

# **Craig Donnelly's**





Craig has been involved in horseracing for 50 years as a handicapper, journalist, linemaker and analyst. He began his career in 1969 handicapping the races for the Miami Beach Sun. Beginning in 1971 he began picking winners for the Philadelphia Inquirer, where he remained for 37 years. Craig has also been a linemaker for the Atlantic City Racecourse and The Meadowlands, where he was the program oddsmaker and television co-host for seven seasons.

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MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025 – FIRST POST 12:40 P.M.

SECURED LANDING (7th) - DR. STEVE (8th) **Best Bets:** 

#### Race 1

- SONADORA GIRL Battled throughout in race taken by stretch-runner; high percentage stable.
- COULD BE A COUGAR Dropped again but finished behind top choice as 7-5 chalk; weight off.
- BUCKS SOME Ten-year-old mare with 10 victories and \$434,345 in bankroll could upset.
- GIA'S FUEGO Shook loose and just lasted and likely one to catch with logical next step.

#### Race 2

- ALYVIA'S GIRL Middle move then faded in mud at loftier level; key third outing since return.
- FLAG SONG FLYIN Rallied despite poor start behind runaway winner; often bottom of exacta.
- INCAN MOON GODDESS Much closer than odds suggest at Delaware but winless 12 local tries
- RAVENITE Far back twice since maiden score in bulky and compact fields; fits with these.

#### Race 3

- MISSOURI RIVER Overcame early trouble in upset win; Pino stable 32% off claims this year.
- MOSE PERFECT Speedy gelding keeps firing and top pair from latest won next time.
- SMOOTH FLYIN MIKE Drops notch and runs big race on occasion; Ness-Sanchez combo.
- HOKU Switches back to main track where he has competed well lately; likely gaining late.

#### Race 4

- WAITWAITDONTTELLME Primed for sprint dueling throughout in game route showing.
- CREATIVE COPY Claimed from 8 of 11 attempts this season and loves to win; must respect.
- LA CIENEGA Likely ability advantage but shelved since February and outrun after layoff before
- GOLDCREST Humbled by runaway winner in route and best efforts earlier in season.

#### Race 5

- GOTMISTYONTHEMIND Fired again when trying blinkers and faces soft opposition.
- HURRICANE JANE Forced pace this far in route but outrun by top pick previously; 15 chances.
- BAHAMIAN BABY Difficult to support off latest but prior three outings stamp contender.
- FAUX PAS Professional maiden with 25 losses but back against own kind and can't dismiss.

#### Race 6

- SWEET LAURA Strong rally behind impressive winner and sufficient early targets for late kick.
- SHETALKSTOMUCH Powerful stretch-runner claimed by Lupe Guerrero and retains Adorno.
- PEARLS AND HEELS Game mare victim of traffic problems after claim; seeks 11th victory.
- TARA'S TALENT Nine-year-old mare captured three of last five starts; must put pair together.

# SECURED LANDING – Nearly prevailed in game effort despite ducking out sharply at start. 3 ASMODEUS – Talented road warrior edged in local bow after absent three months; dangerous. 5 CISCO KID – Speedy and improving gelding claimed for \$25,000 and tests stamina again. 4 TRANSCENDENTAL – Forced pace in "key" race after arriving from Kentucky; best needed. Race 8 1 DR. STEVE – Terrific gelding always fires and battled talented field locally in July; inside trip. 4 BERNIE'S MITTS – Overmatched in Parx Sprint but excellent effort previously; promising "bug." 2 SHERIFF RONNIE – Defeated top choice at Penn and another who gives maximum effort. 6 BOLT OF AURUM – Tremendous ability but sidelined 11 months; faces rugged field for Duarte. Race 9 3 BAILOUT BILLY – Could prove fastest of field packed with front-runners; shakes loose on turn. BROOKLYN RHAPSODY – Dueled to mid-stretch when severely bumped; can rate off pace. CALISA – Used up after stumbling start and crushed maidens after layoff in prior outing.

MAGGIE MISCHIEF - Double-digit romp in softer company but faces early pressure this spot.

# SARATOGA HARNESS (12:00) Mike Sardella

RACE #1. 6-5-2-1

1ST

6- DRACO S

Drops off back to back eight holes

2ND

5- DUCKDODGENDIVE

Another dropper

3RD

2- TIKTOK ROY

Favored and should be but could be

RACE #2. 7-3-1-4

1ST

7- LETS GO NORTH

Runner up in both locally, ready to win

2ND

3- THE GREENWAVE

The legit threat to the top one

3RD

1- ALEXANDRIABLUECHIP

On the board in both since coming to town

RACE #3. 1-2-6-3

1ST

1- KJ TITLE

Rail off a tough first over trip

2ND

2- OLI CANOLI

Steps up off a career best win

3RD

6- MISS BLISS

Thirds in three in a row

RACE #4. 4-1-2-7

1ST

4- BOUQUETS FOR ALL

Steps up off a career best score

2ND

1- BOBCAT

Moves all the way in after getting parked in his Spa debut

3RD

2- MAIS OUI

Consistently hits the board

RACE #5. 2-1-3-5

1ST

2- KNOWYOUCANDO

Drew post eight when moving to this class, in a good spot today

2ND

1- OKEECHOBEE JET

Rail for his return to town

3RD

3- FULL SCALE

Always close but has been coming up short

RACE #6. 1-3-2-4
IST
1- IKON VANG DK
Pole control for his second start back, call
2ND
3- IMMIGRANT AM S
Local debut off a win at Yonkers
3RD
2- SEND IT IN HANOVER
Always gets a piece

RACE #9. 1-3-2-5
IST
1- GOTTAKEEPONDREAMIN
Rail off a strong second, best bet

IST
1- GOTTAKEEPONDREAMIN
Rail off a strong second, best bet
2ND
3- NIFTY FIFTY
Next fastest
3RD
2- QUITE LIKE ME

RACE #10. 1-7-2-3 1ST

2- BJMS LIL MAN

Inside trip

1- MAKIN NO BAKIN Chance at the mild upset from the rail 2ND

7- OSODEVIOUS Consistently first or second 3RD

Stakes star faces some older ones today

RACE #11. 3-5-6-4
1ST
3- MARCELLO HANOVER
Looking to shake his seconditis
2ND
5- HONOLOULOU

Motored home to be second at 33-1 last week 3RD

6- DOMINION

Showed some good things when closing for minor spoils in last

RACE #12. 5-4-2-1 IST

5- EURO CRAZY Could offer value in a wide open race

2ND

4- DEVIOUS MOON

Fast enough to beat these but has lacked winning pop

3RD

2- D A ALEXANDER

Consistently second or third

RACE #13. 2-3-1-4

2- REMEMBER TITANS Swooped the group in last, call to repeat 2ND

3- OCEANVIEW MASSEY Value for second

3RC

1- BBC SPORTSBOY Moves all the way in

4- CAPTAIN CHESLEY

# LAKE'S LUCKY PICKS

# FINGER LAKES RACETRACK SELECTIONS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

Lake's Lucky Picks uses years in the horse racing business and horse sense to regularly track runners, see trends and watch each race, in an effort to provide you with a greater insight on racing from Finger Lakes Gaming & Racetrack.

RACE 1	# 6 2 4	HORSE GIANT AT WORK LAST OF MY KIND TAMBAM	COMMENTS CAN COME RIGHT BACK OFF MAIDEN VICTORY BACK TO REGULAR PILOT AFTER POOR EFFORT OUTRAN ODDS AFTER STEPPING UP OFF CLAIM
2	1 6 4	HYPNOTIC FLAIR WORLD BANK OUTTA THE CLOUD	CAN TRIP OUT FROM INSIDE POSITION OUTSIDE SPEED WILL BE IN MIX LONGSHOT CHANCE TO MAKE THE NUMBER
3	4	MAX FOSTER	TOUGH CUSTOMER WHEN HE BRINGS "A" GAME
	5	MISTER J T	WAS OVERLOOKED LAST TIME AND JUST MISSED
	1	NUTSIE	DROPS BACK DOWN TO LEVEL OF CLAIM
4	6 4 2	MONTAUK MEMOIRS PROBABLY FLATTERY SALTY RYAN	SLIGHT EDGE IN WIDE OPEN MAIDEN DASH LOGICAL TOP THREE THREAT FROM TOP BARN WELL-BRED COLT HAS POTENTIAL TO POP HERE
5	2	EDDIE MARIE	WAS CAUGHT UP IN EARLY SPEED DUEL LAST TIME
	5	JULITA	NEW FACE HAS PLENTY OF UPSIDE HERE
	6	BIG ADVANTAGE	UNDERNEATH TYPE CAN BE USED IN TRIS & SUPERS
6	5	I'M SOLO N IN LOVE	GOES FURTHER AFTER GOOD LOCAL DEBUT
	2	SANZIO	WON FIRST ROUTE AND LOOKS LIKE MAIN THREAT
	7	GRAY HAIRED GUS	SCRATCHED OUT OF STAKE FOR THIS SPOT
7	2	MR. RIPPLE	REMAINS UNDEFEATED AT THE LAKES
	4	BERNING BEAUTY	LOGICAL PLAYER IN PRESENT FORM
	5	AZ U CHASE ME	HAS TO BE RESPECTED WITH THESE CONNECTIONS
8	8	GO LONG	TAKES FINALE IF CAN HANDLE SURFACE SWITCH
	1	AWAITING TRIAL	HARD TO LEAVE OUT BREAKING FROM RAIL
	6	RACERX	RESPONDED TO DROP WITH BETTER FINISH
RACE 6	# 5	BEST BET I'M SOLO N IN LOVE	RACE # LIVE LONGSHOT 2 4 OUTTA THE CLOUD

The selections are purely recommendations, and success is not a guarantee. Track surface conditions, scratches, and other factors may change and can affect the way the selections would be made. Watch the TV broadcast for further updates. Bet with your head, not over it



# Monday September 29

Race 1 - 6-1-5

Race 2 -2-6-1

Race 3 - 3-4-5

Race 4 - 4-2-3

Race 5 - 5-6-4

Race 6 - 2-4-5

Race 7 - 2-4-3

Race 8 - 7-3-2

Race 9 - 7-8-2

Race 10 - 3-1-5

Race 11 - 1-3-2

Race 12 - 2-4-3

Race 13 -2-4-3

Race 14 - 1-2-7

Race 15 - 3-2-6



# Thistledown (12:50)

# **FIRST RACE**

6 Don't Cross Jack Diaz A I

7 Majestic Flag Rivera L R

4 Fat Daddy Martinez M L

# **SECOND RACE**

3 Geegee's Story Rivera L R

2 Style in Time Chavez A

6 Chapter and Verse Barbaran E

7 Don'tdrainmypocket Salazar Becerra F

# **THIRD RACE**

3 Fiona Salazar Becerra F

5 Elika Houghton T D

6 Passionfortreasure Rodriguez A

# **FOURTH RACE**

3 Spooky Little Girl Ramgeet A R

5 Power Banker Fernandez V R

6 Dance Drama Diaz A I

# FIFTH RACE

6 Kat Trax Diaz A I

5 High Fire Rodriguez A

4 Mission Girl Salazar Becerra F

# **SIXTH RACE**

1 Panamaniac Gonzalez L A

5 Box Step Houghton T D

3 Danza Magic Diaz A I

# **SEVENTH RACE**

5 Gamboling Ghost Barbaran E

3 Royally Flushed Chavez A

2 Finistere Salazar Becerra F

# **EIGHTH RACE**

1 Pittsburgh Fernandez V R

3 Not Yet Charlie Salazar Becerra F

2 Cugine Perez R A



# INDIANA GRAND (2:10)

## FIRST RACE

7 Show Me Justice Gutierrez J R

6 Reachin Out Bermudez S E

5 Practical Justice De La Cruz F

### **SECOND RACE**

4 Scenic Justice Bermudez S E

1 Jenny's Beignet Gutierrez J R

6 Mansfield Tiger Mojica O

#### THIRD RACE

3 Ace Reporter Ramos J D

1 Evil Intentions Prescott R

4 D' Kitten Esquivel E

#### **FOURTH RACE**

1 Neon Leon De La Cruz F
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5 A Champs Dream Romero J M

4 Ain't No Disco Achard A

2 Nastinate Hernandez J N

#### FIFTH RACE

1	Zappera	Elliott J
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3 Fascinator Pauly S

8 Acousticat Gutierrez J R

9 Rockaway Reef Burgos A

## SIXTH RACE

4 C'Est Magnifique Achard A

7 Mr Oklahoma Murrill M

5 Track Ranger De La Cruz F

6 Enjoy the Cracken Leahey H

#### **SEVENTH RACE**

6 Wishmaster Murrill M

1 Ketchum Mojica O

8 Pupil Doyle S

5 Forum Pedroza M Jr

#### **EIGHTH RACE**

3 Si O Si 9 Tempest Jill 2 Glitter Queen 10 Screamin Nina

#### **NINTH RACE**

8 Boujee Blood 7 Too Catch a Legacy 9 Valiant Beacher



## The Empire Report - Monday, September 29, 2025 - Race Analysis

RACE 1 – (2) ALL ALONE has been very sharp for some time, and that includes last week's sizzling 1:51.2 front end score – he absolutely deserves top billing, but he does go for a new (small) barn tonight, so be careful about falling in love at too short a price. (1) JUST ENUFF STUFF was sent off at 3/5 last week despite moving up to 40s (off the claim), but he faltered badly on the lead – drops back down to 30s, drops right back in the box, and could bounce right back with a much bigger effort. (4) ALWAYSCUTTINSCHOOL is a solid performer at this level as long as he lands on a decent trip – decent chance to grab a small piece. (5) C BET HANOVER is usually a big price, but often rallies well to outrace his odds – never a bad one for the bottom of exotics. (3) LOUS THE ATTITUDE dropped in for a tag last week and had some pace finishing for 4<sup>th</sup> – chance for another small piece tonight. (6) CAP TAIN PARADISE had pace in his last pair but from tough spots – might have been listed higher if not for the awful draw. (7) WELL THATS MARKY has been racing well but he steps up in class off the claim, and figures to be hurt badly by the draw. (8) PINE BUSH ITALIANO will be hard pressed to get into the hunt from out here

RACE 2 – (2) SLIP THE HUNDY N has really elevated his game since joining this barn 4 starts back, and shouldn't have any trouble handling the class jump after last week's dominant front end score – solid chance to take another. (1) KINGSVILLE leveled off in his last few after a nice form spree just prior to that, but the rail draw and class drop could see him rebound with a sharper try tonight – could be dangerous with the right trip. (4) HELLABALOU has obviously lost a bit on his fastball this year, but he can still be a legitimate player at THIS level – leaning to the top two, but he'd hardly be a surprise. (3) DEUCE HANOVER has been thriving for his current barn and was a very sharp 3<sup>rd</sup> last week, in his local debut – he's forced to move up TWO classes tonight, but that 20-1 ML price does make him at least a little intriguing. (5) LUCAPELO A seems off his best game right now, but that doesn't mean he can't grab a share with an easy enough trip. (6) WINDSUN RICKY can do damage at this level, but probably needs a better draw to do so – might look better with a class drop, next week. (7) SOUTHWIND CELSIUS is just 9-1-0-0 at YR this year, and his best recent PcD tries have come vs. easier – tough draw for his local return. (8) THONG CONTROL gets hit with Post 8 AND a double class jump tonight – sticking with others

RACE 3 – (8) DUNKIN has certainly been off his best game recently but he did appreciate last week's easy pocket trip behind heavily favored CATALPA RESCUE A, and was easily 2<sup>nd</sup> best (chasing the sizzling:26.4 final quarter) – he gets major class relief here, and has the speed to at least find a manageable trip despite Post 8 – giving him the tepid nod. (1) ROCKIN JUKEBOX was well backed from Post 8 last week and used a fast start to pick up a nice 2<sup>nd</sup> (behind #2) – if #8 doesn't fire tonight, he could be a very strong player from this spot. (6) AARDIES FLASH N missed 2 months after a lame scratch on 7/7, qualified back nicely and finished crisply in his (PA) return try off the conservative steer – if the board suggests he's "live" tonight, he's more than capable against these types. (2) MY UL TIMATE BYRON A picked up his first victory in some time last week, helped by a beautiful trip – gets a good draw, and should be part of the equation here too. (3) TWIN B DELUXE has enjoyed an excellent year but does seem at least a bit off top form right now – minor share? (5) THE IDEAL DANCER A has been solid since the barn change but may need to be in a little easier to be a threat for the top slot – ok for minor spoils. (4) ROYAL DESIRE saw his 3 race winning streak end abruptly last week when he got on a line leaving and made a break – he now has to face tougher, and that has us leaning towards others. (7) MANFERNO qualified quietly after a month off and the guess is that he'll be very conservative tonight as well, after drawing so poorly.

RACE 4 – (4) ULYSSES was sharp in NJ after joining a barn that has really excelled with fresh stock, then turned in an excellent try here at Yonkers too, finishing just behind a razor sharp ALL ALONE in that hot 1:51.2 mile – this is a solid field, but we'll still give him the narrow nod. (2) ALTA CLASSIC A was on an excellent roll before a sick scratch, followed by Post 7 – moves back inside, and would be a serious player if he's ready to deliver his best effort (1) DONTLIKEITLEAVE has raced very well since dropping to 40s and that includes his last (even if it's hard to tell from the line) – he may have been the top choice if Bartlett was here tonight, but he's tougher to endorse at that 9/5 ML price with the switch to Miller. (5) SMOOTH LOU was content to trail from Post 8 last start but that was on the heels of a win, and a pair of very narrow nose losses—another that becomes a threat on his best effort (7) MUSIC HALL is in raging form, even managing to hold 3<sup>rd</sup> last week after getting caught in a suicidal speed duel – no luck at the draw for his new connections, however, and it may be tough to overcome Post 7 without a big helping of trip luck. (3) WALKINSHAW N doesn't feel like a threat to win, but he's a steady player with a chance for a piece, with a trip. (8) PYRO has struggled in all his starts from outside posts lately – sticking with others. (6) AMERICAGREA TAGAIN just feels overmatched, especially from Post 6

RACE 5 – (2) CAMOUFLAGE MONEY is a streaky sort that came to life with the 22-1 upset two back, then confirmed it was no fluke with last week's solid finishing 4th (from an impossible spot) – he loses Kakaley to #6 (he stays loyal to his best account), but Kelly can get the job done as well. (5) SOUTHWIND PETYR hit board in 6 of his last 7 starts, and was actually very good the week that he didn't – he finished with good pace last week despite getting bothered on turn three, and looms a solid threat for tonight. (4) LYONS BENJAMIN had been looking a bit off his best game recently but was definitely a solid 3rd last week – belongs in exotics, and maybe even a chance to come out on top. (1) HEAVEN ON HIGH N was a dullish 4th off the barn change last week but it's way too soon to write off his chances – if he's live on the tote board, perhaps give him some extra consideration. (7) SCRIBBLERS moved back to his favorite barn last and was able to deliver a form reversing victory, even if helped by a "fall apart" race vs. cheaper – this feels like a tough spot, but maybe he can rally for a share? (6) REIGNING DEO was terrific in that victory 3 back, but he hasn't been nearly as good in any of his other starts– leaning elsewhere (3) GALANTE A is just 1 for 21 at Yonkers over the past 2 years – prefer others. (8) I DRAINTHESWAMP A lands Post 8 after missing 3 weeks – good week to observe, for next time

RACE 6 – (1) SHAKESPEARE finished alertly 2 back (off the claim) then was very sharp taking his last, even if the trip worked out beautifully (at a very generous 12-1 payoff) – his price will surely come down tonight, but he does have a legitimate chance to repeat. (4) CUT N RUN N was razor sharp when he went on the shelf back in Feb. – he returned after missing 7 months at the \$60K level, but dropped to 30s for his next – he was an excellent 2<sup>nd</sup> that night, was raised to 40s for his last, and raced super once more, even if 2<sup>nd</sup> best to #2 – should be a big player again tonight. (2) SPEAKER OF PEACE worked out a very nice trip off the barn change last week and rallied to a solid victory – he goes for another new barn tonight, but also gets a new pilot...would need a decent price to look for him to repeat. (3) SADDLE UP is tough as nails, and that's why he's won an incredible 20 of his 41 local starts – he's also making a move to 40s tonight, while moving to a barn that's just 2 for 50 here in 2025...demand a decent price if he's your top pick. (5) GOLIATH HANOVER dropped back down to 40s last week (after a try at the \$60K level) and just wasn't sharp at all – possible, but leaning more towards a few to his inside. (8) SLING SHOCK draws Post 8 for his new barn after getting brutally parked last week – terrible spot! (6) ITALIAN LAD N is very camera shy, but can grab pieces (at nice price) sometimes – maybe 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>? (7) GDS THUNDER GB wasn't bad trying the 40s last week, but likely needs a much better draw to compete at this level

RACE 7 – (2) PANETTONE HANOVER can throw some big efforts when things go his way and last week was a clear reminder – he's moving up a peg, but these types are still within his comfort zone, when sharp – the good draw should make him a big threat to repeat. (5) WASA HEAT SEEKER N was hurt when SOHO SANTORINI A left (and got rough) to his inside last week, was parked out as a result, and deserves a complete pass – he's used to facing better, has 2 local wins on the front end and may be able to get there tonight – worth considering. (1) MYULTIMAT EBAXTER N worked out a nice pocket trip last week and was a solid 2<sup>nd</sup> best – he's in line for another good journey tonight, with a chance for another nice chunk. (6) SOHO SANTORINI A probably should have been 2<sup>nd</sup> in his 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. start (ended up 3<sup>rd</sup>) then was a bit disappointing again last week, forced to drop in 3<sup>rd</sup> after getting steppy on the first turn, then drifting in the lane and costing himself a chance at 2<sup>nd</sup> – he'll put it all together sooner or later, but he'd need to be a decent price to use on top tonight. (7) ROCKMYSTER N has been holding form nicely, and not a bad bomb for the bottom exotics…even from out here. (3) DEETZY will attract some attention off the class drop but the mega-classy 13YO has been off his game for some time, and feels pretty iffy at the moment. (8) POP IT hit board in all 3 starts since a short layoff, but has much to overcome tonight with the terrible draw. (4) HYPEBEAST could probably use some class relief, though is eligible here for minor spoils, with an easy trip

RACE 8 – (7) JAMAICAN ROCK A hadn't done much to really distinguish himself in Australia so it was certainly surprising (to say the least) to see him rattle off wins in his first 6 U.S. starts, including 3 straight Invitationals here at Yonkers – he did finally get beat last week, but was still 3<sup>rd</sup> to CAPTAIN ALBANO (and COACHES CORNER) in the Grade 2 Aria Invitational, despite being parked from the start going 1 ½ miles – tough spot here for sure, but still worthy of top billing. (4) SOHO FIRESTONE A had a tough time in the Aria, stuck at the back then bolting to the rake yard after a break on the final turn – he qualified back super, and did finish 2<sup>nd</sup> to #7 in his prior 2 starts – maybe he can turn the tables tonight? (2) WHATS STANLEY GOT A found his form a couple of months ago and has held it right up to this top level – he was an excellent 2<sup>nd</sup> last week, and not a bad one to consider if looking for a longshot play. (6) MOSSDALE BEN N finally showed the gate speed we assumed he had last week, but ended up viciously parked through fractions of :26.3, :53.4, and 1:22...yet still was able to get by the leader into the stretch and almost hold 2<sup>nd</sup> – he's clearly ready to win one, making the 2<sup>nd</sup> start for his new listed trainer -