

TRACK PHANTOM 2026 PREAKNESS DAY GUIDE



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LAUREL PARK

PREAKNESS DAY FULL CARD ANALYSIS



LAUREL PARK	LAUREL PARK	LAUREL PARK	LAUREL PARK	LAUREL PARK
Pick 5	Pick 5	Pick 5	Pick 5	BEST BET OF THE DAY 3 CRUISE THE NILE (9-5) RACE 10
3 rd 1,4,5,6,7,9	5 th 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	7 th 1,4,5,6	9 th 1,2,4,5,6	LIVE LONGSHOT 9 OCEAN SOUND (30-1) RACE 3
4 th 2,3,4,7	6 th 1,3,4,5	8 th 2,3,4,8	10 th 3	MOST LIKELY WINNER 4 OBLITERATION (6-5) RACE 7
5 th 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	7 th 7	9 th 1,2,4,5,6	11 th 2,3,4,5,7,8	
6 th 1,3,4,5	8 th 2,3,4,8	10 th 3	12 th 3,4,10	
7 th 7	9 th 2,3,4,5,6	11 th 2,3,4,5,7,8	13 th 2,5,6,7,9,10,12	
Total \$384	Total \$320	Total \$240	Total \$315	

1 - LAUREL PARK (10:30 ET) 77
OPTIONAL CLAIMING 58K, 5.5F TURF

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 7 EPIC STYLE | 8-5 J ORTIZ |
| 8 GIFT OF GAB | 6-1 J TOLEDO |
| 1 SALLY'S GOLD | 8-1 J VARGAS |
| 9 PRECIOUS AVARY | 8-1 S GONZALEZ |

PICK: 7 EPIC STYLE
She really hasn't run a bad race sprinting on the turf. She has 6 turf sprints so far. She's got a win and 5 of the 6 in the money. The only miss was a 4th place finish against FG opt clm three back when beaten less than two. Winner of the last start had won a G3 sprinting on the turf at SAR in the start 3 races earlier. Jose Ortiz gets the mount today.

VALUE: 8 GIFT OF GAB
Won her last start of 2025 and then returned to win on the class drop here about 3 weeks ago. This is a 7YO mare so the connections are not afraid to run her where she can be competitive. She is 6 for 17 when running for this trainer in the last two years. Rider Toledo is 4 for 9 when he has been aboard. Came with a wide run in the last two and will here.

A) 7 B) 1,2,8,9 C) 3,5 D) 4,6,10

2 - LAUREL PARK (11:05 ET) 66
OPTIONAL CLAIMING 58K, 6F DIRT

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1A BLUE KINGDOM | 6-5 Y HAZELWOOD |
| 7 BAND CAMP | 12-1 J TOLEDO |
| 12 GRAND OPENING | 8-1 P LOPEZ |
| 5 SUREMEANTTOOBE | 12-1 M SANCHEZ |

PICK: 1A BLUE KINGDOM
Another impossible turnaround project for Jamie Ness. He claimed this one about 10 months ago and has seen him fire off 4 wins and 9 in the money from the 10 starts so far for Ness. This 5YO gelding has destroyed the field in last 5 he ran on Lasix (which is back here). Apprentice rider was up for the win in last. Is expertly spotted in this condition.

VALUE: 7 BAND CAMP
6YO gelding iss 8 for 18 in his career and has been in the exacta in 12 of the 18 starts. He's been first or second in 11 of his last 13. Has a really strong closing move but doesn't really drop that far off the pace. He's won 7 of 14 here and has risen up the claiming ladder. Was with an 8% trainer for most of the wins and moves to a new trainer in this one.

A) 1,7 B) 4,5,10,12 C) 2,6,9 D) 8,11

3 - LAUREL PARK (11:41 ET) 43
MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT 52K, 1M TURF

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 9 OCEAN SOUND | 30-1 L SAEZ |
| 1 LIMO | 5-2 Y HAZELWOOD |
| 6 MUNNY PROBLEM | 9-2 M SANCHEZ |
| 7 PENDAR | 30-1 J VELAZQUEZ |

PICK: 9 OCEAN SOUND
The pedigree definitely leans more to the dirt. So he might have a future there. But he's worth a look at long odds in here considering the trainer is 2 for 2 in a debut on grass going long. One of the winners was here and the other was for this ownership. The odds on those two winners were big as the trainer works them very slow. Attracts Saez for this.

VALUE: 7 PENDAR
Turf pedigree. Sire a Group 1 turf winner for Aidan O'Brien (sprinting). His best offspring are all turfers typically at the mile distance (Porta Fortuna is a G1 placed miler). Sib to Midnight Tea Time (won over 580k on the grass going long). Considering the distance pedigree, first two starts can be tossed at 5.5F. Third on dirt. Big name rider gets up.

A) 1,6,7,9 B) 4,5 C) 2,3,10 D) 8,11

4 - LAUREL PARK (12:16 ET) 60
SKIPAT 125K, 6F DIRT

3 KAPPA KAPPA	5-2	J VELAZQUEZ
2 PASSAGE EAST	3-1	S RUSSELL
7 MODO	9-5	I ORTIZ
4 BENEDETTA	8-1	J ORTIZ

PICK: 3 KAPPA KAPPA

This 4YO filly is making her first start of the year. She was recently crowned the Pennsylvania-bred horse of the year. She won the G2 Raven Run (with this rider Velazquez) two back at 27-1. That was a career best. She beat 6 horses who had either won or been placed in a G1 when she took that Keeneland stakes. Drills are tremendous. Layoff is the issue.

VALUE: 2 PASSAGE EAST

Wife of this rider, Shelden Russell, has a horse in this race but he opts off of that one to stay here. He won a 200k on her two back over this track. Slow start at Colonial Downs in the last start and it cost her late in the race. She is 6 for 6 in the top two on this track and she won 4 of the starts at the 6F distance. She will fall into the perfect stalking trip.

A) 2,3,7 B) 4 C) 1 D)

5 - LAUREL PARK (12:51 ET) 39
ALLOWANCE 54K, 1M TURF

10 BUZZAWAY	15-1	C LOPEZ
1 NICK'S NOTION	12-1	J BARBOSA
7 MAMBO QUEEN	5-1	S RUSSELL
4 SASSARI	5-2	M SANCHEZ

PICK: 10 BUZZAWAY

Claimed out of the last start for 12k. She is a deep closer who has won 3 of her 6 starts here at LRL on the turf. This trainer got off to a hot start here with 2 wins in 3 starts. He had C Lopez on one of the winners. Might be enough speed to keep the pace honest and set her up for a late run at odds. Rider will have to move her sooner at the shorter distance.

VALUE: 1 NICK'S NOTION

Banking on the pace being fast as this one is another deep closer. The last time she drew the rail was 3 back here at the same 1M distance. She saved ground before swinging out very wide and closed strongly to grab second at 19-1 in a restricted allowance. Won on the the next turf start last time out. Figures to get a perfect ground saving trip today.

A) 1,4,7,10 B) 3,9 C) 2,5,6,8 D) 11,12,13,15

6 - LAUREL PARK (1:28 ET) 67
SIR BARTON 100K, 1M 1/16 DIRT

4 FINAL STORY	2-1	I ORTIZ
1 MINORINCONVENIENCE	12-1	R SANTANA
3 LET'S GO LANDO	6-1	P LOPEZ
5 FALCON JET	10-1	S RUSSELL

PICK: 4 FINAL STORY-

The scratch of Regan's Honor really gives this one an edge in this spot. He will likely control the pace on the move to a route for the first time. Irad was aboard for the 6-length win in the MSW last out at KEE. Was just run down in the debut by the 9-5 second choice. Notice the top two were far clear of the rest. This breeding does tend to lean to shorter.

VALUE: 1 MINORINCONVENIENCE

Can't really use the Wood Memorial as a gauge. He was off at 77-1 and never really got into the race. He's been gelded since and moves back to regular rider Santana. Caught a good stakes for NY-breds two back. The winner won for the 5th time in 6 races (2 stakes) when he came back win by a distance in 200k stakes. Will save ground from the inside.

A) 1,4 B) 3 C) 5 D) 2,6

7 - LAUREL PARK (2:07 ET) 75
CHICK LANG 150K, 6F DIRT

4 OBLITERATION	6-5	J ORTIZ
6 SHANE'S WONDER	3-1	M SANCHEZ
5 IGNITER	5-2	I ORTIZ
1 FULMINE	20-1	L SAEZ

PICK: 4 OBLITERATION

There has always been big expectations for this one. Was dominant in the first two starts before getting outfinished by another good one, Ewing. Last two were very good. Was an easy winner in stakes at OP and then was a strong 2nd in the Saudi Derby. Third place finisher from there came back to win a rich stakes in Japan. Gets the red hot J Ortiz.

VALUE: 6 SHANE'S WONDER

This one is 3 for 3 coming into this. 2 of the 3 wins were vs. Pa-breds but they were strong efforts. Beat open class opt cfm two back. The runner-up in there came back to win in an allowance with an 86 Beyer. Trainer had the 4-time dirt sprint stakes winner Bucherino. Has a strong worktab with 4 bullet drills in a row at Parx. Will be winging it early here.

A) 4 B) 5,6 C) 1,7,8 D) 2

8 - LAUREL PARK (2:48 ET) 57
MARYLAND SPRINT (G3) 150K, 6F DIRT

2 FASTOR GATOR	9-2	I ORTIZ
8 SLAM NOTION	5-1	J TOLEDO
3 FAUST	8-1	J ORTIZ
4 HAILYSFIRSTNOTION	7-2	J VARGAS

PICK: 2 FASTOR GATOR

High percentage trainer Anthony Farior has this one on a 3 out of 4 winning streak. The only loss was a decent third in a 500k stakes at CT. The Steel Valley Sprint at MVR is a good stakes race for sprinters. Runner-up was second in the G3 Whitmore two starts later. Major rider upgrade here to Irad Ortiz. Has speed but has been able to finish up well.

VALUE: 8 SLAM NOTION

Winner of 7 of 13 starts. He won 6 of 10 last year. Was 4th in a key 200k stakes on this track last time out. The winner returned to take the G2 Carter at AQU. Show finisher won back to back 100k stakes here after. He's 3 for 4 at the 6F distance and is 5 for 9 over this dirt track. Rider Toledo has 3 wins in 4 starts aboard him. He figures to get a great trip.

A) 2,8 B) 3,4 C) 1,6 D) 9

9 - LAUREL PARK (3:30 ET) 70
JW MURPHY 100K, 1M TURF

4 ATTFIELD	9-2	R SANTANA
5 PROTON	9-5	J VELAZQUEZ
6 TURF STAR	5-2	J RUIZ
2 THEBABESLAYER	6-1	J ORTIZ

PICK: 4 ATTFIELD

Winner of his only start routing on a firm turf. It came in the start three back at AQU when he won the Central Park at nearly 4-1. Ran evenly in the G3 Transylvania last out but it came on a good turf course. 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th all came back to hit the board. The winner was second in the G1 Am Turf at CD. Show finisher was third in there. Blinkers are added.

VALUE: 2 THEBABESLAYER

Moves back to the turf for the first time since the MSW win at FG. He's been running in restricted races. Didn't have the best pace situation from the rail in the last start and ended up tiring. Jose Ortiz is back up. He rode this one to a second place finish sprinting on the turf at FG five starts ago. He'll be sitting a bit farther back, a more preferred running style.

A) 4,5,6 B) 2 C) 1 D) 7,8

10 – LAUREL PARK (4:11 ET) 84
DINNER PARTY (G3) 250K, 1M 1/8 TURF

3 CRUISE THE NILE	9-5	J RUIZ
4 FORT WASHINGTON	7-2	J ALVARADO
7 HARROW	12-1	T GAFFALIONE
5 A BOURBON FOR TOBY	12-1	I ORTIZ

PICK: 3 CRUISE THE NILE

4YO gelding, New Jersey bred is a legit 4 for 5 having won 4 straight. The debut came on a muddy track sprinting. But the next four were routing on both turf and synthetic and he won them all. Final time of 1:33.4 last out was a serious run. Another stakes went in 1:34.3 (nearly a second slower). Second two back won the G2 Elkhorn by over 9 lengths next.

VALUE: 4 FORT WASHINGTON

Grade 1 Arlington Million winner just four starts back. He hasn't been quite as good since but there are excuses. He drew the widest 11 post and then the widest 12 post and the widest 8 post in the last 3. He ended up with wide trips in each of them. Keeps the regular rider Alvarado. Has won 2 times at the distance for over 312k. Needs pace to run into.

A) 3 B) 4,7 C) 5 D) 1

12 – LAUREL PARK (5:52 ET) 62
TURF SPRINT 125K, 5.5F TURF

3 JEAN VALJEAN	5-1	F PRAT
4 CHASING LIBERTY	3-1	I ORTIZ
10 FORE HARP	15-1	P LOPEZ
8 OUTLAW KID	5-1	J RUIZ

PICK: 3 JEAN VALJEAN

Winner of 4 of 7 starts on the turf and 2 for 4 at this short turf distance. 3 of the 4 wins came wire to wire. There isn't all that much speed in the race and this one should be in an easy spot early either setting the pace or tracking 2nd behind Fore Harp. Third start off a very long layoff which is typically the top performance. Flavian Prat adds to appeal.

VALUE: 10 FORE HARP

Might be the key to this race. Other than the top choice this is the one with the best speed. It appears they will send him. He didn't go near the front in the last two starts but his best efforts came on the lead. They add speed rider in Paco Lopez. The last start was his best since a stakes win at Penn last August. First two furlongs will decide his fate.

A) 3,4 B) 1,8,10,11 C) 2 D) 5,6,9

11 – LAUREL PARK (4:53 ET) 36
GALLORETTE (G3) 150K, 1M 1/16 TURF

2 RIBALTAGAIA	6-1	J ALVARADO
3 ACCENT	3-1	F PRAT
8 AWESOME CZECH	5-1	R SANTANA
7 CHILD OF THE MOON	5-2	I ORTIZ

PICK: 2 RIBALTAGAIA

Mostly been a front runner in his career. Just couldn't stay with the speedball winner last time out. The other speed in that race finished last so the pace was tough. Winner two back returned to win the G2 Dance Smartly at WO next out. Got an awkward start three back but finished well to finish just a length back. Gets Alvarado back. Will go to the front.

VALUE: 8 AWESOME CZECH

5YO mare is consistent at this level. She's won 6 of 16 turf races and is 5 for 8 at this distance. Unlucky to lose in the start two back but it was a very good effort. Jockey Santana has ridden her 8 times and he's been in the money in all 8 of those starts. She figures to be forwardly placed in a race without much speed. She can outfinish late runners here.

A) 2,3,8 B) 4,5,7 C) 1,6 D)

14 – LAUREL PARK (7:43 ET) 58
MAIDEN SPECIAL WEIGHT 52K, 6F DIRT

6 GRANT THE GREAT	3-1	P LOPEZ
8 HOLY MOLY MITOLE	9-2	C MALDONADO
7 BALLINACLASH	10-1	H REA
4 BRUNO	4-1	J TOLEDO

PICK: 6 GRANT THE GREAT

Debut came at 16-1 when in the barn of a much lower strike rate trainer. This ownership moved him to Kelly Breen who has won about 20% first time after taking over the training of one. Full sib to Landeskog. He was second in the G2 2020 Gallant Bob and won 216k sprinting. Expecting a better run with an aggressive speed rider up for the first time P Lopez.

VALUE: 8 HOLY MOLY MITOLE

Certainly outran his 44-1 odds in the runner-up finish first time out. The winner was 2-5 odds and went wire to wire in that race. This one chased him and hung in well. Typically one chasing a low priced favorite will fade. That winner did win coming back in an opt clm at LRL with an 87 Beyer fig. Notice distance back to third. Bred on both sides to sprint.

A) 6,8 B) 4,7 C) 1,3,5,9 D) 2,10

13 – LAUREL PARK (1:53 ET) 61
PREAKNESS (G1) \$2M, 1M 3/16 DIRT

10 NAPOLEON SOLO	8-1	P LOPEZ
12 INCREDIBOLT	5-1	J TORRES
9 IRON HONOR	9-2	F PRAT
2 OCELLI	6-1	T GAFFALIONE

PICK: 10 NAPOLEON SOLO

Only G1 winner in the field. He did that second time out at Aqueduct in the Champagne. Has had some issues so far in 2026 but the works (1:10 flat on a heavy Belmont training track) indicate he could be back to his two-year old form. Won't be easy. He's a speed type facing quite a few others with speed. Arches into a top run third start in a form cycle.

SECOND: 12 INCREDIBOLT

If the track is playing to closers (or at least running fairly for closers) and the pace heats up as expected, this is the one who could be closing best late. He came from off the pace to win the Virginia Derby in style two back and did it that way in the G3 Street Sense in the third start. Tossing the Holy Bull from his PP's and he stands out in this spot.

THIRD: 9 IRON HONOR

He could go off favored in here. He won his first two starts and easily handled the G2 Wood Memorial runner-up first time out (Right to Party). Chad Brown won the Preakness in 2022 with the very similar Early Voting who was also out of the Wood Memorial. Got the 12 post in the 12 horse Wood last out and was wide as the favorite. Prat joins him today.

FOURTH: 2 OCELLI

Gallant run for third in the Kentucky Derby at 71-1 odds out of the 17 post. Not bad for a maiden. That is back to back big efforts since the blinkers were removed. He was 3rd in the Wood Memorial two back at nearly 30-1. While he does not have a win, he's 4 for 4 in the money without blinkers. He'll get an ideal pace situation. Sharp works. Flying home.

FIFTH: 5 TALKIN

Second to Napoleon Solo in the G1 Champagne as a 2YO at 7-1 odds. Did not run well at 4-1 in the Remsen but did run well in the key Tampa Bay Derby and the Blue Grass. This is his third start as a 3YO so he'll likely move forward here. It certainly doesn't hurt getting Irad Ortiz for the first time today. Bullet work one week ago at KEE. He cost 600k in '24.

VALUE: 5 TALKIN

A) 9,10,12 B) 2,5,6,7 C) 1,4,11,13 D) 3,8,14

1 TAJ MAHAL

Undefeated 3 for 3 Nyquist colt for high percentage Brittany Russell. He won all three of those starts at Laurel. He went quarterhorse style when opening up 10 lengths in the Tesio win last time out. He kept his speed going in the easy win. It's not easy to gauge the strength of that Tesio stakes as many of those were all from this region in small stakes company. Hard to believe he is able to clear off in a race full of speed at longer distance. Certainly talented.

PREDICTION 10

2 OCELLI

70-1 third last out in the Ky Derby. Reminds of 87-1 show finisher from the 1991 Ky Derby, Mane Minister. He followed it up with a show finish next out in the Preakness at 19-1. Like this colt, he was a deep closer who ran on late in the lane for the show spot in all 3 legs of the 1991 Triple Crown. Seems better without blinkers. They were removed before the Wood 2 back (was 3rd at 28-1 odds). He'll get the kind of fast pace that flatters his late running style.

PREDICTION 4

3 CRUPPER

Oaklawn Park shipper comes into this off a 7-1 win in a 200k stakes in the last start. That was not nearly the kind of field he is facing today. Added blinkers 3 back and has won twice in the three starts with them. Dam was an Ok-bred for the same connections who won \$1.1M as the runner-up in the G1 Del Handicap behind Royal Delta in 2013. It feels like a roll of the dice by entering in a G1 that was going to turn up soft. He looks like an outsider in this one.

PREDICTION 13

4 ROBUSTA

This is 1 of 3 in the race to have run in the Kentucky Derby. He drew the widest 18 post and did little but run with the pack before fading. He was a longshot runner-up in the Santa Anita Derby three back. He sat just in behind the pace and went to the front as the two that were fighting for the front tired. Best effort other than that race was a maiden win in a spot he had Lasix only time in his career. He looks like a pop and stop type here. Others look much better.

PREDICTION 9

5 TALKIN

He was the well-beaten runner-up to Napoleon Solo's Champagne win last October. He's shown nothing in the 3 starts since so it could be an indictment on the weakness of the Champagne or maybe excuses for the bad races since. Wide on turns in the Remsen from the 11 post. The 5th in the Tampa Bay Derby wasn't all that bad if you rate The Puma as a legit colt. Brad Cox's Further Ado freaked in the Blue Grass and won by 11. Bullet work and Irad Ortiz is up.

PREDICTION 5

6 CHIP HONCHO

Will certainly get some looks since his past performances include a second place finish in the G2 Risen Star in front of the Derby winner in there, Golden Tempo. Tired chasing the fast pace in the La Derby in last start. Golden Tempo obviously fired out of that race but 1st and 2nd from there flopped in the Derby. He has a bit of speed but will actually sit the perfect trip just off the contested speed. Gets possibly the hottest rider in the country now, Jose Ortiz.

PREDICTION 6

7 THE HELL WE DID

Todd Fincher is not a trainer which many people know but he should be taken seriously in here. Fincher is a high percentage trainer from the Arizona, New Mexico region. He campaigned the sibling to this one Senor Buscador. That one took the 2024 G1 Saudi Cup (\$20M G1 race). Another sib won \$600k going long distances. Those two sibs were by distance sires but this one might have distance limitations. Winner of last was third in the G3 Peter Pan.

PREDICTION 7

8 BULL BY THE HORNS

He was about 8 lengths behind foe Napoleon Solo in the Fountain of Youth two back when he was a non threatening 7th at 88-1. He was able to win the Rushaway at TP on synth last time out. The show finisher out of that race came back to win next in the G3 Lexington and then was a well-beaten 3rd in the G3 Peter Pan. High water mark of 70 Beyer is not the kind of numbers that normally compete here. He does have Saffie Joseph training him but not today.

PREDICTION 14

9 IRON HONOR

Chad Brown won this race in 2022 with Early Voting and was second in this race in 2023 (beaten just a head) with Blazing Sevens. Looks a lot like Early Voting who was also in his fourth start in the Preakness. He was second in the Wood in that year before winning the Preakness. This one was the beaten favorite in the Wood but the 12 post didn't help his chances when wide. He will have the blinkers removed and picks up the superstar Prat. Major contender.

PREDICTION 3

10 NAPOLEON SOLO

Winner of the G1 Champagne in his second start. That win makes him the only G1 winner in the field (and one of the few to have even run in a G1 race). Poor start and rushed into a fast pace in the FOY 2 starts ago at GP. That was a tough spot for the return. Drew the rail and set a quick pace in a race that fell apart in last in the Wood. 1st four finishers came from 8th, 10th, 9th, 6th. Worked a 1:10 flat drill on the BEL training track on 5/2. Eligible for a surge forward.

PREDICTION 1

11 CORONA DE ORO

Dallas Stewart trained the longshot runner-up in the 2013 Ky Derby with Golden Soul and the 2014 Ky Derby with Commanding Curve. So he has been known to get longshots into the money in G1 races. This one was third in the G3 Lexington last time out. Don't think the Lexington was a very deep field. He has worked ok since that race on the CD dirt track. Gets Velazquez for this and might take back a bit and look for one run into a fast pace. Tough read on this.

PREDICTION 8

12 INCREDIBOLT

Likely a popular pick in this event. He was 6th beaten just 4 in the Ky Derby last time out. He had a tough trip in there (as many did) but he finished well. He blew the doors off the field in the Va Derby two starts ago. Figures to come from the back in a race that should be fast early and set up nicely for a late runner. Took the G3 Street Sense in his last start as a two-year old so he's been good enough to beat top company. Big closer gets an ideal setup here.

PREDICTION 2

13 GREAT WHITE

First three starts came at TP on the synthetic track there. He won twice there including the Battaglia two back at 15-1. The runner-up in that race was Fulleffort who returned to win the Jeff Ruby and was a highly considered price in the Ky Derby 2 weeks ago before he was scratched. This one went out early but faded in the G1 Blue Grass last out first time he tried the dirt. First two starts he came from farther back so look for a revert to that form. Toss in trifecta.

PREDICTION 11

14 PRETTY BOY MIAH

Just a 60k purchase in 2024. He's only been beyond 6F once and that was a win last out over 5 foes in an opt clm at AQU. Added blinkers two back and won both starts easily in those races. Doesn't have much of a pedigree (dam was drilled in all 3 starts vs. low level company). Gets the widest 14 post which is not an ideal spot given his running style. Beyer figures are good enough for this spot but he beaten only 19 foes in the 4 starts. Am looking elsewhere.

PREDICTION 12

