



RACE BY RACE SELECTIONS

by Ron Nicoletti

Thursday, April 30, 2026

RACE 1:

8 OPERATION TORCH is turning back to a mile after returning from the layoff to finish a set the pace second vs this level going a mile and a sixteenth on the grass. Jimmy Toner has leading jockey Samy Camacho named to ride. **5 PEPPERMINT MAN** is dropping and racing without blinkers after vying for the lead and weakening vs \$25,000 claimers going 8 ½ furlongs on the turf. Ron Spatz spots the gelding perfectly in the opener. **7 GIURO**, who does his best running from a stalk/close position, can end up sitting a winning trip, especially if the top two hook up in a spirited duel.

SELECTIONS: 8-5-7

RACE 2:

3 HARPY is stretching out after chasing solid early fractions and finishing third vs similar quality going 5 ½ furlongs in the slop. She can get brave if left alone on the front end. **2 NEW LEASE ON LIFE**, a well meant second at this level distance last out, can surely pick up the pieces if the top choice fails to negotiate the distance. Frank Regalbuto has Leonel Reyes named to ride. **5 ARMY MEDIC** is hoping to save more for the stretch drive after setting the early pace and finishing third vs this familiar competition. Heather Smullen, who also trains the top choice, has Jonathan Ocasio atop this half of the uncoupled entry.

SELECTIONS: 3-2-5

RACE 3:

4 GALLANT KNIGHT, a reclaim by Rohan Crichon, turns back to six furlongs after dueling for the lead and finishing second vs this level of opposition going seven-eighths of a mile. Edwin Gonzalez rides. **3 BLESS AMERICA** is turning back to a sprint distance on the dirt after tracking the pace and flattening out vs \$10,000 open claimers going around two turns on Tapeta. Carlos David, 19% with the turnback move, has Leonel Reyes managing the combo turnback/surface switch. **2 SWEN**, now in the Henry Collazo barn, the gelding returns locally after the consistent campaign vs similar quality on the Tampa main track. Apprentice Yolber Torres rides.

SELECTIONS: 4-3-2

RACE 4:

1 BALL UP TOP is going back to the main track after returning from the eight-month layoff to finish second vs this level of competition going five furlongs on Tapeta. Kent Sweezey has hot jockey Diego Herrera overseeing the surface switch. **6 VALI VALI VAL** is dropping to the \$35,000 level on the dirt after shipping down from Tampa to finish third vs maiden special weight competition going 5 ½ furlongs on Tapeta. The daughter of Valiant Minister, who is 3 for 3 in the money on the dirt, has Paco Lopez rationing her speed. **3 MO TOWN SOUL** is a daughter of Mo Town debuting for trainer Ron Spatz with a consistent morning work tab showing. The tote action should tell us more.

SELECTIONS: 1-6-3

RACE 5:

1 SOPHISTRY moves to the Jose D'Angelo barn via the claim and makes her first start since setting the pace and finishing third at this level and distance during December. The barn, 23% with new claims, has the daughter of Mitole working consistently for the return.

7 STORM WEST, 2 for 3 on Tapeta, which includes a sprint victory, returns from the layoff for owner/trainer Joe Orseno, with Paco Lopez named to manage the 5 ½-furlong distance.

6 SARA'S ROSE moves to the Nick Tomlinson barn via the claim and races with blinkers in the first start since finishing a troubled starting (bounced around) second vs \$8,000 three lifetime claimers during February. The daughter of Omaha Beach is working well for the return to action.

SELECTIONS: 1-7-6**RACE 6:**

1 MYTHICAL MAN is dropping to the \$35,000 level and returning to the turf, after following a second-place finish at this level on the grass with a duel and fade performance vs \$50,000 starter optional claimers going a mile and seventy yards on Tapeta. Beau Chapman, who claimed him two starts back, has Miguel Vazquez quarterbacking the surface change.

3 JAYHAWK is stepping up the competition after notching its second consecutive victory when defeating \$20,000 claimers going a mile on the lawn. Bobby Dibona has Diego Herrera in the saddle again. **2 RELAMPAGO VERDE**, another from Bobby Dibona, is returning to the grass after holding on gamely to defeat \$25,000 conditioned claimers going a mile and a sixteenth on Tapeta. The barn, 33% with the surface switch, has Leonel Reyes on this half of the uncoupled entry.

SELECTIONS: 1-3-2**RACE 7:**

1 CALDERA, who was stakes-placed during 2025, returns from the year layoff for new trainer Saffie Joseph in an ideal spot to rekindle past glories. The six Palm Meadows workouts indicate the \$500,000 son of Liam's Map is ready to fire. **2 SKELLIG MICHAEL** is making his first start since defeating \$20,000 state-bred optional claimers, as the even-money favorite, during January. Victor Barboza Jr has the gelding training forwardly for the return. **4 LOU THE BODY** is stepping up the competition after responding in the first race after the claim by Victor Barboza Jr with a seven-length drubbing of the \$6,250 claimers going seven furlongs. The two-time winner at the distance has Paco Lopez at the controls again.

SELECTIONS: 1-2-4**RACE 8:**

2 COME ON POPPI is turning back to 7 ½ furlongs after returning from the layoff to finish a chase the pace second at a mile. The screws should be tightened in the second race off the bench. **6 ARTISTE** is a daughter of Munnings, out of the Blame mare Assertive, debuting on the turf with solid grass breeding on both sides of the family tree. The sophomore will be tested for class at the \$17,500 level.

1 HOT COCOA, who is 2 for 5 in the money on the turf, stretches out on the grass after returning from the layoff to finish second going 5 ½ furlongs on a sloppy track. Mary Lightner adds blinkers and has Joe Bravo at the controls.

SELECTIONS: 2-6-1**BEST BET: RACE 1 – 8 OPERATION TORCH****LONGSHOT: RACE 6 – 1 MYTHICAL MAN**