



A CLOSER LOOK

by The Professor

In-depth analysis of races at The Meadows

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

RACE 1 – NW 11,000 PACE

1 – HE'S A POPPER – Faced open company at Hoosier last time from a bad post and never got involved. Ignore that line as he's changing tracks and classes today. Still, this is a tough group and he's not a quick starter from the rail, so he could be facing a tough task.

2 – KNOCKING AROUND – Has now won 2 in a row, but double-jumps in class this week. He's been at this level before, but not in the last couple of months. He'll be a longer shot in here but is sharp.

3 – GALLANT SEELSTER – Took a conservative route last week, coming from mid-pack and closing to get third. He has early speed so I wouldn't be surprised if he tried to out-leave the inside two horses today and place himself closer to the action early.

4 – MARVALOUS ARTIST – Has now won 3 in a row, but hasn't faced this level as yet. He leaves behind younger, non-winners of a set amount of races company and faces much older and more seasoned foes today. He has the speed, but this will still be a tough move for him.

5 – CAPTAIN VELOCITY – Hasn't been better than 8th in his last couple of starts in this class. He finished second in here three starts ago, but just doesn't seem to be quite as sharp right now, as his overall speed and final quarter times have fallen off a bit.

6 – MISTER VIRGIN – Easy winner in a class one below today's group, so he's earned a shot at this group today. Finished 5th in here two starts ago, but tried the front and went a little too quick to the $\frac{3}{4}$. He should be a major factor in here this afternoon.

7 – NITRO SEELSTER – Last week's second place finisher in this level, he gets the outside post but showed last week that he has the early speed to overcome it. He's the morning line choice and I like his chances to be in the top-2 this afternoon.

SELECTIONS: 6-7-4

RACE 2 – NW 8 PACE

1 – STRIKING REALITY – Finished third in this class last week, only losing by a half length. Raced very well, and figures to be just as good today. He can definitely be a factor, but this is a very competitive group.

2 – GD WESTERN JOE – Raced here in the Adios eliminations back in July, and has had a very good season racing mostly in stakes. Only has win wins this year, so he returns today and drops from stakes into non-winners company. He will draw a lot of attention from the bettors.

3 – TERRORIFICVELOCITY – Won here three starts ago in a different class, but his last 2 efforts haven't been as good. He races against a tougher group today and will likely be one of the longer shots in here.

4 – HAPPY TRIO – 1-for-1 since arriving from out east, a very good, fast win here last week. Steps up in class today but should be a contender despite the move. There's no telling just how much faster he can go for his new connections.

5 – HUDSONANDBERNARD – Finished a strong second last week in a different class. While that group contained some tough older horses, this group is young but fast. He seems to be better when he races from behind, so look for him to take a seat early and try to move with cover.

6 – CRONOS – He was a little overmatched in here last week in his return to The Meadows. Look for a conservative trip once again today. He may be a step behind his stablemate, #1, in this level.

7 – BLAKEMORE – Finished fourth from the inside post last week. It appears as though he likes to get out of the gate and race close to the front, and he should be able to better do that from the outside post today.

8 – REAL PEACE – Made his local debut last week and cut quick fractions, only to get caught in the final stride. Today he has the outside post, but given his success on the front last week, I expect this one to use his early speed once again today.

SELECTIONS: 2-8-4-1

RACE 3 – NW 7600 PACE

1 – DEW N DOUGHNUTS – Comes off a scratch, so this one has been off a couple of weeks. Finished 4th in this level two weeks ago after a win in a class that's 2 lower than today. He can go with this group but hasn't won at this level this season.

2 – STIRLING ESCORT – Won in a lower classification last week, and steps up today. Hasn't raced in this level for a while, as he was in a class higher than this one, then double-dropped a few weeks ago. Merriman got along well with him last week and sticks with him today.

3 – VODKA IS TERROR – We picked this one second last week and he helped complete a very nice exacta. He had figured to improve in his second start for the new barn, and he did. I expect a similar effort again today as he's in the same class and has drawn another good post.

4 – WARP FACTOR THREE – Got away third last time and looked to be in a good spot, but lost positions in the final half mile. Still paced a good last quarter, but couldn't catch the frontrunners. Gets a class drop today which should help.

5 – ZONE BLITZ – I liked this one quite a bit last week and he finished second at a near 6-1 price. Today he moves up in class, but should be ready, as he's in his 4th start after time off. He seems to be better when he gets out of the gate, and he may be able to outstep the inside horses off the car this week.

6 – MAYTIME TERROR – This one has been bounced around to several different barns this year, but always seems to end up back here, in the Marashian Stable. Today, for the first time in quite some time, he moves up to avoid another claim. He'll be tested today at the 20,000 level.

7 – I'M FEELIN GOOD – Makes his second start back after a lengthy period on shelf. He'll likely be better this week, but may not quite be ready for a top effort.

8 – GOOD SIDE – I expect this one to go for the early lead today from the outside post, as I don't think he wants to sit too far back. His last 2 starts have been good, so he's in decent form right now.

9 – HAWKS RED CHIEF – Won in a lower level in his return from time off and his return to the Burke Stable. Last week he double-jumped in class and finished a decent fifth, but never really got involved. Today he gets a class drop to a middle level, and should fit well here, but the post is going to be a challenge. Still, I think he can get the win.

SELECTIONS: 9-3-5-6

RACE 4 – NW 3500 PACE

1 – BROOKLYN FLIGHT – Still looking for his first win since 2016, but he nearly got it last week. Comes off a strong effort last time and draws a good inside spot this week. He's definitely a factor in here

2 – A WILD IMPULSE – Good third place finish in a higher level last week. Drops in class, and only lost by a half length in this level two starts ago. Has only won once in his last 47 starts, but could get another win here.

3 – MATTAMERICAN – Returns after a month off and several races out east. Hasn't seen a level at The Meadows this low in ages, so I have to pick him today off the back class alone.

4 – P H KENNY – Drops in class this week off a third place finish. Cut the fractions last time and may want to try to control things again today, especially off the class drop. He's definitely a factor in here today, as he looks for his 7th win of the year.

5 – ARTFUL BLISS – Dropped to this class last week and responded with his best finish in a while, but it was still only a 5th place effort. He was bet to 5-1 last time but I look for the price to be higher today. Pantaleano chose #4 over this one this afternoon.

6 – FOUR CARD MAJOR – I liked this one last week despite the post, so I have to give him a look today as he moves to a better spot. He's usually a closer, so he will need to get into the outside flow early and move up in the final half mile.

7 – CYRUS SEELSTER – Another 4th place finish last time, and the fractions were very much in his favor with a fast first half and a slower second half. He's just not quite as sharp right now as he had been earlier in the year.

8 – TSM CRUSIN USA – Has struggled badly since returning to The Meadows, and draws a bad post today. On the plus side, the stable has been sharp this week.

9 – JUMPIN JAKE FLASH – Gets the 9 post for the second straight week, but does get a class drop today. Tried going for the front last time and could take that same route again.

SELECTIONS: 3-4-6-9

RACE 5 – 10,000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – JK ONAROLL – Drops to a claimer today for the first time since late September in Ohio. Picked up a win in the lowest conditioned level here three starts ago, but was overmatched in the next step up. Today he changes to the claimer and gets an inside post, two positive factors.

2 – CARMENS BEST – Claimed last week and joins a new barn today. Put in a tough mile from post 9 last time, so I wasn't disappointed with the 4th place finish. He should be very good today from an inside post.

3 – CATHERINE'SDIAMOND – Yet another top-3 finish last time, so this one is still in good form. He's been ultra consistent with his times and has been competitive in all of his recent starts. He should be a factor again today.

4 – FINAL JUSTICE – Got off to a slow start last time, but actually put in his best mile since the claim. His final quarter was much better and he was only 4 ½ back. It could be a sign that he's rounding back into form.

5 – EAGLE FORD – Changes classes today and goes into a straight claimer from the conditioned claiming ranks. Completely ignore his last line, as he was parked for the mile. His previous efforts could make him competitive in this group today.

6 – DOCTOR RJ – Moves to a claimer today rather than try the next level in the conditioned ranks, after finishing second last week. He has put in back-to-back good miles after returning from the summer off. He should be a big factor in here today.

7 – ALBIONKINGINFINITO – Finished 9th last time and has not been in the top five for quite a while. Could be a candidate for a drop to the lower level, but for now, he's a longshot in here.

8 – BONFIRE BLISS – Put in two straight very good efforts in the 7000 level, and today has earned a shot at this group. He has used gate speed the last couple of starts, but that might be a bit tougher today from this post.

9 – DRUNK ON YOU – Got off to a slow start from the inside post last time, and that was in a higher level. Today he should be able to use his early speed, but could be hard-pressed early from post 9. On the plus side, he does drop in class this week.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-3-1

RACE 6 – 20,000 CD CLAIMING TROT

1 – PEMBROKE MORGAN – Draws the inside post this week after having no chance from post 9 last time. Not sure if the rail is the best spot, but he'll definitely get away closer than he did last week.

2 – CATCH THE BOUQUET – Changes classes again this week after being parked last time from an outside post in a tough group. Should find this class and this post to be much better for her. Only has one win this year but has been second or third 9 times.

3 – DOUGLAS HANOVER – Won two straight in lower levels then bumped up to this group last week. Put in a good mile, finishing 5th and only losing by 3 lengths, but it looks like this one likes to be a little closer to the front early in the mile.

4 – MASSIVE RISK – Continues to race well week-in, week-out, but just finds herself too far back early to get the win. Draws a good post today, but will need to hold her position early and not leave herself too much ground to make up.

5 – MIDNIGHT ZETTE – Has come back from a couple of months off with two solid performances, including a win last week. She's back in the same class today, and is the one to beat.

6 – FANTASY ROCKET – Made a break last time, but had been solid in his previous efforts. Forgive the break and give him a look today as a potential closer. There is plenty of inside speed to deter him from heading for the front out of the gate.

7 – J-S JESSES GIRL – Put in a couple of good miles in previous weeks but didn't fare as well last week. That leaves her as a bit of a mystery today. Merriman will drive for the first time behind this one this afternoon.

8 – MARACANA' – Got away third but was shuffled to 6th last time before rallying late. Post hurts a bit today, but this one is definitely a factor in here as he's a proven winner in this level and is still in very good form right now.

9 – BAD RENTORS – Hasn't had luck with the post draw the last couple of starts, drawing the second tier last time and the outside today. Gets a class drop this week from the NW5, so that could help to offset the post a bit.

10 – WHEELS A TURNING – This one likes to race close to or on the front, but gets the second tier starting spot today. She will need to find a way to work out a suitable trip, which could be difficult from this post.

SELECTIONS: 5-4-7-8

RACE 7 – NW MORE THAN 4 PACE

1 – HEZASHININGKNIGHT – When I originally handicapped this race, I made this one my pick to win. I pitched the last line completely, as he was parked from post 9 and never got to the inside. Two starts ago, he finished a strong second in this class. However, Merriman opted off this one today in favor of #7. This one can still win, but the driver choice could be telling.

2 – GALLERY OPENING – Joins a new barn today, one of multiple horses purchased by the Presto Stable from the Johnston Stable recently. Has been off nearly a month, so that's the major obstacle today. It's hard to know just how ready he is after missing time.

3 – ROCKNROLL CHARM – Raced very well last time, going wire to wire for the win in his first start on Lasix. He steps up in class today so he'll find this level to be tougher, but most horses improve a bit in their second start on Lasix.

4 – SCRUB HANOVER – Hasn't finished better than 6th in a while, so he'll be a longshot in here today. The post isn't bad, so his best hope is to stay close early and see what he can get late.

5 – ARTISTS RUFFLES – He's been parked for the mile in back to back starts, which doesn't happen often. I'd look for him to take a more conservative route today, although I thought the same thing last week and he went for the front.

6 – DRAWING DRAGONS – Finished sixth in this class two starts ago, then improved a bit to get fourth last week, but still hasn't cracked the top 3. He's got plenty of speed, but so do several others in the field today.

7 – WINBAK WILLY T – Merriman chose this one over #1 and I think those are the two main contenders in the race today, so I'll lean my pick toward his choice. This one has looked good in both starts since returning from a long layoff, so he definitely has a license to improve just a bit more today in his third start.

8 – SIN CITY BOOGIE – Took last week off, and returns today with a poor post draw. He's raced well in many of his recent starts, but doesn't seem to have much early speed, and the post is going to hurt quite a bit today.

9 – IVEGOTAGIRLCRUSH – Has put in some good efforts in recent weeks, but the post is the major obstacle today. Has some early speed, but could burn up early if he elects to try to use it from the outside post.

10 – MCFLY – Newcomer joins the Walski Stable off an auction purchase. He's a bit of a mystery, but should enjoy the switch to a larger track. The post certainly hurts today as he'll have a lot of horses in front of him, but we'll learn more about him today.

SELECTIONS: 7-1-8-10

RACE 8 – PREFERRED PACE

1 – WESTERN TYRANT – Has faced this level twice, but hasn't cracked the top 3 quite yet. He may just be a step behind this group at this time, but still has plenty of speed. He only lost it all by a length and a half last week.

2 – ARTHUR PENDRAGON – Raced very well in his return from time off last week. Still, he's facing a tough task in just his second start back after the layoff. He'll be able to beat this level soon, but he may still be a few weeks away.

3 – IDEAL ACE – This class may just be a bit too tough for him, but he certainly gives his all. He'll be a longshot in here and would need things to go perfectly his way to get a win.

4 – WINDSONG LEO – Another tough effort out of this one last week, and he's one of the main three that will be battling for the win again today. He has post advantage on his other main rivals, so that could give him a bit of an edge.

5 – ANYTHINGFORLOVE A – Has yet to get a win locally at the top level, but he hasn't missed by much. He's one of the main contenders again today, and trip will play the key role, as always.

6 – PHOENIX WARRIOR N – He's had an amazing season and he's not finished yet, coming off yet another win last week. Today he gets the worst of the posts and the inside horses may do their best to keep him from the front early. If he decides to take a seat early and race from the back, the ones up front will back things down as much as they can to take his edge away.

SELECTIONS: 4-6-5

RACE 9 – 12,500-15,000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – DALIORITY – Newcomer shows quick final quarters on the bigger track in Indiana. Raced well from an inside post a few weeks ago and draws well here. The tough question to answer is how a conditioned claiming race at Hoosier compares class-wise to a straight claimer at The Meadows.

2 – RIP THIS JOINT – Won in this class 2 starts ago from an inside post, then finished third from the outside when he went in for a higher price tag last week. Today he wanted an inside draw so the claiming price is dropped back to 12,500. He should be a factor in here.

3 – V I P BAYAMA – Claimed by the Rhoades barn last time, and that stable has a very good record with first time starters off the claim. He's 10-1 on the morning line, based on his recent performances, but look for him to take a lot of play.

4 – UNCLE COZ – It's hard to argue with his success in recent weeks, with four straight second place finishes. He should once again be a factor for the top spots

5 – ULTIMATE G – Got to the outside early but was never able to advance higher than fourth last time. He will likely end up with a similar trip today, so he'll need a fast first half and a slower second half in order to score.

6 – SUPERFICIAL – Newcomer was claimed at Hoosier last time and makes his debut today for a new trainer at a new track. He's already had 40 starts this year, so he's quite an iron horse. The new connections obviously wanted him so he could be good here today.

7 – LOUIE'S SO BOSSY – Comes off back-to-back 8th place finishes since the claim. He'll likely be a longshot today.

8 – ALLIE'S CRUISER – Another one that has the look of a longshot, he's coming off a 6th place finish and despite dropping his claiming price today, he gets a poor post.

9 – NATHAN FEELSGOOD – Gets the worst of the post draw this week as he makes his debut for a new barn off a claim. He beat the 10,000 level last time, but faces a bit of an uphill battle today due to the post and the class change. Still, he's in good form and could catch a piece of the ticket with the right trip.

SELECTIONS: 3-6-4-9

RACE 10 – 7000-8000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – MYSTERY ISLAND – Three straight second place finishes for this one, and a move to the inside post. He's definitely a factor to win in here. Should be able to stay close early and strike late.

2 – DANCE LIFE WELL – He's a mystery in here off a scratch. Looked very good in his debut in the Rhoades Stable, but that was 3 weeks ago. Will he be as good today? That's the big question.

3 – SMOKE UP JOHNNY – Dropped to this class last time but had little chance due to post 9. He's not out of the question in here, but will need the right trip.

4 – HICKORY LITTLE RED – Won a couple of times in this class in recent months, but has run hot and cold as far as his finishes. His times, until last week, were very consistent. Again, trip will mean everything for this one.

5 – THISWAYORTHEHIGHWAY – Has looked good in all of his starts from decent posts. Today, he draws another good spot, so logically he should be a factor.

6 – BERGERAC – Finished 4th last week off a very tough trip. Moves to a more outside post today, which should allow him to draw some cover. If the fractions are quick and he gets a second-over trip, he could be on the ticket here.

7 – HONEEMOON SUITE – Was bet to the 2-1 favorite's spot last time but faded after a quick third quarter. The bettors may end up elsewhere today, but he did win in this class just two starts ago so he's not completely out of the question. Still, this is the worst post he's had in a while.

8 – TWIN B WRANGLER – Comes off a very good win last time, but moves to an outside post this week. He'll still draw a lot of attention despite the post, and deservedly so. He has hit the ticket consistently, even from the outside.

9 – COLOSSAL – Dropped back to this class last time but got off to a slow start from an inside post. Rallied late but had give up too much ground early. He is likely to leave the gate today and try to either get to the front or simply find a closer spot at the rail.

SELECTIONS: 1-8-5-3

RACE 11 – NW 3500 TROT

1 – BROADWAY JO ELL – Had little chance in her local debut due to a bad post. Not only does she move inside today, but also gets a class drop. Not only that, but she had been off for 10 months prior to that start. She should definitely improve today.

2 – HOLY HALIBUT – Comes off a very slow final quarter, but that was over a month ago. Makes his return today after more than 5 weeks on the shelf, so he's a bit of a mystery in here. Also changes classes out of the claiming ranks, which is interesting.

3 – KIWI PRES – Dropped to this class last time but had a bad post. Rallied late with a decent final quarter, despite having been off a few weeks. He definitely should be better today and can be a factor to win.

4 – WHAMBAMTHANKUMAAM – She was a top-level trotter earlier in the year but hasn't shown signs of that lately. Drops out of filly & mare ranks this week to face open company, and I just think she's better than the recent lines show. I'm going to take a shot on her this week.

5 – STIRLING DIVA – Finished 4th last week, her best finish in a while. Like #4, drops from racing against mares, and may like this class today. She's a closer, so she'll need others to set fast fractions.

6 – CALL TO POST – Still hasn't picked up a win since making his return after missing much of last season. Comes off a third place finish but will still be a higher price in here today.

7 – NEEDNORESTRICTIONS – Has plenty of gate speed, but last week had post 9 and tired to a 31 second final quarter. The post isn't much better today, so this one will need to avoid a speed battle early and save some energy for the stretch.

8 – BOY MEETS GIRL K – Drops in class today, but gets a poor post. I've been waiting for this one to get a win since returning from eastern tracks, and it hasn't happened yet. He's not completely out of the question today, but it will be tough for him from this post.

9 – ISABELLA HANOVER – She's coming off a scratch and a few weeks off, so she may take a more conservative route this week. She usually leaves the gate, but could find that route to be difficult if she tries it in here today.

SELECTIONS: 4-3-1-8

RACE 12 – NW 5000 PACE

1 – SILVERHILL BLAZE – Returned from 2 months off last time and put in a very good mile at a 6-1 price, earning the upset win. He moves up in class this week, but the class change is offset by a switch to an inside post.

2 – HILLBILLYFAIRYTALE – Got off to a slow start last time and was just too far back to make up the ground, as the frontrunners paced the last half in 56.4. It's very tough to come from 9th and get much with those fractions. Needs a quicker start this week.

3 – GOODY TWO SOCKS – Newcomer has been off since late September, having last raced at a fair track in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. He's a bit of a mystery, but the qualifier wasn't bad, in 1:56.2. He may need a start or two until he's 100% in shape.

4 – REGGIE RAIDER – Put in a good closing performance last week, after dropping to this level. His final half mile was very quick, a sign that he's in top form and ready for a win.

5 – KINGS BEACH – He missed a month prior to his last start, yet still rallied late and passed a few horses. It was a good mile for him, and today he figures to be stronger, as he's back in on just 7 days rest. He's definitely a factor here.

6 – R N NATE – Finished 7th in here last week but only lost by 4 lengths. He has paced some quick miles, but just hasn't been able to get a win locally in a while.

7 – RUFFLE UP – Finished 2nd in this class on November 3. Moved back up to the higher level last time, made a move to the front, but the final quarter wasn't as strong after pacing a very fast $\frac{3}{4}$. He has the speed to win at this level today.

8 – INNOCENT VICTIM – Hasn't been better than 8th since the claim in early October. He'll be a longshot in here this afternoon.

9 – ONE BAD NIGHT – Dropped to this level last time, and showed a little gate speed but then got shuffled back to 7th. Didn't lose it by much, and does show a win in this level in early September. May use his early speed and be aggressive today.

SELECTIONS: 4-7-5-1

RACE 13 – NW 5 TROT

1 – TEQUILA TALKIN – Ignore the last race, as he had post 9 and was coming off a couple of breaks. Stayed flat last time, so that was encouraging and gives hope for today. The rail isn't the best spot for most trotters, and he broke the last time he drew it, so use caution.

2 – KRISTY'SGINGERGAL – Won in this level 2 starts back, then returned just five days later and just couldn't work out the right trip. She was closing late with a decent final quarter. It looks like it's all about the trip, as she won from a pocket trip. Hopefully she can get into the right spot early today.

3 – JUST JOE – Had missed 3 weeks prior to his last start after a scratch. Should be stronger today, and also gets a better post this time around.

4 – MEETMEINTHEMIDDLE – Added Lasix prior to the last start, and put in a strong effort. It was his fastest mile and his fastest final quarter in a while. Changes classes again today, and will be tested in here.

5 – TOM CATTIN – Solid mile last week at a 13-1 price. Trotted a very quick $\frac{3}{4}$ before getting caught late. Won't be the favorite, but also shouldn't be 13-1 this time around.

6 – SAND CASH – Won in this class last week in his local debut. He'll be the one to beat again today, especially considering last week's race was his first in 2 months.

7 – SCRAMBLE CAMP – Was bet to 6-5 last time, but faded in the final quarter. Has now been a beaten choice in 2 of last 3 efforts. Won't likely be the top choice today, but could still get the job done with the right trip.

8 – BONE A FIDE BABE – Comes off a break at the start last time, so you can ignore that mile completely. Her previous efforts have all been good, but this is the worst post that she's had in quite some time. Has gate speed and closing ability. Gets a new driver today as Rawlings chose off this one in favor of #10.

9 – RIDE THE RAILS – Finished 5th in this level last time after missing about 3 weeks. She has gate speed, and used it the last time she had post 9. However, she hasn't been able to finish after using up energy early.

10 – SELKA SONG – She qualified an easy winner after making breaks in 2 straight races. Won against older foes on 10/10 in 1:57, so she has the speed if she stays on stride. She'll also need to work out a trip from the second tier.

SELECTIONS: 6-7-2-1-8