

Jim Mazur's
2026
Preakness
Day
EPILOG

Published By
Progressive Handicapping, Inc.
9630 NW 39th Ct • Hollywood, FL 33024
1-800-272-8039

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First Print Date: May 17, 2026

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As is my custom, I always recap the BES and Preakness day cards. Let's see how things turned out. *Jim Mazur*

Selections For Race 1

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	8	Gift of Gab (6-1)	Picked up where she left off last year...with a victory. Right back at a decent price.
<i>Value Plays</i>	2	Boujee Bubblez (7-2)	Fits with these IF ready. Works say she will be.
<i>Bombers</i>	9	Precious Avary (8-1)	This mare ran 2nd here last year off similar layoff.
<i>Heads Up</i>	7	Epic Style (8-5)	3-0-2-1 at 5.5f turf; seems overbet.

VALUE PLAYER **BOUJEE BUBBLEZ** wires them and beats my **HEADS UP** runner with 2nditis.

Selections For Race 2

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	3	Wickeddivine (6-1)	At top of his game but wondering if he's got one more left in the tank.
<i>Value Plays</i>	10 12	Dean Delivers (10-1) Grand Opening (8-1)	Part of Robert Bailes uncoupled entry (UE). GRAND OPENING comes off the bench but won in its '25 seasonal debut off a similar layoff. DEAN DELIVERS makes 1st start for Bailes off the claim. Is zip for his last 8 but has been facing tougher. Bailes bats 25% off the claim.
<i>Bombers</i>	4	Freeze the Fire (10-1)	Since being claimed last August his only losses came in two 7f races and ship out to Keeneland in his latest. Note his 16-7-1-3 record at six panels.

MOST LIKELY WICKED DEVINE gets home first over my bet-down **BOMBER FREEZE THE FIRE**.

Selections For Race 3

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	1	Limo (5-2)	A wide-open race with the experienced runners having an edge over the FTS none of which have eye-catching Turf Sire Ratings. This guy was just gelded and is working bullets at Fair Hill. He seems to have his mind on business. Note this is an owner UE with #3.
<i>Value Plays</i>	3	Naabaahii (7-2)	Part of a Brittany Russell UE. This one ran a distant 2nd in his debut which was on dirt. Working Fair Hill bullets for turf debut with Turf Sire Ratings (C+/B) for a trainer who bats 20% with 1st time turfers
	6	Munny Problem (9-2)	Gets blinkers and has also worked a Fair Hill bullet indicating focus. But note that trainer Trombetta bats just 12% with the 1st Time Blinkers move.
<i>Bombers</i>	10	Drive By Johnny (12-1)	Other Russell entrant and she pulls out all the stops: 1st time gelding...1st LASIX...blinkers on. "A" rated turf sire and Toledo signing on adds to the allure of this CRABCAKE play.
<i>Heads Up</i>	9	Ocean Sound (30-1)	Part of Madison Myers UE, a trainer who bats 35% with 1st time turfers. But this geldings sire, Echo Town is "F" rated and has produced just one turf winner from 43 starters per my SR stats.

MOST LIKELY LIMO wires them with VALUE PLAYER NAABAAHII 2nd for a \$25 exacta.

Selections For Race 4 Skipat

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	2	Passage East (3-1)	I'm figuring that this race scratches down to five including Brittany Russell's SPORTING LADY. That's why hubbie Sheldon is named on this Laurel HFC and distance lover.
<i>Value Plays</i>	7	Modo (9-5)	Texas bred has taken two stakes in the Lone Star state but now comes OFF LASIX. That could be the equalizer.
<i>Bombers</i>	1	Striker has Dial (8-1)	Ran 2nd in this race last year but was in great condition. Now he is coming off the bench albeit for a trainer who bats 21% with those sort of layoff runners.

This one worked out very well, as BOMBER STRIKER HAS DIAL was indeed ready off the layoff and pulled the 7-1 upset.

Selections For Race 5

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	7	Mambo Queen (5-1)	The stronger part of Brittany Russell's trio of runners entered in this race. Hubby Sheldon lands here on an in-shape filly with improving Beyers.
<i>Value Plays</i>	5	Serenity Song (10-1)	Part of Russells UE. Just broke maiden sprinting on dirt in her 2nd career start. Now she makes her turf debut and has turf pedigree thanks to "A" rated sire Vekoma.
<i>Bombers</i>	12	Sharmin (12-1)	4 of this mare's 5 career victories have been on the Laurel lawn. She faded in her seasonal debut after setting a solid pace. She looks to steal away again in a bulky field.
	14	Lovely Lookin Lili (30-1)	After four dirt tries, she moved to the turf and stormed home with some late pace to win that turf debut while posting a competitive number. Toledo stays here. The LOWI angle is in play.
<i>Heads Up</i>	4	Sassari (5-2)	This Quality Road filly won at first asking on this course last month. But her speed fig wasn't anything special and she holds no edge over her competition yet is 5-2 ML.

MOST LIKELY MAMBO QUEEN almost got home but I LOVE GIRAFFES stalked and got first run and was able to hold off the late rally.

Selections For Race 6 Sir Barton

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	7	Regan's Honor (7-5)	Top female trainers square off in this one, as Cherie Devaux saddles the legit fave, a multiple winner around two turns albeit while ON LASIX. This colt ran a stinker in the Blue Grass but is the known quantity against two top rivals that are stretching out to two turns for the first time.
<i>Value Plays</i>	4	Final Story (2-1)	Has run fast sprinting and now stretches. The breeding suggests he can run all day and Irad is riding back.
<i>Bombers</i>	1	Minorinconvenience (12-1)	Amelia Green gelded this one after the Wood. A factor if she runs back to her place finish in the Gander.
	5	Falcon Jet (10-1)	Brittany Russell did what Bob Baffert couldn't do: she got this colt to the winner's circle. Now she tries him around two turns. A rare chance to catch this outfit at a price.

With MOST LIKELY **REGAN'S HONOR** a program scratch, the race figured to be wide open with several of these stretching out to two turns for the first time. But local CRABCAKE trainer Gary Capuano had entered a pair and his rabbit helped soften up heavy fave **FINAL STORY** to set it up for Capuano's other entrant LET'S GO LANDO at 5-1.

Selections For Race 7 The Chick Lang

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	6	Shane's Wonder (3-1)	Prx shipper is unbeaten in three starts, all without LASIX and appears quicker than the comp. I like the Prx bullito in the holster.
<i>Value Plays</i>	4	Obliteration (6-5)	The obvious class of the field having won the G3 Sanford last summer and a recent 2nd in the Saudi Derby. Asmussen obviously thinks this guy is BC Sprint material and will probably keep him at 6f and 7f going forward. You never know what the desert effect might be as this one runs into a potential buzzsaw per above.
<i>Bombers</i>	1	Fulmine (20-1)	At 6f this guy is a perfect 4-for-4 including the Hutcheson at GP this winter OFF LASIX.

I took a shot that MOST LIKELY **SHANE'S WONDER** could outfoot heavy fave **OBLITERATION** but he yielded late and they ran 1-2 with the fave on top at 4-5..

Race #8 Maryland Sprint (First Leg of PREAKNESS Pick 6)

Selections For The Maryland Sprint

<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Haileysfirstnotion (7-2)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Celtic Contender (9-2) Slam Notion (5-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Faust (8-1) Hymn (12-1)

“C” TEAM

#	Horse
	#1 #5 #9

“A” TEAM

#	Horse
4	Haileysfirstnotion (7-2)
6	Celtic Contender (9-2)
8	Slam Notion (5-1)

“B” TEAM

#	Horse
2	Faster Gator (9-2)
3	Faust (8-1)
7	Hymn (10-1)

SPEED, SPEED, SPEED is the historic profile for this race when run at Pimlico. So I didn't have a feel for whether that would hold up at Laurel. Either way, I didn't have winner **BRING THE SMOKE** on my radar...he seemed a tick or two slower than the others and was taking blinkers off...a 10% move for trainer Whitworth Beckman. This race would come back to haunt me later!

Race #9 James W. Murphy (First Leg of PREAKNESS Pick 5)

<i>Selections For The James W. Murphy</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Proton (9-5)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Zihnal (6-1) Turf Star (5-2)
<i>Bombers</i>	My Favorite Bird (10-1)

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
1	My Favorite Bird (10-1)
3	Zihnal (6-1)
5	Proton (9-5)
6	Turf Star (5-2)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
	#7 #8

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Thebabeslayer (6-1)
4	Attfield (9-2)

The troops bet down **MY FAVORITE BIRD** to 2-1 and that let my CO-VALUE PLAYER **TURF STAR** sneak away at 4-1 and he caught my so called BOMBER late for a \$47 exacta for a deuce.

ZIHNAL was a program scratch.

<i>Selections For The Dinner Party</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Dresden Row (7-5)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Cruise The Nile (9-5) Fort Washington (7-2)
<i>Bombers</i>	Thundering (15-1) Harrow (12-1)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>		
#	Horse	
	#1	#5

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
3	Cruise The Nile (9-5)
4	Fort Washington (7-2)
6	Dresden Row (7-5)

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Thundering (15-1)
7	Harrow (12-1)

When ML fave **DRESDEN ROW** scratched off the program, the troops bet down **CRUISE THE NILE** to 2-5. But it was defending champ **FORT WASHINGTON** repeating for the Shugster.

Race #11 **The Gallorette** (Start of the **PREAKNESS** Pick 3)

<i>Selections For The Gallorette</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Ribaltagaia (6-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Awesome Czech (5-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Mahra's Love (15-1) Warming (12-1)

"A" TEAM	
#	Horse
2	Ribaltagaia (6-1)
3	Accent (3-1)
4	Warming (12-1)
8	Awesome Czech (5-1)

"C" TEAM			
#	Horse		
	#5	#6	#7

"B" TEAM	
#	Horse
1	Mahra's Love (15-1)

I had one of my strongest opinions of the day in this race. I liked the two H Graham Motion entrants **RIBALTAGAIA** and **WARMING** but preferring the former over the latter. They were both in my 2-Day Pick 5 ticket and I wagered my usual box and split-them-in the trifecta routine. My win money went on **RIBALTAGAIA**. She went to the front and set reasonable fractions but, in the end, faded while setting it up for her stablemate. And when my other selections above didn't hit the board, it was an empty experience!

Race #12 Jim McKay Turf Sprint

Selections For The McKay Turf Sprint

<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Had to Have Him (8-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Jean Valjean (5-1) Outlaw Kid (5-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Isivunguvungu (10-1)

“C” TEAM

#	Horse
	#1 #2 #4 #5 #6 #9 #10

“A” TEAM

#	Horse
3	Jean Valjean (5-1)
7	Isivunguvungu (10-1)
8	Outlaw Kid (5-1)
11	Had to Have Him (8-1)

“B” TEAM

#	Horse
	NONE

When **ISIVUNGUVUNGU** scratched off the program, I moved **CHASING LIBERTY** onto the “A” TEAM even though he was already there on my Pick 5 play. But I went all in on **HAD TO HAVE HIM** looking for a CRABCAKE connection.

Instead we got a NY connection as the two shippers that ran 1-2 in the K T Leatherbury on April 18 hit the wire together. But this time **CHASING LIBERTY** was on top **OUTLAW KID**.

That cost me some value on the Pick 5 play, as one was the fave and the other was off 8-1 with a 6-1 ML.

RACE #13 THE PREAKNESS

<i>Selections For The Preakness</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Incredibolt (5-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Iron Honor (9-2) Ocelli (6-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Napoleon Solo (8-1)

"A" TEAM	
#	Horse
1	Taj Mahal (5-1)
2	Ocelli (6-1)
9	Iron Honor (9-2)
10	Napoleon Solo (8-1)
12	Incredibolt (5-1)

"B" TEAM	
#	Horse
6	Chip Honcho (5-1)
8	Bull by the Horns (30-1)

"C" TEAM							
#	Horse						
#3	#4	#5	#7	#11	#13	#14	

*Those who back **Napoleon Solo** are wagering that he is ready to match or improve on his 95 Beyer earned in last year's Champagne. That's called betting "on the come." Normally, I don't like to "project" off a previous race unless the price is right. But for this year's Preakness, **Napoleon Solo's** "promise" is better than most of the field's current form. This Liam Map colt had an awkward start in his sophomore seasonal debut and finished 5th behind Commandment in the Fountain of Youth while sent off at 3-1. A slight injury forced trainer Chad Summers to miss a work and thus an excuse when finishing 5th next out in the Wood. On the positive side, this guy has punched out two enormous six-furlong works. On the negative side, he wants to be part of the early mix in a field where others also want to be close up. At 8-1, he is a marginal BOMBER but I simply can't take one the 30-1 fuzzies without any justification.*

My Preakness race history was extremely valuable this year with all but 3 of the entrants coming from preps outside of the Derby. The history book says that the Wood Memorial produces the most winners in what I call the "newbie" group. As such, I focused on **NAPOLEON SOLO** and **IRON HONOR** as each of them were pointed directly to the Preakness after the Wood. That's called a plan as opposed to an audible that saw several runners scramble in to this field including **INCREDIBOLT**.

When I saw Chad Brown's runner drift to 9-1, I went all in with win money on both of them as well as a nice exacta box with some **OCELLI** sprinkled in as he was once removed from the Wood.

It all came together complete with a Pick 5 cash out and some muttering from myself about leaving out Whitford Beckman's runner in the first leg of the Pick 6.

Overall a solid weekend in which history played out albeit at a Laurel course instead of historic Pimlico.