

Jim Mazur's

2026

Oaks Day

Epilog

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As is my custom, I always recap the Oaks and the Derby day cards. Let's see how things turned out.

Selections For Race 1

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	1	Phantom Blue (4-5)	Ran a solid Beyer sprinting in slop and now adds blinkers and goes 2 turns. Bullet 4f in the holster.
<i>Value Plays</i>	6	Soaring High (7-2)	Ran 7th in debut last fall; bred to run all day; Devaux bats 19% off long layoffs.
	7	Epist (4-1)	Improving with each start and has a bullet in the holster. Logical if fave isn't up to the task.
<i>Bombers</i>	5	Mass (8-1)	Speed fade in turf route now goes back to dirt and adds blinkers with Prat switching on.

Cherie Devaux had SOARING HIGH ready off the layoff as my CO-VALUE PLAYER scored at 4+1 over the heavily favored PHANTOM BLUE.

Selections For Race 2

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	3	Chop Sticks (9-2)	Trainer Brad Cox was on fire at Keeneland and all year really and couldn't have found an easier spot for his filly to begin her '26 campaign. No way will you get 9-2.
<i>Value Plays</i>	1	Amalfi Drive (6-1)	This Godolphin filly showed promise as a juvenile in '24 but she hasn't been able to find the winner's circle since returning from a 15-month vacation. Trainer Stidham is pulling out all the stops...turf to dirt...stretchout...blinkers off...all of those are high % moves for him.
<i>Bombers</i>	8	Carmel Rose (30-1)	Mountaineer mile specialist tries to take her game on the road against the big girls. Trainer is batting 44% this year. Looks way overmatched on the Beyers...but you never know!
<i>Heads Up</i>	5 6 9	Quantum Burst (6-1) Anna's Promise (8-1) Five a Side (3-1)	These three fillies have 2nditis. You know what to do, right?

Bam! They let my VALUE PLAYER sneak away at 11-1. A nice bankroll builder early in the card.

Selections For Race 3

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	10	Star Actress (4-1)	Wide open race that may require spreading in the horizontal wagers. Mott tried this one in the G1 Ashland (finished 3rd) and now has a class edge over most of these and is back on Lasix.
<i>Value Plays</i>	2	Measure (6-1)	She ran a 72 Beyer last fall. That projects into the mid 80s if Casse has her ready. First Lasix and Irad.
	5	Joyful Justice (6-1)	Juddmonte homebred should relish added distance off MSW victory. Cox is on a roll. Must use.
	9	Leinani (5-1)	Chad Brown filly working great since breaking maiden at GP 2 months ago. Told you this was wide open!
<i>Bombers</i>	8	U R Desire (20-1)	This filly woke up when moved from turf to dirt. Now she is a LOWI (last out winner ignored) and dangerous to hit the board at whopper odds.
	11	Feisty Red Head (20-1)	Another LOWI...this one woke up with blinks on last out. Ships in for sharp SoCal outfit with Smitty on board.
<i>Heads Up</i>	7	Betty's Pearl (9-2)	Filly is 6-1-3-1 and exits GP Oaks. Lynch tries blinkers and adds back Lasix. Probably runs 2nd again.

I went all in on my two bombers but neither was around at the end. Ken McPeck's winner MAXIMUM OFFER wasn't on my radar which was too bad because I had the others on top of my *HEADS UP* runner BETTY'S PEARL who indeed ran 2nd at nice odds.

Selections For Race 4

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	1	Hedge Book (7-2)	I'm not thrilled with the rail post draw but this filly should be in the thick of it after disappointing as the heavy fave at Tampa. Prat jumps back on and there is an impressive Payson Park bullet in the holster.
<i>Value Plays</i>	4	Couplet (6-1)	Juddmonte homebred makes career debut with daddy Gun Runner an "A" rated FTS sire and CD bullets in the holster. Only negative is that McCarthy bats just 10% with FTS.
<i>Bombers</i>	3	Battis Grove (10-1)	The FTS breeding is just average but trainer Walder bats 26% with his FTS and there is a back 3f bullet in the holster.

Brad Cox's PASSERINE wasn't on my radar due to mediocre FTS sire stats but he got the job done at first asking at 5-1 with my bet-down BOMBER BATTIS GROVE running 2nd.

Selections For Race 5

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	10	Prepped (3-1)	This colt has been the beaten fave in all four career starts but looks to have been victimized by slow pace lines in each. So trainer Devaux is entering a “rabbit” named CASH BONUS (15-1). Could make the difference but make sure you back this one up in the exacta. His vulnerability makes this race ripe for a longshot upsetter.
<i>Value Plays</i>	2	Clark’s Corner (12-1)	Part of an Ian Wilkes uncoupled entry, this guy runs as a 1st-time gelding and also gets 1st Lasix. While the turf breeding isn’t spectacular, I do love the back 4f work at CD followed by two sharp 5f drills.
	5	Flick (10-1)	Woke up when switched to Tapeta at TP. B+ breeding to take to turf.
<i>Bombers</i>	3	Grande Sorpreso (30-1)	I’m all in with the Ian Wilkes uncoupled entry. This gelding IS bred for the turf (B+ over A) and tries the green for the first time after two mid-pack finishes on the dirt.
<i>Heads Up</i>	6	Executive (4-1)	This colt is 2nd choice but has been only earning slices with a career record of 6-0-1-3. Except for a layoff, I don’t see any “karma” changes that would propel this guy to victory so handicapper beware.
	13	Timayyy	A factor if he draws in.

I guess the addition of the “rabbit” did the trick for my MOST LIKELY as Cherie Devaux picked up her second win on the card. My BOMBER went off at boxcar odds and was moving well but was stopped cold by another runner and then re rallied to get 5th.

Selections For Race 6

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	6	Carmel Coast (3-1)	Last year this filly broke maiden while posting an 86 Beyer. She than ran 6th in the G1 Frizette. She returns on Lasix and only has to improve slightly on that debut victory to win this. Note that trainer Beckman is 0 for 25 with runners racing on 1st Lasix.
<i>Value Plays</i>	5	Paige Turner (4-1)	Same scenario as above...ran 2nd in ungraded stakes last fall with a 75 Beyer. But trainer DeVaux bats 30% with runners racing on 1st Lasix. Note he has won at CD.
	1	Where Luck Lives (6-1) scratched	With several runners coming off the bench, this guy is the "now" runner having just run a big one at Keeneland in the slop...one never knows what caused the wake up call...the slop?...rider change to Rosario? Not thrilled with the post which forces Rosario to get to the lead early.
<i>Bombers</i>	2	Camilia Catalina (20-1)	With many of my picks in here based on the "projection" method, why not toss this guy in as well...he ran a 71 Beyer winning here at CD! This one has BOMB SQUAD written all over it.
	3	Nimah (8-1) scratched	Part of a Bob Baffert uncoupled entry with #12 FRENCH BLUE (9-2) this one will be longer odds and is another looking to "project" off of a juvenile Beyer (74).

I had high hopes that my BOMBER would hit the board. But she didn't real lift a hoof as it chalked out with my MOST LIKELY on top of the VALUE PLAYER PAIGE TURNER for a paltry \$14 exacta. Yuck.

The Unbridled Sydney (1st Leg Pick 5 for races 7-11)

Selections For The Unbridled Sydney

<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Shisospicy (9-5)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Queen Maxima (7-2) Haulin Ice (6-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Mae Town (20-1)

“C” TEAM

#	Horse
	#2 #3 #4

“A” TEAM

#	Horse
5	Queen Maxima (7-2)
6	Shisospicy (9-5)
7	Haulin Ice (6-1)

“B” TEAM

#	Horse
1	Mae Town (20-1)
8	Moon Spun (4-1)
9	Shoot It True (6-1)

I didn't get involved in this race and good thing. While I had MOON SPUN on my "B" TEAM, I didn't give her much shot at defeating the "A" TEAMERS. But she sprung from the gate put SHESOSPICY into a stalking mode and then held on as the heavy fave faded to last. Anything goes on Oaks and Derby weekend!

Eight Belles (1st leg of the \$0.20 Derby City Pick 6)

Selections For The 8Belles

<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Goodall (3-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	River Wind (4-1) French Friction (6-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Paradise (15-1)

“C” TEAM

#	Horse
	#1 #5 #6

“A” TEAM

#	Horse
2	French Friction (6-1)
3	River Wind (4-1)
8	Goodall (3-1)
9	On Time Girl (5-2)

“B” TEAM

#	Horse
4	Paradise (15-1)
7	Luv Your Neighbor (6-1)

Although I didn't have her listed as MOST LIKELY or a VALUE PLAYER, ON TIME GIRLS was on the "A" TEAM and ran that way albeit at 2-1 odds. "B" TEAMER LUV YOUR NEIGHBOR ran 2nd to key a \$48 exacta.

The Alysheba (1st leg of Oaks P5)

Selections For The Alysheba

<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Skippylongstocking (7-2)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Grande (8-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Corporate Power (10-1)

"A" TEAM

#	Horse
2	Baeza (5-2)
3	Grande (8-1)
7	Skippylongstocking (7-2)
8	Corporate Power (10-1)

"C" TEAM

#	Horse
	#4 #5 #9

"B" TEAM

#	Horse
6	Nu What's New (8-1)

I was undecided who to back in this race....either GRANDE or CORPORATE POWER. Both were around 5-1 with CORPORATE POWER taking more money. So I bet GRANDE and boxed the pair in the exacta. In the end it was CORPORATE POWER with a gutsy hold off of favored SKIPPYLONGSTOCKINGS. A good upset to start the Oaks Pick 5.

The Modesty (1st leg of the Oaks P3)

<i>Selections For The Modesty</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Gezora (4-5)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Whiskey Decision (4-1) Kathynmarissa (8-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Pin Up Betty (10-1)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>						
#	Horse					
	#1	#6	#7	#9	#10	

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
3	Whiskey Decision (4-1)
5	Kathynmarissa (8-1)
6	Gezora (4-5)

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Proctor Street (6-1)
8	Pin Up Betty (10-1)

It was a Chad Brown exacta as his KATHYNMARISSA bested defending BC FM Turf champ GEZORA to the wire. It was the champs seasonal debut so that result was not unexpected. Unfortunately late money kicked the winner's odds from 5-1 to 3-1.

La Troienne (1st leg of Oaks-Derby Pick 6); (1st leg of Oaks Pick 5);

<i>Selections For The La Troienne</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Bless the Broken (9-2) Chasten (6-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Scalable (8-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Dry Powder (12-1) Drexel Hill (15-1)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
	#1 #6 #7

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
1	Bless the Broken (9-2)
2	Scalable (8-1)
7	Chasten (6-1)

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
5	Shred the Gnar (3-1)
8	Dry Powder (12-1)
9	Fully Subscribed (7-2)
11	Drexel Hill (15-1)

My history profile didn't come through in this one. I downgraded SHRED THE GNAR after her GP stinker as no previous 8 Belles winner had finished that poorly in their final prep. But she got the lead and didn't yield.

Edgewood (Leg 4 of Oaks Pick 5)

<i>Selections For The Edgewood</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Imaginationthelady (4-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Storm's Wake (6-1) Lion Lake (8-1) Just Aloof (8-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Tam Tam (15-1) Indigo Woods (15-1)

<i>"C" TEAM</i>							
#	Horse						
	#2	#4	#7	#10	#12	#14	

<i>"A" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
1	Storm's Wake (6-1)
3	Imaginationthelady (4-1)
5	Just Aloof (8-1)
8	Lion Lake (8-1)
13	Indigo Woods (15-1)

<i>"B" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
6	Tam Tam (15-1)
9	Dandona (6-1)
11	Time to Dream (5-1)

I almost got the crush in this one, as BOMBER TAM TAM led most of the way and gamely hung on when passed by MOST LIKELY IMAGINATIONLADY. Solid exacta but obviously it would've been better the other way.

THE KENTUCKY OAKS (2nd Leg of Oaks/Derby P6)

<i>Selections For The Ky Oaks</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Explora (6-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Percy's Bar (6-1) Meaning (5-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Always a Runner (10-1) Counting Stars (8-1) Search Party (30-1)

"A" TEAM	
#	Horse
1	Explora (6-1)
4	Counting Stars (8-1)
5	Meaning (5-1)
11	Percy's Bar (6-1)

"B" TEAM	
#	Horse
2	Zany (4-1)
3	Search Party (30-1)
9	Always a Runner (10-1)
10	Prom Queen (8-1)
12	Bella Ballerina (12-1)

"C" TEAM	
#	Horse
#6	#7 #13 #14 #15
	#16AE #17AE

Chad Brown re-wrote the history books, as his ALWAYS A RUNNER came barrelling through the stretch to overtake SoCal invaders MEANING and EXPLORA and ruining my *Twilight Zone* exacta of the Las Virgenes earlier this year.

Kudos to team Brown for having this one ready on just two career starts and a great ride by J L Ortiz who won five on the day.

Although I played against her on my Pick 5, I used her in the Oaks/Derby Pick 6 on the "A" TEAM and thus had live tickets going into the Derby card.