

2025

BES Day

Epilog

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Jim Mazur's BES Day Epilog

As is my custom, I always recap the BES and Preakness day cards. Earlier in the week, rain was hit Pimlico as predicted. The main track dried out to be fast but the turf course had some give to it and was labeled "good." A nasty thunderstorm hit before the BES post time and delayed the race and turned the track in a sea of slop. Let's see how things turned out.

Selections For Race 1

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	6	Verifire (2-5)	Give the racing secretary kudos for lining up six rivals against this promising colt that cost \$1 million.
<i>Value Plays</i>	4	Saxton (4-1)	Needs a major form reversal off last race's finish.
<i>Bombers</i>	1	Straight to Water (20-1)	Best late pace to close out for pieces when the race falls apart chasing the MOST LIKELY on the engine.

VERIFIRE was an easy wire winner at 2-5.

Selections For Race 2

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	10	My Brazilian Girl (5-2)	Ran 4th last out in G2 Orchid and now drops back in with MSW. Top grass connections and a bullet 5f in the holster.
<i>Value Plays</i>	12	Software (7-2)	CRABCAKE play with local trainer Motion calling the shots.
<i>Bombers</i>	3	Mopo (8-1)	Beyers jumped when he moved to turf last out.
<i>Heads Up #1</i>	5 7	Abundant Love (4-1) Positive Carry (20-1)	Likes to earn pieces; finished 2nd in last two. Likes to earn pieces (13-0-4-3 lifetime).

MOPO was bet down to 5-1 and scored. Not much of a BOMBER but a winner nonetheless.

Selections For Race 3

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	6	Stronsino (5-2)	Gelded last year; Ness took over and is 5-2-3-0 in dirt routes with him. Could be a set up if stablemate POINT DUME also runs as the "rabbit." Even so, back yourself up with this guy...he does like to run 2nd.
<i>Value Plays</i>	3	Sagrada Ray (5-1)	Just claimed and trainer bats 28% next time out. Probably claimed to run on turf. Should be part of the pace with Carmouche aboard.
	2	Cadet Corps (4-1)	Win machine on dirt and at this distance but I have my doubts if he will be ready for a top effort off the 69-day layoff...Breen bats just 8% in that situation.
<i>Bombers</i>	10	Classic Joke (12-1)	Just claimed by Farrior who bats 26% with his new purchases. This gelding usually sprints but rated nicely in a turf route last out. Sneaky play for top trainer.
<i>Heads Up #1</i>	9	Point Dume (7-2)	Could be the "rabbit" for STRONSINO but note that this gelding is bred for stamina on both sides. Sometimes the "rabbit" keeps going. I'm using them both.

My HEADS UP play was right on target. POINT DUME (3-1) went right to the lead and never looked back.

Selections For Race 4

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	8	Bourbon Boss (3-1)	Wired them in his seasonal debut at 5.5f on "good" turf. This heat lacks early speedsters so a repeat "W" is likely.
<i>Value Plays</i>	1	Island d'Lite (5-1)	Beyers improved when moved to turf last year and stayed there when 2nd last out in seasonal debut on "good" turf.
	2	Katie's Notion (4-1)	5f might be just a bit short for this 7-year-old that ended the '24 campaign with a victory at 5.5f and then was 3rd at that distance in his seasonal debut last time out.
<i>Bombers</i>	4	Toolpusher (6-1)	Moved to the turf at the end of the '24 campaign and ran two big ones and then just missed in his seasonal debut. Trainer has high win% with runners 2nd off the layoff.

MOST LIKELY BOURBON BOSS got the job done at 6-5. Yup, more chalk.

Selections For Race 5

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	4	Ennis Town (8-5)	Comes off the bench with BLINKERS ON and should get the jump on the Baffert below.
	7	Privman (6-5)	Also makes seasonal debut and has typical Baffert bullet in the holster. Might not catch Ennis Town.
<i>Value Plays</i>	2	Firmantown (6-1)	Has a conditioning edge on the top two and also has solid early speed. He could get the jump on both of them!
<i>Bombers</i>	5	Gung Ho (8-1)	CRABCAKE trainer bats just 11% with FTS but this one has above average FTS sire ratings on the sire side and a Fair Hill bullet in the holster.

PRIVMAN went off at 2-5 and chased FIRMANTOWN all the way around. But then a FTS at 67-1 blew by them both. Since the FTS had just average FTS *Sire Ratings* and the trainer was 0'er in that category, this one wasn't on my radar.

Selections For Race 6

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	3	Tidewater (7-2)	Shows a win at the distance at Pimlico. Top rider switches back on for trainer who bats 40% 2nd start off the layoff.
<i>Value Plays</i>	6	Fierce and Strong (4-1)	Turf router won his seasonal debut at this distance last year.
<i>Bombers</i>	10	Had to Have Him (10-1)	First time gelding comes off the bench for CRABCAKE trainer. He won a race this weekend last year but that wasn't off the layoff. Stats say 0 for 5 with the layoffs.
	8	Where's Ray (20-1)	Ran 4th in Jim McKay last year on "soft" turf and posted a new speed fig top but never got back to that fig. Now has a tightner for trainer who bats 33% with 2nd start off the layoff types.

Finally, some value comes home to roost. FIERCE AND STRONG drifted up to 9-1 and scored the upset as my VALUE PLAYER. To add to the sweetness, BOMBER WHERE'S RAY ran 2nd to key a \$220 exacta for \$1.

Selections For Race 7

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	11	Ocean City (3-1)	Gelded at the end of March and then did a speed fade OFF LASIX in the Henry Clark. Should be set up to take this group a long way on the front end.
<i>Value Plays</i>	10	St. John's (9-2)	SCRATCHED
<i>Bombers</i>	5	Wow Whata Summer (10-1)	Had a tuneup at Laurel and won on this weekend at Pimlico last year on "good" turf. One of the few in here with multiple wins at the distance. Win candidate at a price.
<i>Heads Up #1</i>	7	Army Officer (2-1)	Brad Cox's gelding is the ML fave and gets BLINKERS ON after fading in seasonal debut on the Turfway Synthetic. I will use him on the "A" TEAM for the Pick 5 but he is far from a dominant favorite and holds no edge on the speed figs.

Again my HEADS UP was right on. ARMY OFFICER was bet down to 3-5 and looked like a winner when he cleared the field in mid stretch. But a 37-1 longshot fuzzy ran by him late. The winner was 1 for 5 on the turf and had never run a race fast enough to be considered a threat. Blinkers off did the trick because he sure woke up!

Selections For Race 8 *Allaire Dupont Distaff*

	Prog #	Horse	Comment if any
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	1	Dazzling Move (4-1)	Won the G3 Royal Delta at GP and then turned back to run 5th in the G1 Madison at 7f. BLINKERS OFF is a 26% move for this trainer who bats 30% when riding JL Ortiz.
<i>Value Plays</i>	8	Sudden Switch (6-1)	Fast developing filly is 2-for-2 but now moves up to a graded stakes and runs for the first time WITHOUT LASIX. Breeding says this one may not go further than a mile...we shall see.
<i>Bombers</i>	7	Regaled (15-1)	Closes from the clouds and has rallied stoutly on OFF TRACKS in the last two. Shows a win at Pimlico but is another runner that is bred to run a mile.
	2	Miss Hebrides (12-1)	Brings speed to the table and ran some sharp races at Oaklawn ON LASIX; last time out she ran 3rd but caved late OFF LASIX in an OP ungraded stakes. Should be lone speed in here and is bred to run all day. Mixed bag but we are getting 12-1 and Saez!
<i>Heads Up #1</i>	3	Candied (8-5)	In '24, she was on the edges against G1 competition and then dropped to a G3 in her seasonal debut but finished 3rd. She hasn't won a race since taking a baby stakes at Monmouth last summer. Looks like a sucker play to me.
<i>Heads Up #2</i>	6	Peignoir (8-1)	Was on the edges this winter OFF LASIX but then freaked with a Keeneland allowance victory ON LASIX. A multiple winner at the distance. I'd use her instead of CANDIED.
<i>Heads Up #3</i>	4	Lemon Muffin (5-1)	Broke a long drought (and a severe case of 2nditis) by winning on the CD slop on Derby weekend ON LASIX. Now wheels back quickly and will be OFF LASIX. Play her underneath.

In this instance, my HEADS UP #1 was NOT on target. Last year, CANDIED came in 6-1-2-2 and had run 3rd in her seasonal debut. I thought she was a vulnerable fave. But not today. She moved with authority and blew by DAZZLING MOVE. CANDIED went off 4-5. DAZZLING MOVE was 8-5. The chalk mites were dancing in the street!

Race #9 The Hilltop (Start of the BES Pick 5)

<i>Selections For The Hilltop</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Obeissante (5-2)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Me Governor (7-2) Sigh No More (4-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Pretty Lavish (8-1) White Rocks (6-1)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
	#1 #4 #5

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
3	Me Governor (7-2)
6	Pretty Lavish (8-1)
8	Obeissante (5-2)
9	Sigh No More (4-1)

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Play With Fire (6-1)
7	White Rocks (6-1)

The Hilltop kicked off the Pick 5 ending in the BES, so I took a swing. I moved WHITE ROCKS onto my “A” TEAM and made PLAY WITH FIRE a “C” TEAMER. The turf course was listed as “good” and PLAY WITH FIRE had weekend in her last two on “good” turf courses at Keeneland and Fair Grounds. Plus she was coming OFF LASIX.

But, on this day, on this turf course, she came roaring from off the pace and won by daylight with my “A” TEAMERS filling in behind her. Still alive but hanging by a thread.

Race #10 Miss Preakness (Start of the BES Pick 4)

<i>Selections For The Miss Preakness</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Family (6-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Long Neck Paula (6-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	G W's Girl (12-1) Delray (15-1)

<i>"C" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
#1	#2
#10	#11
#13	

<i>"A" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
4	G W's Girl (12-1)
5	Family (6-1)
7	Delray (15-1)
9	Long Neck Paula (6-1)

<i>"B" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
3	High Paf (12-1)
6	Stunner (4-1)
8	Echo Sound (5-1)
12	Vodka With a Twist (7-2)

I had high hopes for FAMILY in this one; I thought she would wire the field and one of my BOMBERS would clunk up for the place. But FAMILY didn't break sharply and stalked for a bit before fading to last. Meanwhile, "B" TEAMER ECHO SOUND came off the layoff to win going away for Kentucky-based Rusty Arnold. Those hardboots are not supposed to win on Preakness weekend! I was tutti finutti on the Pick 5, like a starting pitcher who gets shelled in the 3rd inning and is showering by the 4th.

Race #11 The Very One (Start of the BES Pick 3)

<i>Selections For The Very One</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Accomplished Girl (3-1) Bosserrati (9-2)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Simply Stated (10-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Anaita (30-1) Shoshanah (20-1) Gift of Gab (20-1)

<i>“C” TEAM on turf</i>				
#	Horse			
#3 (MTO)	#5	#8	#10 (MTO)	#13

<i>“A” TEAM on turf</i>	
#	Horse
1	Anaita (30-1)
2	Bosserati (9-2)
6	Gift of Gab (20-1)
14	Accomplished Girl (3-1)

<i>“B” TEAM on turf</i>	
#	Horse
4	Shoshanah (20-1)
7	Pinotslilgirl (20-1)
9	Loon Cry (9-5)
12	Simply Stated (10-1)

<i>“A” TEAM on dirt</i>	
#	Horse
3	Pleasant Embrace (7-5)
7	Pinotslilgirl (20-1)
8	Moonlit Kiss (8-1)
10	Mudslide (8-1)

I was optimistic that the VERY ONE STAKES would provide some fireworks. I liked two longshots in here—ANAITA and GIFT OF GAB. I went all in. They tried hard at long odds but had to settled for 3rd and 5th behind the two MOST LIKELY. Chalk on

Race #12 Pimlico Special (Start of the BES DD)

<i>Selections For The Pimlico Special</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Phileas Fogg (5-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Encino (6-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Cataleya Strike (20-1) Awesome Aaron (12-1)

<i>“C” TEAM</i>				
#	Horse			
	#5	#6	#9	#10

<i>“A” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
1	Phileas Fogg (5-1)
3	Encino (6-1)
7	Pyrenees (8-5)
8	Star of Wonder (7-2)

<i>“B” TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Cataleya Strike (20-1)
4	Awesome Aaron (12-1)

Brad Cox entered a pair in here and his ENCINO was expected to engage PHILEAS FOGG on the front end and set it up for Cox’s STAR OF WONDER. I was hoping that the whole shooting match would melt down on the front end and set up a late run from BOMBER CATALEYA STRIKE.

Right idea on my part...wrong horse. Instead my other BOMBER, AWESOME AARON, stalked the leaders in 3rd and then slowly wore down PHINEAS FOGG to score a 7-1 mini upset. Poor PHILEAS. He did all the work on the front but just couldn’t last to the wire.

RACE #13 THE BLACK EYED SUSAN

<i>Selections For BES</i>	
<i>Most Likely to Win</i>	Margie's Intention (3-1)
<i>Value Plays</i>	Liam in the Dust (6-1) Paris Lily (8-1)
<i>Bombers</i>	Reply (8-1) Moon Cache (20-1)

<i>"C" TEAM</i>		
#	Horse	
	#4	#5

<i>"A" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
1	Liam in the Dust (6-1)
3	Margie's Intention (3-1)
6	Paris Lily (8-1)

<i>"B" TEAM</i>	
#	Horse
2	Princess Aliyah (15-1)
7	Reply (8-1)
8	Amarth (4-1)
9	Moon Cache (20-1)

We had two historical factors being questioned in the BES: (1) *no local filly had won a BES in at least 31 years; and (2) no BES winner had ever finished worse than 4th (in the 31-year sample).*

REPLY and MOON CHACHE were sharp local entrants and PRINCESS ALIYAH and AMARTH had run worse than 4th.

I thought it was PARIS LILY'S race to lose and was hoping for a replay of her last race where she beat LIAM IN THE DUST. C'mon Rod Serling, how about a *Twilight Zone* exacta replay to end the day?

Nope. MOST LIKELY MARGIE'S INTENTION had other plans as she passed PARIS LILY in deep stretch.

For the most part, my handicapping had been right on except for the FTS and longshot turf fuzzies. But I had little to show for it except some live DD to PAY BILL and euro HEART OF HONOR in the Preakness.