

OSCAR'S 2008 KENTUCKY DERBY GREEN SHEET

BIG BROWN – SPECIAL DELIVERY!

(This is a long publication, so if you just want the Reader's Digest version and my picks go to page 17)



Undefeated, **Potential Superstar**".

If you are a hardcore handicapper like I am, you have probably spent the last few weeks, if not months pouring over pedigrees and statistics, race charts and race videos in a dedicated effort to win bragging rights on the first Saturday in May by picking the winner of the Kentucky Derby, a challenge only slightly less difficult, and certainly a lot more fun than trying to pick the correct power ball numbers.

Well maybe this year we ought to just make a bonfire of our notes and place a hunch bet instead. How does this hunch sound? ***On Saturday May 3, 2008 in Louisville, KY the "Big Brown Machine", guided by a top notch, experienced pilot will return after delivering the goods.*** Now that sentence describes the original "Big Brown Machine", the United Parcel Service; the company that has its aircraft based in Louisville. It could also describe Boundary's best son, the literal and figurative "Big Brown Machine". The Nureyev mare Mien dropped this very special delivery on April 10, 2005, but it's only since last fall that we began to see what the complete package really looks like!

If Big Brown wins this race, you can forget about calling it the Kentucky Derby, Presented by Yum Brands; next year's race will be known as the Kentucky Derby Presented by UPS! In fact, there is a rumor going around that UPS is going to provide a tracking number for those who place a bet on Big Brown, and I've also heard that they have been speaking to trainer Dutrow in an attempt to have him begin referring to Big Brown's groom as "the package handler"!

All joking aside folks, this hunch is really very appropriate because this year UPS is sponsoring an "Off to the Races" sweepstakes in partnership with NASCAR, the Kentucky Derby, and the NTRA! There will even be a special paint scheme on the UPS Toyota Camry for the Talladega Sprint Cup Series race. The hood will carry two logos with the Kentucky Derby sharing the space with the UPS logo. The artwork will also be found on the right rear quarter panel (that's the car's right flank in our terminology).

If Big Brown is to make a successful delivery this Saturday, he will have to overcome a lot more than air turbulence or road hazards. He will have to overcome history! The equine UPS will have only 2 starts as a 3 year-old, and only 3 lifetime races. The last horse to win the Derby with fewer than 5 lifetimes starts was Exterminator in 1918, and going back to 1955, the only winners with fewer than 3 starts as a 3 year-old were Sunny's Halo in 1983 and Street Sense in 2007!

THE ELIMINATION FACTORS FOR 2008

For the last several years I have used "the elimination factors" in my Derby analysis. Recent winners Giacomo, and Barbaro have made these seem about as relevant for picking winners as

whether the horse's stall faced north or south, so last year, despite the fact that he would have been eliminated by using these factors, I picked Street Sense as my top choice.

I still think these factors have some relevancy, so I will include them again this year, however, I will not depend on them exclusively to eliminate horses. (Besides, as you will see, if I used all these factors, every horse in the race would be eliminated this year. I'd have to bet on the lead pony!

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

In the history of the Derby there have been 68 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, Cat Thief, Pulpit, Flower Alley, Brother Derek, and last year Hard Spun and Scat Daddy. Almost as important is the fact that of those 68 starters, only 5 finished 2nd. (Invisible Ink, Tejano Run, Prairie Bayou, Closing Argument, and Hard Spun).

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 5 place horses in 68 tries!

Please note, however, that **the Raise A Native sire line has had just the opposite effect.** An amazing 9 of the last 13 Derby winners are tail-male to Raise A Native, including last year's winner Street Sense! The exceptions are Charismatic, Silver Charm, Giacomo, and Barbaro.

With each year, this factor should become less useful as Raise A Native and his son, Mr. Prospector recede in the pedigrees of Derby contenders.

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

**ADRIANO
ANAK NAKAL
BOB BLACK JACK
COLONEL JOHN
COOL COAL MAN
COWBOY CAL
DENIS OF CORK
MONBA
Z FORTUNE**

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 Congaree, Indian Charlie, Medalia d'Oro, and Flower Alley.

Last year this factor eliminated Curlin and Tiago.

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

BIG BROWN

DENIS OF CORK

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

The only two horses since 1955 to win the Derby with fewer than 3 starts as a 3 year-old were Sunny's Halo in 1983 and Street Sense last year. That's 50 out of 52 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 is another factor that Big Brown fails on. (Sunny's Halo had 7 races as a 2 year-old and Street Sense had 4, so they at least had some bottom. Big Brown raced only once as a 2 year-old.

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

BIG BROWN
COLONEL JOHN
COURT VISION

MONBA
TALE OF EKATI
Z HUMOR

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.

Because training styles change and because of Barbaro, I've expanded this factor from "more than 4 weeks" to "more than 5 weeks". That still did not help Hard Spun last year as he was off 6 weeks. Six weeks is apparently is too long.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby

ADRIANO

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

You could say that during the last 18 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.

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

RECAPTURETHEGLORY

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

In the last 14 years, every Derby winner has finished 4th or better in his last prep race. In 11 out of the last 14 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. You have to back to Iron Leige in 1957 to find a Derby winner who finished worse than 4th in his final prep, and Iron Leige was 5th.

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

ANAK NAKAL
BIG TRUCK *
COOL COAL MAN *
DENIS OF CORK
PYRO *
VISIONAIRE *

*May not have cared for the synthetic track. Ran well on dirt

There has to be a footnote here. Big Truck, Cool Coal Man, Pyro, and Visionaire all had very good races in their next to last prep. Their last prep was the Blue Grass which was run on a synthetic racing surface. Only Visionaire showed any life at all, and he finished 5th. I am in a real quandary here. It could certainly have been the track, but with the exception of Visionaire, these others should have shown more. Street Sense hated the synthetic track, but his effort was outstanding. He bounced from that right into the Derby Winner's Circle.

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, and last year Curlin failed to overcome this handicap.

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

None

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

Every Derby winner in the last 14 years had run in at least one race of 1 1/8 miles or more. This factor eliminated the highly regarded Circular Quay last year.

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

EIGHT BELLES

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.

This angle eliminates the following from this year's Derby

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

Going into 2005, 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 Atswhatimtalknbout, Brancusi, Eye of the Tiger, and Ten Cents a Shine. In 2005 this factor eliminated Giacomo.

Because of Giacomo, I 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. In 2006, this factor eliminated the 3rd and 4th placed horses, Steppenwolf and Jazil.

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

None

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 66 years is still a pretty strong elimination factor.

Lawyer Ron was eliminated on this factor.

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

**4.00 or higher
ANAK NAKAL**

**BOB BLACK JACK – over 4.00 but Beyer 100+
GAYEGO – over 4.00 but Beyer 100+
RECAPTURETHEGLORY – over 4.00 but Beyer 100+**

Please note that Gayego actually has two Beyers in excess of 100, and Bob Black Jack's 109 is the highest in this field, albeit in a sprint.

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.

This angle eliminated the entire field in 2007. No horse had run a Beyer of 105 or higher in a route race as a 3 year-old. The only horse that had run a Beyer of 105 or higher **in any race** was Street Sense, who had run a 108 in the BC Juvenile.

The only horse in 2008 who has run a Beyer of 105 in a route race as a 3 year-old is Big Brown, and he ran a 106 twice.

Pyro ran a 105 in the BC Juvenile.

Bob Black Jack ran a 109 in a sprint

Gayego ran a 103 in the Arkansas Derby

CAUTION: Even if we could use them, the above factors would have eliminated horses that we believe will not WIN. That does not mean that an eliminated horse will not finish 2nd or 3rd.

Although these factors are interesting, we couldn't use them this year. Based on Oscar's elimination factors, every horse, including Big Brown, would have been eliminated on at least one factor.

Since somebody has to win, let's take an "up close and personal" look at who could might deliver on Saturday:



BIG BROWN – Will he Deliver?

Pedigree

In 2006 I made one of the biggest mistakes of my handicapping life by tossing Barbaro from my Derby consideration. Although he was undefeated and had won his preps impressively, I viewed him as a turf horse who was unlikely to win at 1 ¼ miles on dirt against several others that I thought were better bred for the Derby's surface and distance. Well you know the rest of that story!

Now along comes our latest enigma, Boundary's best son, Big Brown. As a sire, Boundary's most accomplished offspring have either been turf horses such as the champion Minardi, or solid sprinters such as Shake the Dice and Pomeroy. Siring a horse who can win at a classic distance on dirt would appear to be a big challenge for this sire of 11 crops.

Turning to his bottom line, Big Brown's dam, Mien is sired by Nureyev and is out of a Lear Fan mare. Turf / turf! (The last time I was surrounded by that much grass was at a frat party in college!)

So although one could argue that the big guy gets a strong dose of stamina from his bottom line, he remains a question mark going 1 ¼ miles on dirt based on the other side of his gene pool. This is similar to my analysis of Barbaro's chances in 2006; however, with Barbaro it was the sire line (Dynaformer) that provided the stamina. The "speedy" bottom line (Carson

City) was what gave me significant reservations about his ability to get a classic distance. (However, his 2nd dam was by King's Bishop, a son of the great stamina influence, Round Table.) Oh oh, guess who shows up in the 4th (sire) and 5th (dam) generation in Big Brown's pedigree? Here's a hint: It's where King Arthur spent his Knights!

Adding to the intrigue is the fact that although the dosage theory is about as passé these days as pay telephone booths, his dosage profile shows the dominant classicity (higher in the middle) that has been viewed as a predictor of a horse's ability to get the Derby distance (4-7-23-2-0).

Ok folks, now here comes the BIG one. Pedigree aside, **no horse has won the Derby with fewer than 5 lifetime starts since Exterminator in 1918.** That was one obstacle that Barbaro did not have to tackle, but both Curlin and the very highly regarded Bellamy Road ran full speed into that brick wall!

Another roadblock for UPS is the fact that since 1955 only Sunny's Halo and Street Sense have won the Derby with fewer than 3 starts as a 3 year-old, and both had significant races at two. Big Brown raced only once as a two year-old.

A final factor that could prevent the thrill of victory is the agony of de feet! This horse has had more trouble in his brief career with quarter cracks than Southwest Airlines has had with fuselage cracks. Had Unbridled's Song not had quarter crack problems, I believe he would have won the 1996 Derby where he had the lead in midstretch before fading to fifth behind Grindstone. The hard track at Churchill does not bode well for horses with foot issues. In my opinion, Unbridled's Song was clearly the best horse, a phrase which sums up my opinion of Big Brown.

Big Brown might be able to overcome one or maybe even two of these negative factors, but three or four? That is really asking a lot for someone running around in short brown pants!

To his credit, however, is the fact that he became the first horse to win from post 12 at Gulfstream going 1 1/8 miles since the track was reconfigured. So he is already accomplished at doing something that had not been done. The only horse to win from post 10 was Barbaro, so this guy is keeping great company. Now he must win from post 20.

Connections

Should Big Brown win the Derby, Richard Dutrow will join the list of trainers in the 2000's who will have won their first Derby. For years the Derby was owned by trainers Lukas, Zito and Baffert the way baseball, hockey and basketball were owned by the New York Yankees, Montreal Canadiens, and Boston Celtics of yesteryear. Then from 2003 – 2006 we had Barclay Tagg, John Servis, John Sherriffs, and Michael Matz combine for a 4 year run of new blood. Carl Nafzger, who had previously won the Derby with Unbridled, returned in 2007 with Street Sense to break up the new kids on the block. Will Dutrow become the fifth trainer since 2003 to win his first Derby?

The son of a trainer and brother of another, it was a safe bet that he probably would not stray too far away from the barn for a career. He has been the leading trainer at Aqueduct and Belmont, but this is already becoming his best year with the Dubai devastation he caused with Diamond Stripes and Benny the Bull. If you don't think that Dutrow considers Big Brown something special consider this: Dutrow could have gone to Dubai to saddle veteran horses in stakes with purses totaling 3 million dollars (he won both). Instead he elected to stay in Florida with a horse making only his third lifetime start. His arrogance aside (he's just a few pounds and one or two words shy of Johnny Campo), this man can train a racehorse!

Kent Desormeaux has won the Derby twice - Real Quiet in 1998 and Fusaichi Pegasus in 2000. He is a Hall Fame Rider, and has won racing titles at all the Southern California tracks as well

as Laurel and Pimlico. All riders give a bad ride on occasion, but I will always remember the second worst ride I ever saw when he moved prematurely on Real Quiet in the 1998 Belmont – a move that cost Real Quiet the Triple Crown when he was nailed on the wire by Victory Gallop. (The worst ride that I ever saw belongs to Frankie Detori aboard Swain in the 1998 BC Classic. Don't let me go there!) Still, Desormeaux is a talented veteran who has ridden Big Brown flawlessly, and I have every reason to expect the same on Saturday.

Analysis

Here's a riddle for you. What do the 2008 Presidential race and the 2008 Kentucky Derby have in common? (No, it's not what you are thinking. The answer is not that you get to see horses' asses running in both!)

The answer is that the biggest concern about the probable favorite is that he lacks experience. You have to go back to Exterminator in 1918 to find the last Derby winner with fewer than five starts. Big Brown will have only three! Despite the fact that he has virtually run the table each time, he will have to face by far his stiffest competition on a track he's never run on, going a distance he has never tried, with a pedigree that does not exactly scream stamina. Yes, I know that description fits just about everyone, except that all of them have had at least five races.

His name may be Big Brown, but he sure looked pretty green coming down the stretch in the Florida Derby. He won because of sheer brilliance and heart in becoming the only horse to win at 1 1/8 miles from post 12 at Gulfstream since the reconfiguration.

There is no question about his brilliance, but being brilliant at 1 1/8 miles and being brilliant at 1 1/4 miles are two vastly different things. Curlin tried to overcome the inexperience hurdle last year and failed. Some say Big Brown is better than Curlin at this stage. In my opinion I would rate them as even, but note that Curlin did not break from post 20.

Make no mistake, Big Brown has some very big questions to answer, but that can be said for every one of these horses. The difference is that based on his experience (as little as that may be), if he answers those questions correctly, he is the only one capable of blowing this field away like Barbaro did two years ago.

The only sure thing that I can say about Big Brown is that due to his inexperience Hillary will not be betting on him this Saturday. (Not that she is really any good at picking winners anyway. I believe the last ticket she cashed was collecting show money on Impeachment in the 2000 Derby, and that horse had experience!)



PYRO – He flamed out on Polytrack. Can they rekindle him on dirt?

Pedigree

Pyro's sire, Blue Grass winner Pulpit, looked like a winner entering the stretch of the 1997 Derby, before fading to finish fourth behind Silver Charm. Pulpit has sired 30 stakes winners,

and most, including Wood winner Tapit, and BC Dirt Mile winner Corinthian showed their best from a mile to 1 1/8 miles. Pulpit would need to be bred to a very stout mare (think Roberto or Princequillo type family) to be able to get a classic distance horse.

Pyro's dam, Wild Vision, by Wild Again placed in a G3 sprint. Wild Again is a very good sire, but his best offspring like Elmhurst and Wild Rush have been somewhat stamina challenged. So there is not much stamina help for Pyro from his bottom line, with the possible exception of the Axe II in his dam's 4th generation.

Based on pedigree, top and bottom, I think Pyro will find it very difficult to win at 1¼ miles. His awesome stretch running ability will flare momentarily before turning to a warm glow in deep stretch. (Hey didn't someone once say that no son of Bold Ruler could win at 1¼ miles?) However, against this competition, on a track where he has already run well, a warm glow may still be hot enough to get him on the board.

Connections

Steve Asmussen has won training titles at Lone Star, Keeneland, Fair Grounds, Churchill Downs, Remington Park, Sam Houston and Retama Park. He's had seven Derby starters. None have won, including Curlin and Zanjero last year. He has, however, won the KY Oaks with Summerly in 2005. You certainly cannot find a much better resume, except when he filled out my application for employment in my picks.

He had to answer to the question, "Were you ever convicted of a crime"? Oops, Dutrow failed that one also! I do have to admit to having a strong personal bias against trainers who were convicted of medication infractions. That's just a personal bias with me being someone who admires trainers like Bill Mott and Carl Nafzger so much. If he gets the right horse, he is more than capable. The job he has done with Curlin is exemplary.

Shaun Bridgmohan won the 1998 Eclipse Award for leading apprentice and tied for leading rider at the 2002 Aqueduct spring meet. He's a solid rider who has patience and good hands. It was not his fault that Pyro never got fired up on a synthetic surface.

Analysis

Geico uses the caveman hook with great success so we will use it here as well. If we use a caveman analogy you would think that I'd be referring to the invention of "fire" what with this colt's name and all. However, you would be wrong. The analogy that I'm using is the invention of "the wheel". Someone needs to re-invent one for this horse, because they certainly fell off during the running of the Blue Grass. How you think this horse will run in the Derby will depend on whether you blame the synthetic track 100% for his poor race. I don't. Maybe it was 75% of the problem but not 100%. Pyro did not lift a hoof the entire race. If he didn't like the track, you would see him trying and struggling. He did neither. I always had the feeling that he would peak prior to the Derby and I think he did that in Louisiana. There is no question that he will improve, and he can even win if he can duplicate his race in the BC Juvenile, Risen Star or even the Louisiana Derby. I just don't think he will do that.



COLONEL JOHN – Shock and Awe at 1 /4 miles?

Pedigree

The expectation was that Tiznow would sire late developing horses capable of getting a distance. Two of his top stakes horses; Tough Tiz's Sis and Bear Now, were certainly much better as their season progressed.

The feeling here is that Colonel John might just be something very special because he is already annihilating his foes with such force that I hear Eoin Hardy is considering a name change from Colonel John to General Sherman! Too bad they don't hold the Derby in Atlanta.

Tiznow set a new track record in winning the 1 ¼ mile Super Derby and is the only two-time winner of the 1 ¼ mile BC Classic. His progeny have an average winning distance of 7.5 furlongs.

On his bottom side, Colonel John is out of a dam sired by Turkoman, a winner of the 1 ¼ mile Widner in 1:58 3/5. His progeny have an AWD of 8.1 furlongs. He is the broodmare sire of Point Given and last year's Derby runner up, Hard Spun.

Want more stamina? Colonel John's third dam, Fia, was a good third in the 1977 1 ½ mile Coaching Club American Oaks!

Believe me, Colonel John will have absolutely no trouble staying 1 ¼ miles. The question with him is how well he will handle dirt, a surface he has never raced on. His dad certainly handled it well, and horses coming off the California synthetics seem to make the transition to dirt without difficulty, so my guess would be that he will have no trouble, and given his pedigree, he might even improve on it. His last work at Churchill sealed the deal for me on that question!

Connections

Eoin Harty came to the U.S. from his native Ireland at 17. He was an assistant trainer for Bob Baffert during the reign of Silver Charm and Real Quiet. In 2000 he became the private trainer for the American operation of Godolphin, and proved that it was a smart hire when he won the 2000 BC Juvenile with Street Cry and trained the exacta of Tempera and Imperial Gesture in the 2001 BC Juvenile Fillies. Colonel John will be his first Derby starter, but he is certainly capable training a Derby winner considering his pedigree, patience, and experience.

Corey Nakatani who has struggled with injuries and personal problems over a long career has won many major races, but is 0 for 13 in the Derby. Colonel John may be his best chance.

Analysis

This son of Tiznow will try to become the most famous colonel in Kentucky since a guy named Sanders when he enters the gate on Saturday, and if he has inherited the heart of his two-time BC Classic winning sire, there will be a lot of others too chicken to face him in the Preakness.

The big question with this horse is how he will run on dirt, a surface that he has never raced on. I think he will improve on dirt. His sire not only loved dirt, he loved Churchill dirt. Colonel John worked a fantastic 57 4/5 (1/62) on April 27, and that told me all I needed to know about this horse's chances on this Saturday.

There are two things that I look for during the last two weeks in selecting a potential Derby winner. (This is assuming that I have already analyzed pedigree, preps, running style, and connections). The first thing I consider is the horse's attitude. Unlike Adriano, this colt has never turned a hair. You want a Colonel you know will stay cool and calm in a war where bombs are exploding and people are screaming. No horse has any experience with a crowd anywhere near what they will face on Derby Day, but you want a horse who remains calm and cool. Colonel John is so calm that he could be a police horse in Iraq!

Second, you want a horse who has shown in his works that he loves the surface and is not only holding his form from a previous prep, but seems to actually be improving. Colonel John passes that test as well. That work on April 27 coupled with an outstanding last prep race should set him up well for the Derby. The big question is will it be good enough if Big Brown is truly a freak? **Do not leave this horse off your trifecta tickets!**



COURT VISION – Justice does not have to be blind to work – sometimes all you need is blinkers

Pedigree

Court Vision is by Gulch, and is out of a Storm Bird mare. Sound familiar? Yep, that's right. That was 1995 Derby winner Thunder Gulch. Like Thunder Gulch, Court Vision won the Remsen, but he finished 3rd in the Fountain of Youth, a race that Thunder Gulch won. Thunder Gulch then went on to win the Florida Derby before finishing 4th in the Blue Grass. His next stop was the Derby where he won at 25-1.

Court Vision went from 3rd in the Fountain of Youth to 3rd in the Wood, and now goes on to Louisville with Beyers less impressive than those of Thunder Gulch as this stage.

Court Vision's bottom line is the most impressive of any Derby starter this year. His dam, Weekend Storm is out of Broodmare of the Year Weekend Surprise, making her a full to Summer Squall and a half to AP Indy. Weekend Storm is a granddaughter of two Derby winners – Northern Dancer and Secretariat.

Court Vision will have no trouble with the distance, and will pass a lot of tired horses. Is he fast enough to win? I think we have a hung jury on that one, but they certainly need to weigh the evidence of what happened when he put the hood on for his first work at Churchill.

Connections

At age 45, Bill Mott became the youngest trainer ever elected into racing's Hall of Fame. He was the leading trainer in 1995 and 1996 mostly due to his expert handling of Cigar who ran Citation to a dead heat by winning 16 races in a row. In addition to Cigar, Mott has trained

champions Paradise Creek, Theatrical, Ajina, and Escena. Not noted as a particularly strong trainer of young horses on dirt, he has started four horses in the Derby and has yet to win.

The retirements of Jerry Bailey, Chris McCarron, Pat Day, Gary Stevens, and Laffit Pincay left a hole in the jockey colony bigger than the one that sunk the Titanic. Garrett Gomez is one of several good riders who have surfaced to try to plug that abyss. That list includes John Velazquez who Gomez replaced as Pletcher's go-to rider when Johnny was injured during the 2006 Keeneland spring meet. In 2007 Gomez broke Bailey's record for number of stakes wins in a single year. I'd have to say that the hole is pretty well plugged after that! Bailey was Mott's go-to rider. Maybe this is an omen.

Analysis

Blind Justice - you know that famous statue of the blindfolded lady holding a set of scales in one hand and a sword in the other? Well if Court Vision wins the Derby I think they need to make a new statue: replace the blindfold with a set of blinkers, and the sword with a riding crop; the scales would still be appropriate. Of course instead of a Court Clerk, you would have to employ the Clerk of the Scales.

Court Vision had always shown some talent, but from a speed perspective he had been moving more like the human Oprah than Oprah the graded stakes winner...until Bill Mott put blinkers on him. The last time Mott caused a wake-up call of this caliber was when he tried Cigar on dirt!

Court Vision has several big factors in his favor:

- He is a winner at Churchill – the one mile G3 Iroquois as a 2 year-old.
- He has had 3 consecutive 1 1/8 mile races with one win and two shows.
- He has never been off the board
- He has a Derby pedigree (a similar nick to Thunder Gulch)
- He had a recent bullet work over the Churchill track. His next work on April 27 was much slower; more of a maintenance work. He still passes the test of having at least one bullet in his last 2 works. Eleven of the past thirteen, including the last six winners fit this qualification.

The only big negative is that he has had only two prep races this year. In past years I would have eliminated him on this factor. However, last year there was another horse with only two preps who was a previous winner at Churchill and had that bullet work prior to the Derby. His name was Street Sense.

Besides, this year we have several horses with only two preps, including the probable favorite, Big Brown, and the probable second choice, Colonel John.

Mark these words well: Court Vision will acquit himself well this Saturday!



GAYEGO – If he joins Arkansas Derby winners Smarty Jones and Grindstone they will rename that race the “Ark” de Triomphe.

Ok first let's quell all the rumors going on about this horse:

- His name is not pronounced Gay Ego
- He is not sired by Rock Hard Ten out of a Freud mare
- He is not owned by the Brokeback Mountain Stable
- He is not trained by Elton John
- He has shown no desire to mount Cowboy Cal.
- He is not taken out the closet to train; he is taken out of his stall.

Pedigree

Gayego is by Gilded Time. Now using the words Gilded Time and stamina in the same sentence is about as incongruous as using the words Bill Clinton and fidelity in the same sentence. Gilded Time, the champion 2 year-old male of 1992 has sired mostly sprinters. The AWD of his progeny is only 6.5 furlongs, however, Elloluv and Mandy's Gold did win at 1 1/16 miles, and Added Gold won the Black-Eyed Susan at 1 1/8 miles. They are clearly the exceptions, most of his offspring were most effective racing one mile or less.

He does not get a lot of stamina from his dam either. The Lost Code mare Devils Lake has produced three winners in addition to Gayego, and none have won beyond a mile. Lost Code's offspring have an AWD of 6.9 furlongs, with his best being Squirtle Squirt; the champion sprinter of 2001.

The only hope for true stamina genes come from the fact that Devils Lake is bred 4X4 to Ribot. That may be why Gayego can win at 1 1/8 miles, but that added 1/8 may be just too steep a climb up Brokeback Mountain.

Connections

Paulo Lobo is no stranger to good horses. He trained Farda Amiga, the champion 3 year-old filly of 2002. He also trained the very good multiple graded stakes winner Pico Central. This man is an excellent horseman who is capable of winning this race with the right horse. I'm just not sure that Gayego fits that definition.

One Derby winner who had no distance questions was Giacomo, the Derby winner of 2005. He looked like a plodder who might pass some tired horses to complete the bottom of a trifecta, or more likely a superfecta. Thanks to a brilliant ride by Mike Smith, that "plodder" at 50-1 passed everyone, including Afleet Alex, who I am still convinced was a much better horse. Mike also was the rider aboard Holy Bull as well as the ill-fated Prairie Bayou. He is an excellent rider, and if there is a nicer jockey out there I haven't heard of him.

Analysis

Gayego has good tactical speed which will help him establish position. He will need to call on every bit of it as he breaks from way outside. His preferred running style is to stalk and

pounce from the outside as he did in the Arkansas Derby and San Pedro. This time, however, it will not be Tres Borrachos (Arkansas Derby) or Sea of Pleasure (San Pedro) that he will be stalking; it will be Big Brown. That's a BIG difference.

He won the Arkansas Derby with an impressive move, however, the last 3 furlongs in 38 3/5 seconds was far from what you want to see in a horse's last prep. If he runs the Derby's last 3 furlongs in that time he will not hit the board.



TALE OF EKATI – Is this diamond cut out to win?

Pedigree

Tale of Ekati is by Tale of the Cat, whose best son Lion Heart finished 2nd to Smarty Jones in the 2004 Derby. Despite that, Tale of the Cat has been more a source of speed than stamina. His offspring would have to come from very stamina-oriented mares in order to go beyond 1 1/8 miles.

Tale of Ekati is out of the Sunday Silence mare, Silence Beauty, a half-sister to champion older female Sky Beauty, whose wins included the 10 furlong Coaching Club American Oaks and Alabama Stakes. Sunday Silence of course won the Derby in his epic battle with Easy Goer. The class is definitely there and the stamina may be as well. However, he inbred 3x4 to Mr. Prospector. That does not exactly scream 1 1/4 miles.

Connections

Barclay Tagg is a college graduate with a degree in animal science, but got his Masters when he won the 2003 Derby with Funny Cide, the first NY bred and the first gelding since 1929 to win that race. In 2006 he trained Showing Up to a very respectable sixth place finish behind his stalemate Barbaro. Showing Up was a very inexperienced horse at the time and Tagg did an excellent job with him. If you recall, Showing Up was right in the hunt until he tired with about a 16th of a mile to go.

Eibar Coa has won riding titles at Calder, Gulfstream, Belmont, Aqueduct and Monmouth. Born in Venezuela, he arrived in the U.S. in 1993 and has enjoyed a successful career. He finished seventh in the nation last year in money earned and was the rider of Grade 1 winners Lear's Princess and Dream Rush. He has had only one Derby mount. He finished fifth aboard Eye of the Tiger in 2003. He is certainly a capable rider; however, Tagg had to be a little disappointed when Prado opted to ride Adriano.

Analysis

Tale of Ekati won the Wood. Well, I'm not sure that's exactly the right way to describe it. You could say he finished first in the Wood, but I think a more accurate statement would be "War Pass lost the Wood." When War Pass was softened up by a rabbit and ran out of gas (possibly exacerbated by an injury), Tale of Ekati happened to be in the right spot. The exhausted (and/or injured) War Pass was tenacious and courageous in defeat, and it took Tale of Ekati the length of the stretch to finally pass him. The last three furlongs were very slow, obviously due to a suicide pace in the early running, but I would still have liked a faster finish in order to consider this horse as a potential Derby winner. Also consider that his Beyers this year are

lower than those that he achieved in the Sanford as a 2 year-old. Tagg has stated that this horse "is not Funny Cide". Translation: "He's earned his ticket to the Derby, but I really don't expect him to win."



MONBA

Pedigree

Monba is a son of Maria's Mon, sire of the 2001 Derby winner Monarchos and 33 other stakes winners. His dam, Hamba is by Easy Goer and is a half-sister to Alcidiades winner Silent Account. So there is some potential for stamina there.

Perhaps the best thing about Monba's pedigree, and what gives me some hope that he can get 1 ¼ miles is his 4X4 inbreeding to Buckpasser. He is also inbred five times in his seventh generation to the great mare La Troienne. However, that may be a little far back to give him the stamina that he needs. I mean I am inbred to a monkey if you trace my pedigree back far enough, yet I've always had difficulty climbing trees! (I do have to admit to having a fondness for bananas though.)

Connections

Todd Pletcher has won just about everything there is to win except for the Boston Marathon and the Kentucky Derby. This year he just may have someone capable of winning both in Monba. Pletcher learned his trade from D. Wayne Lukas during the years that Lukas was on top of the horse heap, and he learned his trade so well, that pupil quickly passed teacher. In 2005 his horses won over \$20.8 million and were the reason he won the Eclipse Award for the second year in a row. (He also won in 2006.) He broke his Breeder's Cup drought with a big drink in 2004 when he won the Sprint with Speightstown and the Distaff with Ashado. His best Derby finishes have been places with Bluegrass Cat and Invisible Ink.

Ramon Dominguez won the Breeder's Cup Turf with Better Talk Now but has never won a Derby. His best finish was with Bluegrass Cat who finished 2nd to Barbaro in 2006. No disgrace there!

Analysis

Monba has won on both synthetic and dirt surfaces, however, with the exception of his maiden win, he has never blown his field away the way that Big Brown and Colonel John have. In fact, except for two necks, Monba would be just a maiden winner. Those two neck wins tell you two different things about this horse, depending on how much you like him. If you don't like him, they tell you that was a lucky winner who maybe just did enough to beat mediocre fields. If

you like him, they tell you that he is a street fighter who is tenacious and will do whatever is necessary to win. The horse that he beat by a neck in an allowance race at Churchill Downs (Macho Again) won the Derby Trial impressively last Saturday defeating some very nice horses, so maybe those who have always liked Monba will like him a little more. Personally, I don't think he is fast enough or good enough to win the Derby, but he can certainly get the distance. (Hey that sounds like what I said about Giacomo in 2005!)



COOL COAL MAN

Pedigree

Cool Coal Man is from the first crop of Mineshaft, the winner of the Grade 1 Pimlico Special, Suburban, Woodward, and Jockey Club Gold Cup. Mineshaft did his best running as an older horse, as you might anticipate from a son of A.P. Indy. Cool Coal Man is his first graded stakes winner, and the likelihood is that like fine wine and antique autos, he will become more valuable with age.

His dam, Coral Sea is a daughter of champion Rubiano, who won the Carter and Vosburgh. Rubiano's offspring have an average winning distance of 7 furlongs with his best runners prior to Cool Coal Man being the speedy Burning Roma and Too Much Bling. Rubiano's daughters seem to be producing speed horses like War Front.

Coral Sea is out of a Northern Dancer mare. Northern Dancer is capable of imparting stamina into a pedigree, but is not especially noted for this as is Princequillo, Round Table, Roberto and Graustark for example.

While I expect that Cool Coal Man will improve later this year and especially next year to the point where I think he will be able to win at 1 ¼ miles, he is a question mark for this distance at this point in his career.

Connections

If I have to spend a lot of time here telling you about Nick Zito and the Derby, you have no business reading a Green Sheet; you should be out on the green trying to sink a six foot putt! Suffice it to say that Nick has saddled Derby winners Strike The Gold and Go For Gin. He trained the 2005 favorite Bellamy Road to a seventh place finish. Maybe he only wins the Derby with horses who have a three-word name. (Oops, what happened to The Cliff's Edge?) Well, Cool Coal Man is three words! Make of that what you will. (The Cliff's Edge did have an excuse as he was running on an off track and lost two shoes.) I don't know if I can compare "Gold" to "Coal" except to say that if you put enough pressure on coal it will turn into a diamond! Wait a minute. Isn't Tale of Ekati the horse named after a diamond mine? Certainly

there will be a lot of pressure on Cool Coal Man going from post one. He has the potential to be a gem if he can handle this pressure.

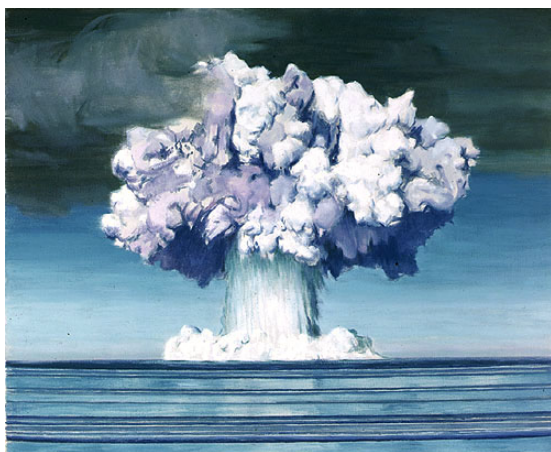
Julian Leparoux, the French bred, former go-to rider for Patrick Biancone has the mount on CCM. He won the Apprentice award in 2006. (No not Donald Trump's Apprentice– you need to think Eclipse!) He won his first BC race, the new Juvenile Turf last fall with Nownownow, and finished a credible fifth in last year's Derby aboard Sedgefield. I think he is actually a better rider on the turf (think "Samyn on the green"), but he is a capable rider on dirt with the right horse.

Analysis

A reporter once asked Jerry Bailey what his secret was to winning all those races. "Fast horses", replied Bailey. Like so many others horses in this year's Derby I'm not sure that Cool Coal Man qualifies on that requirement (with the exception of his Fountain of Youth). He has one very good race and one very bad race at Churchill. Mixed signals for sure, and post one is no help. He will have to use some valuable gas or get shuffled back.

His Blue Grass was an enigma. Was it the track? At least he seemed to try a little. He ran strongly for the first half before tiring. (Compare that to Pyro who never seemed to run at all.)

In the final analysis, I just don't think he can win, but considering his seasoning, and his trainer, he could hit the board at a nice price. I really, really like the fact he has had 3 races as a 3 year-old, and all were at 1 /18 miles. Of the 19 others only Court Vision has done this. He'd be on my short list if he had drawn a better post.



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

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.

There are no horses this year that I feel can hit the board with payouts anywhere near those examples listed above. Several will be in the 20-1 to 30-1 range. However, the two I have chosen for my "H" Bombs will probably be at least 20-1 and would still make a nice trifecta:



SMOOTH AIR – May not be just a Fly By Night

Pedigree

Distorted Humor and Our Emblem appeared to be stamina challenged horses and were relatively young sires when they sired Derby and Preakness winners Funny Cide and War Emblem respectively. Smooth Air's sire, Smooth Jazz reminds me of them. So do I make the same mistake and toss Smooth Air as a horse who cannot possibly get 1 ¼ miles because of his sire? I don't think so. Not this time.

Smooth Air is from the first crop of Smooth Jazz. Smooth Jazz is a son of sprint specialist Storm Boot. Now Storm Boot got tired walking from one side of his stall to the other, and his progeny have an AWD is 6.3 furlongs, so how would he be capable of siring a Derby winner? Take a look at his 4th generation. Who do you see there in addition to Raise A Native? Ever heard of Northern Dancer, Secretariat, Round Table, Prince John, Graustark, and Sea-Bird? Folks, if I had relatives like that I would enter next year's Boston Marathon! If Equus shook up the gene pool and

bypassed the speed in the first three generations to reach back to the 4th for Smooth Air's paternal DNA, there will be more than a few surprised people on Saturday.

Smooth Air's dam, Air France, by French Deputy was strictly a sprinter. Her first foal, Super Phoebe (Smooth Air is her second) won nine races; all at distances of less than a mile. Her dam, Twin Propeller, by Known Fact was also a sprinter and all three of her foals were sprinters as well.

However, French Deputy did produce the Japanese champion Kurofune who was a winner up to 1 5/16 miles out of a mare who was not exactly a source of stamina, so there is certainly some hope here. Not to be redundant, but sometimes Equus mixes up the gene pool, and your wallet could drown in what you were so certain was shallow gene pool water.

Also please note that Smooth Jazz is an incredible sire of off-track runners. Granted the sample is very small, but he gets 38% winners on an off-track. Two of Smooth Air's three wins have been on off-tracks. Move him up 5 lengths if the track is sloppy.

Caution: Smooth Air ran a fever and lost a few days of training. This is not a good sign.

Connections

Bennie Stutts Jr. is not exactly a household word. He has been a trainer since 1968, but has never had a horse anywhere near the equal of Smooth Air. He's an old style; patient, hands-on trainer who believes in using stamina-building works like many of the best trainers from yesteryear. Don't underestimate his ability.

Jockey Manoel Cruze is another name you've probably never heard of unless you play the Florida tracks often. He grew up in Brazil riding jumpers, came to the U. S. in 2000, and has finished among Gulfstream's top 15 jockeys since 2003. He was the rider on Storm in May when he won the Sunshine Millions Dash, and he rode Splended Blended to victory in the Shirley Jones. He was Calder's leading rider in 2006. This is his first Derby mount.

Analysis

If it hadn't been for his fever last weekend, Smooth Air would be my Bud Longshot. I can't get past the thought that if Big Brown had stayed in his stall for the Florida Derby, this guy would have won that race by more than 7 lengths. Granted it may not have been the best of his crop that he faced that day, but it was still a visually impressive race. Even though he seems 100% now, he did lose valuable training time and you don't do that and still win this race unless you are very special. If I rains he moves way up.



VISIONAIRE

Pedigree

Visionaire is a son of Grand Slam, who has sired 43 stakes winners. However, with the exception of Café Olympus who won the 2004 Japan Dirt Derby, none have really excelled at a distance. Without question, that colt's second dam by Roberto was responsible for that dose of stamina.

Visionaire's dam, Scarlet Tango is by the fast miler French Deputy, and his second dam, Silver Tango was a multiple stakes winning sprinter.

This is a pedigree that does not exactly scream stamina, however, if you go back far enough he does have four crosses to La Troienne. (Ah there's my monkey relative again who is responsible for my fondness for bananas!)

Similar to Smooth Jazz, Visionaire is out of a French Deputy mare whose dam was somewhat stamina-challenged. On the other hand, French Deputy has been known to sire horses out of sprinter type mares who are capable of winning at route distances. Please see Smooth Air above an analysis of French Deputy as a broodmare sire.

Connections

If you don't think that Michael Matz can train a Derby winner I just have one word for you: **BARBARO**. Now Visionaire couldn't carry Barbaro's muck rake, but with a very few exceptions, can you name another horse who could? Matz, the former 6 times U.S. Equestrian Show Jumping Champion made a very smooth transition to training where he was mostly

competitive in the mid Atlantic region until his big horse came along. He doesn't compare this horse to Barbaro, but that doesn't mean that he is a completely empty stall either.

Jose Lezcano is even less well known than Matz was before Barbaro. Born in Panama, he has ridden at Gulfstream, Monmouth, and the Meadowlands. He finished in the top 10 at both NJ tracks. His biggest wins were on R Lady Joy in the Delaware Oaks and Visionaire in the Gotham. Lezcano first rode in the Derby in 2006 where he finished 8th behind Barbaro on Deputy Glitters.

Analysis

Despite being trained by Barbaro's trainer, the fact that he finished up the track in the Blue Grass and will be ridden by a virtual unknown jockey should make him a huge overlay. I'm not saying that he will win, but consider these facts:

- He has hit the board in all 5 of his dirt races
- Breaking from post 12, he went 10 wide and although he finished 5th, he was the only horse that showed a closing kick on the synthetic track in the Blue Grass.

START HERE FOR THE READER'S DIGEST VERSION OF OSCAR'S GREEN SHEET

OSCAR'S PICKS

For a lot of people, and I include myself, trying to pick this year's Derby winner is a lot like voting in the presidential primaries. I keep switching back and forth in my choice, and like so many voters, I may not actually make up my mind who to vote for (oops, I mean bet on) until the last minute.

There are other similarities to this year's presidential race as well. Consider the following:

- When they asked Big Brown why he ducked in so badly during his stretch run in the Florida Derby, he said that he was running for cover from sniper fire.
- Tale of Ekati said that he was out to end the War (Pass) by running in the Wood Memorial.
- Colonel John said that he knew his surge would work to overpower Bob Black Jack in the Santa Anita Derby.
- Eight Belles teared up when someone asked her how she felt about having a hard campaign and running against the boys.
- Anak Nakal swore that he never had been a Muslim
- Z Fortune stated that his wealth was not result of contributions by lobbyists.
- Big Brown complained, "Why do they always have to play the color card? I'm not 100% Brown, my sire and dam are bays and my granddam was a chestnut!"
- Recapturetheglory said he was happy to be starting from very far to the right, because he really believes that conservative values are necessary in order to recapture our glory days.
- The filly Eight Belles, who has more experience than everyone else, has unequivocally and consistently stated that the favorite, Big Brown lacks the required experience to

make a suitable Derby Winner. *"If the stable phone rings at 3:00 a.m. who do you want to answer it?"* she snorted.

- Monba stated that just because he is all gray that doesn't mean he wouldn't make a good leader and can win.
- Big Truck denounced his preacher for saying that the government is intentionally raising the cost of gasoline so that people will continue to discriminate against any "Big Trucks", calling them road hogs and gas guzzling monsters.

Ok, I guess by now you got my point, which is that most of us would love to hit the "none of the above" lever, but we have to pick someone. I've been playing the Derby since I was 7 years old (I nailed a \$50 winner then), and this is absolutely the most difficult Derby that I have ever tried to handicap. Usually I can single one horse who is outstanding like Street Sense, Barbaro, Afleet Alex, Empire Maker, or Fusaichi Pegasus. They might not always win, but they are good horses to key, and almost always hit the board. (Yes I know Point Given is an example of one who didn't, but at least I felt confident when I picked him.)

On paper it's hard to beat Big Brown and Colonel John. If everyone runs their best race and there are no traffic problems, these two are clearly heads and withers above the others. But Colonel John has never been hit in the face with dirt and never shipped outside of Southern California, and Big Brown is big on performance but little on experience. He might be a step better than Colonel John, but the post position draw negated any advantage I felt he had.

Without question they will go off as the first and second choices. I expect Big Brown to be about 3-1 and Colonel John should be in the 7-2 range; huge underlays considering their unanswered questions. Pyro will probably be the only other horse with single digit odds. He too has a huge question mark. He was so awful in the Blue Grass that I just can't believe that it was due entirely to the racing surface.

Well you paid for my advice, so I feel that I have to give you something for your money. What did you say? You didn't pay anything? Ok, then let's just say that I'm about to give you your money's worth!

I've narrowed it down to these horses:

1. **COLONEL JOHN**- always calm, has the right running style, a great post, a superior last work, and seems about to peak, but slow Beyers are a concern and though bred for it, he's never run on dirt.
2. **BIG BROWN** – may be a freak, but no horse has won the Derby off only 3 starts since 1915, and only one horse has ever won from post 20. His work Thursday indicates that he is sitting on a big one, but he is really bucking history.
3. **COURT VISION** – similar nick to Thunder Gulch, but much slower, woke up first time with blinkers. Certain to pass tiring horses. If he passes enough of them, he hits the board. I like that he has had 3 races at 1 1/8 and he's never been worse than 3rd.
4. **PYRO** – Can't be as bad as his last, capable of explosive moves, but may have peaked too early. Needs a clean trip, fast pace, and some racing luck, but a repeat of his Risen Star would win this.
5. **VISIONAIRE** –Distance questions but drew good post. Mud would help. I admire Matz greatly. After my top 4, it's a crap shoot, so why not root for the good guy?
6. **GAYEGO** – joins Pyro and Big Brown as the only horses with two 100+ Beyers. Impressive Ark Derby winner, but a Gilded Time going 1 ¼ miles? Dam is 4X4 to Ribot! Post hurt his chances. He will be sandwiched between Bob Black Jack to his inside and Big Brown to his outside. A speed duel with those two will cook him.

- 7. TALE OF EKATI** – walked home in Wood after chasing War Pass through suicide fractions. Will use good tactical speed and save ground from post 2 to stalk. Distance a question, but his maternal aunt won CCA at 10f so he's not without hope.
- 8. SMOOTH AIR** – Caught Derby fever literally last week and that is a concern. If there was no Big Brown he wins the Florida Derby by 7. Mud moves him up 5 lengths. Bad sign that he missed his last work, but Stutts has been training him like he was Rocky Balboa so he should still be fit. Yo Adrienne!

DENIS OF CORK – 7 week vacation after Southwest left him dull for Illinois Derby and nearly too short on graded earnings. Ignorant owners thought they knew more than the trainer. (So why are they paying him?) Cork is one race short but still has the breeding to finish in the money. Borel knows what it takes. Love the way Denis has looked and worked at Churchill and he has won there. May use Derby to spring to possible Preakness win.

Z FORTUNE – raced wide from outside posts in last 3, now draws great post. He was right there with Pyro, Gayego, and Visonaire, so if you like those three, this guy is logical. Dull works are a concern, but he's never been brilliant in the morning. (Reminds me of some people I know!)

I have to be honest; this is a bad betting race, and probably the best bet is no bet. If this race were the 4th at Aqueduct on a Thursday and not the Derby would you still want to play it?

If you want to play trifectas, you have to key the top two and hope that somebody splits them (possible) or even better, beats them (somewhat doubtful).

Are you willing to key a horse in a field of 20, at a distance he has never run, at odds of 3-1 or lower from the outside post who:

- Would be the first horse since 1915 to win this race with only 3 lifetime starts
- Would be only the third horse in 53 years to win this race with only 2 starts as a 3 year-old.
- Has not raced in 5 weeks (yeah I know Barbaro did it, but that was BARBARO!)
- Has a history of quarter cracks

And key him in the trifecta with another horse at 4-1 who

- Has never run a race on a dirt track
- Has never run outside of California
- Has never run a Beyer higher than 95

Even if you are willing to take that chance, you still have to find the horses to key them with. There are really very few that you can entirely eliminate, including the filly.

I would suggest keying them with horses 3-8 above. A \$1 part tri box with those will cost you \$36.

You will notice that I've listed three horses as #8. I can't make that call until nearly post time. I like Smooth Air if it's sloppy or muddy. If it's a fast track, include whichever looks better in the paddock and post parade between Denis of Cork and Z Fortune.

If you want to try exactas, box the first 4, putting more money on the exactas with Big Brown and Colonel John on top.

If you really want to try for a big payday, key each separately with the other 7 in trifectas. What you are hoping for is that one, but not necessarily both will hit the board along with 2 of the remaining 6. The cost of a \$1 key is \$126. If you hit, you will get at least 10 times that as long as only one finishes in the money. Hey, wouldn't you be prepared to lose \$126 if you went to the casino? The problem is I'm just not confident that 2 of the others will finish in the top 3.

Personally for me, I think I'm back to my UPS hunch trifecta box of:



BIG BROWN

–

SMOOTH AIR

–

BIG TRUCK



A \$1 UPS trifecta box costs only \$6 and if I didn't bet it and it came in, I'd go postal and they would have to Fed-Ex my pieces back home!

OSCAR'S GRATUITOUS SEXY PHOTO

(Parents, please ask your children to leave the room.)

In today's world you can't publish anything without having it contain a controversial or inappropriate photo of a young female in various stages of undress. That's marketing 101 folks –sex sells! Vanity Fair is famous for doing this and has continued that tradition with its latest issue featuring that now infamous photo of 15 year-old Miley Cyrus.

Well the Green Sheet will not be upstaged!

Consequently I am publishing my own photo of a partially dressed young female (she can be seen below wearing only a small halter). You think Miley is underage? This girl is so young that she doesn't even have a name yet! (Well let's see. We have to top Hanna Montana so my suggestion is **Dinah Carolina**.)

Who is she? She is the OBS's top selling two year-old filly by Silver Deputy who was recently hammered down (that's an auction term, guys, not a sex term) for \$520,000.

Besides their stages of undress, she has another similarity to Miley. Miley was bred to be a singer. Well so is this young lady. She is a half sister to Japanese stakes winner Surplus Singer!

Of course there are also some differences. For one, I think she is a lot better looking than Miley and more athletic as well. You don't believe me? Here is a quote from West Point President Terry Finley, her new owner: *"She has a great presence about her, and we loved the way she carried herself all week."* When was the last time you heard someone say that about Miley?

Another big difference is that Miley did not begin earning any money until she was nine years old. Nine years old? That's only one year younger than Evening Attire! This two year-old girl will be earning money by this fall.

So without any further hesitation here is the photo. Vanity Fair eat your heart out!



Oh, and one more thing. Miley, if you're reading this, forget about using that Annie Leibovitz woman as your photographer. She's just a rank amateur. The next time you want to pose for a photo shoot, get a real professional – call Barbara Livingston!