

## Fair Grounds full card analysis – Saturday (1-8-11)

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**Weather:** Partly cloudy. High 63. **Best Bets** (races 5, 6, 9)

FG 1 (C1m-15/2L, 3yo fil, 6f) #6 CHAMPAGNE TOMMIE (7-2) stalked and faded to 4<sup>th</sup> in a disappointing effort vs. similar local rivals Dec 16. Edward Johnston is a profitable 23% with new additions to his barn and an outside tactical trip is expected. #4 Miss Michelle (5-2) exits back-to-back strong efforts in the local Maiden Claiming ranks. I like her tactical speed and Graham strings along. THE PLAYS: #6 to win, Exacta Box 4-6

FG 2 (Mcl-10k, LA-bred 4-5yo f&m, 5.5f) #7 SHE'S SAARIFFIC (9-2) showed marked improvement in a similar spot Dec 13. She had a troubled start vs. this kind Nov 27 and is beginning to put it all together. She removes the hood and should make her presence felt throughout. #8 Sparkin On Therail (6-1) flashed early foot before fading in both career outings. Sellers is 1-for-1 with profitable trainer Carl Woodley. THE PLAYS: #7 to win, Superfecta 7-8/3-7-8/3-6-7-8/ALL

FG 3 (OC-20k, f&m 4up, 5.5T) The pace should be honest and late runners have been winning more than expected in local turf sprints. With that in mid I'll tab #2 MINNESOTA MAFIA (6-1). Gary Scherer is 36% sprint-route-sprint and she could finish full of run under James Graham. #1 Sweet Madness (5-1) is now under the care of Al Stall Jr. and he is 23% with 46-90 day layoff runners. The late running mare is not big on winning but has run numerous competitive turf sprints. #6 Sensational Love (5-2) exits back-to-back extended sprint synthetic wins at Woodbine. She has won on turf before but might get overbet for Briggy/Asmussen. THE PLAYS: #2 to win, Exacta 2/1-6, Exacta 1-6/2

FG 4 (C1m-15/2L, 3yo, 6f) #6 BRAXTON COUNTY (7-2) smartly graduated off the shelf in the local slop Nov 26 and may have bounced three weeks later in his first start vs. winners. Autrey excels 3<sup>rd</sup> off the shelf and the outside speed threat could easily rebound today. #4 Bid's Reward (4-1) held on by a nose in his local bow and the runner-up was a *next out* winner. Calhoun is 23% with his recent grads trying winners for the first time. #5 Winkatdawat (5-2) missed by a neck in a similar local spot Dec 17 but he has yet to run two alike. THE PLAYS: #6 to win, Exacta 6/4-5, Exacta 4-5/6

FG 5 (Dixie Poker Ace, LA-bred 4up, 8T) #1 WILDRALLY (6-1) had no shot on the main against controlling speed and today's rival #5 Grey Papillon (3-1) Dec 11. There has only been one wire job in 25 flat mile turf races so the surface and course profile are in his favor today. New pilot Rosie Napravnik is 3-for-4 with Edward Johnston recently and the 10-time grass winner can compete here if able to run back to Aug 28 place finish vs. this kind at Louisiana Downs. #7 Kissimmee Kyle (5-2) always runs his race and was *clearly second best* in a similar spot Dec 11. His running style versatility should play well in this event. THE PLAYS: #1 to win, Exacta Box 1-7

FG 6 (OC-25/2x, LA-bred 4up, 6f) #8 IDE BALL (3-1) exits a romping local Optional Claiming score and was nabbed out of that heat by 27% claiming artist Karl Broberg. The 3<sup>rd</sup> *off the shelf* outside tactical threat could easily maintain form. #7 Power Surge (9-5) beat my top in the local slop Nov 26 and he missed by a neck here Dec 26. He's a low odds tactical factor. THE PLAYS: #8 to win, Exacta 8-7, Trifecta 7-8/6-7-8/1-3-6-7-8

FG 7 (MSW, 3yo, 8.5T) #9 SORGHO (6-1) earned a decent number in a rallying show finish from post 12 (4-wide 1<sup>st</sup> turn) vs. this kind in his local bow Dec 18. Bennett is 24% with second time starters and the well-bred (Storm Cat-Private Account) colt won't be 51-1 this time. #7 Sockaroooni (9-2) rolled a couple of 3's behind decent sorts (El Grayling, Wilkinson) to begin his career. The Mott trainee returns to the grass and will be finishing. #8 Smarter Than Ever (20-1) failed to threaten in his dirt sprint bow at Churchill Nov 21. Smarty Jones is a 19% first grass sire and dam has tossed three turf winners. Tab for improvement. THE PLAYS: #9 to win, Exacta 9/7-8, Exacta 7-8/9

FG 8 (OC-50k, 4up, 6f) #3 BACKTALK (5-2) exits a solid show finish in a minor turf sprint Stakes event here Dec 18. He earned triple digit Final Time Ratings in his last two six furlong starts on the dirt and could easily wear down the speed. #2 Cash Refund (9-5) has dropped four straight including his last in the slop. He is 4-for-4 here and has the speed to succeed. All five wins at this distance. #5 Grasshopper (4-1) makes his first start in more than ten months and returns to the hot Neil Howard barn. He is capable around one turn but probably wants more ground and might need the race. THE PLAYS: #3 to win, Exacta 3/2-5

FG 9 (Clm-17.5k, 4up, 7.5T) #5 STRIKING HIGHT (9-2) dropped to this level and responded with a close-up show finish here Dec 19. He has experience at this unusual distance and his ample late kick should serve him well in this spot. #1 Attempted Humor (3-1) finished a nose in front of my top last time and projects a ground saving tactical trip for Briggy/Asmussen. #4 Jimanator (6-1) might be better on dirt but he owns a turf win and his competent new conditioner is 15% *first off the claim*. THE PLAYS: #5 to win, Exacta 5/1-4, Exacta 1-4/5

FG 10 (Mcl-25k, LA-bred 3yo, 6f) #2 BANDIT'S BULLET (12-1) might be worth a stab in the finale after racing wide from post 11 behind a runaway winner in his bow. I like the class hike despite the 10<sup>th</sup> place finish for \$15,000 and James Graham hops aboard. #8 Grumpy Jim (5-2) dons the hood after a less than ideal start vs. this kind Dec 18. He's a wire job threat under Napravnik. #5 Top Cats Bull (6-1) is out of 18% debut sire Big Top Cat and Tony Richey is a solid 16% with debut Maiden Claimers. THE PLAYS: #2 to win, Trifecta 2-5-8/2-5-8/2-4-5-8-10

Double/Pick 3/Pick 4 contenders (in order of preference)

Race

- (1) 6-4
- (2) 7-8
- (3) 2-1-6

- (4) 6-4-5
- (5) 1-7
- (6) 8-7
- (7) 9-7-8
- (8) 3
- (9) 5-1-4
- (10) 2-8-5