



# In Focus

**Laurel Park stakes  
General George Day  
February 16, 2015**

*For more, visit [www.theracingbiz.com](http://www.theracingbiz.com)*

**The Racing Biz**

**LaurelPark**  
A Stronach Group Company

# G3 GENERAL GEORGE HANDICAP

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 9 (4:27), \$250,000 purse, 3yo and up, 7 furlongs
- **STORYLINE:** Quality shippers and speedy locals collide in a wide-open race.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** De Francis winner Zee Bros returns to the scene of his biggest win and hopes for the same scenario -- speedy Smash and Grab compromised at the gate.

## RACE ANALYSIS:

1. **Bourbon Courage (5-2)** --Kellyn Gorder trainee has done a little bit of everything -- in his last four, he's run (against graded company!) at distances from six furlongs to 1 3/16 miles. If there's a knock against this hard-hitter, it's that he doesn't win much (four times in 21 starts). Ran a fast-closing fourth at 21-1 in last fall's Breeders' Cup Sprint, which makes him more than classy enough here, and shows a solid work tab for his '15 debut.
2. **Misconnect (10-1)** -- Lightly raced four-year-old dials back to a distance at which he owns two wins and a second from three tries. Has a single stakes placing from four tries for trainer Bruce Levine. Stalked, led, but then emptied out to be fourth in the muddy Jazil. Talented runner, tall task.
3. **Praetereo (10-1)** -- Formful seven-year-old has won two straight for trainer Michael Moore, edging Javerre (also here) two back in the Valley Forge. Not sure how enthralled to be with last-out allowance win, as place horse had been keeping starter allowance company previously. Owns three wins at the distance and in good enough form that it's worth a shot, but these are some rugged foes.
4. **Smash and Grab (8-1)** -- Laurel-loving speedster obliterated allowance foes at the trip last out, and that was a quality group (place horse Behemoth just missed in the Campbell). The caveat: he was loose on the lead that day, and it's probably hard to see a repeat of that here. Has won seven of 10 at the track and owns two wins at the distance. Xavier Perez has the call.

## RACE FACTS

- ✓ 40th running, begun at Bowie in 1973.
- ✓ Race has been contested at three different distances, from 7 furlongs to 1 1/16 miles.
- ✓ Fastest running at 7 furlongs: Greenspring, 2010, 1:20 4/5

## TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ 27 races contested at 7f in 2015.
- ✓ Runners from rail to the six-hole have won at a 14.3 percent clip; those farther out, just 6.9 percent.
- ✓ 4 of the last 16 winners wired the field; 5 of the last 16 had the lead by the pace call.
- ✓ In races contested last weekend, only 1 of 8 winners was on the rail.
- ✓ 4 of 8 winners last weekend were at least 5.5 lengths behind at the pace call.

5. **Zee Bros (7-2)** -- 29-1 De Francis upsetter ships up from Oaklawn for legendary trainer D. Wayne Lukas. Have to believe that seasonal debut -- third in the 1 1/16 mile Fifth Season -- was a prep for this, as Lukas says he can "be a serious horse in the six- and seven-furlong stakes." Shows a solid interim work tab, culminating in a bullet 5f on February 7. De Francis win benefited from the stumble of Smash and Grab, which left this one comfortably stalking Private Tale, but that was a good effort, and this is a quality runner. With Jose Ortiz up, a second Laurel win would be no surprise.
6. **Big Business (6-1)** -- This David Jacobson trainee mostly keeps to himself in NY-bred company, a strategy that's netted him over \$766,000. But don't sleep on him; occasional forays into open company have included a good second in the G1 Forego and a fourth in the G1 Cigar Mile. Loves this trip -- 4-3-1-0 ledger at 7f -- but would be easier to endorse if he'd won more than one of nine stakes tries.
7. **West Hills Giant (15-1)** -- Another earning big bucks in NY-bred company, this John Terranova trainee hasn't crossed the line first since June '13 and is winless in three tries at the distance. This feels like a tough spot for his '15 bow.
8. **Cutty Shark (12-1)** -- Second-place finish at 31-1 in the City of Laurel presaged a new level for this Donald Barr trainee, who's now finished in the triple in five straight, and in his last, in allowance company, he avenged his Fire Plug defeat by besting Never Stop Looking. Has five wins at Laurel and three at 7 furlongs, which seems like the ideal distance for a horse who can be outfooted at times going six. This is a major class test, but this horse has never been better than he is now.
9. **Perilous Indian (30-1)** --With a career-best Beyer of 91, an eight-race losing streak, and no placings in five stakes tries, this guy is up against it.
10. **Outside Nashville (12-1)** -- Tricky read for the handicapper. Jerry Hollendorfer trainee enters off a pair of wins over Golden Gate synthetic, and if this race were there, he'd look live. But it's not, and his one dirt try -- a second as the favorite in a minor stake at Pleasanton -- is inconclusive; not much appears to have been in the field. Shows a solid half-mile breeze at Santa Anita, a couple ticks faster than G1 filly Sam's Sister on the same day. You'll need value.
11. **Javerre (15-1)** -- NJ-bred Outflanker gelding upset this race in '13 but has just a single win in 13 subsequent tries. Cal Lynch trainee ran a good third -- beaten a half-length -- in the Valley Forge, won by Praetereo, who's also here. He's been training forwardly for his '15 debut, but we'll need to see better than we've seen of late for him to get the money here.

### THE SCOOP

- ✓ **Favorite** -- Classy company lines and big Beyers make **Bourbon Courage** deserving chalk. Doncha wish he won more often, though?
- ✓ **Contender** -- De Francis winner **Zee Bros** looks locked and loaded for this event.
- ✓ **Live longshot** -- **Cutty Shark** loves Laurel, thrives at the trip, carries the colors of a red-hot barn.

# WIDE COUNTRY STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 7 (3:27), \$100,000 purse, Three-year fillies, 7 furlongs
- **STORYLINE:** Familiar faces abound in a stake that has the feel of a reunion.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** Lake Sebago looks to get back on track at a distance that seems to be her best.

## RACE ANALYSIS

1. **Hot City Girl (6-1)** -- Jose Ortiz gets the mount on this NY shipper for Linda Rice who hasn't done much wrong: two wins from four tries, plus a second in the NY-bred East View at Aqueduct. Lodged a solid score against allowance rivals last out and shows a couple of good works since.
2. **My Magician (15-1)** -- Maryland-bred shocked the Maryland Million Lassie at 28-1, in what turned out to be a productive race. Lost all chance after a disastrous trip in the Maryland Juvenile Filly Championship but returned with a good second in an allowance against another of today's runners, Spotted Heart, winner of three straight. No great excuse that day -- Spotted Heart was an inch better -- but both runners came home fast after a slow half.
3. **Diannestillworks (5-1)** -- Rudy Rodriguez doesn't ship down to Maryland without having high hopes; he's 65% in the money here, with 28% wins. So this Scat Daddy filly, who dropped into pricey maiden claiming company to leave the winless ranks, would get your respect based on that alone. Nothing wrong with her follow-up to that score either, a third in the Busanda after a rugged trip into and through the first turn. But that day's winner, Overprepared, got dusted here by Lake Sebago.
4. **Kazuri (6-1)** -- PA-bred First Defence filly has won two of four (DQed from a third win) and ran second (to Rockin Jojo) in the Blue Mountain Juvenile Fillies at Penn National.
5. **Lake Sebago (6-5)** -- Strong favorite looks to be tough at a distance that seems to hit her right between the eyes; two-for-two at 7f, including a commodious two-length score in the Gin Talking. Wouldn't judge the second-place finish (as chalk) in the Marshua too

## RACE FACTS

- ✓ 23rd running.
- ✓ Contested at 5 distances, from 7f to 1 1/8 miles.
- ✓ 7f stakes record: Saarligh, 2009, 1:22 3/5.
- ✓ Named for 1991 Maryland-bred Horse of the Year, who won eight straight, including the G2 Black-Eyed Susan and G3 Pimlico Oaks.

## TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ 27 races contested at 7f in 2015.
- ✓ Runners from rail to the six-hole have won at a 14.3 percent clip; those farther out, just 6.9 percent.
- ✓ 4 of the last 16 winners wired the field; 5 of the last 16 had the lead by the pace call.
- ✓ In races contested last weekend, only 1 of 8 winners was on the rail.
- ✓ 4 of 8 winners last weekend were at least 5.5 lengths behind at the pace call.

harshly; she closed nicely but too late, and the added furlong here figures to count. For the second straight race, Sheldon Russell rides in lieu of the injured Trevor McCarthy.

6. **Spotted Heart (12-1)** -- Not every day that you get 12-1 on a horse riding a three-race winning streak. The Beyers are light -- career-best 62 -- but she beat some runners to win the Md. Juvneile Filly Championship, and she's one of two to return victorious from that race, while fifth=place finisher My Magician (who won the Maryland Million Lassie) ran just behind this one in an allowance test. Similar running style to Lake Sebago, closed sharply in stakes score, and will have Jevian Toledo in the irons for a suddenly sharp Shuman barn.
7. **Have a Taste (15-1)** -- New Jersey-bred filly is cross-entered in a Parx allowance, and it would be no great surprise to see her stay home rather than ship in for what looks like a tall task. Broke her maiden nicely last out, on December 30, but not sure what exactly she beat that day.
8. **Rocky Policy (20-1)** -- After a busy late summer, this Bobby Leaf trainee has raced just once since Maryland Million day, beaten a couple by Spotted Heart in the Juvy Filly Championship. That wasn't a bad effort in a crowded field -- in fact, none of her four efforts is bad -- but she'll need to take a step forward here to contend.
9. **Gypsy Judy (8-1)** -- Robin Graham trainee ran credibly behind two of these -- Lake Sebago and Spotted Heart -- in her first two tries, then profited from a loose-on-the-lead trip to break her maiden going a mile. Not sure what she beat that day -- she was 1-2 -- but has been working well since for a barn on a good roll and may have the chance to sit a good trip from the outside stall.

### THE SCOOP

- ✓ **Favorite** -- **Lake Sebago** has run three straight bang-up races and gets back to 7f trip that looks like her best.
- ✓ **Contender**-- **Diannestillworks** ran well despite rough trip last out, gets blinks on.
- ✓ **Live Longshot** -- **Spotted Heart** has won three straight, beating some accomplished sorts, light Beyers notwithstanding.

# MIRACLE WOOD STAKES

- **RACE PARTICULARS:** Race 8 (3:57), \$100,000 purse, Three-year-olds, 1 mile
- **STORYLINE:** Runners with aspirations of big May races square off in the first Maryland route stake for sophomores.
- **RACE OVERVIEW:** Two accomplished runners -- Golden Years and Nasa -- and some talented aspirants meet up.

## RACE ANALYSIS

1. **Combat Diver (15-1)** -- Gary Contessa trainee makes the trip down I-95 to try to get back on track after being thrashed in the G2 Remsen. He was 40-1 that day, so perhaps no surprise, and shows a solid worktab since. Remsen place horse Frosted ran second in the Holy Bull to Upstart. Maryland-bred figures to need a pace, but with several of these stretching out, that's not out of the question, and Sheldon Russell, good with closers, takes the mount.
2. **Golden Years (2-1)** -- West Virginia-bred stretched out to 7 furlongs nicely in a seven-length Marylander score to close his '14 season, and trainer Rodney Jenkins was aglow with thoughts of further stretch-outs to come. Ran fourth in the stacked Lewis at six furlongs -- a race that produced *six next-out* winners at a distance probably too short for his best effort. Skipped an earlier 7f stake on the grounds for this spot, and if he's what they think he is, should be a handful here.
3. **Savvy Street (5-1)** -- Improving Street Sense colt was a couple in arrears of favored Nasa in the Elser but has improved since, just missing against Bodhisattva before romping against allowance foes. Measured, the show horses from last-out score, returned to be second to Majestic Affair in the Whiteley. Shows a couple of modest works since and Forest Boyce picks up the mount.
4. **Nasa (9-5)** -- It was a nice scene when this son of Smarty Jones reprised dad's work by winning the PA Nursery for owner/breeder Pat Chapman. He followed that up with a solid second to El Kabeir in the G3 Jerome, but he was no match for that one, who then ran second in the G3 Withers. Shows a couple of good works since, and regular pilot Kendrick Carmouche makes the trip.

## RACE FACTS

- ✓ 21st running.
- ✓ Contested at 5 distances, from 5 1/2 furlongs to 1 1/8 miles, now first route stake for 3yo in Maryland.
- ✓ Prior winners include '06 Preakness place horse Sweetnorthern saint.
- ✓ Named for 1986 Preakness entrant Miracle Wood, owned by Albert F. Allen and trained by his son Ferris.

## TIPS AND TRENDS

- ✓ 27 races contested at 7f in 2015.
- ✓ Horses breaking from the outside have fared better than those inside: 16.9% strike rate from PP 6 and out, versus 11.9% inside.
- ✓ Preferred running style is stalking; 5 of last 13 winners made the lead by the pace call, and all the rest were within 3.5 lengths.

5. **Measured (12-1)** -- Michael Salvaggio trainee has outrun his odds in back-to-back tries, most recently to the very good Majestic Affair in the Whiteley. Was well back of Savvy Street, who's here, two back, and that's a cause for concern. This will be first try beyond seven furlongs -- and in both 7f tries, he lost ground in the stretch. He'll need to improve to contend here, but with only three starts to date, that's not out of the question.
6. **Bodhisattva (10-1)** -- Student Council colt's strongest argument is that he's just one of three here to own a win at a mile or beyond, and he's beaten one of those, Savvy Street. Still, this feels like a heavy lift for the Jose Corrales trainee. Grinder has one moderate work since fourth-place Whiteley finish, has been a pretty busy runner -- eight starts since August.
7. **Governmentshutdown (12-1)** -- Tough test for this Jerry Robb trainee, who hasn't won since May and hasn't won beyond 5 furlongs. Toss the messy G3 Bashford Manor in June, but his only start since was a well-beaten sixth in the Whiteley. Julian Pimentel will ride.
8. **On Tap (8-1)** -- Linda Rice trainee parlayed a perfect rail run into a narrow maiden score last out and now looks to stretch out from three-quarters to one mile. Breeding says the one-mile trip should work nicely, and the interim works are solid. But will he post, or choose Parx spot, where he's cross-entered?

### SELECTIONS

- ✓ **Favorite** -- PA Nursery winner **Nasa** validated win with good second in G3.
- ✓ **Contender** -- WV-bred **Golden Years** has three local wins, thrived on stretch-out, looks ready to roll.
- ✓ **Live Longshot** -- **Measured** figures to be a major longshot for the third straight time, keeps improving.