

# JANUARY 3, 2015: LAUREL PARK STAKES IN FOCUS

Welcome to *Stakes In Focus* -- your key to unlocking profits during Laurel Park's big, four-stake card on January 3, 2015.

We've enlisted four handicappers to share their selections with you. And on the pages that follow, you'll also find data and analysis that's not available anywhere else: tips and trends that you can use to drill down into the card.



You can use these to turn a profit -- and to win our FREE handicapping contest, featuring Laurel Park, on Saturday. Go to [www.TheRacingBiz.com](http://www.TheRacingBiz.com) to enter. Good luck!

RACE	TED BLACK ( <i>racing journalist</i> )	GARY QUILL ( <i>Horse Racing Nation blogger</i> )	JO TALBOT ( <i>'Capper</i> )	FRANK VESPE ( <i>The Racing Biz</i> )
1	1. Dreams Of Monaco 2. Pennie My Love 3. Latasense	1. Latasense 2. Complimenting 3. Joann's Girly	1. Complimenting 2. Dreams of Monaco 3. Pennie My Love	1. Complimenting 2. Dreams of Monaco 3. Pennie My Love
2	1. Sonny Inspired 2. Sniper 3. Vexor	1. Sniper 2. Pax Orbis 3. Whyprolongtheagony	1. Pax Orbis 2. Sonny Inspired 3. Negrito	1. Sonny Inspired 2. Negrito 3. Pax Orbis
3	1. Pot of Gold 2. Grand Mast 3. Rocky Romano	1. Pot of Gold 2. Peaceadaaction 3. Grand Mast	1. Peaceadaaction 2. Don's Honour 3. Grand Mast	1. Rocky Romano 2. Don's Honour 3. Peaceadaaction
4	1. Kippy Fox 2. Luna Brava 3. Middle Jewel	1. Start Swinging 2. Stardust Lill 3. Miss Edmund	1. Start Swinging 2. Notably Awesome 3. Luna Brava	1. Luna Brava 2. Middle Jewel 3. Getaway Keys
5 - What a Summer S.	1. Lady Sabelia 2. Winning Image 3. Disco Barbie	1. Lady Sabelia 2. Vicki's Dancer 3. Sounds of the City	1. Lady Sabelia 2. Winning Image 3. Disco Barbie	1. Lady Sabelia 2. Disco Barbie 3. Winning Image
6 - Fire Plu S.	1. Castaway 2. Bakken 3. Smash And Grab	1. Bakken 2. Castaway 3. King Henry	1. Bakken 2. Smash and Grab 3. Castaway	1. Smash and Grab 2. Cutty Shark 3. Bakken
7 - Nellie Morse S.	1. Miss Mischief 2. Star Pearl 3. Before You Knew It	1. Miss Mischief 2. Unbound 3. Zucchini Flower	1. South Andros 2. Star Pearl 3. Zucchini Flower	1. Zucchini Flower 2. Miss Mischief 3. South Andros
8 - Native Dancer S.	1. Turco Bravo 2. Stormin Monarcho 3. Elnaawi	1. Cosmic Gold 2. Stormin Monarcho 3. Cerro	1. Cerro 2. Stormin Monarcho 3. Cosmic Gold	1. Cerro 2. Stormin Monarcho 3. Wealth to Me
9	1. Cover Price 2. Coco Knows 3. Peppermint Prince	1. Coldblack 2. Cover Price 3. Sportswriter	1. Super Robusto 2. Cover Price 3. Ore Pass	1. Ore Pass 2. Super Robusto 3. Mr. Flexible

# WHAT A SUMMER STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 5 (2:29), \$100,000 purse, Fillies and mares, 4yo and up, 6 furlongs
- **STORYLINE:** Several runners are hoping to stamp themselves contenders for February's Grade 2 Barbara Fritchie in a field expected to include the top three from last year's running.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** Red-hot Lady Sabelia dazzled in the Willa on the Move, and a repeat of that effort could leave her foes in the dust.

## OUR HANDICAPPERS SAY:

1. **Lady Sabelia (#6, 1-1)** -- Our four handicappers agree: Robin Graham trainee is the likely winner. A winner of three stakes in her brief career, she's won her last two in flashy style, bursting away to win an allowance by nearly five and then the Willa on the Move by over seven. The only negative: speedy Winning Image immediately to her outside.

### TIPS 'N' TRENDS

*(Stats for 2 wks ending 12/31 unless noted)*

- 2 of last 17 winners wired the field.
- 10 more were within 3 lengths at first call.
- No horse breaking from the rail won in last 17.
- 9 of last 17 winners broke from position 6 or farther out.
- Avg. post position of last 17 winners: 5.9
- For the meet, no strong post position bias: Horses breaking from 1-5 won at a 12.9% clip.
- Horses breaking from 6 and out won at 12.3% clip.

2. **Winning Image (#7, 9-2)** -- Almost \$750,000 in earnings say you can't fault anything this eight-year-old has done in her well-managed career. She won three of eight last year, has won both her Laurel starts, and brings usual rider Tony Black along for the ride. Look for her to be on the engine early.

3. **Disco Barbie (#4, 6-1)** -- Pure Prize mare rallied to be second -- but a very distant second -- to Lady Sabelia last out in the Willa on the Move -- the eighth stakes placing of her career, four against graded foes. Typically a closer, she might get a friendlier setup here if the top two choices hook up early. She has to win a stake one of these days -- doesn't she?

### RACE FACTS

- ✓ 29th running
- ✓ 10 have been contested at 7 furlongs, the rest at 6
- ✓ Named for Maryland-bred mare What a Summer, winner of the '77 Eclipse Award as champion sprinter
- ✓ Silmaril (2007-2008) is the only horse to win the race twice; her granddam, Kattegat's Pride, also won, in 1982.
- ✓ Stake record holder: Xtra Heat (2003), 1:09.43

# FIRE PLUG STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 6 (2:58), \$100,000 purse, 4yo and up, 6 furlongs
- **STORYLINE:** Three of seven runners in this modest group are seeking their first stakes win.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** If he posts, lightly raced Chad Brown shipper Bakken is the horse to beat in this crew. Though eighth, he was beaten less than four lengths in the Breeders' Cup Sprint and also was a close-up second to the very good Palace in the G2 True North.

## OUR HANDICAPPERS SAY:

1. **Bakken (#3, 4-5)** -- Six 94+ Beyers in seven tries, a good second in the G2 True North, and a better-than-it-looks finish in the Breeders' Cup Sprint all make this son of Distorted Humor the choice.

2. **Smash and Grab (#5, 5-1)** -- Laurel-loving local runner (six-for-eight over the strip) enters in good form now with three wins in four tries and an excuse when seventh in the De Francis. Trouble sign: five stakes performances on the page all leave something to be desired.

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### RACE FACTS

- ✓ 19th running
- ✓ There have been two repeat winners: Ah Day and Broad Rule
- ✓ Broad Rule's 2014 win was trainer Dickie Small's last stakes win before passing away.
- ✓ 3 jockeys have two wins in the race: Forest Boyce, Mark Johnston, Jeremy Rose.
- ✓ Stakes record: Digger (2010), 1:09.13

3. **Castaway (#2, 6-1)** -- David Jacobson trainee ships into a track where he's run well in two starts. Most recently was third behind Smash and Grab in an allowance test. The winner of a division of the 2012 G3 Southwest Stakes at Oaklawn, he hasn't faced stakes company in more than 30 months.

# NELLIE MORSE STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 7 (3:27), \$100,000 purse, Fillies and mares, 4yo and up, 1 1/16 miles
- **STORYLINE:** Suddenly good Before You Know It aims for a fifth straight win, but more accomplished rivals may have other plans in a wide open heat.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** All-surface runner Miss Mischief has a class edge here but will have to overcome farthest outside post at a distance that favors the inside.

## OUR HANDICAPPERS SAY:

1. **Miss Mischief (#9,3-1)** -- A stake winner on both dirt and synthetic already, this Dale Capuano trainee has one oddity in her record: six wins -- but no seconds or thirds -- in 14 races. Victor Carrasco replaces the injured Trevor McCarthy in the irons.
2. **Zucchini Flower (#5, 6-1)** -- Graham Motion runner was

### TIPS 'N' TRENDS

*(Stats for 2 wks ending 12/31 unless noted)*

- 6 of last 8 winners broke from the 4-hole or closer to the rail.
- 1 of last 8 wired the field.
- 4 of 8 were six or more lengths behind after a half-mile.
- 4 of 8 had the lead after three-quarters of a mile.
- Clear inside bias over the course of the meet.
- 16 of 53 races -- 30% -- were won by the horse breaking from the one-hole.
- Horses breaking from the 5-hole and inside won at a 15.9% clip.
- Those breaking from outside the 5 won at a 11.7% rate.

nowhere in the Grade 3 Go for Wand last out, her first try in two months. But her better efforts, including a pair of solid tries in graded company this year, make her a contender here. Of concern: winless in seven tries in 2014.

3. **South Andros (#1, 8-1)** -- Last was not good for this Rodney Jenkins trainee -- but don't judge too harshly on that one. It was her first in three months, and it came against a good group of boys. Late-running sort may need some pace assistance, but a step forward would put this stakes winner in the mix here.

## RACE FACTS

- ✓ 32nd running of a race inaugurated in 1941 at Laurel as the Queen Isabella, then put in mothballs from 1950 to 1990.
- ✓ Namesake was one of five fillies to win the Preakness.
- ✓ The race has been contested at three different distances, ranging from 1 mile to 1 1/8 miles
- ✓ Only one jockey has won the race in consecutive years: Douglas Dodson won aboard Hall of Famer Twilight Tear in 1944, and then again in 1945 aboard Good Blood.

# NATIVE DANCER STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 8 (3:57), \$100,000 purse, 4yo and up, 1 1/16 miles
- **STORYLINE:** Mike Trombetta trainee Cosmic Gold goes for a fourth straight win against a solid group headlined by Stormin Monarcho, winner of three stakes in 2014.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** Speedy Cerro will look to give 'em the slip and hold off the closers, including Stormin Monarcho and Turco Bravo.

## OUR HANDICAPPERS SAY:

1. **Cerro (#1, 5-1)** -- Irish-bred has won three of his last four by doling out the fractions and, breaking from the inside, figures to try to do the same here with Cecily Evans in the irons. Faltered last out at 1 1/8 miles and should appreciate the cutback to 1 1/16.
2. **Stormin Monarcho (#8, 2-1)** -- You can't fault this Jacobson trainee's 2014, which included three stakes wins

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and more than \$260,000 in earnings. He won the Dickie Small over the strip back in November, and if he can work out a decent trip, will be a handful in the lane.

3. **Cosmic Gold (#9, 8-1)** -- Is this six-figure Mineshaft colt ready for prime time? Trainer Mike Trombetta thinks so, as he moves him into stakes company after three straight easy-as-pie wins against allowance sorts. His last, though impressive, came against just three rivals.

### RACE FACTS

- ✓ 47th running
- ✓ Named for the great Native Dancer, the Hall of Famer whose only loss in 22 career starts was a second in the 1953 Kentucky Derby and who stood stud in Maryland for a dozen years
- ✓ Inaugurated in 1966 at Bowie, it remained there until 1985, when it shifted to Laurel.
- ✓ It has been contested at distances ranging from 6 furlongs to 1 1/8 miles.
- ✓ 2 horses have won it twice: Christopher R. (1975-76) and Little Bold John (1986-87).
- ✓ Third time the race will be conducted at 1 1/16 miles.