with the right trip.

4 – TRIPLE T SWINGER - Always passes horses late in the mile. Got away 6th last time and figures to get away in a similar spot today. He'll be making up ground in the stretch.

5 – IRISH VALENTINE – Chris Shaw called off this one today to drive #4, but this one can still contend. Isn't often a factor for the win, but has found a way into second or third on 11 occasions this year, more than half of his starts.

6 – THISISSHE – Makes her second start on Lasix today, and finished second last time. She'll be one of the top choices in here. Look for her to try to get to the front early and control the mile.

7 – BUCKEYE REESE – Makes second local start, and second start in the Zubkoff Stable. Certainly can improve, but also faces a tougher class today. Raced very well last time despite post 9, so there are plenty of things to like about this one.

8 – A DOOZY – Finished 8th last week in the same class, from the same post. Has the look of a longshot today.

SELECTIONS: 6-5-2-4

RACE 9 – PREFERRED PACE

1 – SAM HILL – The classy old veteran got off to a slow start last time and was too far back on the half mile track at Northfield to make any noise. Draws a much better spot today, but faces a tough field.

2 – WESTERN TYRANT – Moves back to the top level today after a near-miss in a lower group last week. Shows one start at this level, finishing 5th, so he may not be a top contender for the win today.

3 – IDEAL ACE – Another one that has had success in a slightly lower level, but has yet to crack the top-3 in this class. He will be a higher price today.

4 – ANYTHINGFORLOVE A – Finished second last time, but couldn't catch Windsong Leo despite a good trip. It was only his second start back after 4 months off, so he may be a bit better this week.

5 – VAGUE TRACES – Finished third in Cleveland last week but only lost by a half length, so he appears to have bounced back nicely from a 9th place finish in Indiana two starts ago. The big question is whether or not this one will try to challenge early, or will sit back and make a late rush.

6 – SOUTHWIND YUKON – Comes off back to back wins in Ohio, but faces a much tougher class today. He'll be one of the longshots.

7 – PHOENIX WARRIOR N – Very game effort last time, parked for the mile and holding on for third, still pacing a 28-second final quarter. The posts are reversed this week, so he will start the race inside of Windsong Leo. The question is whether or not he will repay the favor and park that one early, or if he will take a more conservative route.

8 – WINDSONG LEO – Very impressive winner last week, drawing well clear of the best horses on the grounds. He'll get a lot of play again today, but will have to overcome the outside post.

SELECTIONS: 7-5-8-4

RACE 10 – NW 7700 PACE

1 – DEW N DOUGHNUTS – Comes off a win last time, but steps up two classes today. The inside post also isn't the best spot for him, so this is a tough draw.

2 – THE DARK SHADOW – Drops in class after a third place finish in a tough group. Only finished 4th in this class two starts ago, but that was from post 9. Has a much better chance to get the win this time around.

3 – VODKA IS TERROR – Newcomer was claimed for 12,500 at Pocono last time and appears to be in a tough spot today. However, the McNeight Stable has traditionally done very well with horses they have claimed from Pocono or Philly in their first Meadows start.

4 – BEACH HOUSE – I thought this one raced well in his Meadows return last time, but today the big question mark is due to the fact that Mike Wilder chose off this one to drive #1. Still, Merriman can certainly get this one onto the ticket.

5 – GOOD SIDE – Finished third in here two starts ago, but was a bit overmatched in a claimer last time at Harrah's Philly. Does show a win 4 starts back, but that was in a lower level.

6 – BESTINTHEBUSINESS – Makes his third start in the Micallef barn today and drops in class, but will need a little more speed to contend in this group.

7 – V I P BAYAMA – Has now won 2 of his last 3, so he's in very good form right now. However, he's up in class again this week, so he will find this group to be a bit tougher.

8 – REGGIE RAIDER – He's a closer, and with post 8 will likely be sitting pretty far back early in the mile. His best hope will be for others to mix it up early and set fast fractions so that he can pass a few late.

9 – R N NATE – This one likes to race closer to the front, but with post 9 that could be a tough trip. If he elects to test the waters early, he could be pushed a little too hard. If he finds a spot mid-pack, he could end up getting shuffled.

SELECTIONS: 3-2-4-6

RACE 11 – 10,000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – SMOKE UP JOHNNY – Only has one win this year, and hasn't been better than third in a while. Doesn't seem to have a ton of speed from the inside posts, so will likely get away mid-pack. Will need the right trip to hit the ticket.

2 – FINAL JUSTICE – Claimed for 10,000 just two starts ago, faded to a 7th place finish last start in a higher level so he drops back down today. Also has missed a week. Likely will be a medium price, since she shows a second place finish in his last appearance in this class.

3 – COLOSSAL – Wilder gets the call on this one today, after yet another top-3 finish. Hasn't gotten a win in this class since moving up, but has been competitive. Should be one of the top choices in here again today.

4 – LUCKY MILLIONAIRE – Hasn't been better than 5th in this class in the last 5 starts, and is winless in 25 tries this season. He'll be a longshot again today.

5 – CARMENS BEST – Didn't get the trip he wanted last time, because of the inside post. Moves to a middle post this week and will likely get out of the gate quickly and try to take the field wire to wire. Definitely will be a top choice in here.

6 – CATHERINESDIAMOND – Last week's winner in this class, he can certainly do it again. Very sharp right now, but that's often been this one's trademark. Puts together a win streak, tails off for a bit, then storms back. He's sharp right now.

7 – ALBIONKINGINFINITO – Another well-beaten finish last time, this one just doesn't seem to be able to crack the top-3 in this class at this time.

8 – HRUBYS N LUCK – I'm going to take my chances on this one today from the outside post. He was hard-used twice during the mile last week and still finished fourth. My hope today is that this one gets out of the gate, either gets to the lead and gets covered up by #5, or slips in behind #5 and gets a pocket trip.

9 – EPIC UNION – Gets the outside post again this week, so the bad luck continues for this one. Has good closing speed and has done well to get a few checks, but faces another uphill battle today.

SELECTIONS: 8-5-6-3

RACE 12 – 20,000 CD CLAIMING TROT

1 – TECH TITAN – Comes off his best finish in over a month. Came a long way from 9th at the half to get third last time. Draws the inside post, which isn't a good spot for him, so hopefully he can repeat last week's finish, but he needs to stay out of trouble early.

2 – WHAT A HUNK – Never got involved last week from post 9, despite having dropped in class. Moves to a much better post today, so you have to give him another look in here. Won in a higher level just two starts back.

3 – MARACANA' – The trip didn't work out for this one last time, but he rallied late after being shuffled early. Only lost it all by a length and $\frac{3}{4}$, so it was a strong close after being shuffled to 8th. He's not out of the question here.

4 – MASSIVE RISK – I'm going to take a chance on this one today, even though she's coming off an 8th place finish. Had to make a tough move last time and while she lost positions, she was only 4 lengths back of the winner at the wire. I'm hoping she uses some early speed today rather than trying to race from mid-pack.

5 – MIDNIGHT ZETTE – Put in a very strong effort here in early August, then trotted a strong mile in this class just two starts later, on August 18. However, after a 9th place finish the following week, he disappeared for a couple of months. Requalified last week, but may be a week or two away from his best effort.

6 – FANTASY ROCKET – Made up some ground last time and raced well, in his second start back after a scratch. Has some gate speed, and also has closing ability, so his versatility could serve him well this afternoon.

7 – PEMBROKE MORGAN – Finished 5th in his return after 6 weeks off, and figures to be stronger today. The trip was more conservative last time, after using a little bit of early speed, he sat and ended up shuffled to 8th. Showed a good closing kick, in a race where he had an excuse to be a little short. The post hurts today, but he's definitely improving.

8 – DANISH DESIGN – Won in a conditioned race five starts ago, but has struggled a bit in the starts since that time. Changes classes today, moving to a claimer, but gets a tough post draw. Will likely be one of the longer shots in here.

9 – ODD BALL – Has a ton of speed but is always a risky play due to breaks. Stayed on stride last time as the favorite but faded late, leaving him as an even bigger question mark for today's race.

SELECTIONS: 4-2-3-6

RACE 13 – NW 5000 PACE

1 – HILLBILLYFAIRYTALE – Put in another good effort last week, but moves up in class today. Has been very class conscious this year, with his better efforts all coming in the NW3500 level.

2 – RUFFLE UP - Showed some improvement last time with a good closing effort from a second tier starting spot. Drops in class today and moves to an inside post, two positive factors. Could be a factor here with the right trip.

3 – STIRLING ESCORT – Returns after a trip to Ohio, where he had to make a move after a very quick first half. His most recent Meadows starts were in a level that is two higher than this one, so he should fit much better in this group.

4 – HUDSONANDBERNARD – I've picked him to win several times lately, but he is still just 1-for-23 on the year. Still, he always puts in a good effort, but by not showing any early speed, he's always at the mercy of the fractions ahead of him. He can be a factor for the win today, but will need the trip to work out just right.

5 – A WILD IMPULSE – Moves up in class after a second place finish, but will likely need to find a little more speed today. Will likely be one of the longer shots in here.

6 – ARTFUL BLISS – Tried this class last week and finished 7th, but that was his best finish in over a month. Just isn't sharp right now, so he will bring a high price.

7 – ZONE BLITZ – I probably would have this picked this one higher from a better post. Qualified twice prior to his return, and had a bad post last week. Doesn't draw much better today, so the prospects for a win are limited, but he can be part of the Hi-5 ticket.

8 – JK ONAROLL – Won in a lower level two starts ago and put in a decent mile last week but the post worked against him. Draws another bad spot today.

9 – FOUR CARD MAJOR – Finished second last week in his return after 6 weeks off. Logically he should be even better today, since he's in the same class, but he gets the worst of the post draw. That will make his job much more difficult this afternoon.

10 – HAWK'S RED CHIEF – He makes the race difficult to handicap. Returns to his former track and his former trainer today. He was a top-level horse for the Burke Stable, and today comes back to a level lower than he has seen in quite some time. Two negative factors – post 10 and the fact that he is coming back after 3 months off. However, the qualifier was good and he could contend for the win despite the obstacles.

SELECTIONS: 10-4-2-3-7