



# 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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**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 – FIRST POST 12:40 P.M.**

**Best Bets: LOST AND CONFUSED (8<sup>th</sup>) – METALHEAD (9<sup>th</sup>)**

### Race 1

- 7** **DEPOLI** – Solid effort despite poor start when easily second best; set to end long losing skid.
- 1** **BIAGIO** – Fair showing at loftier level after prevailing on road trip; draws rail and usually fires.
- 4** **EMPIRE SKY** – Romped on Monmouth turf and appears to handle various surfaces as threat.
- 2** **OKIE DEN DEN** – Back at preferred yardage with Lopez and already proven he fits with this kind.

### Race 2

- 4** **ENCRYPT** – Sharp after two month hiatus when returning from Kentucky; conqueror good again.
- 1** **BOTTLES** – Front-runner captured 5 of 11 attempts and claimed again; likely to shake loose.
- 3** **RIVER'S GAMBLE** – Failed to offer true measure on wet surface and back around two turns.
- 2** **SKULL HONOR** – Claimed for \$16,000 at Monmouth and hit board all four local outings.

### Race 3

- 4** **SCUDETTO** – Eliminated at start in latest after upset winner at Monmouth; late bid anticipated.
- 1** **STARLORD** – Probable favorite plunges after costing \$16,000 earlier; dangerous this level.
- 2** **MYSTIC LUTE** – Good speed but weakened late when runner-up again; Pino barn at 37% here.
- 6** **PONTIAC** – Forced pace when humbled by smashing winner; must put it all together.

### Race 4

- 5** **EXPECT TO BE READY** – Game mare rebounded from poor showings to wire latest as longshot.
- 2** **IRIE EMPRESS** – Chased capable group at Penn after crushing local rivals in mud; dangerous.
- 4** **GUN RUNNIN' GAL** – Absent over two months but drops notch and won this spot in May.
- 1** **TIZ RACE DAY** – Weakened late under pressure again and likely pacesetter again from rail.

### Race 5

- 6** **JUST CHEESY** – Trounced maidens in 13<sup>th</sup> attempt; possible repeater with renewed confidence.
- 1** **JUST BE HONEST** – No match for runaway winner in Jersey and fired this level locally in July.
- 5** **COACH KNIGHT** – Hard-earned score in softer field and remains eligible as three-year-old.
- 7** **RENARD** – Trailed badly after layoff but takes significant drop and can't dismiss this level.

### Race 6

- 4** **SHEZA BERNARDINI** – Improved effort after claim by hot Miguel Rodriguez barn; sharp in Jersey
- 3** **POPOVER GAL** – Re-claimed soon as possible by Diaz stable when failing as odds-on chalk.
- 2** **MENDED WE STAND** – Finished just ahead of top pick and boasts seven victories from 39 tries.
- 6** **DENALI RAE** – Far behind in mud but Pino barn winning next out with third of claims.

### Race 7

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| <b>2</b> | <b>NUEDORF</b> – Pair of decisive scores for Pino barn; worked quickly for step up in class.       |
| <b>1</b> | <b>NINJA PRIZE</b> – Last couple far from his best but formidable when right and Kirby stable 27%. |
| <b>4</b> | <b>LUCKY DUDE</b> – Disliked wet surface as usual and claimed from six consecutive attempts.       |
| <b>3</b> | <b>AMAZING WOO</b> – Speedy gelding used up in taxing duel in “key” race; early pressure again.    |

### Race 8

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| <b>5</b> | <b>LOST AND CONFUSED</b> – Lacked room on final turn in tough field; impressed in prior outing. |
| <b>3</b> | <b>GOLDEN ICE</b> – Bargain claim closed big gap to win again and taking realistic next step.   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>MAD BANKER</b> – Outrun at Delaware but romped last local start; back in with claim tag.     |
| <b>4</b> | <b>MISSOURI RIVER</b> – Upset capable group despite early trouble and won twice with Lopez up.  |

### Race 9

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| <b>6</b> | <b>METALHEAD</b> – Heavily-backed when outrun in quick event; much closer than odds predict prior. |
| <b>2</b> | <b>MY KID SYD</b> – Promising effort after hiatus and moves to Danny Velazquez barn as threat.     |
| <b>1</b> | <b>ORTHO STAR</b> – Broke slowly in bulky field and performed well earlier at various meetings.    |
| <b>3</b> | <b>ONE IMPROBABLE</b> – Good speed elsewhere and first try for Pino barn; some progress needed.    |

### Race 10

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| <b>4</b> | <b>LEX</b> – Pressed eventual winner in strong effort and just missed two prior tries at Delaware.   |
| <b>8</b> | <b>OTTER MISCHIEF</b> – Battled throughout again as 4-5 chalk and obvious threat in strong field.    |
| <b>7</b> | <b>COLONEL BOB</b> – Back home sprinting on main track where he scored in June; figures close.       |
| <b>2</b> | <b>MR. BOGAN</b> – Nearly always fires and sharp again after Ness took; rates off pace if necessary. |