

FULL RACE PREVIEWS & WAGERING STRATEGIES FOR ALL STAKES RACES ON THE CARD

**RACING
DUDES** **INSIDE**
TRACK
TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY



**EXCLUSIVE RACE
ANALYSIS**

WAGERING STRATEGIES FOR ALL STAKES
INCLUDING KENTUCKY OAKS & KENTUCKY DERBY

**DERBY HORSE
CAPSULES**

FROM AWARD-WINNING HANDICAPPER
MIKE "SARATOGA SLIM" SPECTOR

EXCLUSIVE ANALYSIS

FROM PROFESSIONAL HORSEPLAYER
JONATHON KINCHEN

\$39.95 US \$53.90 CAN



WELCOME

The Kentucky Derby is a part of the American fabric. During "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports," the country turns its eyes to Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky, to see which 3-year-old horse will win the "Run for the Roses."



This **Inside Track to the Kentucky Derby** is a combination of some of the best handicapping forces in the country. The Racing Dudes have been at it for years, offering handicapping picks and analysis daily for over 7 years. This year, all hands are on deck. Racing Dudes Aaron and Jared have scoured over the Kentucky Derby field for months, while Mike "Saratoga Slim" Spector and Mike Somich have also been busy at work. Mike Somich is known for his massive multi-race scores. He is fairly new to the team, but is already making many fans with his Pick 4 and Pick 5 analysis and picks. Saratoga Slim is the master at crushing major tickets on big days. Last year, he cashed in HUGE at the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes. In addition to his handicapping skills, Saratoga Slim is also an award-winning Kentucky Derby pace writer.

And a special bonus this year, Jonathon Kinchen will be contributing to this **Inside Track to the Kentucky Derby!** Jonathon was the 2015 NHC Tour champion and remains the only player in NHC history to have both of his entries qualify for The Final Table. Jonathon's work has been seen with DRF, as well as more recently on Fox Sports. You can also check out the In The Money Players' Podcast, which he does with tournament expert Peter T. Fornatale.

The Racing Dudes have absolutely dominated the Kentucky Derby! Successes such as **predicting 5 out of the last 6 winners** correctly, as well as cashing in on a \$4,000+ Trifecta in 2017. Last year, the guide **CRUSHED** the Justify/Good Magic **STRAIGHT** Exacta. What will we do this year?

IN THIS ALL-INCLUSIVE INSIDE TRACK TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY YOU CAN FIND:

Horse capsules for each of the 20 horses in the 2019 Kentucky Derby field from award-winning handicapper Mike "Saratoga Slim" Spector, including:

- ▶ Trainers, jockeys, projected odds, and running styles (i.e., early speed, presser, closer)
- ▶ Pros (positive angles), Cons (negative angles), and the Bottom Line
- ▶ Five categories – Win Contenders (horses to use to win or on top in exotic wagers), Can Hit the Board (horses to use in the second- and third-place slots), Exotic Plays (horses to use, but only in the third- or fourth-place slots), Consider / Tosses (horses to possibly use or toss), and Tosses (horses to not include on tickets)
- ▶ Historical pace analysis, including the running styles of the past 18 Kentucky Derby winners and superfecta ticket strategy
- ▶ Multi-Race Wager plays and strategies from handicapping expert Mike Somich
- ▶ Exclusive analysis from Jonathon Kinchen on the two day \$2 Pick 6 wager

RACE BY RACE ANALYSIS OF ALL STAKES RACES ON THE KENTUCKY DERBY CARD INCLUDING:

- ▶ Overview of the Race
- ▶ Race Shape and Pace Analysis
- ▶ Top Selections
- ▶ Major Threats
- ▶ Longshots to Use
- ▶ Exclusive Picks and Plays for each race which includes: Win bet, place or show bet, long shot across the board play, exacta, trifecta, Superfecta, horses to use in multi-race wagers, what to play on a small budget, and what to play on a large budget. Each win, place, show, or across the board selection comes with a confidence rating, so you can see how strongly we feel about each pick.
- ▶ Exclusive bonus analysis of the Kentucky Oaks
- ▶ Top 4 choices for all stakes race from the handicappers at racingdudes.com

Finally, always remember to wager responsibly and never wager more than you can afford.

Good luck today!

OAKS/DERBY

TWO DAY PICK 6



... by Jonathon Kinchen

Remember when you were a kid how you felt about Christmas? Well, for me, I get to relive that experience every year at the Kentucky Derby.

I went to my first Derby in 2009. I'll never forget walking into Churchill Downs for the first time, sneaking up to the third floor, and watching Rachel Alexandra win the Kentucky Oaks by 20 lengths. What a magical performance, and one I will never forget. Walking out of the track that Friday evening it hit me, "I get to come back here tomorrow and watch the Kentucky Derby."

In the eleven years since, I've missed a lot of things: birthday parties, shows, even the occasional podcast (sorry, PTF). But I haven't missed a Kentucky Derby. With all due respect to the Breeders' Cup, a fabulous event in its own right, for me, these are the best two-days in horse racing.

So what did my favorite two-day horse racing event get me for our 11th anniversary? A **Two-Day, All Grade 1, \$2 Minimum, Pick 6**. The best anniversary gift ever! I just wish I had a single like Rachel Alexandra...

\$2 OAKS-DERBY PICK 6

Friday, Race 8, 2:52pm ET, **G1 La Troienne presented by Inside Access from Chase**

Friday, Race 11, 6:12pm ET, **G1 Longines Kentucky Oaks**

Saturday, Race 6, 1:13pm ET, **G1 Humana Distaff**

Saturday, Race 8, 2:45pm ET, **G1 Churchill Downs presented by Twinspires.com**

Saturday, Race 11, 5:25pm ET, **G1 Old Forester Turf Classic**

Saturday, Race 12, 6:50pm ET, **G1 Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve**

HOW TO USE THIS COLUMN

My goal here is not to give you a specific ticket to play, though you could easily construct one from my thoughts below. But I prefer the idea that I'll identify my A horses and B horses and allow you to infuse those opinions with your own thoughts, and filter those through your budget, your goals, and your own "betting personality."

A large part of this game is formulating your own opinion and creating your own wagers. For me, it is so much more gratifying when your opinion or ticket construction leads to a score. What's the old saying? Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Are you a cautious player for whom a winning Derby Day would mean more than just money? Feel free to spread more and bring those denominations down. Or are you a wild man like Tommy Massis, not worried about withstanding a losing streak as long as when you hit, you hit 'em hard. Those who listen to the show know where I stand on this: when I win, I want to crush their souls.

Below you'll find tickets at three different price points. Some might look at my big ticket and think, "Damn, that's a lot of money to spend, JK. Maybe you really do own a private plane." But I believe that these big days – especially with a \$2 Pick Six like this – are the best opportunities our game has to offer. When my opinion warrants it, as I believe it does this year, I'll take the risk to reap the reward.

If you can't do that, there are other options. You can pool money with your friends, or, if your opinion allows, you can trim down in spots, either according to your own ideas or how I suggest below. Whatever you do, don't just play the Pick Six to play the pick six. If you don't have an opinion and/or your budget isn't large enough to play your opinion properly, pass the bet and find other wagering opportunities in other pools. There's no need to take a knife to a gun fight.

Your opinion, budget and goals make all the difference in the world when deciding how to attack a certain sequence. You might have \$200 to spend, or you may have \$2,000. You may want to try for a six-figure score or you may be happy winning enough money to break even on all those Mint Juleps. That said, here is how I see the Oaks-Derby Pick Six sequence and how I will be playing it.

LEG A - G1 LA TROIENNE:

I find this race to be one of the most complicated in the sequence. There are no real standouts and hardly any low priced horses to fade. This is the typical survive and advance race. **She's a Julie** is drawn down inside which doesn't concern me for a horse with her speed. Ricardo Santana is an aggressive rider and I imagine he will get her out of the gate and lead them around there as long as he can. **Blue Prize** hasn't been seen since last fall when she was fourth behind Monomoy Girl, Wow Cat, and Midnight Bisou. Monomoy and Bisou would be odds on in this race. Blue Prize's layoff is a concern, but her record at CD (6-3-2-0) makes her a must use in a spread race. **Secret Spice** ran a huge speed figure in the Beholder Mile and confirmed that 11-length win she had in the allowance race back in October. She feels like the most likely winner of the race, but hasn't gotten her picture taken on a consistent basis and that prevented me from leaning on her in this spot. **Mopotism** is the longest price of my A horses. I really respect Doug O'Neil and this filly has been knocking on the door of a Grade 1 for sometime. The addition of blinkers could see her more involved early and we know she will finish. I love the price we are going to get on this mare in a race that appears wide open. I don't have much clever to say about **Divine Miss Grey**. She is a talented filly that hasn't missed the exacta in her last five starts and two of those races were over the Churchill Downs strip. Manny Franco has been riding as well as anyone in the country and he is poised to have a break out weekend on a national stage. I am going to use **Awe Emma** as a B horse because of her speed. If She's A Julie misses the break or is not aggressively ridden from the rail, this filly could be loose on the lead! Not likely, but at 20-1 on the morning line I'll use her just in case.

A:

- 1 – She's A Julie
- 2 – Blue Prize
- 5 – Mopotism

9 – Secret Spice (Top Choice)

B:

- 3 – Divine Miss Grey
- 4 – Awe Emma

LEG B – G1 LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS

The big story here is that I am trying to beat Bellafina. She has long been the top 3-year old and was beaten on this racetrack as the top 2-year old. She is going to take a ton of money and will likely be a single on many Oaks-Derby Pick 6 tickets. Now the tough part is figuring out how am I going to do that! My top pick in the race is **Champagne Anyone**. I do love a mimosa or two at brunch, but that is not the reason I landed on this filly. By all accounts she is working extremely well at Churchill Downs and I think she is going to get a massive setup. The Kentucky Oaks pace looks like it is going to be very quick with fillies like Motion Emotion, Serengeti Empress, Jaywalk, and Bellafina. This will also be the first time any of these fillies will be going nine furlongs, except Positive Spirit. This feels like a race that falls apart late.

I mentioned **Jaywalk** when I was discussing the likely quick pace, but I think she offers a bit of value based on her recent record and explosive performance on this race track as a 2-year old. I am attempting to create the narrative that they had an overconfident start to her 3-year old season and there is a chance we will see her best performance yet. I don't mind the 14 post for **Restless Rider** as her late kick on a speed favoring track at Keeneland was extremely encouraging and even more so with the expected pace of this race. She is a two-time winner on this track and will be running on late. Chad Brown is going to need to get lucky with a scratch to get **Dunbar Road** in the race. Most of the racing world might giggle at the notion of Chad Brown needing to get lucky. He seems extremely fortunate the other 363 days of the racing year, but this filly is live if she draws in. This lightly raced filly was right there with my top pick, Champagne Anyone in only her second career start. **Flor De La Mar** is interesting for a few reasons. First of all, she is trained by Bob Baffert, owned by Godolphin, ridden by Joel Rosario, and could be double-digit odds. This filly looked like the Oaks favorite after her debut and then started to look ordinary. I will give her an excuse for the sloppy track race in March, but Bob and the team better be singing "rain, rain, go

away" from now until post time. I would fade her if the racetrack comes up sloppy.

A:
7 - Jaywalk
10 – Champagne Anyone (Top Choice)
14 – Restless Rider

B:
5 – Flor De La Mar
15 (AE) – Dunbar Road

LEG C – G1 HUMANA DISTAFF

To single **Marley's Freedom** or not to single Marley's Freedom, that is the question. She has races in her career that would win this race by six lengths, but there are plenty of reasons for players to try to find a chink in her armor. She has tried stretching out a few times since the Breeders' Cup debacle that saw her run off the board as the odds on favorite, winning one of those route attempts and running second in the other. I think she will appreciate the cutback, but I couldn't muster up enough confidence to single. Her stable mate, **Emboldened** is extremely interesting and has a rider change to Joel Rosario that might be favorable. Her last race in the Las Flores was much better than the second place finish might suggest. I also was very impressed with her last work at Churchill with Improbable. Despite her 0 for 3 record going 7 furlongs, **Amy's Challenge** is live in this spot. Her price should be fair with the under the radar connections and she is likely to get an easier pace scenario than she encountered at Keeneland in the Madison. **Spiced Perfection** and **Talk Veuve To Me** are both extremely talented fillies, but they are going to need to talk a step forward to beat the two Bafferts.

A:
6 – Emboldened
7 – Marley's Freedom (Top Choice)

B:
2- Spiced Perfection
4 – Talk Veuve To Me
5 – Amy's Challenge

LEG D – G1 CHURCHILL DOWNS PRESENTED BY TWINSPIRES.COM

I am a card carrying member of the "Speed of the Speed" club, but this race has to have a pace meltdown. **Mitole** has been unbelievably impressive in almost ALL of his lifetime races, but he has never faced pace pressure like he will today. With that said, I am looking for closers to pick up the pieces when the speed horses are feeling the effects of their early race efforts. I love the chances of **Do Share**. His last race in the Tom Fool was nothing short of phenomenal. He is going to get all the pace he needs to run his best race and picks up the services of Irad Ortiz Jr. Take a look at the last two Breeder's Cup Filly and Mare Sprint races that Irad won on two bombs. Those rides are exactly what this horse needs and he will have the horse in contention when they straighten out for home. Like with all closers, my main concern is avoiding trouble while passing horses late. **Whitmore** is another closer that has a great shot. I am not crazy about the post, but this old warrior shows up every time. Don't let his previous running line confuse his actually running style. He had to be put into the race at Oaklawn if he wanted any shot of beating Mitole in a paceless race. He ran well considering he abandoned his preferred style. **Uncontested** got a curious ride last time at Keeneland when he was broke a step slow, hustled, and then rated. His previous two races at Laurel make him a contender in here if the pace doesn't materialize like it appears on paper.

A:
1 – Do Share (Top Choice)
8 – Mitole

B:
9 – Uncontested
12 – Whitmore

LEG E – G1 OLD FORESTER TURF CLASSIC

Where is Divisidero when you need him? One of my favorite horses of all time won this race in back-to-back years (2016-2017) but is absent again for this running. This race is not as simple as those two races were. **Bricks and Mortar** has is undefeated this year and absolutely exploded in the Pegasus Turf. The most important aspect of that race was the soft ground he excelled on and the possible soft ground he might encounter Saturday. He is the most logical winner, but the outside

post and underwhelming performance in his last race at Fair Grounds make him slightly vulnerable. **Synchrony** is a horse I have always admired, but not one I completely trust as he has never been able to win a Grade 1. His performance in this race last year versus Yoshida and Beach Patrol on a soft Churchill Downs turf course makes him a must use in this year's edition. The addition of blinkers and Hall of Fame rider Johnny Velazquez could be the changes needed to get him over the Grade 1 hump. **Next Shares** has a tricky post, but I am not too concerned based on the way the Churchill Downs turf course typically plays with no rail and rain. The inside paths are not ideal and outside trips often upgrade a horse's chances. Next Shares has a strong record on "not firm" turf (6-3-0-0) and will be forgotten by most out in the 13 post.

A:
9 - Synchrony
12 – Bricks and Mortar (Top Choice)
B:
13 – Next Shares

LEG F – G1 KENTUCKY DERBY PRESENTED BY WOODFORD RESERVE

After I spent the first few hundred words writing about how much I love Derby weekend, it might surprise you to hear me say that when it comes to betting, The Kentucky Derby is just another race. Don't leave, I am not crazy. Bear with me while I explain what I mean. The Kentucky Derby does something to a horseplayer. We handicap and bet races all year long and we suddenly change everything we do on the first Saturday in May. We start using horses we wouldn't normally use out of fear. We start building narratives for what horses "might do" based on this or that soft factor. We feel guilty or silly using the favorite in the world's best betting race.

I think we make these mistakes for a number of reasons. One, we want to win on Derby Day because there won't be another chance for 364 days. Second, we struggle to pass up the chance for a life-changing score which requires some out-of-the-box thinking (or so we think). The bottom line is that the Derby is generally a formful race despite a few outliers – and even many of those can be explained (Giacomo going from pace compromised to pace aided, Mine That Bird's golden rail). So when it comes to betting, instead of getting all worked up and worried, do what I'm about to tell you: bet it like

any other race. I was about to hit submit on an email containing this document at about 6:00pm on Wednesday telling you that Omaha Beach is the best horse in the race. He is the fastest. He is drawn perfectly. He is working amazing. He is tactical. He can rate. He can go to the front. He can pass horses. He has a Hall of Fame trainer. He has a Hall of Fame rider. He excels on the wet but isn't a mere mudlark. He beat BOTH of the early 2019 Kentucky Derby favorites in Game Winner and Improbable. He beat BOTH the second and third choice morning line horses in Game Winner and Improbable.

I can keep going, but I wrap this up so I can pick out my Derby Day outfit. He is the most likely winner and I believe 4-1 is still value. He'll be more than that in the picks. BUT, he scratched! Now I will defer to my second choice **Improbable**, who ran second to Omaha Beach in the Arkansas Derby, is now the most likely winner. He was not happy in the gate before the start in Hot Springs and Bob Baffert suggested it might have been because of the blinkers that have since been removed. Improbable broke a step slow and sat behind a wall of horses while taking a bunch of sloppy kick back. He got in the clear and gave Omaha Beach a real battle down the stretch. No one can question how hard Improbable ran in that race. Irad Ortiz Jr. has a Derby with his name on it, and I think it's the 2019 Kentucky Derby. I was extremely confident in Omaha Beach or Improbable winning, but with the scratch of Omaha Beach I have added a few B horses. **By My Standards** is exiting the very fast Louisiana Derby and is working lights out by all accounts. **Vekoma** shows up on some of my tickets based on the fact that he will be forwardly placed and not have to deal with Omaha Beach. **Tacitus** was once considered Bill Mott's best chance to win this year's Derby and he seems to be thriving. He is more tactical than people think and will have zero issues with the distance. **Win Win Win** is likely to be overbet, but his closing run against a speed-biased track at Keeneland is enough to give him a shot. **Game Winner** is the 2-year old champion because of a race on this track and is trained by arguably the best Derby trainer of all-time! Spinoff is exiting that fast Louisiana Derby like By My Standards. Todd Pletcher has an unreal amount of experience in this race.

A:
5 – Improbable (Top Choice)



"HIGH ROLLER"

(All As and All As with one B)

Race	La Troienne	Oaks	Humana Distaff	CD Sprint	Turf Classic	Derby
1	A			A		
2	A		B	SCR		
3	B					B
4	B		B			
5	A	B	B			A
6			A			B
7		A	A			
8				A		B
9	A			B	A	
10		A				
11						
12				B	A	SCR
13					B	
14		A				B
15		B (AE)				
16						B
17						
18						
19						B
20						

All As:

(\$4 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 6,7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

All As with one B:

(\$2 Pick 6) 3,4 w 7,10,14 w 6,7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 5,15 w 6,7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 2,4,5 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 6,7 w 9,12 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 6,7 w 1,8 w 13 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 6,7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 3,6,8,14,16,19

Total = \$2,336

(Cheaper if the AE15 doesn't draw in)





“HAD A NICE SCORE ON THE UNDERCARD PLAY”
(All As and All As with one B)

Race	La Troienne	Oaks	Humana Distaff	CD Sprint	Turf Classic	Derby
1	A			A		
2	A			SCR		
3	B					B
4	B					
5	A	B				A
6			B			B
7		A	A			
8				A		B
9	A			B	A	
10		A				
11						
12				B	A	SCR
13						
14		A				B
15		B (AE)				
16						B
17						
18						
19						B
20						

Graphic provided by Eric Bialek @eric_bialek

All As:

(\$4 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

All As with one B:

(\$2 Pick 6) 3,4 w 7,10,14 w 7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 5,15 w 7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 6 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 7 w 9,12 w 9,12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10,14 w 7 w 1,8 w 9,12 w 3,6,8,14,16,19

Total = \$1,072

(Cheaper if the AE15 doesn't draw in AND/OR you can change 'ALL As' to \$2)





“BALLIN’ ON A BUDGET PLAY”

(All As and All As with one B)

Race	La Troienne	Oaks	Humana Distaff	CD Sprint	Turf Classic	Derby
1	A			A		
2	A			SCR		
3	B					B
4	B					
5	A	B				A
6						
7		A	A			
8				A		B
9	A			B	B	
10		A				
11						
12				B	A	SCR
13						
14		B				
15		B (AE)				
16						B
17						
18						
19						B
20						

Graphic provided by Eric Bialek @eric_bialek

All As:

(\$4 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10 w 7 w 1,8 w 12 w 5

All As with one B:

(\$2 Pick 6) 3,4 w 7,10 w 7 w 1,8 w 12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 5,14,15 w 7 w 1,8 w 12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10 w 7 w 9,12 w 12 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10 w 7 w 1,8 w 9 w 5

(\$2 Pick 6) 1,2,5,9 w 7,10 w 7 w 1,8 w 12 w 3,8,16,19

Total = \$320

(Cheaper if the AE15 doesn't draw in AND/OR you can change 'ALL As' to \$2)



HISTORICAL KENTUCKY DERBY

PACE ANALYSIS

by Mike "Saratoga Slim" Spector

POST POSITION ANALYSIS

Since there are so many horses in one gate, post position analysis is an important part of handicapping the Derby. For your reference, below is a table showing performance from each post position (1-20) since the use of a starting gate in 1930, including total starts, total first, second, and third-place finishes, and winning and "In The Money" % (ITM) (first, second, or third) from that post (**see chart at bottom**).

Even though the #1 post position shows a 9% win percentage, any horse that draws the 1 post is a complete toss-out. Yes, Lookin at Lee finished second in 2017 after leaving from the 1 post, but he also had a perfect rail trip, dropping back in the pack after Thunder Snow bucked like a bronco from the gate. The rail is the worst place to start because the Churchill chute basically lines up directly with the horse running into the rail. With 19 horses all pushing from the outside into the rail, the horse in the 1 position is in danger of getting hit into the rail to start the race. No horse has won the Derby from the 1 slot since Ferdinand in 1986.

Additionally, a horse hasn't won from the #2 post since Triple Crown winner Affirmed in 1978. The 3-post position hasn't won since 1998 with Real Quiet, so being on the inside is not a good place to be, even though the percentages in the table are skewed due to smaller fields in the past.

Another post position to be wary of is the #17 slot. No horse has ever won from this post position. Maybe it's just a coincidence, but 40 horses have started from this post without a winner to date. The most favorable post positions are generally believed to be 5 through 16. Post positions 14 and 15

have the advantage of being at end of the main 14 horse gate and the start of the 6-stall auxiliary gate, giving these two horses a little bit extra room to break. This also helps the horses in the 13 and 16 post positions to break more cleanly. Posts 13 through 16 have performed well, including wins in three of the last six years: Orb (15) in 2013, American Pharoah (15) in 2015, and Nyquist (13) in 2016. This theory has been debunked in the past two years, though as the space between the main and auxiliary gates has become a spot where horses have been demolished early in the race including Classic Empire and Mendelssohn, who both left from the 14 post.

Some would think that the far outside posts would be disadvantageous, but since 1999, a total of eight winners have won from the auxiliary gate (posts 15 through 20). In addition to those discussed above, Big Brown won from post 20 in 2008, Animal Kingdom won from post 16 in 2011, and I'll Have Another won from post 19 in 2012.

The 5 post is winning at the highest rate at 11.2%, including recently with California Chrome in 2014 and Always Dreaming in 2017.

HISTORICAL PACE ANALYSIS – PAST 18 DERBIES

Handicapping the horses in the Kentucky Derby is just half the battle. Trying to predict the pace of the race is the next part of putting together the Derby puzzle.

The importance of pace is demonstrated by the table below that shows the past 18 Kentucky Derbies with the winner, where he sat in position and how many lengths back at the 3/4-mile point in the race, the fractions run in the race at the 1/2-mile and 3/4-mile point, and a rating of the pace based on where the times rank in the

Post	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Starts	89	89	89	89	89	89	88	88	85	82	78	74	72	64	57	47	40	32	27	17
1st	8	7	5	5	10	2	7	8	4	9	2	3	5	2	5	4	0	1	1	1
2nd	5	5	6	6	8	8	6	5	5	6	5	3	5	5	2	3	1	4	1	0
3rd	5	13	8	4	4	3	5	4	8	9	4	3	7	5	1	3	2	0	0	1
Win %	9.0%	7.9%	5.6%	5.6%	11.2%	2.2%	8.0%	9.1%	4.7%	11.0%	2.6%	4.1%	6.9%	3.1%	8.8%	8.5%	0.0%	3.1%	3.7%	5.9%
ITM %	20.2%	28.1%	21.3%	16.9%	24.7%	14.6%	20.5%	19.3%	20.0%	29.3%	14.1%	12.2%	23.6%	18.8%	14.0%	21.3%	7.5%	15.6%	7.4%	11.8%

past 18 years:

Year	Winner	BRIS Running Style		Winning Style	Place at 3/4 Mile	Lengths back at 3/4 Mile	Fractions		Pace	Track Condition
							1st 1/2 Mile	1st 3/4 Mile		
2001	Monarchos	S3	Closer	Pressed	10th	7.5	44.86	1:09.25	Fastest	Fast
2002	War Emblem	E6	Early	Early	1st	N/A	47.04	1:11.75	Slow	Fast
2003	Funny Cide	E/P6	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	3rd	1.5	46.23	1:10.48	Fast	Fast
2004	Smarty Jones	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Presser	2nd	2.5	46.73	1:11.80	Slow	Sloppy
2005	Giacomo	E/P5	Early/Presser	Closed	18th	14.75	45.38	1:09.59	Fast	Fast
2006	Barbaro	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	4th	3	46.07	1:10.88	Fast	Fast
2007	Street Sense	S2	Closer	Closed	17th	12	46.26	1:11.13	Fast	Fast
2008	Big Brown	E/P8	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	6th	3.75	47.04	1:11.14	Fast	Fast
2009	Mine That Bird	E/P4	Early/Presser	Closed	19th	14	47.23	1:12.09	Slow	Sloppy (Sealed)
2010	Super Saver	E6	Early	Presser	4th	6.5	46.16	1:10.58	Sloppy	(Sealed)
2011	Animal Kingdom	P3	Presser	Presser	10th	6	48.63	1:13.40	Slowest	Fast
2012	I'll Have Another	E/P7	Early/Presser	Pressed	6th	6.5	45.39	1:09.80	Fast	Fast
2013	Orb	P2	Presser	Closed	17th	14.5	45.33	1:09.80	Fast	Sloppy (Sealed)
2014	California Chrome	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	3rd	0.5	47.37	1:11.80	Slow	Fast
2015	American Pharoah	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	3rd	1.5	47.34	1:11.29	Slow	Fast
2016	Nyquist	E/P5	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	3rd	2	45.72	1:10.40	Fast	Fast
2017	Always Dreaming	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	1st	N/A	46.53	1:11.12	Wet Fast	(Sealed)
2018	Justify	E/P7	Early/Presser	Early/Pressed	2nd	1.5	45.77	1:11.01	Sloppy	(Sealed)

Table 2

*Note: The run-up distance was changed from zero to 34 feet starting in 2009.

SLOW-PACED DERBIES:

Just like in any race on any given day of the year with a slow pace, a horse needs to stay closer to the pace to win.

Not surprisingly, in four of the six slowest Derbies studied, horses that were on the lead or within 1/2 to 2 1/2 lengths of the lead at the 3/4-mile point won the Derby, including:

- ▶ *War Emblem* in 2002 – the only horse in the last 18 years to wire the Derby
- ▶ *Smarty Jones* in 2004 – 2 1/2 lengths back at 3/4-mile point
- ▶ *California Chrome* in 2014 – 1/2-length back at 3/4-mile point
- ▶ *American Pharoah* in 2015 – 1 1/2 lengths back at 3/4-mile point

In the slowest-paced Derby, Animal Kingdom used his pressing style in 2011 to sit 6 lengths off the lead before winning, so even in that Derby, he needed to keep in touch with the leaders early, even though he was sitting in tenth at the 3/4-mile point.

The outlier for slow-paced Derbies was in 2009, when Mine That Bird closed from 14 lengths back to win, but that was one of the most unforeseen and unlikely results in Derby history, so it's considered an anomaly in this analysis.

FAST-PACED DERBIES:

In contrast, when a fast pace ensues, the pace might melt down on the front end and set up for mid-pack runners and closers. To that point, in the four fastest Derbies studied, the winner in each case pressed from mid-pack

or closed from 6 1/2 to 14 3/4 lengths back at the 3/4-mile point in the race:

- ▶ Monarchos pressed in mid-pack 7 1/2 lengths back at the 3/4-mile point into the fastest pace to win.
- ▶ Giacomo closed from 14 3/4 lengths back at the 3/4-mile point into a fast pace to win.
- ▶ I'll Have Another pressed in mid-pack 6 1/2 lengths back at the 3/4-mile point into a fast pace to win.
- ▶ Orb closed from 14 1/2 lengths back at the 3/4-mile point into a fast pace to win.

ALIGNING RUNNING STYLES TO PACE

Additionally, in each slow or fast-paced case, the early/presser or closer Brisnet running style of the winning horse almost perfectly aligned itself with how the horse ran and won the race.

For those not familiar with the Brisnet Run Style Definitions, please reference the Brisnet.com descriptions to the left and the summary below:

Run Style Definitions
[E] A winner exhibiting a typical 'E' (or Early) run style would show the horse leading or battling for the lead through the duration of the race. An 'E' horse is any horse which typically vies for the early lead or whose better races are run on the lead. Most 'E' horses are need-the-lead types which can not reasonably be expected to successfully rate behind a pacesetter.
[E/P] A winner exhibiting a typical 'E/P' (or Early/Presser) run style would show the horse running 2nd or 3rd and within a few lengths early before making the winning move. A 'E/P' horse, like an 'E' horse, may also run on the frontend. However, unlike an 'E' horse, it can reasonably be expected to successfully lay just behind a pacesetter.
[P] A winner exhibiting a typical 'P' (or Presser) run style would show the horse running in the middle-of-the-pack early before making his winning move. A 'P' horse may at times run close to the pace but rarely, if ever, challenges for the lead early. Unlike a 'S' horse, the 'P' horse doesn't typically run from the rear-of-the-pack in it's better races.
[S] A winner exhibiting a typical 'S' (Sustain or Closer) run style would show the horse running in the back-of-the-pack early before making his late winning move.
[NA] A 'NA' (or Not Available) run style is used for first-time-starters and those horses without any meaningful running lines to accurately assess the horse's preferred run style.
[Early Speed Points] Ranging from a low of 0 points to a high of 8 points, this measures the Early Speed ability of the horse based upon its running position and beaten lengths at the 1st Call in recent races at today's distance. The higher the points, the more early speed the horse has shown in recent races. The Early Speed points are displayed in the past performances after the horse name and in parenthesis alongside BRIS Run Style - e.g. (P7).

Table 3

The run style of the horse is either:

- E = Early**
- E/P = Early/Presser**
- P = Presser**
- S = Sustained or Closer**

The number next to the run style represents the early

speed points. The numbers range from 0-8 and measure the Early Speed of the horse based on its running position and beaten lengths at the first call of recent races. The higher the number, the more early speed a horse has shown in recent races.

In the 6 slowest Derbies in the past 18 years, the winner's running style was either an Early (E), Early/Presser (E/P), or Presser (P), meaning that the winner naturally wanted to be nearer to the early pace:

- ▶ 2002 – *War Emblem* (E6)
- ▶ 2004 – *Smarty Jones* (E/P7)
- ▶ 2009 – *Mine That Bird* (E/P4)
- ▶ 2011 – *Animal Kingdom* (P3)
- ▶ 2014 – *California Chrome* (E/P7)
- ▶ 2015 – *American Pharoah* (E/P7)

Even *Mine That Bird*, closing from 14 lengths back at the 3/4-mile mark, still came into the 2009 Derby as an E/P4 by Brisnet and closed into a slow pace.

On the other end of the spectrum, in two out of the four years of fast-paced Derbies, the winner came into the race displaying the Presser or Closer running style, meaning that they more naturally wanted to lay back off the hot early pace and make one run late. These two horses include *Monarchos* (S3) in 2001 and *Orb* (P3) in 2013.

PREDICTING THE DERBY PACE

Now that the importance of pace and correlation has been demonstrated, the next step is to try predict the pace of this year's Derby. Using the running styles to indicate the amount of early speed in the race is a great way to predict the future Derby pace.

The table below shows the past 18 Kentucky Derbies ranked by fastest to slowest time to the 3/4-mile point in the race and the quantity of each running style in the race (noting the total of E8 horses):

Table 4

Importantly, in the five fastest Derbies studied, there was more than one horse entered with an E8 running style. Since E8 horses have the most early speed and need to be on the lead, it's natural that if two horses with these characteristics hook up on the front end, then they will press each other and a fast pace will ensue. In almost all cases, horses with E running styles set the early Derby pace:

Year	Winner	Fractions		Pace	# of E8 Horses	Total of E & E/P Types	Sum of E & E/P Points	Brisnet Derby Field Speed	
		1st 1/2 Mile	1st 3/4 Mile						
1 2001	<i>Monarchos</i>	44.86	1:09.25	Fastest	2	8	53	6.63	Fast Pace Avg BDFS = 6.32
2 2005	<i>Giacomo</i>	45.38	1:09.59	Fast	2	13	76	5.85	
3 2012	<i>I'll Have Another</i>	45.39	1:09.80	Fast	3	6	43	7.17	
4 2013	<i>Orb</i>	45.33	1:09.80	Fast	2	8	49	6.13	Middle Avg BDFS = 6.11
5 2016	<i>Nyquist</i>	45.72	1:10.40	Fast	2	6	35	5.83	
6 2003	<i>Funny Cide</i>	46.23	1:10.48		0	7	44	6.29	
7 2010	<i>Super Saver</i>	46.16	1:10.58		4	12	76	6.33	Slow Pace BDFS = 5.56
8 2006	<i>Barbaro</i>	46.07	1:10.88		3	14	86	6.14	
9 2018	<i>Justify</i>	45.77	1:11.01		1	8	47	5.88	
10 2017	<i>Always Dreaming</i>	46.53	1:11.12		0	8	52	6.50	
11 2007	<i>Street Sense</i>	46.26	1:11.13		0	12	71	5.92	
12 2008	<i>Big Brown</i>	47.04	1:11.14		2	9	55	6.11	
13 2015	<i>American Pharoah</i>	47.34	1:11.29	Slow	1	11	62	5.64	
14 2002	<i>War Emblem</i>	47.04	1:11.75	Slow	0	9	59	6.56	
15 2004	<i>Smarty Jones</i>	46.73	1:11.80	Slow	1	8	49	6.13	
16 2014	<i>California Chrome</i>	47.37	1:11.80	Slow	1	14	76	5.43	
17 2009	<i>Mine That Bird</i>	47.23	1:12.09	Slow	1	10	44	4.40	
18 2011	<i>Animal Kingdom</i>	48.63	1:13.40	Slowest	1	10	52	5.20	

Table 4

▶ In eight of the last nine years, horses with E running styles set the early pace (the exception being *Palace Malice* (P3) in 2013 when trainer Todd Pletcher added blinkers and he blazed fast fractions in the slop).

▶ Moreover, in six of the last ten years, horses with E8 running styles set the early fractions, including last year with *Promises Fulfilled*. E8 horses have the most early speed and are naturally need-to-lead types.

Another important part of the table above is the "Brisnet Derby Field Speed." This value is calculated by averaging the Brisnet Early Speed Points of all E and E/P horses in the field.

▶ The seven fastest paces averaged a Brisnet Field Speed of 6.32.

▶ The eighth to 12th-fastest Derbies averaged a Brisnet Field Speed of 6.11.

▶ The five slowest Derbies averaged a Brisnet Field Speed of 5.56.

This year's Derby field has a Brisnet Derby Field Speed of 5.36, ranking it the 17th lowest in the past 19 years. This points to a slow pace this year and with only one E8 horse entered, there's reason to believe that they will go really slow early.

In the past four years of the Derby points era, when only one E8 horse was entered (2014 and 2015), *California Chrome* and *American Pharoah* were close to the early slow pace before taking over in the stretch to win. An all-out pace is not likely this year, with no sprinters entered to speed up the pace.

A slow pace is the most likely outcome because of the correlation to the number of early/presser horses in past

Derbies. Based on historical analysis, the first 1/2-mile should be run in approximately 47.30 seconds and the first 3/4-mile in 1:11.40, which projects as the 14th-slowest in the past 19 years. We'll discuss what this means for this year's race in the next section.

For more historical Derby pace analysis, check out RacingDudes.com for an article named: *"2019 Kentucky Derby Pace Thesis Preview."*

QUALITATIVE PACE FACTORS:

A lot of the items above dealt with numbers and times (i.e., quantitative factors), but there are qualitative factors that also need to be brought into this pace discussion. The implementation of the Derby points system in 2013 has changed the pace dramatically. Previously qualification for the Derby was based on graded stakes earnings, which included sprint races. Now the Derby points system awards points in races at least a mile long and the points system has thus eliminated the entry of pure sprinters in the Derby.

Since proper route horses are winning the longer Derby preps and receiving the points to qualify, the elimination of front-end sprinter speed is naturally slowing the pace of the Derby. This wasn't seen in the first year of the points system due to the fast pace set by the aforementioned Palace Malice. The pace in the 2014 and 2015 Derbies trended downward, but then the pace heated up again in 2016. In 2017, the running was more aligned with the slower Derby paces that we've seen in the Derby points era.

Last year, even though the 1/4-mile was run in a blistering 22.24 seconds and the 1/2-mile was run in a fast 45.77 seconds, the pace slowed in the third-quarter of the race to rank in the middle of the pack in the chart above. This allowed Justify and Good Magic to run 1-2, even though they both were near to the early pace. ■



Pick 5 Plays

by Mike Somich

KENTUCKY OAKS PICK 5 RACE 7 THRU 11 – FRIDAY

This is a tough, tough sequence early and could roll some favorites late. I'm going to play two tickets myself; one going deep early with one single late and taking a shot against one of the favorites. The other ticket will focus on my top opinions for each race which will end single, single.

RACE 7, ALYSHEBA (G2), 1 1/16TH MILE

This is going to be a fun way to kick it off! I'm going four deep here and I am going to leave off #1 McKinzie. This is the limit of his distance range and he's never won when facing older horses thus I am not willing to use him when he's the favorite. The horse to his outside, however, is my top pick. #2 Tom's d'Etat took a nice little break before running a three race set that was quite impressive for a horse coming off a fifteen-month layoff. Those races and the works in between mean we should get his best version today. It doesn't hurt that he's won twice in four outings at Churchill and his career top Beyer came over an off track. I cannot leave off #8 Seeking the Soul in this race. It's rare that a Grade 2 is a drop in class, but after facing City of Light in two of the last four and shipping over to Dubai that's exactly what we've got here. Additionally, he's back at his home track where he won the Grade 1 Clark Handicap. He'll be rolling late.

Now let's use some prices since this race is wide open. All the way on the outside, #11 Copper Bullet lost as 2-1 favorite last time out, but that was going longer than he wanted to. Today, we get 15-1, going the proper distance, third off the layoff, and should sit a wonderful staking trip. We're also returning to Churchill where he's two for three and has run his top Beyer. Finally, let's add in #9 Multiplier. Stick with me here! What if this horse is actually better on the dirt? At three, broke his maiden, won the Grade 3 Illinois Derby and ran back to back 94 Beyers all on dirt. He switched barns then won in his four-year-old debut over a wet track before moving two turns to run his career best Beyers going long while fac-

ing the best in the world. Now, we get second off a layoff and second time with Mott, who has won with horses like this in the past (see Yoshida). If there's rain, all the better, his grandfather is War Front who we all know if a mud monster.

RACE 8, LA TROIENNE (G1), 1 1/16TH MILE

Race two in the sequence is just as wide open as race one. I will once again not use the morning line favorite, #2 Blue Prize, because there simply are horses who are better than her in here. The three most logical horses to me are #9 Secret Spice, #1 She's a Julie, and #3 Divine Miss Grey. All three of them are coming into the race in good form. Of the three, Secret Spice should sit the best trip, but this will be her first effort on the east coast and her one career effort over an off track was not impressive. She's got the pedigree to be able to handle the off going so I'm more including to give her a pass on the last off going effort.

There are two prices that I do think are awfully interesting here. #4 Awe Emma is a VERY lightly raced four-year-old that's got nothing but upside. It's also a second entry from trainer Steve Asmussen which is awfully interesting because he's got She's a Julie in here at 7-2. Awe Emma is 20-1. Her three-year-old season was awful for this \$2,000,000 daughter of War Front, but something clicked and now she's three for three as a four-year-old and has yet to really try in any of those races. Awesome Maria is her mother, who ripped off seven straight graded stakes wins in her four-year-old season. Finally, due to the amazing amount of speed in this one, #8 Golden Award should have a beautiful trip here at 12-1. Throw out the last race where she lost as a favorite. Today we get her second off a layoff, second as a four-year-old, both angles I like for trainer Bill Mott.

RACE 9, OC 62K/N2X, 7 FURLONGS

My top pick here happens to fall in the Also Eligible, #15 Soul Streit, who's shipping in for Baffert and was once a Derby prospect himself. He's done nothing wrong in his return to the track and would be a deserving favorite in this group. The other California shipper,

#7 Solid Wager, looks like he's ready to roll as well for Peter Miller. He's now eight-years-old, so I like that we've got a race under him this season and can expect him to return to his 90's Beyer form. I cannot leave #8 Home Base off of any tickets either. This is a simple case of a horse getting back to what he's good at. The last two races were simply too long, both over 1 1/16th, and too rich. Before that, he ripped off back to back wins at today's 7 Furlong distance including his career-best Beyer over the Churchill dirt. If he improves first time out as a four-year-old then watch out.

Finally, I'm going to include the horse on the rail, #2 Rugbyman. He ran well at three, but the son of Tapit clearly has some issues since they Gelded him in the offseason. That should help him take a step forward especially with Jose Ortiz back aboard who has ridden him well in the past.

RACE 10, TWIN SPIRES TURF SPRINT (G2), 5 1/2 FURLONGS

It's single time and there is no reason to get cute in here. #1 Bound for Nowhere should fire from the rail, but #6 World of Trouble doesn't need the lead to win and there is no reason to try to take a shot against the short-priced favorite here so he's the single. I do think #2 Mr. Crow is a sneaky underneath horse if you are playing Exacta/Trifecta/Superfecta bets.

RACE 11, KENTUCKY OAKS (G1), 1 1/8TH MILE

I love #4 Bellafina, but she's clearly the more vulnerable standout between when compared to World of Trouble in the previous race so we will use her defensively here on our bigger ticket. Do not get me wrong, she's the best horse in the race is a very deserving favorite. Her only loss she was in heat, hopped at the start, was bumped and still ran forth. She has looked great all week and should be very live.

However, if we are playing a \$0.50 ticket, the payout with World of Trouble and Bellafina as singles could pay very little so let's make a case for some others in here. There is a TON of speed signed up for this one so I expect a blistering pace up front. If that's the case, 20-1 seems like a gift on #3 Lady Apple who has improved in her three-year-old season. This daughter of Curlin should love the added distance which is a major concern with some of the other contenders in here. Finally, let's use #10 Champagne Anyone who took a nice step forward from two to three and then an additional step adding blinkers last time out. She was three lengths

closer to an identical pace with the equipment change and she should sit right behind a hot pace today with Bellafina on her flank.

THE BIG TICKET - \$0.50 - 2,8,9,11 / 1,3,4,8,9 / 2,7,8,15 (AE) / 6 / 3,4,10 - Total \$120

If the 15 does not draw in, I will use the #5 Flor de La Mar in the final leg as a replacement.

THE SHORT TICKET - \$0.50 - 2,8,11 / 4,8,9 / 2,7,8,15 / 6 / 4 - \$18

KENTUCKY DERBY PICK 5 - SATURDAY

We've got another tough sequence on Derby day even though I do believe there is one clear single. I'm also going to take a stand in the Derby since I like my opinion in that race and it allows me to really spread early.

RACE 8, CHURCHILL DOWNS (G1), 7 FURLONGS

Every year this seems like a tough race to handicap and this year is no different. The pace should be quick. Like lightning quick with #6 Promises Fulfilled and #8 Mitole both gunning for the lead. Mitole has never really passed a horse and won; combine that with how Promises Fulfilled needs the lead and you can expect 21 and change for the 1st quarter. I will use both since if either doesn't break then the other could run away from the field. The grizzled veterans #7 Warrior's Club and #12 Whitmore should both sit wonderful trips with Limousine Liberal right behind the dual and either could win. Finally, let's take a swing with #3 Majestic Dunhill who's going to need to improve, but we get second off a layoff and he'll be flying late so if it falls apart up front, I want that 30-1 train rolling on the outside. He was also 9-1 last out with Warrior's Club and Limousine Liberal in that race, but he had zero chance once the :46 half was posted. They will be going between one and three seconds faster today which he's successfully closed into two of the last four times.

Finally, let's add in #11 Uno Mas Modelo who will be midpack and flying late. He won six of eight starts in his last form cycle, will have pace to run into, and has won at Churchill over a sloppy and fast going.

RACE 9, AMERICAN TURF (G2), 1 1/16TH MILES

I actually considered singling 10-1 morning line #2 Social Paranoia here but decided against it. He's still my top pick coming in off a maiden score, but it's not your typical maiden. He ran third in a Grade 3 to close out his two-year-old season and lept forward to open his three-year-old campaign. This race has little pace so he

will be on the leader's heels. And, if he improves, he's gone. Due to that lack of pace, I'll also include #1 A Thread of Blue who coming off a gutty win in the Grade 3 Palm Beach. He should be on the lead from the 1 hole and will be tough to pass if he brings his A-game.

Since I like Social Paranoia here, I'm only going to go three deep and I'll include Chad Brown's #3 Digital Age. This lightly raced, undefeated colt is coming in off a stakes win and has a huge chance of improving. If he does, he's going to be thick of it down the lane. I'll stop there, but if one of them scratches, I'll be using #5 Seismic Wave as next in line in the ticket.

RACE 10, PAT DAY MILE (G3), 1 MILE

There just isn't much in here so I'm going to try not to overthink it and simply single #10 Instagrind. He's the best horse and should have a wonderful trip stalking a moderate pace off the inside speed if they send. If they don't, he should just be able to gallop away from this field.

RACE 11, OLD FORESTER TURF CLASSIC (G1), 1 1/8TH MILE

Let's get the butter knife back out because it's time to spread! The #1 Qurbaan could be sitting on a monster effort second off a layoff while adding distance. He should be forwardly placed and be able to save all the ground before pouncing down the lane. I can't knock the favorite, #12 Bricks and Mortar for anything he's done this year. I am concerned that today's distance isn't his best which is one of the reasons I'll use him defensively while still trying to beat him. I expect his 5-2 morning line to close around 6-5 which is just too short. Chad Brown has two other entries in here. One is #10 Ticonderoga who won back to back allowances and now shows up in a Grade 1. That's a class Brown move, he's live and his Beyers fit. The other is #2 Raging Bull who will need to improve off his seasonal debut to win here. That being said, he was electric at three and has the talent to do it.

I like a couple of prices here as well starting with #6 Clyde's Image who's coming off his career-best effort but just did beat both Qurbaan and Raging Bull last time out. Since I'm this deep, I'll use him. I'd leave him off shorter tickets. You know I love me some War Front (on turf) so how can I leave off #8 Breaking the Rules? Well, I can't. We get 2nd off a layoff, 2nd as a four-year-old for this horse that's improved every start since he started running on the lawn. Finally, I'm going to in-

clude the horse who I think can steal this one on the lead. #7 Prime Attraction will be lone speed if he runs Saturday, he's cross-entered on Friday so he may not, and he's had graded stakes turf success. If he's in, he's scary and I'd include him on tickets.

RACE 12, KENTUCKY DERBY (G1), 1 1/4 MILE

It's finally time for the big one! For me, this race plays out as a classic known and unknown race. Check out my article on RacingDudes.com to read the full theory. I believe we know who the best-known horse is and that's #16 Game Winner. I was not a huge fan of this horse last year, but in a crazy prep season, you cannot underrate the value of knowing you are in the gate before running a race in 2019. Baffert wanted all his horses to be on the third race of a cycle, but only with Game Winner could he use those two races to build since he didn't NEED to win. He was two jumps from beating Omaha Beach off a layoff at 3/16ths shorter than today's distance and the Grade 1 Santa Anita Derby effort was no more than 80%. He's going to be 100% today, has won on the track, can be tactical, and is properly set up to run his top effort. The reason I am not going to single here is the great unknown, #7 Maximum Security. Look, we just don't know how good this horse is or if he can rate.

What we do know is he won the "best" prep of the season (prior to the race being won), ran the fastest final 3 furlongs of ANY horse in the race in any Derby Prep while doing so and has the two highest Beyers in the field. On top of that, the Florida Derby came back in 1:48 4/5. The only prep to run :12 furlongs throughout and only the fifth time in since 2000 the Florida Derby finished with a sub 1:49 time. The others, Always Dreaming, Take Charge Indy, Quality Road, Big Brown, and Harlon's Holiday. If we allow 1:49.00 and 1:49.01 into the party then we are adding Scat Daddy and Barbaro. Empire Maker would be next at 1:49:05. Pretty good company! ■

PICK 5 TICKET: Pick 5 Ticket: 3,6,7,8,11,12 / 1,2,3 / 10 / 1,2,6,7,8,10,12 / 7, 16 - \$126



DERBY SUPERFECTA

STRATEGY

BY MIKE "SARATOGA SLIM" SPECTOR



Hitting a big Derby superfecta is every handicapper and bettor's dream. The \$1 minimum base wager makes it difficult to hit on a small budget and with 20 horses in the field there are 116,280 combinations for the superfecta (top four finishers).

Since it's such a difficult bet to hit, it usually pays dividends including last year when the pay-out was over \$19,000. This isn't a bet to approach without a substantial budget, though, and if you don't have the capital to take it on yourself, think about pooling money with friends to try to take it down. I did that this year and 7 of my college buddies plus me are throwing \$50 each into superfecta bets for a total \$400 budget to try to hit it big. Here is my wagering strategy using that budget.

I think there are three likely winners in the Kentucky Derby this year: #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus and #16 Game Winner. These are the three horses that I will key in the superfecta plays as my "A" plays.

My second tier picks or "B" plays are #2 Tax and #17 Roadster. Since Tax is 20/1 odds on the morning line, I will be throwing him into the superfecta looking for a massive payout.

My third tier picks or "C" plays are #1 War of Will and #14 Win Win Win. In total, that's 7 horses and boxing those 7 horses would cost \$840, so that's above my budget. By weighing their chances to win, I will be able to play them in combinations to stay below my \$400 budget, plus have pay-off possibilities above the \$1 base wager amount.

I will first box my top 5 choices in a superfecta box for \$120, as shown in Ticket #1 below. By playing Improbable, Tacitus and Game Winner, with Tax and Roadster in a box, I am hoping that Tax somehow wins or gets second for a monster payout.

\$1 Superfecta Box	
1st	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable,
Thru	#8 Tacitus,
4th	#16 Game Winner,
	#17 Roadster
\$120 Ticket #1 Total Bet	

Since Tax winning is not likely and Improbable, Game Winner or Tacitus will pay a lot less on top, I will key those three in the first and second spot in Ticket #2. I will use all five of my "B" and "C" plays along with my "A" plays in the third and fourth place spot in this superfecta ticket for a total \$120 bet.

This brings me to \$240 spent out of my \$400 budget.

\$1 Superfecta Straight	
1st	#5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
2nd	#5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
3rd	#1 War of Will, #2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #14 Win Win Win, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
4th	#1 War of Will, #2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #14 Win Win Win, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
\$120 Ticket #2 Total Bet	

I'll come back again and play my "A" plays in first and second place over my "A" and "B" plays in third and fourth for a total \$36 ticket. Therefore, if Tacitus and Improbable run 1-2 over Tax and Game Winner, for example, by building out the tickets this way, I will have it for \$3 and a whole lot of money in my bank account!

\$1 Superfecta Straight	
1st	#5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
2nd	#5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
3rd	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
4th	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
\$36 Ticket #3 Total Bet	

I've been telling myself all week to play one superfecta ticket as a back-up if Maximum Security wins the race. He is a boom or bust play, meaning he will either win the race or not hit the superfecta, so Ticket #4 will put him singled in first over my "A" and "B" plays in second, third and fourth for \$60.

\$1 Superfecta Straight	
1st	#7 Maximum Security
2nd	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
3rd	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
4th	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable, #8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner, #17 Roadster
\$60 Ticket #4 Total Bet	

With only \$64 left in my budget, I will actually play a \$4 ticket to demonstrate how you can play this bet for a very small wager. I will take an exacta box of Tacitus and Game Winner (my top two picks in the race) and play them over an exacta box of Improbable and Tax in Ticket #5.

\$1 Superfecta Straight	
1st	#8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
2nd	#8 Tacitus, #16 Game Winner
3rd	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable
4th	#2 Tax, #5 Improbable
\$4 Ticket #5 Total Bet	

It's as easy as that to start building our your Derby superfecta tickets! I'll leave \$60 in my original budget to either grow out some of the tickets above by adding more horses or maybe play some trifectas. Good luck!





FRIDAY RACE

RACE 11:

1 1/8 MILES ON
THE DIRT
3-YEAR-OLDS FILLIES

KENTUCKY OAKS [G1]

OVERVIEW:

It's time to crown a leader in the 3-year-old filly division after a year that has given us several interesting results. The 145th Kentucky Oaks has drawn a full field of 14, including 2 also eligible horses, in a race that should have a lot of pace. The clear standout is Bellafina, who is the 2-1 morning line favorite, after winning all three of her starts this season.

RACE SHAPE: VERY FAST PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: Jaywalk, Motion Emotion, Serengeti Empress

Pressing Speed: Lady Apple, Bellafina, Positive Spirit

Stalkers: Out for a Spin, Flor de La Mar, Liora, Restless Rider, Dunbar Road

Closers: Chocolate Kisses, Champagne Anyone, Jeltrin, Street Band, Point of Honor

Look for the pace to be swift in this spot, setting it up very well for closers. Jaywalk, Motion Emotion, and Serengeti Empress all are quality horses as well, which means there is not a presence of cheap speed in the race. Heavy favorite Bellafina should find a solid stalking position; however, she has to be careful to not get involved in the fast early fractions.

TOP CHOICE: #4 BELLAFINA

She is easily the deserving favorite and most likely winner of this race without question. You definitely have to try to beat her in the exotics, as the reward will be great, but you can't deny she looks tough on paper. The only question mark with her is the distance; however, she showed no signs of slowing down when running a 1 1/16th miles last time out in the Santa Anita Derby (G1)

MAJOR THREATS: #12 STREET BAND, #5 FLOR DE LA MAR, #10 CHAMPAGNE ANYONE

You have to try to take some shots against the favorite in this one and these three horses are prime candidates. Street Band opened many eyes with her win the Fair Grounds Oaks (G2), and trainer Larry Jones has a great record in this race. Champagne Anyone is improving rapidly heading into this event,

while Bob Baffert is still very high on the lightly raced Flor de La Mar.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #14 RESTLESS RIDER, #3 LADY APPLE, #9 LIORA, #7 JAYWALK, #13 SERENGETI EMPRESS

Restless Rider is a horse that is always a must use underneath, with this race being no different. Lady Apple is a filly on the improve, which is what you want to see coming into an event like the Kentucky Oaks. Liora is another that is right there in each of her starts, while Jaywalk and Serengeti Empress have back class that can win this race; however, they must bounce back from poor efforts in their last start

OTHERS: #1 OUT FOR A SPIN, #2 CHOCOLATE KISSES, #8 MOTION EMOTION, #6 POSITIVE SPIRIT, #11 JELTRIN, #15 DUNBAR ROAD, #16 POINT OF HONOR

Out of all of these fillies, the most interesting one of the group is Dunbar Road, who is currently not in the race. If she draws in she could be a handful as the lightly races filly is on the improve.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #4 Bellafina – Confidence Level: 3.5 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #10 Champagne Anyone – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #12 Street Band – Confidence Level: 2.5 out of 5

Exacta: 4,5,10,12 BOX

Trifecta: 4,5,10,12 BOX

Superfecta: 4,5,10,12 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 4,5,10,12

Small Budget Wager: \$0.50 cent trifecta BOX 4,5,10,12

Large Budget Wager: \$2 trifecta BOX 4,5,10,12



RACE 12:

KENTUCKY DERBY [G1]

1 1/4 MILES ON
THE DIRT
3-YEAR-OLDS

OVERVIEW:

The big one is finally here! After months of preparation, it's time for the 145th Kentucky Derby, which once again will be the race of the year. A full field of 20 horses is set to contest the race, which, with rain in the forecast all weekend, could be run over a sloppy track for the second straight year. The 4-1 morning line favorite Omaha Beach scratched from the race, which leaves the Bob Baffert trained Game Winner as the 9/2 morning line choice.

RACE SHAPE: MODERATE PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: *Maximum Security, Bodexpress, Vekoma, War of Will*

Pressing Speed: *Gray Magician, Improbable, Long Range Toddy, Spinoff*

Stalkers: *By My Standards, Code of Honor, Cutting Humor, Game Winner, Roadster, Tax*

Closers: *Country House, Haikal, Master Fencer, Plus Que Parfait, Tacitus, Win Win Win*

For a full pace analysis of this race, make sure to read Mike "Saratoga Slim" Spector's pace article earlier in the guide. He breaks down the race from an in-depth pace standpoint, as he is an award-winning pace writer. Simply put, this year's version of the Kentucky Derby will most likely have a reasonable pace, unlike a lot of years where the pace can become very quick.

TOP CHOICE: #16 GAME WINNER

There is so much to like about this horse coming into the race. He has a win over the Churchill Downs surface, he is bred to run very well at this distance, and his trainer has conditioned him to fire his best race on this day. Trainer Bob Baffert also said to the media late last week that Game Winner "should run a big race" in the Kentucky Derby. Baffert is always important to listen to, with him recently tipping off several of his horses that he thought would run well. If there is one horse you can count on in this race it is Game Winner, who is the type that is always going to show up with a solid effort. His two runner-up finishes this season are the only draw backs; however, he is two narrow margins away from being undefeated.

MAJOR THREATS: #5 IMPROBABLE, #17 ROADSTER, #7 MAXIMUM SECURITY

Roadster is coming along very well after winning the Santa Anita Derby (G1) for Bob Baffert, while Improbable is no

slouch, either, after runner-up finishes in the Rebel Stakes (G2) and Arkansas Derby (G1). Maximum Security is a feast or famine type, that could set the early pace and be hard to pass if left alone on the front end.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #1 WAR OF WILL, #14 WIN WIN WIN, #8 TACITUS, #13 CODE OF HONOR, #18 LONG RANGE TODDY, #20 COUNTRY HOUSE, #21 BODEXPRESS

In the Kentucky Derby, there are several horses that you have to play in the underneath positions. Because of the uniqueness of the race, many horses have hit the board in this race in the past who weren't one of the top three horses in the race. Out of this list, Win Win Win is the most interesting horse since he has been compromised by poor trips in his last two races. With a better trip today, he could make some noise at a big price.

OTHERS: #6 VEKOMA, #10 CUTTING HUMOR, #2 TAX, #11 HAIKAL, #3 BY MY STANDARDS, #19 SPINOFF, #9 PLUS QUE PARFAIT, #4 GRAY MAGICIAN, #15 MASTER FENCER

These are the horses we'll take a stand against, which is the first step when handicapping a race with 20 horses involved. A few of these horses might sneak up and hit the board; however, it is hard to see any of these horses actually winning the race.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #16 Game Winner – Confidence Level: 4 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #5 Improbable – Confidence Level: 4 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #1 War of Will – Confidence Level: 2 out of 5

Exacta: 5,7,16,17 BOX

Trifecta: 5,7,16/1,5,7,16,17/1,5,7,8,13,16,17,18,20

Superfecta: 5,16/5,7,16,17/1,5,7,8,16,17/1,5,7,8,13,16,17

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 5,7,16,17

Small Budget Wager: \$10 Across the Board on #16 Game Winner and 5,7,16,17 exacta BOX

Large Budget Wager: \$30 Across the Board on #16 Game Winner and either the trifecta or superfecta suggestion based on the size of your bankroll.



RACE 11

1 1/8 MILES ON
THE TURF
4-YEAR-OLDS AND UPWARD

OLD FORESTER TURF CLASSIC (G1)

OVERVIEW:

Wow, this is one of the best turf races we will see all year long. A field of 13 horses is set to do battle in this Grade 1 event that includes Pegasus World Cup Turf (G1) winner Bricks and Mortar. He will be looking for his third started graded stakes triumph in this spot; however, he must take on a slew of worthy challengers, including a couple of world class horses from his own barn.

RACE SHAPE: SLOW PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: *Clyde's Image, Prime Attraction*

Pressing Speed: *Qurbaan*

Stalkers: *Multiplier, Breaking the Rules, March to the Arch, Bricks and Mortar*

Closers: *Raging Bull, Sabador, Markitoff, Synchrony, Ticonderoga, Next Shares*

The pace should be mild in this event; however, that isn't always a bad thing for closers when running on the turf. The closer a stretch runner is to the lead, the less ground they have to make up, which could be big trouble for the rest of the field with a horse like Brick and Mortar entered. All these horses will be within a few lengths of each other turning for home, making this an all-out sprint to the wire.

TOP CHOICE: #12 BRICKS AND MORTAR

It's hard not to go with him after how well he has raced this season. With a win in this spot, he could actually become the top horse in the country, which would be an amazing accomplishment. We also know that he runs well over a soft turf course, which is likely what we are going to see all day on Saturday. He'll be a short price; however, you can't deny that he is the most likely winner.

MAJOR THREATS: #2 RAGING BULL, #10 TICONDEROGA, #1 QURBAAN

We'll take our chances with Chad Brown as he brings three into the race, including our top choice, and two others we believe should be used in the exotics. Raging Bull should be set up for a nice effort after running a mile in his last start off a long layoff. This race is better suited for him. Ticonderoga looked extremely impressive in his last start, which means he could be ready to fire a huge shot. Qurbaan has hit the board in five straight stakes events.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #9 SYNCHRONY, #5 MARKITOFF, #13 NEXT SHARES

Synchrony is always going to be around in races like this one. He has proven to at least be able to hit the board at this level. Markitoff nearly upset Bricks and Mortar in his last start, which can't be ignored. Next Shares should enjoy the stretch out in distance today.

OTHERS: #3 MULTIPLIER, #4 SABADOR, #6 CLYDE'S IMAGE, #7 PRIME ATTRACTION, #8 BREAKING THE RULES, #11 MARCH TO THE ARCH

There are some solid horses in this group; however, this race is loaded with stars. It will take something special for anyone amongst these horses to jump up and make an impact in the race.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #12 Bricks and Mortar – Confidence Level: 4 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #10 Ticonderoga – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #1 Qurbaan – Confidence Level: 2 out of 5

Exacta: 2,10,12 BOX

Trifecta: 1,2,10,12 BOX

Superfecta: 1,2,10,12 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 1,2,10,12

Small Budget Wager: \$.50 cent trifecta BOX 1,2,10,12

Large Budget Wager: \$2 trifecta BOX 1,2,10,12



RACE 10: PAT DAY MILE [G3]

1 MILE ON THE DIRT
3-YEAR-OLDS

OVERVIEW:

This race usually draws a large field, with this year being no different. All the horses that can't get the Kentucky Derby distance, or just didn't have enough points to make the race, end up in this spot. The talented and popular Instagrاند is the headlining horse for this one after his third-place finish in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) last time out.

RACE SHAPE: EXPECT A FAST PACE

Pure Speed: Market King, Mr Money Bags, Instagrاند, Global Campaign

Pressing Speed: Durkin's Call, Manny Wah, Everfast

Stalkers: Dunph, Mr. Money, Last Judgment

Closers: Dream Maker, Tobacco Road, Captain Von Trapp, Frolic More, Hog Creek Hustle

We see a hot pace in this race each and every year. Many horses that are entered here are sprinting types that couldn't quite run long enough to make the Kentucky Derby. Closers should have a big shot here, as well as horses that can sit just off the lead and pounce at the perfect moment.

TOP CHOICE: #10 INSTAGRاند

The pace may make things complicated for him; however, it is great that he is drawn outside of most of the other speed horses. When it comes to class, there is no doubting that he is the one to beat in this spot the and one-mile distance will be perfect for him. Looking back, his third-place effort in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) was very good, considering he only lost by 2-lengths to two of the main contenders in the Kentucky Derby, at a distance that was too far for him. He should show up with a big effort.

MAJOR THREATS: #4 MR MONEY BAGS, #13 HOG CREEK HUSTLE

Instagrاند should be difficult to beat in this spot; however, if he doesn't show up these are the two main contenders. Mr Money Bags has some fast and flashy performances coming into this one at smaller tracks. He gets the class test today. Hog Creek Hustle should do very well shortening up in distance after trying his hand on the Triple Crown Trail.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #5 DUNPH, #7 MR. MONEY, #9 CAPTAIN VON TRAPP

Dunph and Mr. Money were horses that had high hopes starting the year but haven't been able to find their best strides lately. Captain Von Trapp has some solid races at Oaklawn Park before stepping up in competition. He should enjoy the slight drop in class today.

OTHERS: #1 DURKIN'S CALL, #2 MARKET KING, #3 DREAM MAKER, #6 TOBACCO ROAD, #8 MANNY WAH, #11 FROLIC MORE, #12 EVERFAST, #14 LAST JUDGMENT

This is group will have a chance if the heavy favorite fails to show; however, they just don't match up with Instagrاند if he brings his "A game."

PICKS and PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #10 Instagrاند – Confidence Level: 5 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #13 Hog Creek Hustle – Confidence Level: 1 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #7 Mr. Money – Confidence Level: 1 out of 5

Exacta: 10/4,7,13 and 4,7,13 BOX

Trifecta: 10/4,7,13/4,7,9,13

Superfecta: 4,7,10,13 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 10

Small Budget Wager: \$20 to win on #10 Instagrاند

Large Budget Wager: \$100 to win on #10 Instagrاند



RACE 9:

1 1/16 MILES ON THE TURF 3-YEAR-OLDS

AMERICAN TURF STAKES [G2]

OVERVIEW:

The 3-year-old turf division is always fantastic to follow and this year is setting up to be no different. In America, the dirt racing gets most of the attention, yet this group will make for an interesting series of races that kick off today.

RACE SHAPE: SLOW PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: *A Thread of Blue, Marquee Prince*

Pressing Speed: *Weekly Call, Social Paranoia*

Stalkers: *Henley's Joy*

Closers: *Digital Age, Seismic Wave, Forever Mo, Casa Creed, Avie's Flatter, War Film, The Black Album, Louder Than Bomb*

A Thread of Blue could get a dream trip in here, which will be very dangerous for the rest of the field. Marquee Prince is another horse who might be interested in going to the front, although he is really more of a stalker. This projected pace set up could make life extremely difficult for the closers.

TOP CHOICE: #1 A THREAD OF BLUE

We came into this race trying to beat this horse; however, the pace sets up so well for him in this spot. He is by no means a single, with a talented group lining up to take him down. The lack of early speed in this race gives him a major advantage though, with most of his toughest challengers coming from way behind.

MAJOR THREATS: #2 SOCIAL PARANOIA, #3 DIGITAL AGE, #5 SEISMIC WAVE, #8 AVIE'S FLATTER, #10 HENLEY'S JOY

Social Paranoia showed a lot of talent when breaking his maiden last time out at Gulfstream Park. Digital Age is a perfect two for two in his career while having the training of Chad Brown on his side. Seismic Wave has won two races in a row, including the Cutler Bay Stakes last time out at Gulfstream Park. Avie's Flatter and Henley's Joy finished 1-2 last time out in the Transylvania Stakes (G3) at Keeneland.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #4 MARQUEE PRINCE, #7 CASA CREED, #12 THE BLACK ALBUM

These three horses have shown signs of being good enough to win a race like this; however, they've been inconsistent. In a spot with so many horses with talent, it makes it hard to rely on this group, yet their odds may dictate a small play on one of them.

OTHERS: #6 FOREVER MO, #9 WAR FILM, #11 WEEKLY CALL, #13 LOUDER THAN BOMBS

Even though they are in this category, these four horses could still make an impact in the race, especially in the underneath position. In the end, though, you have to take a stand against at least a few, and these look like good candidates.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #1 A Thread of Blue – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #3 Digital Age – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #5 Seismic Wave – Confidence Level: 2.5 out of 55

Exacta: 1,3,5 BOX

Trifecta: 1,2,3,5 BOX

Superfecta: 1,2,3,5 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 1,2,3,5,8,10

Small Budget Wager: \$0.50 cent trifecta BOX 1,3,4,6

Large Budget Wager: \$2 trifecta BOX 1,2,3,5



RACE 8:

7 FURLONGS ON THE DIRT 4-YEAR-OLDS AND UPWARD

CHURCHILL-DOWNS STAKES [G1]

OVERVIEW:

When it comes to top class sprinters this race certainly has no shortage of them. This will be the best and deepest sprint race we've seen all season, with several superstars lined up to earn their shot at being the number one horse in this loaded division. The winner of this race will have earned the right to be considered one of the best sprinters in the country.

RACE SHAPE: EXPECT A VERY FAST PACE

Pure Speed: *Bobby's Wicked One, Promises Fulfilled, Mitole*
Pressing Speed: *Uncontested, Whitmore*
Stalkers: *Wild Shot, Warrior's Club*
Closers: *Do Share, Majestic Dunhill, Still Having Fun, Uno Mas Modelo*

There are several world class sprinters signed on for a race that should see horses flying right from the start. Promises Fulfilled, Mitole, and Bobby's Wicked One all have serious speed, and Uncontested can also fly. This should set up well for closers or horses that can stalk the pace.

TOP CHOICE: #12 WHITMORE

Last time out Whitmore ran extremely well; however, he lost to Mitole because the pace did not set up well for him. Today, he gets plenty of pace to run at, while also getting an extra furlong. Whitmore is a Grade 1 winner going this distance. He could turn the tables on Mitole in this spot today.

MAJOR THREATS: #8 MITOLE, #4 BOBBY'S WICKED ONE, #6 PROMISES FULFILLED, #1 DO SHARE

Mitole has proven to be a freak of a horse; however, there are some concerns about him getting 7 furlongs today. He was able to defeat Whitmore in his last race where everything set up well for him. Promises Fulfilled will play a major factor here as well, while Bobby's Wicked One picked up a huge win at Keeneland last time out. Do Share should get a perfect pace set up today.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #10 STILL HAVING FUN

Because of the pace, this is another horse who will have a shot to coming flying with a late stretch run at the end.

OTHERS: #3 MAJESTIC DUNHILL, #5 WILD SHOT, #7 WARRIOR'S CLUB, #9 UNCONTESTED, #11 UNO MAS MODELO

These five seem to be a bit outclassed and will really have to step up their games in order to make an impact here. The field is extremely tough.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #12 Whitmore – Confidence Level: 2 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #8 Mitole – Confidence Level: 2 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #4 Bobby's Wicked One – Confidence Level: 1 out of 5

Exacta: 4,8,12 BOX

Trifecta: 1,4,8,12 BOX

Superfecta: 1,4,8,12 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 1,4,6,8,12

Small Budget Wager: \$.50 cent Trifecta BOX 1,4,8,12

Large Budget Wager: \$2 Trifecta BOX 1,4,8,12



RACE 7:

1 MILE ON THE TURF
4-YEAR-OLDS AND UP,
FILLIES AND MARES

CHURCHILL DISTAFF TURF MILE [G2]

OVERVIEW:

We might as well rename this division the “Chad Brown Invitational” after his dominance with females on the turf. He has two horses entered in this race with Precieuse and Environs, both of which figure to play a serious factor in this contest. However, the race has drawn an extremely tough field of 10, which will give the Brown duo a run for their money.

RACE SHAPE: SLOW PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: *Take These Chains, Valedictorian*

Pressing Speed: *Precieuse, Got Stormy*

Stalkers: *Environs*

Closers: *Raven's Lady, Proctor's Ledge, Beau Recall, Daddy Is a Legend, Capla Temptress*

Usually you can expect some pace in a one-mile turf event; however, this race does seem to be a bit devoid of early speed. Valedictorian will be your likely pacesetter, but Take These Chains won't be far behind. Past that, most of the runners will be coming from off the pace, which means the leaders will have a shot to steal the race if they are good enough.

TOP CHOICE: #6 PRECIEUSE

Chad Brown is always tough to beat in these types of races. Precieuse returned from a long layoff in her last start to win the Honey Fox Stakes (G3) by a determine half-length over Valedictorian. That race should set her up for an even better effort today, with more fitness under her belt. If she does improve, she'll be hard to defeat.

MAJOR THREATS: #3 PROCTOR'S LEDGE, #7 CAPLA TEMPTRESS, #8 GOT STORMY, #10 VALEDICTORIAN

Proctor's Ledge should be ready to fire a huge race after knocking the rust off last time out with a runner-up effort in the Sand Springs Stakes at Gulfstream Park. Capla Temptress proved last year to be best when running a mile, which is the distance of today's race. Got Stormy only lost by a length last time out to Rushing Fall, while Valedictorian could be dangerous as the lone speed in the race.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #4 BEAU RECALL, #5 DADDY IS A LEGEND

Trainer Brad Cox always deserves respect in these types of races, especially with a horse who has won two of her last three starts. Daddy is a Legend danced all the big dances as a 3-year-old and is now making her 4-year-old debut. If she improves with maturity, there is a shot she can upset this field at a nice price.

OTHERS: #1 RAVEN'S LADY, #2 TAKE THESE CHAINS, #9 ENVIRONS

It was hard to throw anyone out of this race. All 10 horses have a shot here, but you have to take a stand against a few, which is what we did with these three. They seem to be just a bit out-classed in this ultra-difficult spot.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #6 Precieuse – Confidence Level: 5 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #3 Proctor's Ledge – Confidence Level: 4 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #7 Capla Temptress – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Exacta: 3,6,7 BOX

Trifecta: 6/3,7,8,10/3,7,8,10

Superfecta: 6/3,7,8,10/3,7,8,10/3,7,8,10

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 3,6,7

Small Budget Wager: \$20 to win on #6 Precieuse

Large Budget Wager: \$50 to win on #6 Precieuse



RACE 6:

HUMANA DISTAFF [G1]

7 FURLONGS ON THE DIRT
4-YEAR-OLDS AND UP, FILLIES AND MARES

OVERVIEW:

The stakes action on the card kicks off with this contest, which has drawn a shorter field of just 7 horses. However, it is not short on talent, with nearly all 7 entries having major wins on their resume. Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert has sent two horses to run in this race, including superstar Marley's Freedom, who looks to redeem herself after losing in her last start at Santa Anita.

RACE SHAPE: FAST PACE EXPECTED

Pure Speed: *Talk Veuve to Me, Amy's Challenge*

Pressing Speed: *Mia Mischief*

Stalkers: *Spring in the Wind, Spiced Perfection*

Closers: *Emboldened, Marley's Freedom*

With three quality speed horses signed on, this should be a race that has a chance to set up well for closers. We know Amy's Challenge will sprint out to the lead, while Talk Veuve to Me is best when she is on the lead as well. Mia Mischief is also a horse with a solid early turn of foot, which could turn this into a three-way battle up the backstretch.

TOP CHOICE: #7 MARLEY'S FREEDOM

It is hard to go against the Baffert trainee in this race that looks to set up well for horses coming from off the pace. They tried to stretch Marley's Freedom out to two turns last time out in the Beholder Mile (G1); however, one turn races look to be more her game. This 7-furlong sprint is right in her wheelhouse. She should be ready to fire a big one today.

MAJOR THREATS: #2 SPICED PERFECTION, #4 TALK VEUVE TO ME, #5 AMY'S CHALLENGE

Spiced Perfection comes into this race after narrowly defeating Amy's Challenge last time out in the Madison Stakes (G1) at Keeneland. With similar conditions, both horses are must uses again today. Talk Veuve to Me is probably best when running one-turn races, even though she did perform well going longer at times last year. She opened up her season with a dominating allowance win last time out at Keeneland.

LONGSHOTS TO USE: #3 MIA MISCHIEF

Even though she was beaten by lessor last time out, you can't count out this Steve Asmussen trainee who has plenty of back class coming into this race. This will be her third start off the layoff as well, which could mean she's ready for a solid effort.

OTHERS: #1 SPRING IN THE WIND, #6 EMBOLDENED

These two horses are just a bit overmatched in what is a top-heavy field. It would be a major upset if either of these horses were to win.

PICKS AND PLAYS:

Bet to Win: #7 Marley's Freedom – Confidence Level: 3 out of 5

Bet to Place or Show: #4 Talk Veuve to Me – Confidence Level: 2.5 out of 5

Across the Board Longshot Play: #3 Mia Mischief – Confidence Level: 2 out of 5

Exacta: 2,4,7 BOX

Trifecta: 2,4,5,7 BOX

Superfecta: 2,4,5,7 BOX

Horses to Use in Multi-Race Wagers: 2,3,4,5,7

Small Budget Wager: \$1 Exacta BOX 2,4,7

Large Budget Wager: \$4 Exacta BOX 2,4,7

by Mike "Saratoga Slim" Spector

Turning to this year's Derby, the table below shows the Brisnet running styles for each horse entered in the 2019 Kentucky Derby with post position and morning line odds.

Program #	Post #	Horse	Brisnet Running Style		Morning Line Odds
1	1	War of Will	E/P5	Early / Presser	15/1
2	2	Tax	E/P6	Early / Presser	20/1
3	3	By My Standards	P3	Presser	15/1
4	4	Gray Magician	E/P6	Early / Presser	50/1
5	5	Improbable	P5	Presser	5/1
6	6	Vekoma	E/P5	Early / Presser	15/1
7	7	Maximum Security	E/P7	Early / Presser	8/1
8	8	Tacitus	P2	Presser	8/1
9	9	Plus Que Parfait	E/P2	Early / Presser	30/1
10	10	Cutting Humor	P4	Presser	30/1
11	11	Haikal	S2	Closer	30/1
12	-	Omaha Beach	SCRATCHED		
13	12	Code of Honor	S2	Closer	12/1
14	13	Win Win Win	S3	Closer	12/1
15	14	Master Fencer	N/A	Closer	50/1
16	15	Game Winner	E/P2	Early / Presser	9/2
17	16	Roadster	E/P6	Early / Presser	5/1
18	17	Long Range Toddy	E/P5	Early / Presser	30/1
19	18	Spinoff	E/P7	Early / Presser	30/1
20	19	Country House	S0	Closer	30/1
21	20	Bodexpress	E/P6	Early / Presser	30/1

EARLY SPEED

The story of the Derby is the early speed drawn inside, starting with the dreaded rail draw for #1 War of Will. The Grade 3 Lecomte and Grade 2 Risen Star winner has been anxious to work at Churchill lately and busted from the gate in a workout at Keeneland recently after his debacle in the Grade 2 Louisiana Derby, where he bottomed out leaving the gate and almost seriously injured himself for trainer Mark Casse. Jockey Tyler Gafflione has no choice, but to gun it from the rail to not get trapped inside early. Casse said after the post-position draw, "Our horse is really on his game so he'll come away from there running. We'll probably be on the lead. I think we'll probably be on the lead and play catch me if you can."

#6 Vekoma is another that will want to be forwardly placed, as he pressed the fastest pace in the last round of Derby preps winning the Grade 2 Blue Grass Stakes.

The George Weaver-trainee worked a bullet at Palm Beach Downs in Florida over the weekend with Hall-of-Famer Javier Castellano up for the ride and is sharp coming into the race. Weaver has said he wants Vekoma in the first tier of horses early in the Derby.

The horse that was a likely pace setter before the draw was Grade 1 Florida Derby winner #7 Maximum Security, but now sitting in the 7-post with early speed to his inside, he'll likely sit off the two front-runners War of Will and Vekoma early. Trainer Jason Servis has trained Maximum Security to relax in the morning with long works, which is his usual training style, so jockey Luis Saez will likely not be all out early in the Derby.

The mystery horse in the early flight of runners will be #5 Improbable, who has been reluctant to relax early in his workouts over the Churchill strip, after his runner-up finish in the Arkansas Derby for two-time Triple Crown winning trainer Bob Baffert. Irad Ortiz, Jr. has been known to wrangle back his mounts, but may not have a choice if Improbable is eager to go early.

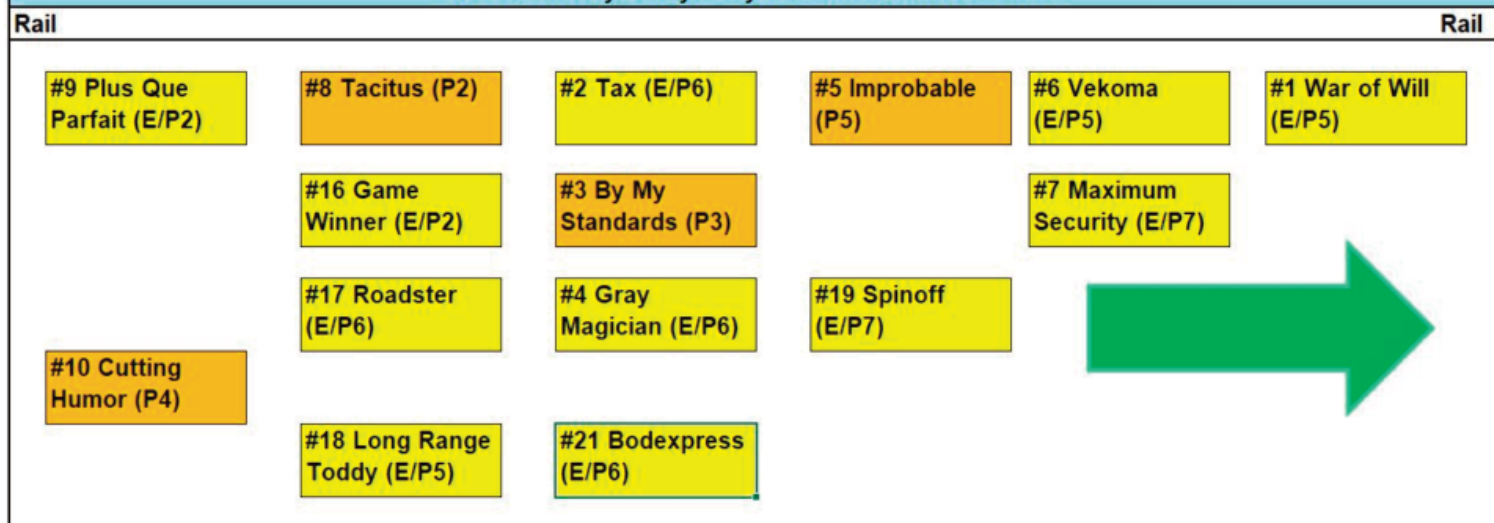
#19 Spinoff has good early speed, as he showed in his runner-up Louisiana Derby performance, but will be hard pressed not to be hung wide early under Many Franco leaving from the 19-post. The trainee for two-time Derby winner Todd Pletcher idled late in the Louisiana Derby and was caught by By My Standards, so visually his ability to go long has to be questioned.

Below is an early pace prediction of how the first 15 horses will line up going into the first ("clubhouse") turn and onto the backstretch of Churchill Downs in this year's Derby. It is projected that War of Will, Vekoma and Maximum Security will vie for the early lead, while Improbable and Omaha Beach Spinoff will sit fourth and fifth early.

PRESSERS & STALKERS

Continuing to run down the horses by early speed in the chart above, as War of Will is sent on the rail, Junior Alvarado on #2 Tax will have no other choice but to follow him. The former claimer and Danny Gargan-trainee possesses good early speed, as was shown when he sat

2019 Kentucky Derby Early Pace into Clubhouse Turn



behind a swift pace on his way to a runner-up finish in the Grade 2 Wood Memorial at Aqueduct. He drew the rail in that race and in his Grade 3 Withers win and still ran triple-digit Brisnet speed figures in both races, so maybe he excels on the rail. He has the pedigree to go long, too.

Grade 2 Louisiana Derby winner #3 By My Standards may be caught in no-man's land if he doesn't break sharp and get involved with the early speed drawn to his inside and outside. Before the draw, he was projected to be more of a mid-pack runner, but will be involved with this second group now under Gabriel Saez. By My Standards has been the Churchill workout hype horse all month for trainer Brendan Walsh, but his pedigree sired by two-time Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile winner Goldencents may limit him going the 1 1/4 mile of the Kentucky Derby.

#4 Gray Magician got into the Derby as the runner-up in the Group 2 UAE Derby and is another that will need to keep up early, but doesn't have the United States class to match up here. His trainer Peter Miller is known for his sprinters, but said after the draw, "We plan to take back early (with Drayden Van Dyke up)." Projecting him to sit eighth or ninth early may be ambitious after hearing that quote.

#21 Bodexpress has drawn off the Also Eligible list with the unfortunate scratch of Omaha Beach. From the far outside 20-post, he'll really have to motor to get in position early under jockey Chris Landeros, like he did running second in the Grade 1 Florida Derby the whole way around the track behind Maximum Security. The Gustavo Delgado-trainee doesn't have burner speed to heat up the pace drawing in from so far outside.

MID-PACK

With a moderate pace projected, the horses will really start to be bunched up on the backside and this mid-pack group will race tightly together.

With so much speed drawn inside, Eclipse award winning jockey Jose Ortiz on #2 Tacitus will have every opportunity to suck up behind the leaders and get a cozy rail trip saving ground. The Wood Memorial winner overcame adversity being bumped early in the Wood Memorial and also won the Grade 2 Tampa Bay Derby sneaking up the inside, so will look for a similar trip. Trainer Bill Mott has yet to win a Kentucky Derby in his illustrious Hall-of-Fame career and Tacitus may be his best shot yet.

The two Baffert charges drawn to the outside, #16 Game Winner and #17 Roadster, also will look to get over from their posts and get into good position early. Both have shown the ability to either be forwardly-placed or sit back early. With their outside posts, they will probably need to use off-the-pace tactics to have their best shot at winning. The Eclipse-award winning juvenile champion Game Winner hasn't won a race in 2019, but sat in mid-pack before winning the Breeders' Cup Juvenile under regular jockey Joel Rosario over this same Churchill track. Game Winner was moving late in the second division of the Grade 2 Rebel Stakes and lost by a nose to Omaha Beach, so is a top choice here. Roadster fell way back to the rear of the field before exploding to win the Grade 1 Santa Anita Derby in early April and may need to do the same thing here under his new jockey Florent Geroux.

Finishing up the mid-pack horses in the chart above,

trainer Steve Asmussen probably wanted a better post for #18 Long Range Toddy, since he would like to be more forwardly-placed. The winner of the first division of the Grade 2 Rebel Stakes will find it tough to get involved early from his outside post. UAE Derby winner #9 Plus Que Parfait and Grade 3 Sunland Derby winner #10 Cutting Humor will break from the middle of the gate and both may run mid-pack throughout the race.

CLOSERS

Not shown in the chart above are the closers in the race and two of the horses rated as Sustained (S) running styles (meaning they will look to put in one sustained closing run) may be in mid-pack: #13 Code of Honor and #14 Win Win Win.

Shug McGaughey won the 2013 Kentucky Derby with Orb coming off the pace and Grade 2 Fountain of Youth winner Code of Honor will look to do the same for his Hall-of-Fame trainer. Code of Honor has two-time Derby winner and Hall of Famer John Velazquez aboard, so he's in the right hands to make a run, but his pedigree may limit him going this long.

On the flip-side, jockey Julian Pimentel has never even ridden a race at Churchill Downs and will have his first-ever Derby mount on Win Win Win. Pimentel regains the mount on Win Win Win after Irad Ortiz, Jr. rode him in his last two races for trainer Michael Trombetta and will look to keep him nearer to mid-pack than Ortiz, Jr. did. Win Win Win was flying late on a speed-favoring Keeneland track to finish second in the Blue Grass Stakes, so he should be moving late here, too.

It is possible that both Code of Honor and Win Win Win are in front of Plus Que Parfait and Cutting Humor on the backstretch in the Derby.

The three deep closers in the race: Grade 2 Gotham winner #11 Haikal, Japanese invader #15 Master Fencer and Mott-trainee #20 Country House will likely be nowhere near mid-pack in this race. With a moderate pace expected, all three of these runners will be hard-pressed to finish in the top 5 of this year's Derby.

For more Derby pace and post position analysis, check out RacingDudes.com for an article named: "2019 Kentucky Derby Pace Thesis" ■



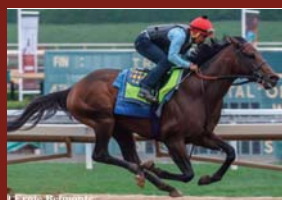
#16
GAME WINNER

Photo: Ernie Belmonte

Morning Line Odds
5 / 1**Trainer:** Bob Baffert**Jockey:** Joel Rosario**E/P2 (Mid-Pack)**

PROS: The Juvenile champion is all class and all guts. He always runs his race and will be making a move in the stretch late. The son of Candy Ride out of an AP Indy mare has plenty of distance pedigree to excel going 1 1/4 miles. Baffert is looking for his record-tying sixth Derby victory.

CONS: He hasn't won this year losing by a nose in one of the divisions of the Rebel Stakes (G2) and then losing by a half-length in the Santa Anita Derby (G1). Baffert said he hasn't pushed him this year, though, with the Derby his main target. His running style isn't what Derby winners have shown recently, as he may be too far back at the top of the stretch to win.

BOTTOM LINE: The most likely horse to hit the board and needs to be keyed.

#8
TACITUS

Photo: Michael Spector

Morning Line Odds
10 / 1**Trainer:** Todd Pletcher**Jockey:** Jose Ortiz**P2 (Mid-Pack)**

PROS: Two-time Grade 2 winner took down the Tampa Bay Derby (G2) with a perfect trip and then conquered the Wood Memorial (G2), while getting crushed early from the gate and overcoming adversity to win. The son of multiple Grade 1 winning mare Close Hatches has the pedigree and connections to fire third off the lay-off in his third start of 2019.

CONS: He's lightly raced with only four lifetime starts, so he's still developing. May be more of a mid-pack horse, but has tactical speed, so it'll be interesting if he gets involved early in the Derby. Top sire Tapit has yet to have an offspring win the Derby and in Mott's Hall-of-Fame career, he's yet to win a Derby either.

BOTTOM LINE: No knocks on him and may be the Derby winner if he gets the trip.

#17
ROADSTER

Photo: Ernie Belmonte

Morning Line Odds
6 / 1**Trainer:** Bob Baffert**Jockey:** Florent Geroux**E/P6 (Stalker)**

PROS: The Baffert-hype horse since he told TMZ last summer that Roadster was the next one to watch after Justify won the Triple Crown, he has had a roller-coaster career. His win in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) was remarkable, as he rallied from far off the pace to win impressively. A perfect 2-for-2 this year, Baffert has said he is bred to go 1 1/2 miles, so the son of Quality Road should be just fine for the Derby distance.

CONS: Has come back from throat surgery last year and quarter cracks earlier this year with no issues, but it's always a concern if his breathing issue could pop back up. His slender build also could be concerning when going this far, but it hasn't seemed to limit him yet. He's lightly raced with only four lifetime starts, has run mostly in small fields and hasn't shipped for a race outside California in his career. It will be interesting if he shows early speed to stalk or come farther off the pace, like he did in the Santa Anita Derby.

BOTTOM LINE: You can't get beat by Baffert in the Derby. Need to use defensively.

#7
MAXIMUM
SECURITY

Photo: Leslie Martin

Morning Line Odds
10 / 1**Trainer:** Jason Servis**Jockey:** Luis Saez**E/P7 (Leader)**

PROS: Florida Derby (G1) winner cruised to a gate-to-wire triumph after setting some of the slowest fractions ever seen in a Grade 1 Derby prep. Undefeated in four lifetime starts, he'll likely lead early in the Kentucky Derby and if he's allowed to get away with easy fractions again, he's dangerous. Trainer Jason Servis is winning at a gaudy 33% in 2019.

CONS: He was originally run in claimers for \$16,000 on debut, so he wasn't highly thought of to start his career. Owned by Gary and Mary West, who also own Game Winner, it's possible he'll be used as a rabbit to set an honest pace to set up Game Winner's late move. The Florida Derby was his first two-turn race and as a son of New Year's Day, it's unknown if his pedigree will help him excel at 1 1/4 miles, plus a horse hasn't won the Derby gate-to-wire since War Emblem in 2002. His class still needs to be questioned coming out of starter allowances and a maiden claimer into his Grade 1 win.

BOTTOM LINE: Boom or bust, can win gate-to-wire or finish off the board, use defensively.

#5
IMPROBABLE

Photo: Coady Photography

Morning Line Odds
6 / 1**Trainer:** Bob Baffert**Jockey:** Irad Ortiz, Jr.**P5 (Presser)**

PROS: Has always been deemed one of Baffert's best. Impressively took down the Street Sense Stakes last year at Churchill Downs, so we know he likes the course. After that win, cruised to win the Los Alamitos Futurity (G1) in December. Has looked good working over the Churchill strip in preparation for the Derby.

CONS: Hasn't won this year in his two starts. Got caught late in the Rebel after a wide trip and had his excuses after being fractious in the gate before the Arkansas Derby, but both losses leave a lot of questions. He ran with blinkers for the first time in the Arkansas Derby and will shed that equipment for the Kentucky Derby. It's never a good sign when a horse has to change equipment so many times, especially coming into the toughest race of his life. He'll have his third different jockey in as many races, as Irad Ortiz, Jr. now jumps aboard, too. Sired by the speedy City Zip, he may be distance-limited, as was hinted late in the Rebel and Arkansas Derby

BOTTOM LINE: With the scratch of Omaha Beach, becomes a win contender if he gets the trip.

#1
WAR OF WILL

Photo: Hodges Photography

Morning Line Odds
20 / 1**Trainer:** Mark Casse**Jockey:** Tyler Gafflione**E/P5 (Stalker)**

PROS: After winning the Lecomte (G3) and Risen Star (G2) at Fair Grounds to start the year, many thought he was the top prospect to win the Derby. He made his own trip in both of those races and blew away both of those fields without turning a hair. His tactical speed is a weapon if he's ready and healthy for the Derby. Earlier in the year, Casse called him his best shot to the win the Derby in his career. Has a slop romp over the Churchill strip, so the son of War Front should excel going long, especially if the track comes up wet.

CONS: A few steps out of the gate in the Louisiana Derby, he bottomed out and awkwardly lost his stride, which could've caused a severe injury. Gafflione was smart to not push him after that and it resulted in a ninth-place finish. After getting a clean bill of health after a thorough check-up, he has come back with a few huge workouts, so he's likely healthy, but the lack of fitness from not running a real race since February is a huge concern along with the fear that he may fall victim to a similar start breaking with 19 other horses in the Kentucky Derby.

BOTTOM LINE: He's the biggest Derby mystery and can provide value, so need to play strong at a price.

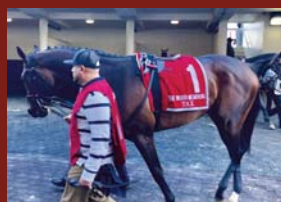
#2
TAX

Photo: Michael Spector

Morning Line Odds
20 / 1**Trainer:** Danny Gargan**Jockey:** Junior Alvarado**E/P6 (Stalker)**

PROS: The Withers (G3) winner is all guts and won that race gamely up the rail with a very good trip under Alvarado. Returned off a two-month lay-off from the Withers to almost win the Wood Memorial, where he struck the lead, but had to settle for second behind Tacitus. He has tremendous breeding to get the Derby distance and is the only horse coming into the Derby off three straight 1 1/8 mile races, including a good third as a juvenile in the Remsen (G2). Only horse in the field with three straight triple-digit Brisnet speed ratings and has the early speed to stalk the pace.

CONS: Gargan claimed him for \$50,000 last year at Keeneland, so if he was supposed to be this good, his former owner / breeder Claiborne Farm would've never let him go, but everyone makes mistakes. He raced only at Aqueduct since last November and Aqueduct horses haven't been very successful in the Derby lately, but returns to Kentucky where he broke his maiden at Keeneland in that aforementioned claimer. His win in the Withers can be questioned for class, as he beat Not That Brady and Our Braintrust by a head and a neck and both ran miserably in their next starts on the Derby Trail.

BOTTOM LINE: Massive longshot to use underneath in exotics.

#14
WIN WIN WINMorning Line Odds
15/1**Trainer:** Michael Trombetta**Jockey:** Julien Pimentel**S3 (Mid-pack closer)**

PROS: After breaking the track record in the Pasco Stakes at 7 furlongs at Tampa Bay Downs in an impressive romp, he got on the Derby trail and got terrible trips in the Tampa Bay Derby (G2) and Blue Grass Stakes (G2). Still, he was able to finish third and second respectively in those races, and was gobbling up ground late in the Blue Grass. If he is able to sit more of a mid-pack trip under re-united jockey Pimentel and get a better trip, he can be the one runner coming from the back of the pack to hit the superfecta.

CONS: Pimentel has never even rode at Churchill Downs, let alone in the Kentucky Derby, so having an inexperienced jockey at this level trying to thread through the biggest field of the year may be tough. Some people question his ability to get the Derby distance, but his grandsire Sunday Silence and damsire Smarty Jones are both Derby winners, so he has that going for him. Irad Ortiz, Jr. jumping off him to ride Improbable can also be seen as a sign of what the jockey thinks of him.

BOTTOM LINE: He's the one mid-pack closer that has to be used underneath in the exotics..

#3 BY MY STANDARDS



Photo: Hodges Photography

Morning Line Odds
20 / 1

Trainer: Bret Calhoun**Jockey:** Gabriel Saez**P3** (Mid-Pack)

PROS: The Louisiana Derby (G2) winner has become the “wise guy” hype horse at Churchill Downs after putting in three straight, strong works over the local strip. His Louisiana Derby win was the fastest the race was run since it was extended to 1 1/8 mile in 2010. He may be a late developer that is figuring it out at the right time and will be live in this spot.

CONS: His sire Goldencents was a two-time Breeders’ Cup Dirt Mile winner, but didn’t excel going longer distances, so it’s unknown if his progeny will excel at the Derby distance, as this is his first crop. It took him four races to break his maiden, but was second on debut at Churchill on the “Stars of Tomorrow II” card in the slop as a juvenile behind a good horse in Jersey Agenda. He was helped in the Louisiana Derby when he didn’t have to deal with heavy favorite War of Will, who bottomed out when leaving the gate and was never a factor in the race.

BOTTOM LINE: May not provide value if he is bet down and pedigree is questionable.

#20 COUNTRY HOUSE



Photo: Coady Photography

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Bill Mott**Jockey:** Flavien Prat**S0** (Closer)

PROS: Has shown the willingness to come with one run late in all three of his Derby prep races this year, finishing second in the Risen Star (G2), fourth in the Louisiana Derby (G3), and third in the Arkansas Derby (G1). He also has performed well on multiple surfaces and at multiple racetracks. The big, handsome chestnut son of Lookin At Lucky has plenty of pedigree to excel at the Derby distance.

CONS: He has had gate issues in many of his races and this has put in a disadvantageous place early. The fear is that he’ll just be too far back in the Kentucky Derby to make up the amount of ground he’ll need to hit the board. He also has been caught wide in his races and would be giving up valuable real estate if he’s forced to go 7 or 8 wide into the Churchill stretch.

BOTTOM LINE: The slow pace here and his early position make it tough to use him, except in the third and fourth spot in a big superfecta ticket.

#19 SPINOFF



Photo: SV Photography

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Todd Pletcher**Jockey:** Manny Franco**E/P7** (Leader)

PROS: Ran a credible second in the Louisiana Derby (G2) to qualify for this race, as he was bumped at the break, was caught wide and still was in position to win in the stretch. His blow-out win at Tampa Bay Downs by 11 lengths against optional claimer foes to start his 2019 campaign was eye-catching. He has the early speed to be in the front-running tier early in the Derby, and if a slow pace ensues, he may be in the picture late.

CONS: After striking the lead in the stretch of the Louisiana Derby, he idled and was caught late by By My Standards, so his ability to go longer here has to be questioned. His pedigree is decent for distance, but visually looks like a horse that may top out at 1 1/8 miles. Lightly raced with only four starts to his ledger, he had to take off a good deal of time after his third-place finish in the Grade 2 Saratoga Special with “baby issues.”

BOTTOM LINE: If you believe a very slow pace will ensue, maybe he’ll hang on for a piece.

#21 BODEXPRESS



Photo: Coady Photography

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Gustavo Delgado**Jockey:** Chris Landeros**E/P6** (Stalker)

PROS: He finished an admirable second chasing a slow pace the whole way in the Florida Derby behind Maximum Security. He was almost four lengths in front of third-place finisher and Grade 2 Fountain of Youth winner Code of Honor, so it wasn’t like he was holding on for second for dear life. Even though, he hasn’t won a race in his career, he has lost to some good horses in his back class including Hidden Scroll, Overdeliver and beat highly-touted Pletcher trainee Fort Worth. The best thing he has going for him is his running style that will keep him forwardly placed in the Derby.

CONS: He’s a maiden! He’s never won a race in his career and it’s unlikely he breaks it in the Kentucky Derby. That doesn’t mean that he can’t hang around for a piece, but his outside post stranded in the 20 post isn’t going to help his chances at all.

BOTTOM LINE: Can play at the bottom of exotics at a monster price.

#6 VEKOMA



Photo: JennyPhoto

Morning Line Odds
20 / 1

Trainer: George Weaver

Jockey: Javier Castellano

E/P5 (Leader)

PROS: Impressive when winning the Blue Grass Stakes (G2) pressing, pouncing and pulling away by 3 1/2 lengths, his fast early speed will have him in a good position to start the Kentucky Derby. The son of Candy Ride has good distance influences on the top side of his pedigree, but being out of a Speightstown dam isn't encouraging for the 1 1/4 miles of the Derby. Weaver is an underrated trainer and keeps the services of Hall-of-Famer Castellano, who has never won a Derby.

CONS: He has a paddling motion when he runs that's just ugly and expending that extra energy going this long will be to his detriment. He'll likely excel going shorter in one-turn mile and even sprint races later in his career and probably isn't a true route / distance horse.

BOTTOM LINE: Will be forwardly placed, then fade. He's one to play against.

#13 CODE OF HONOR



Photo: Leslie Martin

Morning Line Odds
15/1

Trainer: Shug McGaughey

Jockey: John Velazquez

S2 (Mid-Pack Closer)

PROS: Finally put it all together when he rallied from off the pace to win the Fountain of Youth (G2) at Gulfstream Park in March. Has always been highly touted beginning with his maiden breaker at Saratoga as a juvenile and his impressive come-from-behind, runner-up finish in the Champagne (G1). He has regal connections with McGaughey and Velazquez both Derby winners and has a decent enough pedigree for the Derby distance.

CONS: In his big Fountain of Youth win, he was the beneficiary of a wicked, fast pace and wasn't as successful closing into the slow fractions of the Florida Derby, where he wandered all over the stretch looking very green and finishing third. He also flattened out late in the Florida Derby and it's not a sign you want to see as he stretches out another furlong in the Kentucky Derby. He's had a roller-coaster career, getting a fever and having to skip the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, then skipping the Remsen (G2) due to a poor work, followed up by a complete clunker as the favorite in the Mucho Macho Man Stakes to start January.

BOTTOM LINE: Will take more money than he should making him a tough one to bet.

#10 CUTTING HUMOR



Photo: Coady Photography

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Todd Pletcher

Jockey: Corey Lanerie

P4 (Mid-Pack)

PROS: Impressively won the Sunland Derby (G3) by a neck over a good horse in Anothertwistafate, where he was nearer to the hot early pace than he was in his past races. Showed the willingness to finish off the race and make it a winning one, even though the runner-up was breathing down his neck late. Has classy horses in his past running lines including UAE Derby (G2) winner Plus Que Parfait, Holy Bull (G2) winner Harvey Wallbanger and Fountain of Youth (G2) runner-up Bourbon War, so has been keeping good company throughout his career.

CONS: After his Sunland Derby win, jockey John Velazquez still chose to ride Code of Honor in the Derby over him. His sire First Samurai has been more successful as a sprint sire, so there are questions about his pedigree going long. His clunker in the Southwest Stakes (G3) as the 2/1 betting favorite shows that he doesn't always bring his best race.

BOTTOM LINE: Likely will have a mid-pack run throughout the race.

#18 LONG RANGE TODDY



Photo: Coady Photography

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Steve Asmussen

Jockey: Jon Court

E/P5 (Stalker)

PROS: Showed all the grit and determination you'll ever want to see in a horse when he tracked down Improbable late to win one of the divisions of the Rebel Stakes (G2). Was able to take back after breaking sharp from the gate and got a masterful inside-out ride by old-timer Jon Court there. After winning the Remington Springboard Mile in December, hit the board in his next two Derby points races always showing his guts to never give up.

CONS: Absolutely spit the bit in the stretch of the Arkansas Derby finishing a distant sixth and now it's questionable if he can get the Derby distance. Maybe he hated the slop there or maybe he just bounced off his huge performance winning the Rebel, but it's tough to know what he'll do next. He has surprised Asmussen his whole career and might just be an overachiever that's plummeting back to reality.

BOTTOM LINE: Was a long shot play before the Arkansas Derby, but not anymore.

#4 GRAY MAGICIAN



Photo: Ernie Belmonte

Morning Line Odds
50 / 1

Trainer: Peter Miller

Jockey: Drayden Van Dyke

E/P6 (Stalker/Leader)

PROS: Made a nice mid-pack move going wide to finish second in the UAE Derby and qualify for the Kentucky Derby. Had been running against top-level competition on the west coast including a loss to Improbable early in their careers. He has the early speed if asked to be part of the Derby early pace picture and may have only one way to go here, as Miller is a speed, sprint trainer.

CONS: If he tries to go to the lead, it's doubtful he'll stay much longer than a mile into the race, as he was eaten up by much lesser foes when he tried those tactics against optional claimers at Santa Anita three races back. He caught a weak field in the UAE Derby and when he raced against graded stakes caliber horses in the United States, he didn't have much success finishing a weak fourth in the Sham Stakes (G3) at the beginning of the year at Santa Anita.

BOTTOM LINE: If he gets on the lead, he'll likely fade and if he doesn't, he'll still fade.

#9 PLUS QUE PARFAIT



Photo: DRC MK

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Brendan Walsh

Jockey: Ricardo Santana, Jr.

E/P2 (Mid-pack)

PROS: After shipping to Dubai and adding blinkers, won the UAE Derby under a masterful ride by Jose Ortiz, who jumps off to ride Tacitus instead in the Derby. He was a fast-rising juvenile to end 2019 with a strong runner-up finish over the sloppy Churchill Downs strip in the Kentucky Jockey Club (G2), which he may encounter again, if it rains again in Louisville on Derby day. His maiden breaking win way back last October at Keeneland was over eventual Holy Bull (G2) winner Harvey Wallbanger and Sunland Derby (G3) winner Cutting Humor.

CONS: The field he beat in the UAE Derby was probably one of the worst for the race in recent history. Shipping all the way back from Dubai and being in top form to run five weeks later is a big ask for a horse that wasn't competitive earlier this year running at the Fair Grounds in the Lecomte (G2) and Risen Star (G2). He was caught wide in the Lecomte, but his Risen Star was just a no-excuse clunker.

BOTTOM LINE: He could be used at the bottom of very large superfecta tickets at a monster price, if you have the budget.

#11 HAIKAL



Photo: NYRA

Morning Line Odds
30/1

Trainer: Kiaran McLaughlin

Jockey: Rajiv Maragh

S2 (Closer)

PROS: Used the hot pace and one-turn configuration to his benefit to come roaring home to win the Gotham (G3) to qualify for the Derby. Followed that up with an admirable late charge to get up for third in the Wood Memorial (G2) in his two-turn debut, so he proved that he could be decent going longer. Always comes with his run late whether it be on the outside like in the Gotham or on the rail, like he did winning the Jimmy Winkfield Stakes at Aqueduct.

CONS: As a half-brother to the late, top sprinter Takaful, his ability to go long is a huge question. Even though he finished third in the Wood Memorial, he visually looked like the 1 1/8 mile of that race was his limit.

BOTTOM LINE: He'll come with his run, but he may not be able to sustain it going this long

#15 MASTER FENCER



Morning Line Odds
50/1

Trainer: K. Tsunoda

Jockey: Julien Leparoux

(Closer)

PROS: Went from last to a good charging second in the Fukuryu Stakes at Nakayama at the end of March to qualify along the Japanese Trail for the Kentucky Derby. He loomed large turning for home in the Hyacinth Stakes at Tokyo Racecourse in February coming from last way back, but flattened out to only get fourth in that Japanese prep for the Derby. He's in the Derby gate, so in the words of Jim Carrey in Dumb & Dumber, "So you're saying there's a chance?"

CONS: As the only measure of class versus the American runners, he lost to Derma Louvre in the Hyacinth by 3/4 of a length. Next Derma Louvre ran fourth in the UAE Derby behind winner Plus Que Parfait by 6 lengths, so that gives you a sense where Master Fencer stacks up against this field. He's not even one of the best Japanese horses, as evident by his double-digit odds in both the Hyacinth and Fukuryu. His late running style isn't going to do him any favors against the best field he's seen.

BOTTOM LINE: It's good the Derby gets global recognition, but you can toss him.



expert picks

RACE

Aaron
Haltermann

Jared
Welch

Mike
"Saratoga Slim"
Spector

Mike
Somich

Curtis
"Magic"
Kalleward

Jonathon
Kinchen

FRIDAY 5/3/2019

Kentucky Oaks	Bellafina Street Band Champagne Anyone Flor de La Mar	Bellafina Champagne Anyone Jaywalk Out for a Spin	Champagne Anyone Bellafina Positive Spirit Lady Apple	Bellafina Lady Apple Champagne Anyone Flor de La Mar	Bellafina Restless Rider Street Band Lady Apple	Champagne Anyone Jaywalk Restless Rider Flor De La Mar
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SATURDAY 5/4/2019

Old Forester Turf Classic	Bricks and Mortar Ticonderoga Qurbaan Raging Bull	Bricks and Mortar Ticonderoga Qurbaan Raging Bull	Bricks and Mortar Synchrony Raging Bull Ticonderoga	Bricks and Mortar Qurbaan Breaking the Rules Ticonderoga	Bricks and Mortar Synchrony Qurbaan Ticonderoga	Bricks and Mortar Synchrony Next Shares Markitoff
Churchill Downs	Whitmore Mitole Bobby's Wicked One Do Share	Mitole Whitmore Do Share Promises Fulfilled	Mitole Whitmore Promises Fulfilled Do Share	Whitmore Warrior's Club Promises Fulfilled Majestic Dunhill	Mitole Whitmore Warrior's Club Bobby's Wicked One	Do Share Whitmore Mitole Uncontested
Humana Distaff	Marley's Freedom Talk Veuve to Me Spiced to Perfection Amy's Challenge	Marley's Freedom Emboldened Spiced to Perfection Amy's Challenge	Marley's Freedom Spiced Perfection Amy's Challenge Talk Veuve To Me	Marley's Freedom Mia Mischief Spiced Perfection Emboldened	Marley's Freedom Spiced Perfection Emboldened Amy's Challenge	Marley's Freedom Emboldened Amy's Challenge Talk Veuve To Me
American Turf	A Thread of Blue Digital Age Seismic Wave Social Paranoia	Avie's Flatter Digital Age Henley's Joy A Thread of Blue	A Thread of Blue Avie's Flatter Digital Age The Black Album	Social Paranoia A Thread of Blue Digital Age (Ire) Seismic Wave	A Thread of Blue Seismic Wave Social Paranoia Digital Age	Henley's Joy Digital Age Social Paranoia Casa Creed
Longines Distaff Turf Mile	Precieuse Proctor's Ledge Capla Temptress Valedictorian	Precieuse Capla Temptress Environs Daddy is a Legend	Precieuse Environs Proctor's Ledge Valedictorian	Proctor's Ledge Precieuse Valedictorian Daddy is a Legend	Precieuse Capla Temptress Valedictorian Daddy Is A Legend	Daddy Is A Legend Environs Proctor's Ledge Precieuse
Pat Day Mile	Instagrand Hog Creek Hustle Mr Money Bags Mr. Money	Instagrand Frolic More Market King Mr Money Bags	Instagrand Last Judgement Durkin's Call Market King	Instagrand Hog Creek Hustle Last Judgment Manny Wah	Instagrand Last Judgment Mr Money Bags Durkin's Call	Instagrand Mr. Money Frolic More Last Judgement
Kentucky Derby	Game Winner Improbable Roadster Maximum Security	Improbable Spinoff Game Winner Tacitus	Tacitus Game Winner Improbable Tax	Game Winner Maximum Security Win Win Win Bodexpress	Game Winner Maximum Security Tacitus War of Will	Improbable By My Standards Game Winner Win Win Win