

### **Fort Erie Selections: Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018**

*The Sunday program features 8 races and my favorite two races on the card are the second and last, as they feature some very tough fillies and mares. Good luck to all the horses, their connections, and those joining us at the track! -Ashley Mailloux*

**R1:** **#4 Master Connor** has had a strong season so far, winning 2 of 5 races and most recently, he finished second to Shot for Shot who closed from far back. Both of his wins this season have been at this distance and against this group, the only runner I could see going with him is the runner to his outside, **#5 Im On It**. If these two do not lock up early, I wouldn't be surprised if Master Connor runs away with this one. **#5 Im On It** returned to the barn of Nick Mileni Jr. last month and enters this race fresh off a win. He found himself closing in the lane after rating throughout to win by a neck. It looks as though the connections have figured him out and he looms large if he can get to **#4 Master Connor**. **#2 Run Run** has yet to really fire this season at FE, missing the board each time he's run here, but he enters a new barn and drops down in class. Could return to form on the drop down.

**R2:** The winner of the Andy Passero Memorial Cup, **#1 About a Girl** has had a fabulous year, winning three of her six starts and only missing the board in her first turf (and only turf) attempt. She's really been content rating just off the pace setters and has been able to reel in those runners. While the horse to her outside usually gets the best of her, this distance is much more suited for About a Girl than her main rival, **#2 Madcap Duchess**. Madcap Duchess has been a force to be reckoned with here at FE, hitting the board 75% and winning 9 of those 20 starts. She's won both of her races this season and the barn has really given her ample time off in between starts. My only concern with her would be the 6 furlong distance, as she almost got caught going 5 furlongs in her last start by my third selection, **#5 Lucky Melissa**. This classy war horse of a mare has a very strong late kick and just missed last time out. She won going 6.5 furlongs and certainly deserves a look against this bunch. Overall, this race looks to be an exciting showdown between some of the stronger mares here at Fort Erie.

**R3:** In his last start, **#4 Hardly Chuckle** ran a nice third in his dirt debut when facing better company. Sum Kinda Fast went straight to the front and never looked back, as he was able to set comfortable fractions for himself sprinting. This three year old son by War Cry figures to handle the turf, as he has been able to work well over the surface in the past and has a running style that will put him in the perfect position to launch in the lane. **#1 Leo's Turn** had his best race all year over the grass against much tougher company. He was beaten by less than 3 lengths when facing maiden special weight company. While his last few races have been lackluster, he looks to rebound returning to the turf and will get assistance from the drop in class and removal of blinkers. **#5 Loosely Brewed** has had his fair share of chances this year, but has yet to break the maiden. In his only turf race, he was able to close some and round out the trifecta. Since that effort, he's been rating just off the leaders so he figures to be closer to the front which should help him chances. In 8 starts this year, he's hit the board 5 times.

**R4:** While **#2 Wild Honey** managed to get a piece of the exotics in her most recent start, it appears as though she did not appreciate the off track. She closed really nice in her prior race at this distance over the main track, but was unable to do the same over the sloppy track. She looks capable of the win honors, but will need some pace to run at. She'll be making her third dirt start today. **#4 Lady Driven** is the newcomer, making her career debut for owner and trainer Kevin Buttigieg. This filly has had decent works throughout and it looks as though the connections were in no rush to get this filly to the races, which I really respect. Not sure where she figures to be in here, but jockey Melanie Pinto is fantastic with getting horses out of the gate. Exiting the same race as Wild Honey, **#3 Super Spice** is another runner who had a bit of an excuse last time out over the off track. The distance might have also played a factor, so the slight cutback should be to her benefit. When looking at her past performances, she lacks stamina is worth considerations in the bottom of the exotics.

**R5:** Losing his 2 most recent starts by just a neck, **#4 Grin n' Bear** looks to find his way back to the winner's circle. It's evident that he loves this dirt surface from his race record, posting a 3-4-0 record from 8 attempts. He's had a month to prepare for this race and the barn has really been on a roll lately. He'll pick up the services of a new jock today, Juan Crawford. The only horse that has beaten him this year is **#5 He's Etain**, who also shines at FE. He hasn't missed the board here at FE in 2018 and in his 2 defeats, he finished second and third to Gold Shark, who won the Bob Summers Memorial Cup, which is the race He's Etain exits. With some intense speed in this race, I'd expect this one to track the leaders which appear to be **#4 Grin n' Bear** and **#6 Like Your Excuse**, who has been on a bit of the win streak. He's won his last two and last time out, he absolutely ran away with it after setting very hot fractions throughout. Today he'll get a class test, as he has yet to take on starter allowance company. Not sure he'll hang in for the top honors, but he is bold on the front end.

**R6:** Trainer Sharon Ceccato has been doing well with runners making their first start for the barn and **#2 Magical Breeze** certainly looks live against this group. He broke the maiden two starts back in a turf route and even though he broke slowly, he was able to get up just in time. He's been facing tough competition throughout his career and in his most recent he seemed to bounce over the tapeta when facing winners for the first time. I really like him getting back on the grass and while the distance is shorter, it looks as though he'll like the two turns. **#7 Berkeley Boy** really stepped it up last time out. After failing as the favorite on the dirt when facing winners for the first time, the connections moved him up from \$4.5k claiming company to a turf allowance. He led for part of the event, but was unable to hold off the heavy favorite Hey Howie and ultimately finished second. It appears that this level is much more in reach for this runner and it wouldn't be a shock to see him perform very well. **#1 Dundurn** walked away in his most recent start over the sloppy main track. It was his dirt debut and he went to the front and was able to control the pace. While he's raced over the grass 5 times, it's always been against much better. Interesting angle moving from dirt to turf.

**R7:** **#7 Afleet Doll** has showed up in each of her races here at Fort Erie, regardless of the surface. Two starts ago, she found herself on the main track after her scheduled turf event was moved and she didn't even bat a lash. She just missed by a neck to **#2 Night Gathers (IRE)**. Most recently she drew clear of the field in a similar event, clinching her second lifetime win. While she'll return to the dirt, it's clear that she steps up each time here and really gets along quite nicely with Melanie Pinto. Very capable of the repeat. New to the barn of Ken Albu, who wins with new acquisitions at 30% from 20 starts, **#5 Connors Seniorita** also comes into this race fresh off a win over the grass. She'll be making her turf debut today, but with such strong performances over the tapeta, it looks as though she'll transition easily. This three year old filly by Spaniard is very consistent, posting a 2-1-2 record from 6 attempts. Returning to her preferred distance today, **#2 Night Gathers (IRE)** bounced last time out, finishing last. It looks as though 6.5 furlongs was too far and maybe she needed some time off. She's had over three weeks to get back on track and looks capable of the exotics, as she certainly does well over this course and at this distance.

**R8:** Dropping significantly in class, **#5 Our Miss Maggie** only missed this board in her first start this season and has impressed at FE, winning two of her races by a combined 20 lengths. She's faced some very tough fillies and mares all season and has showed she can handle her trip being adjusted. In my opinion, she's the one to beat. Morning line favorite **#8 Skippy is Back** ran nicely in her 2018 FE debut over the grass, but after making contact with another runner she was revoked of the win and moved to second. Most recently, she showed a ton of speed up at Woodbine, but folded in the lane. This mare has proven herself over the dirt, but it's been over a year and half since she's raced on it. Could return to form while making her second start off of a two month layoff. My longshot of the day **#4 Quality Assurance** has not raced since October 2017 but she has recorded all five of her lifetime wins over this surface. There looks to be a fair amount of speed in here and her stalking style figures to help her. The barn does extremely well with new runners, winning at 29% from 28 starters. Very curious to see how she runs in her 2018 debut.