



A CLOSER LOOK

by The Professor

In-depth analysis of races at The Meadows

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

RACE 1 – NW 8 PACE

1 – BLAKEMORE – Not his best last week, fading badly after pacing a 26.2 opening quarter. Draws inside today, and was a winner from the rail three starts ago locally. However, this is a tougher group than the ones he has faced here in recent weeks.

2 – CRONOS – Returns from Ohio, hasn't been here in quite some time. Has been putting in some tough miles at Northfield, and the larger track may be a better spot for him right now. This is a tough group, but he has been facing some tough horses in the non-winners classes he's faced in recent starts.

3 – STRIKING REALITY- Has won 3 in a row, including a win last time against some tough older foes. Goes back into a non-winners of 8 races today, and should fit well in this group.

4 – REAL PEACE – Makes his Meadows debut today. Looks like he was purchased two starts ago but hasn't fared well in stake company as a longshot the last 2 starts. We'll learn more about him today. Shows a quick mark this year on a mile track.

5 – LYONS KING – Sharp right now, with all top-3 finishes since arriving from Illinois. Today, however, he steps up in class from the conditioned claiming ranks, so this will be a big test for him.

6 – MARVALOUS ARTIST – Has now won two in a row, but will step up in class this week. He also gets the worst of the post draw, but that shouldn't hurt him too badly, as he has plenty of early speed. Palone chose this one over #1 this afternoon.

SELECTIONS: 3-4-1

RACE 2 – 20,000 CD CLAIM TROT

1 – TECH TITAN – Only lost by 4 ½ last time after a slow start. The rail just isn't a good starting spot for him, and he has drawn it once again. He's not out of the question in here, but he needs a few things to go just his way for that to happen.

2 – MIDNIGHT ZETTE – Makes his second start back after taking a couple of months off. Finished a solid fourth last week and figures to improve a bit today. The inside post draw certainly doesn't hurt.

3 – FANTASY ROCKET – Made a move early and was still there at the wire for a 3rd place finish last time. May need a little quicker final quarter this week to get a win, but can still hit the ticket in this group.

4 – DOUGLAS HANOVER – Moves up in class today after back to back wins. Was an upset winner at odds of 23-1 two starts ago, but last week was an easy winner at 2-1. He'll be a higher price today as he moves up to face a tougher group.

5 – MARACANA' – Won in this class a week ago at a 20-1 price, and it was a very strong performance. Made a big move into the third quarter and held off the pack last time. He's definitely a factor again today and won't be 20-1 this time.

6 – WHEELS A TURNING – The class drop on this one is too much to overlook this week. Has faced much tougher the last couple of starts, won her last start in conditioned claimers with ease, and is now making her second start on Lasix.

7 – MASSIVE RISK – Has gate speed and closing ability, but has been racing exclusively from behind in recent starts. Passed a lot of horses in the final quarter last time, putting in a very good performance. She'll be hoping for others to set fast fractions today.

8 – J-S JESSES GIRL – Just missed by a neck last time, another good performance. She's a proven winner in this class, and is still in very good form. The big problem, once again, is the post. She draws outside for the third straight week.

9- PEMBROKE MORGAN – Tried to get to the front last time, but went a little too quick to the first half. Gets the worst of the post draw this week and will likely be a longshot today.

SELECTIONS: 6-8-5-3

RACE 3 – 7000-8000 PACE

1 – TWIN B WRANGLER – Finally draws an inside post today. Has been racing very well in all of his recent starts, but has had to contend with some terrible posts. He should be a top-2 finisher in here today and can definitely win.

2 – COLOSSAL – He'll likely be the favorite, thanks to a class drop from the 10,000 level, where he has been competitive. Wilder had his choice between this one and #1 Twin B Wrangler, and went to this one today.

3 – IT'S A DEW THING – Has gone the wrong direction with his finishes the last couple of starts after a good debut in this class on 10/13. This is the best post he's drawn in a while, so hopefully that can help him a bit.

4 – CAPITAL ACCOUNT – Was claimed last week for 7000 but stays in the same class today, rather than being bumped up and protected. Also, Merriman picked off this one to drive #5. He was a beaten favorite last time, but was hard-used twice during the mile, so the 4th place finish can be excused.

5 – HONEEMOON SUITE – Won as the favorite last week, making a strong middle move. He has plenty of early speed and should definitely be able to get to the front early. However, he's going to have a couple of strong contenders to his inside, so they may try to overtake him early.

6 – MYSTERY ISLAND – Has the ability to leave the gate or race from behind, but with the speed to his left out of the gate, he's more likely to take the closing route today. He's usually very good at this level, but today faces some tough competition.

7 – HICKORY LITTLE RED – His finishes haven't been consistent, but his final times have. He's another one that can leave the gate or race from the back, so he'll have a tough choice to make at the start.

8 – MAINLAND KEY N- He tried to race from the back last time and it wasn't his style, so look for him to return to his usual racing style today and go for the front, especially off the class drop. He'll likely get pushed early.

9 – SMOKE UP JOHNNY – Also down in class this week, he gets the worst post and it will be a challenge for him to be a factor in here, despite the drop. He has the look of a longshot today.

SELECTIONS: 2-1-6-4

RACE 4 – NW 11,500 PACE

1 – WARP FACTOR THREE – Draws an inside post this week and can be a factor in here, but hasn't won in this group in a while. He seems to be able to contend for a spot on the ticket with this group, but isn't a big factor to win.

2 – ATTA BOY DAN – Last week's winner in this class, he'll likely be a top choice again today. Draws the same post and is in with the same group. Definitely a major contender.

3 – A REAL MIRACLE – Won in a lower level three starts ago, but hasn't fared well since moving up to this class. Has had outside posts two straight times, so today he should be able to give a better accounting of how he fits in this class.

4 – GALLANT SEELSTER – Finished 6th in here last time, losing by less than 5 lengths, despite a poor post. Moves to a much better starting spot today but Merriman chose off this one in favor of #7 Nitro Seelster. Still, I think this one can be a factor with the right trip.

5 – HAWK'S RED CHIEF – Made his return to The Meadows last week, and his return to his former barn. He picked up a big win from the second tier, passing a lot of horses in the final half mile. Today he jumps two classes, but he is likely on his way back up to the top level, so he should be able to handle this group when he's 100% ready.

6 – BEACH HOUSE – Won in just his second start back from Canada, and today moves up in class. This was another one that Merriman could have driven, but he chose the 7 instead. This one will likely race from the back of the pack today with a lot of early speed to his left.

7 – NITRO SEELSTER – Finished second in here last week, only missing by a head from an inside post. Moves outside today, but has the gate speed to overcome it. He should be a major player in here, and was Merriman's choice to drive.

8 – ROYALTYHASARRIVED – He's always a factor in this level, and posted a win three starts ago. However, today he draws the outside post so that will likely be a challenge for him. He can still be a factor, but will have a tough choice to make at the start, whether to try for the early lead or take a conservative route.

SELECTIONS: 2-5-8-7

RACE 5 – 10,000 CLAIMING PACE

1 – FINAL JUSTICE – Comes off a 7th place finish from a good post last week in this class, so this one will likely be a longer shot today. Hasn't fared well since the claim, and inside posts aren't the best for him.

2 – RUSTY CARTER – Drops in class today after a distant 8th place finish last time. Shows a win in the higher level back in late September, so the talent is there. He's just not sharp at all right now so perhaps the class drop will bring him back into form.

3 – NATHAN FEELSGOOD – Raced well in his first couple of starts after the claim, and put in a tough effort last time despite a 6th place finish. He only lost by 3 lengths after taking a lot of air on the outside. He can win in here, but will need an easier route.

4 – THREE RIVERS DELL – Moves to a claimer today after a pair of starts in the bottom conditioned class. Hasn't finished higher than third all season long, so he will likely be a longshot today.

5 – LUCKY MILLIONAIRE – Another double-digit length difference between this one and the winner last time. He just appears to be overmatched in this class right now.

6 – CATHERINE'SDIAMOND – This one likes to move forward out of the gate and race on the lead or at least close to the front. Tried a totally different tactic last week, and while he raced well to finish third, it just wasn't his usual style. I'd look for him to try for the front this week.

7 – HRUBYS N LUCK – I picked this one last week, going for the upset, but he got parked again early and faded late. I'm not sure if he will try to go for the front again this week or not, as he has a different driver today. He still has the speed to win in here, but trip will be the key.

8 – EPIC UNION – He's a closer, and once again draws an outside post. He will likely sit last throughout the mile and see what he can get late, as he has done the last several weeks.

9 – CARMENS BEST – A convincing winner last week, this one draws the worst post today, but has the gate speed to overcome it. The big question is whether or not anyone will push him to overuse himself early.

SELECTIONS: 7-9-6-3

RACE 6 – NW 3500 PACE

1 – STARTHIMUP – Has been stuck in this class for 3 starts now, and he's due to win his way out. Made a rare break last time, but I'll give him another try today. He's a slow starter, but I'm hoping he can get away in the top 5 today.

2 – SILVER BULLET – Showed some gate speed last time but faded in the final quarter. He's dropping to the bottom class today so he should fit much better here than his previous classes.

3 – BROOKLYN FLIGHT – He's still looking for his first win in a couple of seasons, but the dry spell doesn't mean he can't win. He's a 41-time winner in his career, and he started to get sharp a little over a month ago. He was parked 2 starts back but bounced back nicely last week.

4 – ARTFUL BLISS – Drops in class today but the drop is needed, as he hasn't been better than 7th in a while. He was parked last time, so he did pace a pretty tough half mile, and off that line and the class drop, he's not out of the question to make some noise in here.

5 – CRANKIN' IT UP – Shook things up a bit last time by heading to the front on the way to the half mile mark. Couldn't quite hold on, tiring to a 6th place finish. Today, he gets a different driver as Rawlings chose #8 over this one.

6 – CYRUS SEELSTER – He's got a shot in here today, if others can mix it up early and set fast fractions. He's paced some decent final quarters the last couple of weeks and has been passing horses. He needs to get into the outside flow early and follow cover.

7 – DAFINATY – Another 7th place finish last time, so he's still winless on the season. He paced a good last quarter last week, so hopefully that's a sign that he could be a bit better today.

8 – SILVERHILL BLAZE – Comes back from a 2-month layoff today. The qualifier was good, and Rawlings decided to stick with this one today over #5. The final quarter of 27.4 in the test run may be a sign that he's ready.

9 – FOUR CARD MAJOR – I don't like to pick horses from post 9, but he's getting a class drop today and it's his third start back after a layoff. He was parked from post 9 in a class two higher than this one back in early September, and still managed to finish 5th. He'll need to work out a trip, but he can definitely win in here today.

SELECTIONS: 9-1-6-3

RACE 7 – NW 5 TROT

1 – SOME MORE PRINCE – He didn't get out of the gate last week and ended up sitting 8th, but rallied late and I thought he raced pretty well, despite finishing 6th. The big question mark today is because Pantaleano chose off this one in favor of #9. I'm going to stick with this one to finish near the top.

2 – BONE A FIDE BABE – Another good effort last time, as she has raced well since adding Lasix. She was 4th last week but less than a length from the winner. Draws another good post today and should be close to the action throughout.

3 – SAND CASH – Stake colt had a good year in Ohio, making over \$50,000. Took about 6 weeks off after Delaware, and returned with a solid qualifier last week. He's got a shot in here today.

4 – KRISTY'SGINGERGAL – Moves to a better post today, after a win in the same class from post 8 last time as a 25-1 longshot. Used her gate speed well, and figures to try a similar route today.

5 – MEETMEINTHEHALLWAY – Picks up Eric Neal today after another solid effort. He didn't seem as though he was going to contend throughout much of the mile last time, but showed a huge late kick and nearly won. He'll likely be sitting back again today and making a late rush.

6 – RIDE THE RAILS – Has made two local starts, and has faded badly in each. He'll be a longshot in here today.

7 – TROT'N GLIDE – This one always sits near the back and makes a late rush, just like #5. The problem today is that she will have to circle that one in order to win. She's not out of the question as she has shown sub-1:56 speed, but she'll need to be at her best.

8 – JUST JOE – Comes off a scratch last time and has now been off since October 20. He'll likely need a start to get back into total race shape.

9 – TEQUILA TALKIN – Gets the worst post in here and comes off a pair of breaking efforts. On the plus side, he qualified well, has shown plenty of speed in the past, and Pantaleano chose this one over #1 today.

10 – BAD RENTORS – This one has been troubled by breaks lately, but the last time he stayed on stride in a regular race, he won by 2 lengths in a quick time. The main objective today will be for him to stay out of trouble.

SELECTIONS: 3-1-5-7

RACE 8 – NW 7500 PACE

1 – DEW N DOUGHNUTS – Double-jumped to this class last time and did well, finishing fourth in a quick mile. Draws the inside post again today, and will need a quick start to stay close to the action.

2 – THE DARK SHADOW – Sat a good trip and couldn't quite reach the winner last time, but still put in a good enough performance that I think he can contend for the win today. His gate speed always makes him a factor.

3 – VODKA IS TERROR – Not a bad line last time in his Meadows debut, he's got a shot in here if he can work out the right trip. I'm just not exactly sure what trip he needs. He's clearly not much of a front end horse, so he'll be coming from mid-pack.

4 – RUFFLE UP – Last week was his best effort since the claim, but today he moves back up in class. Merriman raced him from behind three starts ago, but I'm wondering if he might try to mix things up a bit this time around. He has gate speed.

5 – I'M FEELIN GOOD – Qualified well for his return to the races, but he's been off 7 months so he'll likely need a start or two. Also joins a new barn, moving into the Walters barn for the first time.

6 – MISTER VIRGIN – The front end wasn't the best place for him last time, as he was challenged heavily in the third quarter and tired in the stretch. Rawlings drove him for the previous trainer at Philly, so he knows the horse a bit.

7 – GOOD SIDE – Raced very well at a 6-1 price last time on the front. Gets the outside post today and will be rolling behind the gate, so he may try the same tactic. He was pushed to a quick half last time, and the same thing could happen again.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-3

RACE 9 – NW 5200 TROT

1 – BOY MEETS GIRL K – I've been waiting for this one to jump up and win for a while now. He's not out of the question in here, but will be a price and I'm not sure what kind of trip he will work out from the inside post.

2 – MATTER HATTER – He makes the race a little tougher to handicap. She was a top stake filly a few years ago but didn't race at all in 2017 and has now come back with just a few starts. Did win in a much lower level in Ohio two start ago, and she now joins the Burke barn for the first time. Could be a big player in here.

3 – MEETMEINTHEMIDDLE – Went to the front last time but couldn't hold on in the final quarter. That start was in a lower level, so this will be a very tough task for him today.

4 – MUSCLE HIGH – Was an easy winner in a lower level last time at a 1-5 price. Both of his local starts have been good, and the first one was in this class after missing a month. He's definitely a contender today, regardless of whether he leaves the gate or races from behind.

5 – MAXIMUM CREDIT – Has had some bad posts the last couple of starts, but finished 2nd in this level from post 9 two starts ago. He's been leaving the gate, but used to be a big closer. I'm not sure if he will go for the lead today or not, but like #4, he can be effective either way.

6 – LARS PERRY – Got a perfect trip to the winner's circle last time, just his second win of the year. He moves up in class today and will find this group to be a bit tougher.

7 – DONE ANDOVER IT – Made a break while in contention last time in a higher class. Won in this level with ease two starts ago. Clearly he has the speed to win in here, but the post and the break last time concern me.

8 – MERCURY FASHION – Has done very well the last 3 starts, but all were from better posts. I think the post draw hurts his chances today. He's a closer, so don't look for him early, but he'll rally late.

9 – NEEDNORESTRICTIONS – Gets the worst of the post draw. Likes to race close to the lead, but if he goes for the front this week, he could be hard-pressed and could burn up a lot of energy before the half mile pole.

SELECTIONS: 2-4-5-1

RACE 10 – NW 5 PACE

1 – WINBAK WILLY T – Raced well in local debut after taking 7 months off. Wilder opts for #2 over this one today, but I look for him to be a little better today. Definitely can still hit the ticket.

2 – SPORTS TEEN – Stake colt had a very good season in Canada, banking over \$100,000 with a pair of wins. Makes his local debut today, but has been off nearly a month. He may be a step short, plus he's facing some older horses in here.

3 – HAPPY TRIO – Very good mile last time at Harrah's Philly, and now joins a new barn today. Has shown plenty of speed everywhere he's been in the past, so there's no reason he won't show good speed here.

4 – DRAWING DRAGONS – Moved up in class last week and found it to be a bit tougher. Wasn't able to get involved early and couldn't reach the frontrunners late. Draws a better post this week, but he'll likely be a longshot.

5 – I'VEGOTAGIRLCRUSH – Got a very good trip last time, sitting the pocket from the inside post. Moves outside a bit today, and may have to leave the gate a bit hard to get to the right spot. However, he did race from the back two starts ago and closed nicely, pacing home in 27.2. His versatility will help him in here.

6 – ARTISTS RUFFLES – Won two starts ago off a pocket trip, but was parked last time. Put in a very strong effort, holding on for 4th despite the trip. Seems to use his gate speed more from outside post 5, so he could head for the front early.

7 – SHARK FLIPPER – Made an impressive local debut, winning by 8 lengths in a NW2. Steps up in class today so if he goes for the early lead he will have better horses sitting on his back.

8 – DREAMS ARE TRUE – Has lost his last 2 races by nearly 50 lengths combined, and moves to a tougher group today. He'll be a longshot.

9 – SCRUB HANOVER – Comes off a 7th place finish and draws the outside post in here. He was 50-1 last week and will likely be a similar price today.

SELECTIONS: 3-2-1-7

RACE 11 – NW 5500 PACE

1 – PS HE'S PERFECT – Won two starts ago in a much lower level, then was scratched the next week. Returned with a 7th place effort from a bad post on 10/31, and comes back today in a tougher group. Does move inside, but will still be a price.

2 – BETTOR'S DREAM – Had little chance to win last time due to a bad post, but made the most of it with a strong close to get 4th. He will likely be much closer to the action today.

3 – HILLBILLYFAIRYTALE – Got off to a slow start last time which hurt his chances to win. He was also up in class last week from the previous few lines, and faces that same tougher class today.

4 – ZONE BLITZ – I like this one's chances today despite an 8th place finish last time. Qualified twice prepping for his return after 3 months off, then had a bad post in a higher class. Dropped last week to this level but had another bad post. He's a sleeper in here. Don't overlook him.

5 – P H KENNY – Moves out of claimers this week into a conditioned event. Shows one other recent start in this class, a good second place finish on October 1. Hasn't won in a while but has 6 victories this season. Pantaleano chose to drive this one over #3.

6 – FRESH CUT – Makes his Meadows debut today but has been in the Zawistowski Stable. Shows a quick mark this year and is coming off a win at Hoosier, but the win was in a low level and it was on October 19. He's been off since then and was scratched the last time he was entered.

7 – KNOCKING AROUND – Moves up in class today after a win in a lower level. Finished fourth in this class two starts ago, so if others mix it up early, he can pass a few of them late.

8 – REGGIE RAIDER – A slow starter, he'll likely be sitting at the back of the pack most of the way today. Look for him to try to make his move late. Does get a class drop this week, which will definitely help his cause.

9 – SOUTHWIND MONTY – Drops in class this week, and has some early speed to try to overcome the post. Had post 9 a couple of starts ago and raced well, getting to the front early before being covered up.

SELECTIONS: 4-7-9-2

RACE 12 – NW 5500 PACE

1 – STIRLING ESCORT – Broke last time in his Meadows return. Was bet to 4-1 as he was down 2 classes from his prior local efforts. Did well to get back to be only 7 lengths behind the winner at the wire. If he minds his manners today, he can be a factor.

2 – INDIGO ART – Was slated to drop to this class last time, but was scratched. Today he returns but has been off since October 20. He may be a step or two short this week. Keep an eye on him late, and if he has some late pace, he may be a good play next weekend.

3 – HUDSONANDBERNARD – Tried a different tactic last week, but got caught late and finished fourth. Still, I liked the fact that they tried to mix things up. He may go back to his former closing style this week. He's always a factor at this level, and I'm going to take another shot on him.

4 – R N NATE – Had post 9 last time in a higher level and found himself parked for the mile. Ignore that line completely and give him a look today from a much better post in a lower class.

5 – KINGS BEACH – Comes off a scratch, so he's now been off one solid month. He's also up in class, facing a tougher group. He'll be one of the longer shots.

6 – INNOCENT VICTIM – Has finished 8th or 9th in all three starts since the claim. Drops in class this week so he should fit a little better at this level.

7 – BESTINTHEBUSINESS – Drops in class this week, which should benefit him. He's an old class horse, with 46 wins and a sub-1:50 mark, so if he can stay a little closer to the action, he could do well in this level today.

8 – ONE BAD NIGHT – Another one that's down in class, he gets the nod as the morning line choice. I'm a little more skeptical, however, not knowing what kind of trip he's going to get. I think he's going to have to leave the gate to have any chance to win. If he takes to the back, I don't know that he'll be able to make up enough ground.

9 – JUMPIN JAKE FLASH – This one looked good last week, passing horses with a fast final quarter. He gets the worst post today, and the last 3 times he's had outside posts he has raced from the back. Still, I'm going to take a shot and pick him second, hoping that today's the day he'll try to mix things up and use some gate speed.

SELECTIONS: 3-9-7-8

RACE 13 – NW3 TROT

1 – RAILEEGOTAHOLDONME – Was making a very good move on 10/23 in his Meadows debut before he broke, so he's shown that he has the speed to win. That was even more evident last week when he won a qualifier in 1:57.2 after making back to back breaks. If he can stay on stride, he can be vvery good here.

2 – IRISH VALENTINE – Finished second with Brown driving last week and he gets the call again today. This one has yet to win this year, but has been second or third in half of his starts. May not be a contender to win, but he can hit the ticket again.

3 – TRIPLE T SWINGER – It's the same story week after week for this trotter. He drops back early and flies home late.

4 – WHITE LIE – Made an early move last time but faded in the final turn. He'll likely be a little more patient this week and time his move a little differently.

5 – MUSCLE SOUP – Looked good in his Meadows debut on October 11, but since then has made a break then was scratched. He's difficult to handicap today coming off the scratch.

6 – HAUL N DASH – Was bet to 9-5 last time, got a decent trip, but faded to a 32.2 final quarter. He's not an easy horse to handicap today off that line, but I'm going to give him a pass on that one and try him again, hopefully at a decent price.

7 – HUNTNFURABIGN – Moves up to the NW3 level today off several finishes out of the top-5. He'll be a longshot in here.

8 – BLUE LINE SNIPER – On the plus side, this one has raced well in recent starts, and Rawlings chose this one over #10. The downside today is the post position. Hasn't shown a ton of early speed, so if he takes to the back early, he's going to have an awful lot of ground to make up.

9 – IMA JUGGERNAUT – This one put in a very game effort last time, parked for the mile from post 10, getting as high as third in the final turn, before holding on for a fifth place finish in a crowded 10-horse field at Northfield. He joins a new barn today, comes to a new track, and gets the worst post.

10 – MISTY SONATA – This one has raced well in her last three outings, but today is moving up in class and has to start in the second tier. Rawlings chose off this one for #8.

SELECTIONS: 1-6-3-10-2