

OSCAR'S 2007 KENTUCKY DERBY GREEN SHEET

"YOU'RE FIRED!"



George Steinbrenner first made these two words notorious, Donald Trump capitalized on them for his reality TV show, CBS rightfully said them to Don Imus, Simon finally said them to Sanjaya, and Alberto Gonzales actually stated that he wasn't involved in the decision to say those words regarding the dismissal of eight U.S. Attorneys. (Please note that Lawyer Ron was not among those dismissed and returned off the bench to win the Oaklawn Handicap by 4 lengths!)

So although Oscar may be a dollar short and a few days late in using these words, he will borrow them to use in eliminating the horses who he believes have little chance of winning the 133rd Kentucky Derby; consequently narrowing the field down to those few with the best chance of continuing employment in the Winner's Circle.

Yes I know, I know, I know, you don't have to remind me that I eliminated Barbaro last year with this method. I dismissed him, considering him to be a future grass champion who would be beaten on dirt at 1-¼ miles! I did, however, greatly respect him and despite eliminating him on the factor method, I included him in my Green Sheet anyway: *"Any horse who is undefeated and has won on three different types of surface deserves great respect and that's why he is mentioned here, and he drew post 8 where he should be able to use his tactical speed to get good position."*... And that's exactly what happened as Barbaro won the race and subsequently our hearts.

So ok, Barbaro smashed three very solid elimination rules (Raise A Native broodmare sire line, more than 4 weeks off prior to the Derby, and did not have a Beyer of at least 105) and still won going away! (Give me a break, folks, Steinbrenner has fired some very competent managers, Trump may have sent a few future business moguls packing, some talented "Idols" have been dumped, and I'm sure there were at least a few very competent attorneys that got "Bushwhacked" by Gonzales! While CBS was 100% correct in firing Imus, they have "fired" some very good TV shows in the past. The Point being – we all make mistakes!)

Returning for a moment to Barbaro, I think he was an exception to the elimination factors. Hell, he was an exceptional horse period!

I'm using this method again this year, but times change. In the 1950's Don Imus would have gotten away with his prejudicial remark, and from 1973 to 1989 using only dosage (actually the Dual Qualifier factor), you would have had the winner of 15 out of 17 runnings of the Derby. So ultimately, I'm going to be very, very careful who I fire! I might just suspend a few without pay until my final analysis.



THE ELIMINATION FACTORS FOR 2007

1. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHOSE BROODMARE SIRE TRACES TO RAISE A NATIVE.

In the history of the Derby there have been 63 starters whose broodmare sires traced to the outstanding stallion Raise A Native. Barbaro was the only one to win the Derby. The list includes the favorites Point Given and Harlan's Holiday and such other well-regarded horses as Tapit, Borrego, Ten Most Wanted, Dollar Bill, Brancusi, High Yield, Cat Thief, Pulpit, Flower Alley, and Brother Derek. Almost as important is the fact that of those 63 starters, only 4 finished 2nd. (Invisible Ink, Tejano Run, Prairie Bayou, and Closing Argument).

So if you are planning on playing a horse whose broodmare sire traces to Raise A Native, be aware of those odds – 1 winner and 4 place horses in 63 tries!

Please note, however, that **the Raise A Native sire line has had just the opposite effect.** An amazing 8 of the last 12 Derby winners are tail-male to Raise A Native! The exceptions are Charismatic, Silver Charm, and Giacomo.

The following horses' broodmare sire traces tail-male to Raise A Native:



Great Hunter
Hard Spun
Officer Rocket
Sam P.
Scat Daddy – do not fire - suspend with out pay for now
Stormello

2. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO DOES NOT HAVE A MINIMUM OF 5 CAREER STARTS.

The last horse to win the Derby with fewer than 5 career starts was Exterminator in 1918! (Some very good horses have tried to win the Derby with fewer than 5 career starts and failed. This list includes some very nice horses: Congaree, Indian Charlie, Medalia d'Oro, and Flower Alley.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Curlin
Tiago

3. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO DOES NOT HAVE A MINIMUM OF 3 STARTS AT 3.

The only horse since 1955 to win the Derby with fewer than 3 starts as a 3 year-old was Sunny's Halo in 1983. That's 50 out of 51 years. Point Given, Johannesburg, Saarland, Lion Heart, and Birdstone tried and came up short. In 2005 the betting favorite Bellamy Road faced this factor and became another of its victims. However, Proud Citizen, Bold Arrangement, Best Pal, Victory Gallop Lion Heart, and Closing Argument (at 71-1) did finish 2nd. (Remember, my elimination method is used to eliminate horses who won't win, so be careful, some eliminated horses have finished 2nd and 3rd.)

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Circular Quay
Dominican
Great Hunter
Stormello
Street Sense – wait, we'll just suspend you for now

4. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO HAS NOT RACED WITHIN 5 WEEKS OF THE DERBY.

The last horse before Barbaro to win the Derby with more than 4 weeks rest was Needles in 1955.

So ok, this is the other elimination factor that Barbaro and Michael Matz trampled last year, but again Barbaro was something very, very special.

Because training styles change and because of Barbaro, I've expanded this factor from "more than 4 weeks" to "more than 5 weeks".

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Hard Spun – 6 weeks is just too much
Circular Quay – 8 weeks...are you kidding me? Who does he think he is, the second coming of Da Hoss?

5. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO HAS NOT RACED IN A GRADED STAKES PRIOR TO APRIL THIS YEAR.

You could say that during the last 17 years, every Derby winner ran in a graded stakes race prior to April 1. (Technically, in 2003 when the Rebel was won by Smarty Jones it was ungraded having been downgraded from G3 that year. In 2005 it was upgraded back to G3).

Even if you allow that Smarty was technically an exception, he had won a total of 4 non-graded stakes including the Rebel. So I am leaving this factor in as an elimination factor.

Last year this factor eliminated a very game Showing Up, who I think would have been second if he would have had a little more seasoning.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



None

6. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO DID NOT FINISH 4TH OR BETTER IN HIS LAST PREP.

In the last 13 years, every Derby winner has finished 4th or better in his last prep race. In 10 out of the last 13 years, the Derby winner finished either 1st or 2nd in his last prep race. The exceptions are Sea Hero, who finished 4th in 1993, Thunder Gulch, who finished 4th in 1995, and Giacomo, who finished 4th in 2005.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Bwana Bull
Great Hunter
Imawildandcrazyguy

7. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO DID NOT RACE AS A 2 YEAR-OLD.

No unraced juvenile has won the Derby since Apollo in 1882! Pulpit was a very highly regarded Derby starter who was unraced at 2, as was Atswhatimtalknbout and Showing Up last year.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Curlin

8. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO HAS NOT HAD A RACE AT 1 1/8 MILES OR MORE.

Every Derby winner in the last 13 years had run in at least one race of 1 1/8 miles or more. This factor eliminated Eye of the Tiger and Scrimshaw and Showing Up in the past.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Circular Quay

9. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHOSE SIRE TRACES TO DAMASCUS.

Damascus was the 8-5 favorite in 1967 and lost. None of his sons or grandsons have won the Derby either, and they include Derby favorites Mister Frisky and Private Terms, Juvenile Champion Fly So Free, the highly regarded Buddy Gil, and the great Skip Away.

There are no contenders this year whose sire traces to Damascus.

10. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO HAS NOT WON A STAKES RACE.

Going into last year, the only Derby winner who had not previously won a stakes race (does not have to be a graded stake) was Cannonero II in 1962! (He did win a 1 ¼ mile race, however, as a 2 year-old in his native Venezuela .) Alysheba actually finished 1st in the Blue Grass but was disqualified. In the past this factor eliminated Atwhatimtalknbout, Brancusi, Eye of the Tiger, and Ten Cents a Shine. In 2005 this factor eliminated Giacomo.

Because of Giacomo, I might give this factor a little less weight, however, 1 winner in 44 years is still a pretty good reason to eliminate a horse who has not won a stakes race. This factor eliminated last year's 3rd and 4th placed horses, Steppenwolver and Jazil.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:



Imawildandcrazyguy
Liquidity
Sam P.
Sedgefield
Zanjero

The following horses won a stakes, however, it was ungraded. We will keep them employed for now, but they are on a final warning:

Any Given Saturday
Storm in May
Teuflesberg

11. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHOSE DOSAGE INDEX EXCEEDS 4.00 UNLESS HE HAS RUN AT LEAST ONE RACE WITH A BEYER OF 100 OR MORE.

Since 1940 only 4 winners (Strike The Gold in 1991, Real Quiet in 1998, Charismatic in 1999, and Giacomo in 2005) have had a D.I. in excess of 4.00. Real Quiet (top Beyer 108) and Charismatic (top Beyer 108) pass on the "100 plus Beyer" part of this factor. That leaves Strike the Gold and Giacomo. I was not able to get statistics on his Beyers, but Strike The Gold's D.I. was dropped below 4.00 when his sire Alydar was made a Chef de Race. I can't make any rationalization for Giacomo, however, only 4 winners in 65 years is still a pretty strong elimination factor.

Last year Lawyer Ron was eliminated on this factor.



This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:

Dominican has a D.I. of 4.33. He ran a Beyer of only 93 in his Blue Grass win.
Imawildandcrazyguy has a D.I. of 6.00. His best Beyer was only a 94.

12. ELIMINATE ANY HORSE WHO HAS NOT ATTAINED A BEYER OF AT LEAST 105 IN A ROUTE RACE AT 3 AND ALSO FINISHED 1ST OR 2ND IN A GRADE I OR GRADE II STAKES AT 1 1/16 MILES OR LONGER AT AGE 3.

Between 1992 and 2006, 78.6% (11 of 14) of the Derby winners fit this profile. (There were no horses who qualified in 2003). Only Grindstone, Giacomo and Barbaro did not qualify on this factor. (There are those guys Giacomo and Barbaro again!!) Maybe I need to amend this factor to say that a horse must have attained a Beyer of at least 105 in a route race at 3 UNLESS he has an Italian name!



This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby:

No horse has run a Beyer of 105 or higher in a route race as a 3 year-old. The only horse to have run a Beyer of 105 or higher **in any race** is Street Sense, who ran a 108 in the BC Juvenile.

Based on Oscar's elimination factors, the remaining horses are:

**NOBIZ LIKE SHOBIZ
ANY GIVEN SATURDAY
COWTOWN CAT**

**SCAT DADDY – he is on suspension, but we will review him below just in case....
STREET SENSE – he is on suspension, but we will review him below just in case...**

CAUTION: We have eliminated horses that we believe will not WIN. That does not mean that an eliminated horse will not finish 2nd or 3rd. Several have a very solid shot to round out exacta, trifecta, and superfecta.

Now let's take an "up close and personal" look at the who qualifies for the job as the 2007 Kentucky Derby winner:



STREET SENSE

Pedigree

Street Sense is by Street Cry, Timeform's highest rated horse in 2002 when he won the Dubai World Cup as well as the Stephen Foster. His sire, Machiavelian was the European champion 2 year-old, and his dam, Helen Street was the champion 3 year-old.

Street Sense is out of Bedazzle, a daughter of Dixieland Band, out of a His Majesty mare. While Bedazzle was primarily a sprinter, the presence of Ribot, Reviewer, and Dancer's Image up close and personal in her pedigree suggest that she is capable of passing on some stamina.

Connections

We used the infamous words *"you're fired!"* as the theme of this Green Sheet, but trainer Carl Nafzger also became known for some famous words of his own as in *"I love you, Mrs. Genter"*. Emotion clearly had gotten the best of this veteran trainer in 1990 as Unbridled crossed the Derby finish line. He also went on to beat older horses in the BC Classic that same year, showing that this trainer is very capable when he has the stock, something that he has reduced in recent years. He's back with again with a big horse and a big chance!

Jockey Calvin Borel has won over 4,000 races, but he's never had a horse this good. He is a very capable journeyman who has ridden some good horses but has failed to hit the board in 4 Derby starts. Street Sense seems to have one move and tends to become distracted at times. While I'd rather see Jerry Bailey, Gary Stevens, or Pat Day on him, that of course is not possible and Calvin knows him better than anyone. He also gave him a flawless ride in the BC Juvenile. A repeat of that performance wins roses on May 5.

Analysis

Nafzger planned all along to buck history and his intention was to only give Street Sense two three-year-old prep races prior to the Kentucky Derby (G1). The Blue Grass Stakes (G1) was always designed as his final Derby prep, the questions was, what other race would start him off?

The answer was the Tampa Bay Derby (G3), and Street Sense opened his 2007 campaign with a gut wrenching battle with a determined Any Given Saturday. Street Sense prevailed by a nose while setting a stakes and track record time for the 1 1/16-miles. (Obviously Any Given Saturday also broke the record.)

In the Blue Grass, Street Sense finished second by a nose in a head bob to the late-charging Dominican, but a slow pace probably compromised his style and I don't believe he is a true All Weather track horse. I think the fact that he has twice run well on it despite not really liking it says a lot. It's also possible that he could have bounced a bit in this race.

If that was indeed a bounce, and **if** he still ran that well despite disliking the surface, and **if** he is truly a Churchill-loving horse (won the BC Juvenile, finished 2nd in his debut maiden race, and had a huge work over the track on April 24), then betting on any other horse is betting on Non-Sense!

Steve Haskin of *The Bloodhorse* said that his work at Churchill on April 24 was right up there with the pre-Derby works of Smarty Jones and Barbaro as among the best pre-Derby works he has ever seen, and Mr. Haskin has seen plenty of works by quality horses.

While his time was impressive enough on its own, what was most remarkable about this work was the way he took the corners. If you watch the BC Juvenile and the Tampa Bay Derby tapes, that's exactly what he did in those races also. He has a very efficient stride and is very athletic. In fact, the last time that I saw a horse corner that perfectly was on the Merry Go Round at Six Flags!

When you are truly unable to separate the horses based on past performance, and all of them seem to have one knock or another, you have to turn to other indicators, and certainly one of them is how a horse works before a race.

Advantage #1 – We know this horse LOVES Churchill!

Advantage #2 – Just about the only crowd that rivals Churchill on Derby Day, is the crowd at Churchill on Breeders' Cup Day. Guess who showed up and won going away?

Street Sense is battle tested both on the track surface and in front of a large, noisy, distracting crowd. Those are huge advantages.

The keys for him are that Borel will have to keep relaxed and focused, save ground, and make that one move – up the rail if he can. Street Sense has run his best races using that tactic.



NOBIZ LIKE SHOBIZ

Pedigree

Nobiz Like Shobiz is by Albert the Great, a son of Derby winner Go for Gin, and consequently traces back to Ribot. Albert never competed in the Derby, but did win the Jockey Club Gold Cup, as well as the Suburban and Brooklyn Handicaps. He showed both speed and stamina getting 1 ¼ miles in 1:59.24.

Nobiz's dam, Nightstorm, is a daughter of Storm Cat and is out of the Halo mare Halo's Daughter. This combination gives Nobiz a solid Derby connection. Paternal grandsire Go for Gin was a Derby winner, and maternal grandsire Halo, is the sire of Derby winner Sunday Silence.

His second dam, Lilt, is a full sister to 1973 Ky Oaks winner Bag of Tunes, and thus adds the significant stamina influence of Herbager to the pedigree equation.

There should be no question about this horse's ability to get 1 ¼ miles. The question is, is he fast enough to defeat some of the others?

His pedigree would indicate a horse who should be a little behind his peers at 2, but roar past most of them as he got older and the distances got longer. However, he displayed uncharacteristic precociousness as a two year-old, breaking his maiden by 10 lengths at first asking, finishing 2nd in the Champaign, and winning the Remsen.

Nobiz should have won an Academy Award for acting like a descendant of Raise A Native rather than Ribot!

While he has continued to win and/or be very competitive as a 3 year-old, he has not shown the dramatic improvement that one would have expected based on his breeding. It's as if the others have caught up to him, rather than the other way around.

Connections

Barclay Tagg is no stranger to the pressure of training a Derby horse as he won the Classic with Funny Cide in 2003 and finished 6th with Showing Up last year. Showing Up you may remember as Lael Stables "other horse" who was right there down the stretch but tired late. It took some very nice horses to beat Showing Up that day, and but for his lack of experience, I think he would probably have rounded out the superfecta.

Analysis

I guess his name must have gotten to him, because he was sure “acting” in some of his early races. I don’t know about being a leading man, but he was reluctant to change leads, and spent too much time looking at his audience instead of focusing his attention on the finish line. Barclay Tagg went to Wardrobe and dressed him up for his performance in the Wood with blinkers for his eyes and cotton for his ears. He responded with a professional, if not exactly brilliant victory over a very tough Sightseeing and Any Given Saturday.

This gives him 3 races this year, one more than several of his faster rivals, and that coupled with his stamina-laden pedigree is why I think he has a chance to win the Derby Emmy, Tony, or Oscar (pun intended) on May 5, like another of Tagg’s Derby starters, Funny Cide did in 2003. This guy may not be quite as quick as the first gelding to win the Derby since 1929, but his breeding says that he should have more stamina, and he does have that necessary tactical speed.

He needs a clean trip, but you can say that applies to every horse in this race.



SCAT DADDY

Pedigree

Scat Daddy is Johannesburg’s best runner to date. Although Johannesburg was champion juvenile in both Europe and North America in 2001, he failed to improve as a 3 year-old and was retired to stud in 2003.

Scat Daddy’s dam, Love Style, is by Nijinsky out of a No Robbery mare. Love Style was unraced but Likeable Style (the second dam) was a stakes winner who was best in sprints.

With Scat Daddy being closely inbred (4x2) to Mr. Prospector, I have some serious reservations about him being best at 1 ¼ miles.

Connections

If I have to tell you who **Todd Pletcher** is, stop reading this Green Sheet right now and head for the golf course!

After working for D. Wayne Lukas for 6 years Pletcher struck out on his own and listen to this, Grasshopper – he’s been more successful than the Master except that.....he’s never won the Derby!

When someone once asked Jerry Bailey what his secret to his success was, he candidly replied, "fast horses". I guess if Todd Pletcher were asked the same question he would give the same answer and maybe add "and rich owners"!

He currently trains for such renowned giants as Michael Tabor, Aaron and Marie Jones, Padua Stables, and Eugene Melnyk. He has conditioned such top-class performers as Ashado, Bluegrass Cat, Left Bank, Speightstown, Strong Hope, Forest Danger, Flower Alley, and Balto Star.

He set a season earnings record in 2005 with his horses winning more than \$20.8 million in purses, and won the 2006 Eclipse as the top trainer; his third Eclipse in a row, but he's been a little snakebit with racing's biggest events, the Breeder's Cup and the Kentucky Derby.

He was winless in his first 12 BC tries, before breaking the schneid in 2004 with Speightstown and Ashado. His best Derby finishers so far are seconds with Bluegrass Cat 2006 and Invisible Ink in 2001. Limehouse was 4th in 2004.

Jockey **Edgar Prado** was the dominant rider in Maryland racing for years, winning riding titles at Laurel and Pimlico. From there he moved his tack to NY where he had a great deal of success, including riding Belmont winners Birdstone (2004) and Sarava (2002).

But if you're not into this game, you probably never know what he did before he got on the best horse he ever rode. Unfortunately he will probably be best known both in glory for winning the Derby on Barbaro, and in tragedy when he pulled the injured horse up two weeks later in the Preakness.

Analysis

Alas, Rodney Dangerfield is no longer around as the "guy who gets no respect". Is this his replacement? It sure seems that way. What's a guy have to do to earn a little respect around here? He has won the **Sanford**, the **Champagne**, the Fountain of Youth, and the Florida Derby...and still no respect?

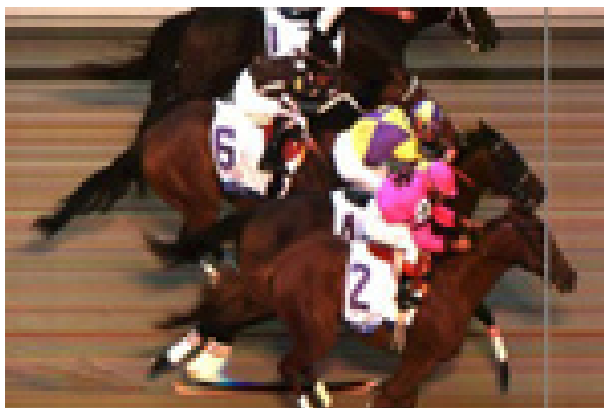
Among Secretariat's wins prior to the Derby were the **Sanford**, the Hopeful, the **Champagne**, the Bay Shore and the Gotham. He finished 3rd in the Wood and yet went into the Derby starting gate as the odds-on favorite. Daddy will be at least 4-1!

Ok maybe it's because he's a little guy. He looks like a pony compared with some of his rivals. Does size really matter in horse racing? Well, yes and no. (Please folks, no off-color comments about a large horse being more likely to hang in the stretch!)

Seriously now, the larger horses with powerful long strides can blow little guys like this away, but what happens if they have to check, get bumped, or have their momentum stopped in any way? Chances are that they can't recover as quickly as a small, agile horse with good balance and a lot of heart. And that's what we have here.

On the other hand, a smaller horse with shorter strides has to take more of them than a larger horse. I'm not a mathematician, but I think you can prove that over the course of a mile and a quarter, a smaller horse will have to take more strides than a larger one, and in a game where the difference is often a nose, a neck, or a head.

Daddy wasn't in this one, and it was a mile and an 1/8, not a mile and a quarter, but take a look at this picture of the finish of this year's Blue Grass Stakes:



ANY GIVEN SATURDAY

Pedigree

Based solely on his pedigree, Any Given Saturday should be easily able to handle the mile and one quarter distance of the Kentucky Derby hooves down!

Despite being a Grade II winning sprinter, his sire, Distorted Humor, has already sired one Derby winner (Funny Cide) and is fast becoming a leading sire with over 40 stakes winners to his credit, including Travers Stakes winner Flower Alley.

The comparison to the 2003 Derby winner, Funny Cide, does not end with their sire. Both horses are out of Seattle Slew granddaughters. Saturday's dam, Weekend in Indy was sired by Slew's best son, A.P. Indy. Seattle Slew of course won the Derby, and I'm certain that A.P. Indy would have won it as well if he had not injured himself the day of the race and had to be scratched.

If that is not enough Derby pedigree for you, Saturday's second dam, Whow, is a daughter of Derby winner Spectacular Bid!

"Wow!" certainly describes Saturday's pedigree. His bottom line contains 2 Derby winners, and should have contained a 3rd, and his sire has already produced a Derby winner. You couldn't possibly ask for a better pedigree to win the Derby – now all he has to do is run to it...

Connections

For information on trainer **Todd Pletcher**, please see Scat Daddy.

Jockey **Garrett Gomez** has won major races including the 2005 Breeders' Cup Mile and Juvenile, but his best finish in three Derby tries was a 7th aboard Southern Rhythm in 1994. He is certainly an accomplished and capable rider.

Analysis

This horse seems to be the opposite of Street Sense in his preference for All Weather vs. dirt tracks. (Ok, you could say that is "across the Street".) Street Sense runs well on All Weather tracks, but seems to excel on dirt, especially Churchill dirt. Any Given Saturday runs well on dirt, but is 2 for 2 on All Weather tracks. He broke his maiden at Turfway Park and won his next race at Keeneland.

So he is undefeated on All Weather tracks, but only 1 for 4 on real dirt. It's also interesting that in his All Weather track races he came from way behind, whereas he employed a stalking style on dirt.

What's truly amazing is that he broke his maiden at 5 ½ furlongs and immediately jumped to a race at 1 1/16th miles for his next condition. In both these races All Weather track races he closed for the win from way back.

His chance to win the Derby will be to combine those tactics, and come running from mid pack. Also it's interesting that he has raced wide in every one of his 6 races. You have to wonder what would have happened if he had saved more ground. Does he shy away from going inside or between horses, or is it just bad racing luck that keeps him outside (or bad rides)? I think we can dismiss the latter as he has been ridden either by Johnny V, Leparoux, or Bejarano.

In his stakes debut in the Kentucky Jockey Club, he faced the undefeated Tiz Wonderful, and actually gained the lead in the stretch. However, in a head to head battle he drifted twice, allowing Tiz Wonderful to regain the lead each time and eventually win by a half-length. Saturday did beat the 3rd horse, Dominican, by almost 6 lengths.

He next went to the Sam Davis at Tampa Bay where he won easily defeating a less than stellar field. He followed this up with a hard fought nose defeat in a dog fight to Street Sense in the Tampa Bay Derby. Once again he raced wide.

His last prep, the Wood Memorial, was his most disappointing. He again raced wide on both turns, but this time not only did he fail to catch the winner, Nobiz Like Shobiz, he was rundown by the fast closing Sightseeing for the place spot without putting up much of a fight. Did he bounce from his previous race, or did he just not like Aqueduct? Perhaps the answer is "yes" on both counts. If that is the case, he could be very dangerous in the Derby, **if he likes the Churchill dirt**. Obviously if this race was being run on All Weather tracks I would rank him right up there with Street Sense.



COWTOWN CAT

Pedigree

Cowtown Cat is another son of Distorted Humor. (See the pedigree of Scat Daddy above).

His dam, Tom's Cat, is by Storm Cat. She was a minor earner on the track and her two other foals have been nothing special. This guy could be though, being inbred 4x4 to Derby winner and outstanding sire, Northern Dance. His fourth generation contains stamina influences Secretariat and Tom Rolfe.

Connections

Trainer? Yeah, you guessed it – **Todd Pletcher!**

Jockey **Fernando Jara** came to the U.S. from his native Panama when he was 16 in 2004. When most males his age were hoping to get lucky on their Saturday night date, Jara was hoping to get lucky in Saturday afternoon's 8th race. And while other 16 year olds were excited about getting their driver's license so they could drive dads beat up old Chevy, or fancy Caddy, this kid was motoring around the track on something much more expensive than the Caddy and probably faster than the Chevy!

Well you could say that Mr. Jara did in fact "get lucky!" He is the rider of Horse of the Year and Horse of the World, Invasor. He also won the Belmont on Jazil, on whom he finished 4th in his first Derby appearance. He is fast becoming one of the leading riders and I have no doubts that will achieve that goal. As the rider of the winner of the BC Classic, Dubai World Cup and Belmont Stakes – I'd say he's arrived there already!

Analysis

Many people are going to make a comparison with War Emblem. War Emblem was the runaway winner of the 2002 Illinois Derby who caught everyone napping in the Kentucky Derby when he went wire to wire. Jockeys who were patiently waiting for him to backup are still *"Waiting for Godot"*!

Cowtown Car destroying his field in the Illinois Derby, much like War Emblem, and now headed to the Big Dance. People are going to dismiss him as a “need the lead” type who will get dueled in submission by some other horses who truly do need the lead.

Don't make that mistake folks! Cowtown Cat does not need the lead. Draw a line through the Illinois Derby. He simply inherited the lead and took full advantage in a race devoid of speed.

The keys to this horse's potential performance in the KY Derby are the G3 Gotham at Aqueduct and a January allowance race at Gulfstream. In both, stalked the pace from mid pack and finished full of run blowing past the leaders.

He has the tactical speed to keep him out of trouble early and establish position, and he should be competitive when the real running starts. However, I'm a little worried about his pedigree. He needs to call on that dose of stamina from his stamina laden ancestors, Secretariat and Tom Rolfe, and if they are not at home when he calls, his drive will flatten out like a 12 week old uncapped bottle of beer in the last 16th. ***Speaking of which, this is OSCAR'S BUD LONGSHOT!***

SUMMARY – I've been at this since February and it's finally starting to make SENSE!

The workplace has changed. I remember the days when you could just say; “you're fired” to an employee for almost anything. Now you need all sorts of documentation and warnings in their file in order to fire them (unless they have committed a blatantly criminal act). If you say, “you're fired” nowadays without proper documentation, they reply, “You're sued”!

Well the Derby handicapping “workplace” has also changed. Using the historical elimination factors had always been a good way of narrowing down the field. However, I've been sued for inappropriate firing three times now (Funny Cide- 2003; Giacomo – 2005; and Barbaro – 2006).

To make certain that I am adequately advised and potentially defended by good legal council this time, I have retained the services of Lawyer Ron who has just become a full partner in Boston (Harbor) Legal! Not only does he know the law, he understands what it's like to run in the Derby! Plus how can I possibly get bad advice from a firm that is named after the 1996 BC Juvenile winner?!



The point of all this being that there was a reason why I did not fire two horses even though they did not pass the elimination factor test. Lawyer Ron advised me to place them on suspension until I had carefully considered all the facts (and weighted the consequences).

We will now discuss them:

Street Sense has had only had two preps. That should have gotten him fired but here are the facts that Lawyer Ron pointed out to me:

- Nafzger intended all along for Street Sense to have only 2 preps. (Many of those who failed to win the Derby off 2 preps in the past had their training interrupted – it was never intended that they would only have 2 preps.)
- He ran a Beyer of 108 in a route race at Churchill (BC Juvenile)
- He has displayed a strong affinity for the Churchill surface
- He is trained by a veteran trainer who has already won this race.
- He is not the only horse bucking historical trends – that should level the playing field a bit.
- His last work indicates that he not only is holding his conditioning, but he is giving every indication of peaking in his next race.

Although **Scat Daddy** escaped getting fired when I permitted a 5-week layoff before the Derby, he should have been fired for being out of a Raise a Native line broodmare. But wait, aren't those the exact two factors that resulted in the firing of Barbaro last year? Ouch!

Now I know that Scat Daddy is no Barbaro, but Lawyer Ron told me that it would be a mistake to dismiss him completely. He has simply done too much to be sent packing. As mentioned previously, he's getting no respect despite winning almost as many preps as Secretariat, and remember folks, just like Daddy, Secretariat finished 3rd in his last prep. (Now please no nasty letters guys, I am in no way saying that Scat Daddy is anything close to Barbaro or Secretariat. But he does have talent, and if horses like Sea Hero, Lil E. Tee, and Giacomo can wear the roses, well....Who's your Daddy?!

DEALING WITH THE HORSES WHO ARE LEFT IN THE Barn BOARD ROOM

- **SCAT DADDY** – He's small and agile, but when it comes right down to it, I don't think he is bred to be at his best at a mile and a quarter. – **YOU'RE FIRED!**
- **ANY GIVEN SATURDAY** – He has ability and he has the pedigree to get the distance, however, he has raced wide in every one of his races. Is he afraid to go inside or between? If he races wide in this large field, I don't see how he can win. – **YOU'RE FIRED!**
- **COWTOWN CAT** – He is still my Bud Longshot, but I have to be honest, if he gets caught up in a speed duel, he has no chance. – **YOU'RE FIRED!**

So now it's down to NOBIZ LIKE SHOBIZ and STREET SENSE, and I rate them almost dead even:

- **NOBIZ LIKE SHOBIZ** –
 - He badly needed the addition of blinkers and cotton in his ears helped him focus, and it worked.
 - He certainly has the breeding to get the distance.
 - His last work at Belmont perfect.
 - His trainer has won this race

BUT – we don't know

- If he will like the Churchill surface – **We know STREET SENSE DOES**
- How he will react in front of a large crowd (even with blinkers and cotton) – **We know how STREET SENSE DOES**

- How well he will run in a large field. The largest field he's faced was 10 and he got pinched back at the start, though he did finish 2nd. – **We know how STREET SENSE DOES...**

So...

YOU'RE HIRED! –STREET SENSE

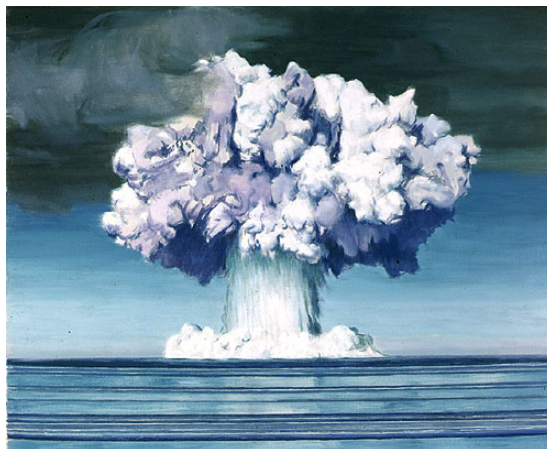
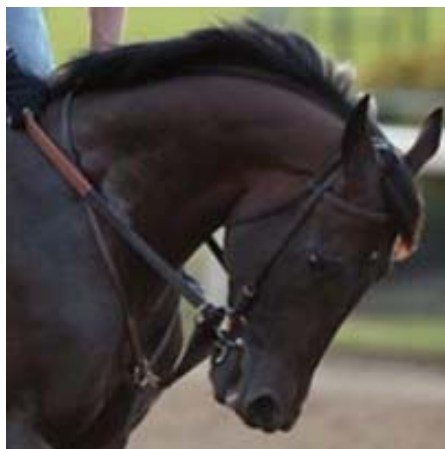


STREET SENSE may not have the distance breeding to match a few others, he may not be quite as brilliant as the too lightly raced Curlin, and he may be bucking one elimination factor, but when all is said and done, I should have a few more STREET CENTS in my pocket by Saturday night!

I think even The Donald would agree to hire this guy. He may not be as pretty or as well educated as Trump's latest Apprentice, Stefani, but you don't need to have a Yale or Harvard education to win the Derby. All you need is some Street Sense! Speaking of Stefani, she can eat a little bit more now because no matter what her scale reads, she will start off carrying 10 pounds less. (She will be able to claim a 10-pound apprentice allowance!)

Leaves are appearing on the trees, the grass is getting thick and green, the dogwoods are in bloom, (yes, Cot Campbell, and they are probably running also), and although it's a bit early for roses, you will be able to smell them in the Winner's Circle at Churchill Downs this Saturday.

The other fragrance that will be carried on the gentle Kentucky breeze will be STREET SCENTS!



DERBY Horse -BOMBS

Woodchopper –	1981	Place: \$23.40	Show: \$13.00
Mane Minister –	1991		Show: \$25.60
Casual Lies –	1992	Place: \$22.00	Show: \$12.60
Invisible Ink –	2001	Place: \$46.60	Show: \$21.20
Proud Citizen -	2002	Place: \$24.60	Show: \$13.40
Closing Argument –	2005	Place: \$70.00	Show: \$24.80

Now that we have settled on a winner, how about trying for a Derby H-Bomb to hit the board? It doesn't happen every year, but it happens often enough. Sometimes the racing gods drop an H-Bomb on the Derby trifecta. The horses above are just a few examples of the fallout that can occur when this happens.

I'm not saying that it will happen this year, but if we are going to get bombed, I'll give you a horse that has a chance to nuke your trifecta!



STORM IN MAY

Pedigree

Storm in May is by Tiger Ridge. Tiger Ridge had a very abbreviated career, racing only 5 times. (Hey Danzig only started 3 times, and Raise a Native only 4 times, although each was undefeated.) Tiger Ridge has sired 8 stakes winners from 4 crops, so he's not exactly the next coming of Mr. Prospector. However he is inbred 3X2 to Secretariat and is out of Weekend Surprise, making him a half-brother to A.P. Indy.

Storm in May is out of Laun Shaw, an unraced daughter of Relaunch. Relaunch is a terrific broodmare sire, as evidenced by The BC Classic winner Ghostapper. Laun Shaw is a half to Storm Creek.

With that breeding, I do not believe that the distance will be a problem for him if he can get the trip.

Connections

He is trained by William Kaplan and will be ridden by Juan Levya. While they are competent horsemen, this would probably be their first really big horse and certainly their first Derby starter.

Ok so Kaplan and Levya are not Pletcher and Velasquez. We're talking about potential nuclear strike here folks. You have a Pletcher / Velasquez horse hit the board, but if you're looking for payoffs like Closing Argument or Invisilbe Ink – forget it. You have a better chance of finding Saddam's weapons of mass destruction than you have of having a Pletcher / Velasquez horse pay \$70 to place!

Analysis

If you're looking for a veteran to pilot your Enola Gay, this is your flyboy! He has started 13 times! Sounds like the good old days. Most of his races have been in Florida where he won the Sunshine Millions Dash. In that 6 furlong race at Gulfstream, he started from post 12 in a field of 14, and closed from 10th at the half to win by a little over one length.

His most impressive race was his last, the Arkansas Derby. No one was going to beat Curlin, but Storm in May in finishing 2nd defeated some nice horses including Flying First Class who came back to win the Derby Trial by almost 4 lengths.

I'm not saying that he has a chance to win the Derby, but he is seasoned, he's hit the board in 12 of his 13 races, and he ran a very strong race in the Arkansas Derby. He broke well and was stalking beside Curlin, then dropped way out of it and came on late up the rail with a strong finish. What is odd is that usually races near the lead the entire way. In his stakes win and in the Arkansas Derby, however, he came from behind. This appears to be his most effective style. He is blind in his right eye, so that may have something to do with his being fearless coming up the rail.

I really do like Street Sense, and as far as my H-Bomb, he might be worth a couple of bucks.

If he does hit the board you will explode with joy; and if he doesn't, just look at those few bucks you've discarded as Nuclear Waste!

Good luck to all and may all the horses and jockeys have safe and uneventful trips.