Race 1 Selections

2 MACH MAJORETTE was a major letdown in her latest as we felt she was a prime candidate to win if not "the one to beat" as we wrote at the time. Well, not only did she not win, she wasn't even the chalk. Oops. What she did do was get away eighth of 10 in a race that lacked flow. She eventually fanned five-wide and traveled 40 feet more than the winner only to be held to fifth.   We won't make any more grand pronouncements until she wins but we will give her the benefit of the doubt in a field of eight.

4 MIRACLE MATTY looks like a serious threat to the top pick after closing in the three-wide path and finishing second to the odds-on Dawn Shooter. She is generally well-spotted which gives her the upper hand on the notoriously slow starting Mach Majorette, but if you base any decision on head-to-head matchups, you have to know that she was an inside third when Mach Majorette finished a closing second on 06/08. On the other hand, Sylvain Filion makes a good last minute replacement for Bob McClure who has nine drivers at Grand River.

5 BRITTLE was good enough to claim second behind the 6-5 winner Dorabella when she contested this class on 06/29. I'd feel a lot better about her if she wasn't 1-for-17 this year and 2-for-57 over two years. If there's a reason to abandon the top two and switch to this one it's the scratch time naming of Louis Roy.

7 GOSSIP MODEL will have to be a bit better than she has been if she's to win on this circuit. She did win her latest at Georgian (before being set back for a pylon violation) but when she cut 7/8ths of the mile on 06/14 she helpless to hold of Mach Majorette and Miracle Matty.

ON THIS DATE…
1934 – Mary Hirsch became the first female to be licensed as a Thoroughbred trainer in North America.
1969 – Tammy McNiven, born

6 HILL OF A COLT didn't get the job done when he dropped into the class from the ultra-tough Graduate Series on 06/22 but the fact that he has missed some time since that race tells me that he may have had some kind of an issue that took a while to resolve. It should also be noted that front-end speed did not hold up well on that particular program.

2 SETANTA caught my eye on 06/22 when he passed two in the lane and wound up third to a well-meant and under wraps Amoureuse Hanover. He was in pretty tough on 06/30 so we cast him in a supporting roll and everything worked out largely as planned. Here he gets another shot at the NW4 class but rather than facing horses dropping from stakes races and the NW7 class, as was the case last week, he's in with the credible Hill Of A Colt plus a collection of B-track shippers, low percentage winners, and class-climbers.

4 SAFEKEEPING was added to the Watch List after the 05/25 race in which she passed seven in the last quarter mile. Unfortunately she was off-stride shortly after the start on 06/08 and a that flushed a lot of money down the drain. The Win pool bettors largely ignored her on 06/16 and she very nearly pulled off an 8-1 upset as a result. She's a threat at NW4 and with four starts since her December-May holiday, she is due!

1 SWEET LOYALTY is the only one in this race that is coming off a win. That may sound like a positive but in reality it means that he's moving up the class ladder. He won't find an easier trip than the one he got last time so we're in no rush to back him in the Win position.

ON THIS DATE…
2005 – Magna Entertainment Corp. announced that Great Canadian Gaming Corp. had agreed to purchase Flamboro Downs

1 FADE gets top billing in this race even thought she failed to connect in her latest at Grand River. First off, it was an OSS Gold race, not an overnight with B-track regulars. Second, she set an honest pace with Roselily breathing down her neck (from first-over) while the eventual winner, Future Headlines, watched from the pocket. The Colin Johnson-trained Future Headlines was also the race favourite after finishing a very respectable fifth in the $440,00 Fan Hanover where she was race-timed in 1:50.1. Quite simply, there are none in here quite like Future Headlines, thus top billing for Fade.

4 AMERICAN SARA last raced on 06/26, just like Fade, and she was one-fifth of a second faster. The catch is that she paced her 1:54.1 mile here at Mohawk whereas Fade was racing on the half-mile track at Grand River Raceway. There's a huge difference! To her credit, American Sara rebuffed her challenger and drew off to win under wraps.

6 BID WRITER was no match for the Gold fillies on 06/26 but in her defence that was just her second start of the season and she got off to a slow start from the eight hole at Grand River. She looked better last week when third in a three-way photo with the ultra consistent Shewearsthepants and the recent New Zealand import Jewelonthebeach. If you want to play against the top two picks, you could do much worse than this filly in her fourth start of the season.

5 NOW AND AGAIN certainly deserves a shot at an $18,000 purse after tearing up the B-tracks for roughly $3500 a week. But can she be expected to beat two stakes-tested fillies who will start to her inside? I'd love to say yes, and if "time" was the only consideration, her last mile over Georgian would be pretty good justification, but I just don't see her being left alone on the front. In that last race at Georgian she faced just four other starters and the second favourite was a B-track regular with a 1-for-20 record over two years.

8 LUCKY SPORT is one of four starters in this race to have already visited a winner's circle. In his case it was a very impressive effort in an overnight race right here at Mohawk. (The other three winners posed for their photos at Vernon Downs, Hiawatha Horse Park, and Harrah's Philadelphia). I like the fact that he's had one start over the track (two if you count the qualifier) as others are shipping in for the first time. That may not mean much with older pacers but it does with babies and trotters. Finally, Lucky Sport used a 27.3 third quarter move to the top and a 28.1 kicker to widen on a decent group whereas others in here have had fast last quarters but not back-to-back fast quarters.

2 SIMPLE KINDA MAN is the main danger and some would say the one to beat now that he has been dropped off at the Scott McEneny barn and paired with Doug McNair for his OSS debut. While he doesn't have any world class siblings, his dam is a sister to a host of good ones including the 47-time winner ART DIRECTOR (h, Artiscape) p, 2, 1:56h, 3, 1:49.3 -'04 ($1,123,734) and the aptly named SPEED DEMON (g, Life Sign) p, 2, 1:51.4f, 3, 1:51f, 4, 1:48.4s -'06 ($771,604)

4 DANCIN DOUG turned in a last quarter of 26.4 in his debut race but could not get within 2-1/4 lengths of the impressive Goth Hanover. Thankfully Goth Hanover has drawn into the second division (Race 8) which certainly bodes well for Dougie. I won't rule out a thing, especially with McNair "offing" Simple Kinda Man.

5 TASTE OF HISTORY might be able to drop the required time given that he was such an easy winner in his debut at Harrah's Philadelphia. I can see him taking charge from Post 5 but wonder how he'll fare when Lucky Sport comes calling. It's simply too early to make any definitive calls.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO ELIGIBLES ($175,000E; Eliminations July 31; Final Aug 7)**: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9**
METRO PACE ELIGIBLES ($700,000E; Eliminations Sept 16; Final Sept 23)**: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8**

7 FOREVER LIZA wouldn't be a complete surprise at this level but she will need her best effort. I'm more inclined to watch tonight and hope she finds an easier spot next week. Of course that's what we wrote prior to her 06/30 race at NW16000L5. She succeeded in driving a win from her "last five" and now is rewarded with a minor class drop. The fact that she took an inside trip, lacked room at three-quarters, and was "right there" once the rail opened up is encouraging even if she didn't have enough to win.

5 PRETTY HOT drops in class for the second time in as many starts and is now racing at the level at which she was a winner on 05/26 and 05/06. One major difference between this race and the field she faced on 05/26 is that presence of other class dropping contenders. She was one of two class droppers in the 05/.26 race (and by far the most attractive) whereas here she's in tough with the class dropping Forever Lisa and to a lesser extent Lights Go Out and Mattjestic Tempo.

3 ART ANGEL BABY must be considered even though her 1-for-14 record leaves a lot to be desired. She wound up in a photo last week when treated to a ground saving trip at this same level. To get back into the class, trainer Ciaran Morrison had to risk losing her for a $25K tag (plus allowances).

4 LIGHTS GO OUT should appreciate the drop but I can't justify more than a top-four call when she's still looking for her second win of 2017.

ON THIS DATE…
1997 – Ray McLean Sr. made his final drive, finishing third at Elmira with the Mark Horner's Smattering
2002 – Howard Beissinger won the Invitational at Goshen's Historic Track. He was 79 at the time.

3 CASE DISMISSED was our pick for third in the 06/23 race in which she was a vet scratch (lame). At the time we reasoned that Dazzling Rockette was a better option based on her last few races at that same class. Case Dismissed was moving up, after all. In the end Case Dismissed was scratched and Dazzling Rockette won at 3-2. Would be stand by that pick if they faced each other today? Tough call as DR has since been a good third at an even tougher level while CD has missed some time. The one thing in Case Dismissed's favour is that one of her stablemates (P L Idaho) has been tearing up the track since we last saw this one. If it's contagious, she's a winner!

2 WINDSONG MAGNIFIQUE looks a lot better here than she did at NW10000L5 and she was favoured at that level! The catch is that she faded badly and has missed close to a month in the meantime. And therein lies the reason for backing her! Carmen Auceillo has got her on the Lasix program and she is back to a reasonable level with the optional claiming price.

6 D GS PESQUERO returns to the level at which she was a 5-1 winner after a pocket trip on 06/02. You can read too much into this particular angle as horses who are dropping in class often show a win five or six lines down the page (the reason they had to move up in the first place). In this case the win was just four back and she fits the class on the much broader "NW16000L10" clause.

8 SHES A MANIAC plunged from $15K to $8500 for her 06/20 race at Georgian and that caught the eye of trainer Travis Cullen. I don't see a solid reason to back her at NW6000L5 but then it is possible that Cullent will bring out the best in a 57-time winner!

2 JUMP JIVE AND JAM is a serious threat if not the one to beat now that she is back from a brief stint at Grand River. She was forced to move up the ladder after a win against similar on 05/19, but when she found the NW4 and NW10000L5 class a bit too much, trainer Bill Budd put her on a truck to Elora. She came very close to winning on 06/21 but unfortunately she was locked in until it was too late to haul down the wire-to-wire winner. Last time out she had Post 8 and simply went to the back as one would expect of a 28-1 shot. It's a whole different story when she drops and draws inside. Beware!

3 FASHION ROCKER has been close in most of her recent races without actually winning since 04/07 at London. I like the way she finished off her last mile, however. She got home in 28 and was still closing when they hit the wire. Of the two who beat her, Artistic Madison has since moved up and fared badly while Buttermilk Hanover was a 21-1 upset winner again better on 07/30.

4 NINETTE B wasn't a factor in her 06/30 debut for trainer Joe Pereira but I can see her turning things around at some point. Could it be as soon as tonight? Trevor Henry was named on two in this race and he opted for Jump Jive And Jam which would seem to suggest the answer is no.

8 ALPHABET QUEEN is worth a look now that she has won a protracted battle at Grand River. She took a while to return to winning form but her odds suggest that it was foreseen. She'll almost certainly need to come up with a career best to win this one.

1 TRUE REFLECTION didn't have much trouble with a lesser group on 06/23. I don't think she's a good candidate to double up given the class hike and the fact that Louis Roy sided with Fashion Rocker.

1 GOTH HANOVER rates a slight edge in an OSS race that features one starter from most of the big barns. There isn't a horse in the field that we can definitely rule out, although some are clearly much more attractive than others. At least in Goth Hanover you get a Casie Coleman-trained winner – and one of just two winners in the race. Who knows if he'll be at the head of the class in the Metro and Breeders Crown, but in the first OSS test of his career he does appear to be sufficiently "advanced" to win.

3 MY TEEN IDOL was a very easy looking winner in his 06/30 overnight debut. Doug McNair didn't have to do much more than pull the right line at the three-eighths pole and then ask for a little something more in the stretch. He responded with a 27.3 last quarter to win by a safe margin over a very "steppy" Sports Legend. This looks like a tougher assignment.

9 SOUTHWIND GRIZZLY didn't pass any horses in the last quarter of his final Big M prep and in fact he let one bet by him in the last eighth despite pacing home in 26.1. A pair of high profile Jimmy Takter pupils finished 1-2 in that race, the runner-up being a full brother to PURE COUNTRY (m, Somebeachsomewhere) p, 2, 1:51f, 3, 1:48.2, 4, Q1:48 -'17 ($1,973,077).

8 BACKSTREET SHADOW might be poised to drop a few seconds now that he hits a fast track. He was on a track rated good-1 and basically in a race of his own on 06/30. Beware!

2 SPORT LEGEND didn't get any respect in his 06/30 debut and as we mentioned earlier, he did put in a few bad steps. If it was something that Moreau could fix in a week he'll probably be heard from.

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4 SANDBETWEENURTOES must be considered every time she goes behind the gate in the f&m-Preferred. She won't win every time, but she must be considered. That's what we wrote last week when she did indeed ace in the f&m-Preferred. She didn't win but she did do pretty well for a mare that was 10 lengths off at the half. Tonight's drop to NW29000L5 doesn't sound like a huge class drop but it should be enough to put her back in win mode. The last time she race at something other than the top class (or a stakes race) was on July 8, 2016 when she dropped out of the Roses Are Red to race at NW25000L5. She didn't win, but closing from 10th at three-quarters to finish second by a neck was a minor miracle.

1 REQUEST FOR PAROLE has been a while between wins and she has had three shots at conditioned types. That's about the only negative comment that we can come up with for Request For Parole. On the flip side, she has been a very solid second in her last three – once after being roughed up (06/16), once after being too far back to catch the favoured PL Hurricane (06/23), and of course last week when second to Wrangler Magic AND more than a length in front of Sandbetweenurtoes.

5 WIGGLE IT J can be a factor at this level if she just gets away better than she has in her last two starts. And that's a distinct possibility now that she has drawn mid-gate.

2 SOLAR SISTER is yet another one that might thrive outside the f&m-Preferred class. She's just two starts into her season but now un-raced since June 17. Hmm.

7 LYONS RIVER PRIDE looks better here than she did at the top class but even here she's probably third-best, at best.

6 EXHILARATED is a lot like Lyons River Pride in that she will appreciate the drop but still will require her best effort and a whole lot of luck to win.

3 MISCHIEVOUSGIRLS hasn't been given top billing for some time but it's probably time to reconsider. The drop from NW6000L5 to NW3000L5 may not seem that significant but it is! Quite simply, if a horse fits this class, it has either been doing "okay" at the B tracks or struggling on this circuit. The key is to find one that was good or very good just before moving up the ladder and that's Mischievousgirls to a tee! She was the favourite when she won at NW6000L5 on 05/12. Consider that for a moment. Not only was she racing at a higher level than what she's at tonight, but she was the public's choice.

8 KATHERINE B is an interesting option for those who don't mind B-track shippers. The naming of Louis Roy from the outset–and him dropping Mischievous girls–is the main selling point in my opinion. However, it's not clear why Billy Davis wasn't the original driver on our top pick so we're sticking with Mishchievousgirls and treating the driver change at scratch time as a red herring.

5 HEX is an interesting option for those who don't like winners. She'll probably need something other than the first-over trip that has backfired twice in a row, but at least she is dropping back to the bottom class. She is also 1-for-16 with the lone 2017 win coming at Flamboro.

7 BLACK WIDOW BABY is a bit like Hex in that she's 1-for-21. That's where the similarities end, though. Hex has taken proactive approaches whereas Black Widow Baby often gets away towards the back and hopes for advancing cover. Last time out she went 30 feet more than the winner and was held to fourth.

4 JUSTABIT MEAN has longshot potential after moving up for one week and actually finishing in the hunt. She wasn't particularly close to the winner but she was involved in a three-way photo for third, fourth and fifth. And at 28.1 her last quarter was best of the bunch.