



Craig Donnelly's

ANALY\$IS

@parxracing



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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SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2025 – FIRST POST 12:40 P.M. -THE PREAKNESS STAKES

Best Bets: BANJO (7th) – TALIESIN (8th)

Race 1

- 5** AULA – Hard used dueling in longer test captured by heavily-favored stretch-runner; hot barn.
- 4** PIT BOSS – Tired after Arce stable re-claimed in race taken by smashing winner; can be rated.
- 3** MR. HUSTLE – Finished ahead of second pick when dropped to this level; switches to “bug.”
- 2** LEVEL UP – Last couple discouraging but takes significant drop and formidable in past.

Race 2

- 4** MISS RAUCUS – Remote fourth in much tougher field and should handle soft opposition.
- 5** HURRICANE JANE – Far behind in last but returns to amount of claim; signs of life earlier.
- 7** NORHO'S GAMBLE – Possible pacesetter with alert break but stamina woes persist in 22d try.
- 3** BAHAMIAN BABY – Closer than odds predicted last month; sheds 10 pounds in 26th outing.

Race 3

- 1** REDOUBTABLERIPKEN – Hinted at ability in debut but shelved since August; might wire inside.
- 5** OLD MARSH – Tried various surfaces at Gulfstream and threat this level returning to main track.
- 4** GRAND COMMANDER – New Yorker drops into claimer and removes blinkers; major threat.
- 6** SAMS AFTER PARTY – Prominent throughout in weaker field at Penn; makes presence felt.

Race 4

- 5** SKINNY JOEY – Excellent speed when leading throughout and claimed; could shake loose again
- 3** MCKIRGAN – Stretching out again with realistic drop and should be gaining late this level.
- 1** SHEER DOMINANCE – Very slow fuse but closed huge gap behind quick early fractions.
- 4** WILD CAPTAIN – Plunges after poor showing but fired in four previous attempts local routes.

Race 5

- 6** GUAPONESS – Appears in peak form and capable in front or from off pace; seeks fourth straight
- 4** GET SET – Frequently close but failed at short odds last pair; often forms bottom of exacta.
- 2** JESTER'S SONG – Victim of early trouble after layoff at Laurel; strong local outing last summer.
- 3** FINAL SHOT – Ten-year-old lightly raced but ample heart and ability; nearing half million bank.

Race 6

- 2** AVA K'S BOY – Sharp again in tougher version this spot and re-claimed by Diaz; short odds.
- 1** PYLON – Fading early again but offers speed inside and boasts 8 local victories over years.
- 3** JEBOLOGIST – Heavily-backed and survived pressure in softer field to end long loss streak.
- 5** BARGAINING POWER – Contributes to contested pace but usually comes up empty in stretch.

Race 7

7	BANJO – Used up setting rapid fractions this spot in longer test; nearly always fires for Catalano
1	LUCCHESI – Wore down leader to end long losing skid and seems well-spotted for Solis stable.
6	MUNYHUNGRY – Prompted pace long way in route and overmatched prior try in local bow.
4	MALIBLUE – Plenty of early zip and hampered by poor starts last two local races; faces pressure

Race 8

2	TALIESIN – Battled huge favorite in latest after overmatched Aqueduct; impressive win January.
3	SHUBAGAIL – Used up dueling with solid Pa.-breds after crushing lesser in bow; main danger.
6	STRESS RELIEVER – Raced sparingly but aggressive drop for Ness barn after \$40,000 claim.
7	E T'S GYPSY ROSE – Caught tiring pacesetter in maiden score but likely tested with these.

Race 9

4	HOUGHTON SHUFFLE – Ultra-consistent shipper nearly beat rugged rival; back after 12 days.
6	REPO ROCKS – Million earner on rare losing streak but back sprinting and often excels locally.
5	WINDSOR GOLD – Another determined score with closing kick; strong record with Haddock up.
1	ONE MORE SCOOP – Sharp effort in first start of season; upset possibility with some progress.

Race 10

3	CHELSEA WALL – Failed on road trips and overmatched last local try; fits against this kind.
5	RUMINT – Changed barns again and stretches out with speed and proven route ability.
2	TITOSCHANGEDMYLUCK – Roughed early then dueled eventual winner after Solis barn claim.
4	GUN RUNNIN' GAL – Decent effort this spot but eligible for softer company; best needed.

Race 13 PIMLICO – THE \$2,000,000 PREAKNESS STAKES

2	JOURNALISM – Powerful runner-up effort in Ky. Derby after winning three straight graded stakes
8	CLEVER AGAIN – Romped twice at tough Oaklawn meet after long absence; likely tries to wire.
6	RIVER THAMES – Solid try in Blue Grass after edged by Ky. Derby winner Sovereignty at Gulf.
1	GOAL ORIENTED – Baffert runner perfect in two starts and takes major jump; \$425,000 purchase