



Craig Donnelly's

ANALY\$IS\$
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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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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024 – FIRST POST 12:05 P.M.

Best Bets: ALANI (8th) – PACHELBEL (9th)

Race 1

- 9** JUMP A FOX – Gained going short and long since Moore claimed; overruns soft foes in 21st try.
- 1** NORHO'S GAMBLE – Dueled odds-on winner in second try for Jones barn; speed along inside.
- 6** WHISKEY AND RAIN – Signs of interest lately and bulk of losses on turf; another long time mdn.
- 4** PICARDY – Finished just behind pair of these but stamina issues persist; merits some attention.

Race 2

- 9** MUSICAL HEART – Nine-year-old with 10 victories battled drop-down winner and drops notch.
- 4** FAST BOB – Offers frequent terrific closing kick but failed at short odds in last; obvious threat.
- 10** OLLIEMEISTER – Fired in four straight with various running styles; threat if puts it all together.
- 6** PYLON – Sharp in last four outings and from 22% Irving Rodriguez barn; competitive field.

Race 3

- 7** FAST MULE – Cruised wide past opposition improved effort; steps up within same claiming tag.
- 6** SOLEMN OATH – Beaten favorite last week and takes plunge for 22% Pino barn as key threat.
- 8** AMATERASU – Far behind when overmatched but six-time winner should regain closing kick.
- 1** LAMASCO – Probable pacesetter from same barn as second pick; wired in September route.

Race 4

- 13** PONTIFFANY – Led to final furlong despite absent nearly three months; game mare drops again.
- 4** GAVICHI – Pressed heavy favorite before tiring at loftier level last week; speed to pose threat.
- 6** JURADICIAL – Exits same race as second pick with decent showing; outran soft group prior try.
- 2** AWESOME PAL – Brief early trouble behind decisive winner this spot; 13 lifetime victories.

Race 5

- 1** LEFTOVER SUSHI – Defeated single-winners after arriving from Indiana; third finisher won next.
- 10** MADE BIRDIE – Gained late in good effort with similar after claim; won three races at Monmouth.
- 4** INDEPENDENT – Led under pressure and continued gamely this level; prior defeat in route.
- 9** KHOZY COLBY – Edged some of these last month and remains eligible as three-year-old.

Race 6

- 1** HYACINTH BUCKET – Defeated maidens after layoff when adding Lasix; takes logical next step.
- 8** NAMORA – Sufficient ability but hampered by early trouble; threat for Ness with alert break.
- 4** PAINT ME BEAUTIFUL – Speedy but just lasted with big lead in 13th try; extra sixteenth mile.
- 3** DARK DUTCHESS – Drops switching turf to dirt but hinted at main track ability earlier in year.

Race 7

6	AARAJ – Solid effort this spot as favorite and outside stalking trip may prove beneficial.
4	SIR PALACE PRINCE – Drew away after dueling in “key” race; chased streaking winner prior try.
7	CHINESEIAM – Prominent to stretch in route but likely better suited this yardage; fits nicely.
8	HOT LOVE – Competing better than odds suggest last pair but lone score from 36 outings.

Race 8

2	ALANI – Romped at Laurel after edged locally by Saratoga shipper; always gives her bes
4	RECONCILE – Led to final furlong as 3-5 chalk following hiatus despite stumbling at start.
1	BEAUTIFULCRAZYGIRL – Rallied then yielded with tough company in last; dam won 10-of-28.
6	BEAUTIFUL BOLT – Soundly beaten in last but prior try after layoff encouraging; upset chance.

Race 9

8	PACHELBEL – Powerful closing stretch-runner among best claims of year; seeks third in row.
2	AMBITIOUSLY PLACED – Eventful trip as odds-on chalk after taking four straight; gets Sanchez.
9	ÉCLAIR BLANC – Game filly offered wide closing bid when benefitting from contested fractions.
1	ET’S MOON MAIDEN – Improved speed when used up dueling in finish taken by stretch-runner.

Race 10

9	BOBBY THE TANK – Claimed for higher tag by hot Padilla barn; enough left to handle these.
6	OCTOBER BLISS – Trailed this level after changing barns but crushed routers in prior outing.
3	NICOLE’S KING – Used up dueling in route and tries sprinting first time for new connections.
5	BIG BEEMSTER – Sharper in past but can’t dismiss competing cheapest ever with leading rider.