



# SARATOGA RACE MEET BETTING GUIDE

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# SARATOGA STAKES SCHEDULE

Date	Race	Grade	Purse	Restrictions	Surface	Distance
Thursday, Jul 11	Quick Call	III	\$100,000	3YO	Turf	5 1/2
Thursday, Jul 11	Schuylerville	III	\$150,000	F2YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Friday, Jul 12	Forbidden Apple	III	\$150,000	4&UP	Turf	1 Mile
Saturday, Jul 13	Diana	I	\$500,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	1 1/8
Saturday, Jul 13	Sanford	III	\$150,000	2YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Sunday, Jul 14	Coronation Cup		\$100,000	F3YO	Turf	5 1/2
Wednesday, Jul 17	Rick Violette (NYB)		\$100,000	2YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Thursday, Jul 18	Stillwater (NYB)		\$100,000	F2YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Friday, Jul 19	Lake George	III	\$150,000	F3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Saturday, Jul 20	Caress		\$200,000	F&M 4&UP	Turf	5 1/2
Saturday, Jul 20	Coaching Club American Oaks	I	\$500,000	F3YO	Dirt	1 1/8
Sunday, Jul 21	Shuvee	III	\$200,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Wednesday, Jul 24	Honorable Miss Handicap	II	\$200,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Wednesday, Jul 24	NYSS Cab Calloway Division (R)		\$150,000	3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Thursday, Jul 25	A. P. Smithwick Memorial (Steeplechase)	I	\$150,000	4&UP	Turf	2 1/16
Thursday, Jul 25	John Morrissey (NYB)		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Friday, Jul 26	Curlin (R)		\$100,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/8
Saturday, Jul 27	Alfred G. Vanderbilt Handicap	I	\$350,000	3&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Jul 27	Bowling Green	II	\$250,000	4&UP	Turf	1 3/8
Saturday, Jul 27	Jim Dandy presented by NYRA Bets	II	\$600,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/8
Sunday, Jul 28	Amsterdam	II	\$200,000	3YO	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Wednesday, Jul 31	NYSS Statue of Liberty Division (R)		\$150,000	F3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Wednesday, Jul 31	Shine Again (R)		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Thursday, Aug 01	Birdstone		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	1 3/4
Friday, Aug 02	Alydar (R)		\$100,000	4&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Friday, Aug 02	National Museum of Racing Hall Of Fame	II	\$200,000	3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Friday, Aug 02	Saratoga Oaks		\$750,000	F3YO	Turf	1 3/16
Saturday, Aug 03	Fasig-Tipton De La Rose (R)		\$100,000	F&M 4&UP	Turf	1 Mile
Saturday, Aug 03	Fasig-Tipton Lure (R)		\$100,000	4&UP	Turf	1 1/16
Saturday, Aug 03	Longines Test	I	\$500,000	F3YO	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 03	Troy	III	\$200,000	3&UP	Turf	5 1/2
Saturday, Aug 03	Whitney (BC)	I	\$1,000,000	3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Sunday, Aug 04	Adirondack	II	\$200,000	F2YO	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Sunday, Aug 04	Fasig-Tipton Waya	III	\$200,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	1 1/2
Sunday, Aug 04	Saratoga Derby		\$1,000,000	3YO	Turf	1 3/16
Wednesday, Aug 07	Evan Shipman (NYB)		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Wednesday, Aug 07	Mahony		\$100,000	3YO	Turf	5 1/2
Thursday, Aug 08	Saratoga Dew (NYB)		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Friday, Aug 09	Tale of the Cat (R)		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 10	Fourstardave Handicap (BC)	I	\$500,000	3&UP	Turf	1 Mile
Saturday, Aug 10	Saratoga Special Presented by Miller Lite	II	\$200,000	2YO	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Sunday, Aug 11	Galway		\$100,000	F3YO	Turf	5 1/2
Wednesday, Aug 14	Bolton Landing		\$100,000	F2YO	Turf	5 1/2
Thursday, Aug 15	Union Avenue (NYB)		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Friday, Aug 16	Skidmore		\$100,000	2YO	Turf	5 1/2
Saturday, Aug 17	Alabama presented by NYRA Bets	I	\$600,000	F3YO	Dirt	1 1/4
Saturday, Aug 17	Lake Placid	II	\$200,000	F3YO	Turf	1 1/16
Saturday, Aug 17	Smart N Fancy		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	5 1/2 Furlongs
Sunday, Aug 18	Summer Colony (R)		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Wednesday, Aug 21	John's Call (R)		\$100,000	3&UP	Turf	1 5/8
Thursday, Aug 22	New York Turf Writers Cup Steeplechase	I	\$150,000	4&UP	Turf	2 3/8
Thursday, Aug 22	Riskaverse (R)		\$100,000	F3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Friday, Aug 23	Albany (NYB)		\$250,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/8
Friday, Aug 23	Fleet Indian (NYB)		\$200,000	F3YO	Dirt	1 1/8
Friday, Aug 23	Funny Cide (NYB)		\$200,000	2YO	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Friday, Aug 23	Seeking the Ante (NYB)		\$200,000	F2YO	Dirt	6 1/2 Furlongs
Friday, Aug 23	West Point presented by Trustco Bank		\$150,000	3&UP	Turf	1 1/16
Friday, Aug 23	Yaddo (NYB)		\$150,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	1 1/16
Saturday, Aug 24	Forego presented by Encore Boston Harbor	I	\$600,000	3&UP	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 24	H. Allen Jerkens Memorial	I	\$500,000	3YO	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 24	Ketel One Ballerina (BC)	I	\$500,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 24	Personal Ensign Presented by Lia Infiniti (BC)	I	\$700,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Saturday, Aug 24	Runhappy Travers	I	\$1,250,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/4
Saturday, Aug 24	Sword Dancer (BC)	I	\$850,000	4&UP	Turf	1 1/2
Saturday, Aug 24	Woodford Reserve Ballston Spa	II	\$400,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	1 1/16
Sunday, Aug 25	Better Talk Now (R)		\$100,000	3YO	Turf	1 Mile
Wednesday, Aug 28	With Anticipation	III	\$150,000	2YO	Turf	1 1/16
Thursday, Aug 29	P. G. Johnson		\$100,000	F2YO	Turf	1 1/16
Friday, Aug 30	Lucky Coin (R)		\$100,000	4&UP	Turf	5 1/2 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 31	Glens Falls	II	\$250,000	F&M 3&UP	Turf	1 3/8
Saturday, Aug 31	Prioress	II	\$250,000	F3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Aug 31	Saranac	III	\$200,000	3YO	Turf	1 1/16
Saturday, Aug 31	Woodward presented by NYRA Bets	I	\$750,000	3&UP	Dirt	1 1/8
Sunday, Sep 01	Spinaway	I	\$350,000	F2YO	Dirt	7 Furlongs
Monday, Sep 02	Bernard Baruch Handicap	II	\$250,000	3&UP	Turf	1 1/16
Monday, Sep 02	Runhappy Hopeful	I	\$350,000	2YO	Dirt	7 Furlongs

# AT A GLANCE

A look at the previous full Saratoga meet: July 20, 2018 through September 3, 2018

**AVG. WINNING ODDS:** 4.93 - 1

**FAVORITE WIN%:** 31% **FAVORITE ITM%:** 71%

EXOTICS	PAYOFF
Quinella	27.06
Exacta	80.82
Daily Double	90.77
Trifecta	494.73
Pick 3	645.09
Superfecta	3,625.51
Pick 6	32,070.17
Pick 4	4,652.68
Pick 5	33,218.68
Grand Slam	184.97



## TRACK BIAS MEET (07/20 - 09/03)

Distance	# Race	% Wire	Best Style	Best Posts
6.5fDirt	39	28%	E	Middle
7.0fDirt	54	37%	E	Middle
1 1/8mDirt	57	33%	E	Inside
Turf Sprint	49	29%	E	Middle
InTf Routes	72	26%	E/P	Rail/Ins
Turf Routes	32	6%	S	Middle

## TRACK BIAS WEEK (08/28 - 09/03)

Distance	# Race	% Wire	Best Style	Best Posts
6.5fDirt	9	11%	S	Rail/Ins
7.0fDirt	11	45%	E	Middle
1 1/8mDirt	4	0%	S	Rail/Ins
Turf Sprint	8	50%	E	Mid/Out
InTf Routes	14	29%	E/P	Rail/Ins
Turf Routes	7	0%	S	Ins/Mid

## WHO'S HOT, WHO'S NOT

HOT TRAINERS	Starts	Wins	Place	Show	Avg. Odds	Winning Favorites	'17-'18 Win %
McLaughlin Kiaran P.	10	4	0	0	5.74	2	18%
Baffert Bob	5	3	0	0	3.37	2	28%
Reynolds Patrick L.	5	3	0	0	8.88	0	15%
Hendriks Richard J.	2	2	0	0	5.85	0	22%
Walsh Brendan P.	4	2	0	1	9.14	1	17%
Quartarolo Anthony T.	5	2	0	0	51.49	1	10%
Dilger Michael	6	2	2	0	13.24	1	14%

HOT JOCKEYS	Starts	Wins	Place	Show	Avg. Odds	Winning Favorites	'17-'18 Win %
Cohen David	28	7	2	4	17.09	2	13%

COLD TRAINERS	Starts	Wins	Place	Show	Avg. Odds	Beaten Favorites	'17-'18 Win %
Lukas D. Wayne	15	0	1	1	16.69	0	9%
Zito Nicholas P.	10	0	0	1	30.85	0	8%

COLD JOCKEYS	Starts	Wins	Place	Show	Avg. Odds	Beaten Favorites	'17-'18 Win %
Alvarado Junior	26	0	0	3	15.91	0	17%
Cancel Eric	18	0	1	0	28.23	1	9%

# SARATOGA STAKES HIGHLIGHTS

by Vance Hanson

Bending to the ostensible desires of horsemen and bettors, as well as the need to free up Belmont Park for its upcoming refurbishment, it was announced earlier this year that Saratoga would begin its 2019 meet on July 11, the earliest known opening in track history.

While the number of racing days – 40 -- remains unchanged from recent years, Saratoga is no longer only “The August Place to be,” but most of July as well. The earlier start is a result of the elimination of Mondays from the schedule, Saratoga being the last holdout from an era when most major tracks raced six days a week.

Although a disappointment perhaps to some weekend trippers to ‘The Spa,’ Saratoga’s Monday cards had arguably been the least aesthetically appealing from a quality standpoint. Besides easing pressure on the racing office to create six programs a week in a time of fierce competition for a dwindling pool of horses, bettors nationwide which have made their view clear that Saratoga is their favorite meet also now have an extra day per week to re-energize and recharge.

Known throughout its history as a proving ground for two-year-olds, Saratoga’s calendar expansion from a four-week meet a generation ago to eight weeks has not come without some apparent drawbacks. Cases in point are the decline in relative stature of its two earliest scheduled juvenile features, the Schuylerville (G3) and Sanford (G3).

Whereas Saratoga’s six graded stakes for two-year-olds on dirt were previously compressed into a short window in August, the stretching of the calendar now mean that the Schuylerville, for fillies, and the Sanford are run in mid-July. Judging from the recent results of both races, neither are reliable indicators of future champions or Grade 1 talent as they once were.

The Schuylerville, for example, was won by the likes of Sacahuista, Meadow Star, Turnback the Alarm, Golden Attraction, Countess Diana, and Ashado in the quarter-century before Saratoga gradually expanded to a 40-day meet in 2010. All were champions or Grade 1 winners over a route at age 3.

Since 2010, though, no winner of the Schuylerville has been named champion and only one earned a Grade 1 victory after their juvenile season. The only future champion to finish in the top three was Take Charge Brandi in 2014.

The same goes for the Sanford. Won by the likes of Forty Niner, Dehere, Maria’s Mon, More Than Ready, Afleet Alex, and Scat Daddy, since 2010 it’s had nowhere near as much influence. The 2017 renewal was arguably its best in recent years, featuring future Grade 1-winning juveniles Firenze Fire and Free Drop Billy. Otherwise, it’s been slim pickings.

Saratoga’s mid-meet features for two-year-olds, the Adirondack (G2) for fillies and the Saratoga Special (G2), have fared better. The latter, for example, has been won by future classic winners Union Rags and Exaggerator, plus Grade 1 mainstay Gunnevera, since 2010.

While the various maidens, stakes, and occasional allowances for two-year-olds remain not only a focal point but an integral part of the Saratoga program, the elongation of the summer season in upstate New York has tended to show that the serious up-and-comers are more likely to be unveiled later in the meet rather than when the gates figuratively spring open this week.

Familiar elements remain, but it’s still not your father’s Saratoga.



# WHO WILL BE THE TOP 10 TRAINERS AT SARATOGA 2019?

by Noel Michaels

It's not too early to start thinking about the Saratoga meet, which opens earlier than usual this season on Thursday, July 11. Saratoga will run five days a week in 2019, Wednesdays through Sundays. As usual, the meet will continue until Labor Day, which this year falls on Monday, September 2.

The Saratoga racing season attracts the best horses and horsemen, not only from New York but from everywhere. Trainers from many circuits point their best horses to Saratoga, and the competition for winners is stiffer there than anywhere. With the best barns bringing their best stock to the Spa, there will be some very good trainers excluded from the top 10 in the standings. Here is a look at the cream of the crop – the projected top 10 trainers for the upcoming 2019 Saratoga meet.

The first thing to mention in any Saratoga trainer's guide is that it is a safe bet that the standings will be dominated by Chad Brown, and that the "exacta" in the trainer's race should be rounded out by Todd Pletcher. That projected 1-2 finish atop the trainer's standings would probably be the safest exacta bet you could make at the entire Saratoga meet.

Chad Brown dominated the trainer's standings like never before in 2018, winning 46 races which smashed the previous all-time Saratoga training record of 40. Brown's win total was more than double the amount of winners Pletcher had in second place with 19. Rudy Rodriguez was next with 14 winners, followed close by Bill Mott and Steve Asmussen, each with 13 wins. Brown accomplished his 46-win season from 171 starters, for a strong win percentage of 27% and a startling in-the-money (ITM) rate of 64%.

Pletcher had edged out Brown by a single win on the final day of the meet for 40 wins in 2017, and Brown had won the training title at Saratoga in 2016 meet with 40 wins. Pletcher had won the title for five consecutive seasons from 2011 to 2015 (13 overall Saratoga trainer titles).

Behind Pletcher and Brown, it once again should be a battle between Rodriguez, Mott and Asmussen as well as other Saratoga stalwarts like Linda Rice and Kieran McLaughlin. Jason

Servis also had a giant meet at Saratoga in 2018, going 10-for-40 in the win column and an amazing 20-for-40 in the exacta. Jeremiah Englehart also must be respected after a big 2018 meet in which he went 12-for-84 in the win column, good for sixth in the standings.

All of the aforementioned trainers should be respected in all spots, but all have their specialties. Brown wins turf routes and stakes races at an alarming rate. Pletcher reels off two-year-old maiden wins and stakes wins like they are going out of style. Asmussen wins with two-year olds and maidens and mainly a variety of sprinters. Rodriguez wins mostly claiming races and New York-bred races, as does Englehart. Rice is the queen of the turf sprints and also wins with New York-bred maidens and grass horses. Mott wins mainly turf routes, and McLaughlin is one to watch in turf sprints and dirt routes. Servis crushes turf sprints.

The aforementioned nine trainers should all land in the 2019 final top 10 in the trainer's standings. The last slot in the trainer's top 10 is up for grabs and could go to any one of a dozen or more top trainers. Perhaps turf ace trainer Christophe Clement is due for a rebound meet with good horses lined up for both turf sprints and routes. Or maybe it will be Joe Sharp, who is lethal in one-mile turf races and turf sprints at Saratoga. Mike Maker brings a wide variety of horses to Saratoga and is always dangerous.

But the edge to sneak into the top 10 amongst everyone else goes to Mark Casse, whose national profile has also risen to elite status the last few years. Casse is a notorious Spa snail, however, who starts slowly but wins the majority of his races in the second half of the meet, and with horses making their second or third starts of the meet.

Stay tuned for more info on even more trainers as the run-up to the start of the 2019 Saratoga meet continues.



# RACING SHIFTS FROM BELMONT TO SARATOGA

by Noel Michaels

One of Saratoga's long-standing nicknames is "The Graveyard of Favorites," and the track has that reputation for a number of reasons. Much of it has to do with the fact that bettors get the dirt route races all wrong by misinterpreting horses' one-turn route form from Belmont Park – either better than it really is, or worse – when handicapping races on Saratoga's totally different two-turn layout.

Dirt route races are just one of the many facets of Saratoga handicapping that are challenging. Handicappers who understand the differences between horses who excel in two-turn races at Saratoga as opposed to the one-turn races at Belmont will enjoy a strong betting advantage in those races throughout the month July. Horseplayers who fail to acknowledge this enormously important difference between Belmont and Saratoga will struggle to win.

Two-turn route races have always been a big element of handicapping at Saratoga, unlike at New York's bookend race meets at Belmont Park where there's almost no two-turn dirt racing. Saratoga cards roughly 40 two-turn dirt routes a season – an average of about one per day. Plus, when it rains a lot, you can expect even more dirt routes at Saratoga due to off-the-turf races.

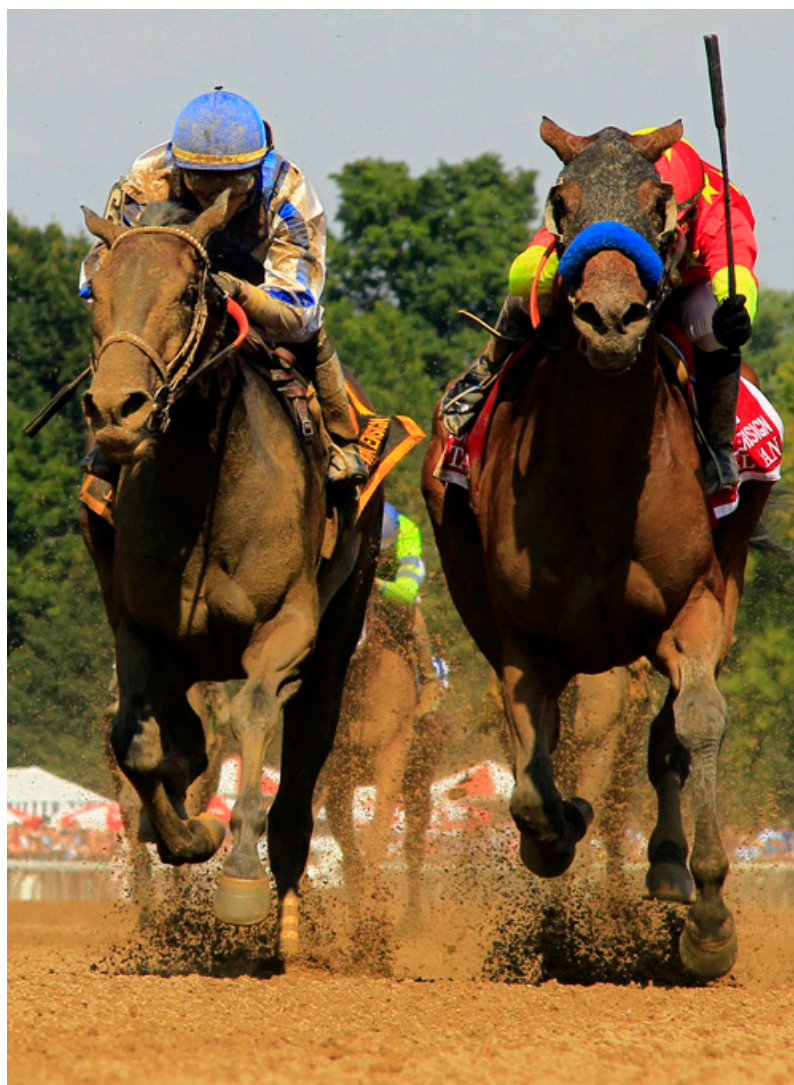
Oftentimes the New York horses that come to Saratoga with the best form from Belmont Park are horses that have been excelling, in part, thanks to their preference for one-turn races. At Saratoga, however, this factor flip-flops away from the one-turn specialists who've excelled at Belmont and instead favors two-turn horses who like the routes at Saratoga, and other more traditional track layouts. This adds an interesting handicapping wrinkle in this track change situation to and away from Belmont Park. This upcoming move in New York racing from Belmont to Saratoga is one of those pertinent times of year.

Handicappers need to scan down a horse's past performances and see where past route wins and/or highest route BRIS Speed figures have come from. If you see a horse who has demonstrated his best route form at Belmont going one mile, 1 1/16 miles or 1 1/8 miles, then that horse can probably be termed a "one-turn router." However, if you see a horse whose best route races came on more traditional layouts such as Aqueduct, Gulfstream, Monmouth, the mid-Atlantic region, particularly at or near 1 1/8 miles, or especially in past races at 1 1/8 miles at Saratoga, then you have a potential Spa wake-up horse.

Remember also that at Saratoga, because of the track layout, there are no one-mile races or 1 1/16-mile dirt races. The vast majority of all main track routes are run at 1 1/8 miles. This creates lots of problems for horses whose best distances are one mile and/or 1 1/16 miles. Those horses must either stretch out to 1 1/8 miles (perhaps too long), or cutback to seven furlongs around one turn (too short). Those horses shoehorn into unsuitable spots and don't do well.

Therefore, in addition to looking for two-turn-type horses, you need to work on eliminating horses who just plain don't want to go 1 1/8 miles on the dirt. Many horses are much the best at one mile and/or 1 1/16 miles, but those options are closed to them at Saratoga. Bet against the horses who prefer the shorter dirt route distances, and upgrade the chances of horses who are proven at 1 1/8 miles and beyond.

Many handicapping factors come into play at this time of year when racing and wagering shifts between Belmont and Saratoga. Different horses tend to win different kinds of races at each of these two very different racetracks. With the impending move from Belmont Park to Saratoga fast approaching, we're coming up to one of those times of the year in New York racing where the difference between one-turn and two-turn races is very important. Pay attention to this important difference, and you will have a distinct edge over the majority of the betting public.



# STAKES NOMINATIONS LISTS CAN YIELD CLUES ON SARATOGA JUVENILES

by Noel Michaels

I was one of the big proponents of stretching the 40 days of Saratoga to eight weeks with only five days of racing per week. Six days of racing per week is tough on everyone and the attendance and betting on Monday was down significantly. With only one day to “rest,” the old schedule was too grueling for all of us.

Thus, Saratoga begins a week from this Thursday on July 11, and I am not ready to say the least. But, life goes on whether we are ready or not so it is time to get to work.

Here is an “Old School” handicapping angle that still works, and with all the two-year-old racing up here, it pays to use if you are not doing so already. This is how it works.

There are two juvenile stakes races scheduled on the first Thursday and Saturday. The 101st running of the \$150,000 Schuylerville (G3) for fillies will be run on Thursday over the main track going six furlongs. The early nominations closed on June 29 with 20 fillies paying the early nomination fee of \$150.

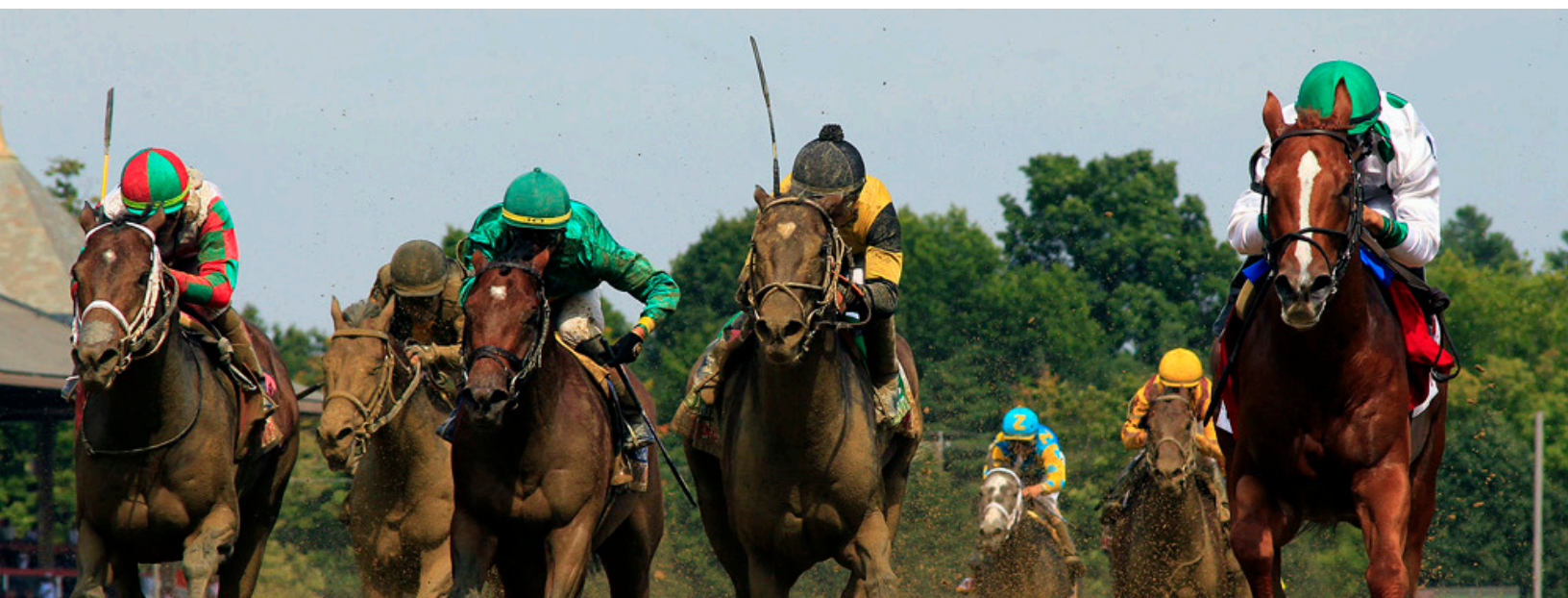
We can assume that the connections of these stakes-nominated juvenile fillies are fairly confident of their ability, but obviously all 20 are not going to run. We can break up the juvenile fillies nominated to the Schuylerville into three groups. First are the ones that have already won a race. Fifteen of the 20 have already won a race and many did at short odds, so those are probably primed to go in the Schuylerville. Second are the ones that have raced but did not win – only two have started without winning. Third are the first time starters – three of them have yet to begin their careers.

You can expect that most of the winners will show up in the Schuylerville on Opening Day. For the five that have raced but not won or haven’t raced yet at all, there is a \$90,000 Maiden Special Weight on Friday going 5 1/2 furlongs on the dirt.

The 105th running of the \$150,000 Sanford (G3) on Saturday at six furlongs on the main track has attracted 22 nominated runners. Thirteen have already won, eight have started but have not won and one is a first-time starter. For those that have raced but not won or haven’t raced at all, there is a \$90,000 maiden special weight on Saturday.

Luckily at most tracks, when you go to the “Horsemen” section on their web site, past performances are available for all the nominated horses. From here, you can start doing your basic research on how the races stack up. Fifteen winning juvenile fillies need to be sorted out, and pay attention to which circumstance they won under. You will have lots of time to do your pedigree research and get as familiar as you can with these young horses.

Do this for all the juvenile stakes races and print out the nominations. Later, when you are handicapping, refer to the nominations and see if the starters in a juvenile race had been stakes nominated. It is not the definitive vote of confidence, but it shows that just recently the connections had high hopes, especially for the first-time starters.



# TIPS TO HELP YOU WIN SARATOGA'S TURF SPRINTS

by Noel Michaels

Anyone who follows New York racing knows that turf sprints are a giant part of the Saratoga landscape. So many of the turf sprints are run throughout the meet, and if you can raise your win percentage and ROI solely in those races, you will go a long way to having a much more successful Saratoga meet. Here are some tips to help you handicap better in Saratoga's multitude of turf sprints.

All run at 5 1/2 furlongs, Saratoga's turf sprints differ greatly from Belmont, where turf sprints are mainly run at either six or seven furlongs. The turn in Saratoga turf sprints seems to come-up much quicker than the turn for Belmont's turf sprints, and Saratoga's turns are obviously much tighter than Belmont's. This sets up the first Saratoga turf sprint handicapping angle: Different turns, along with the shorter distance, puts a much higher importance on tactical speed in Saratoga's turf sprints as opposed to Belmont. This results in form reversals, both positive and negative, with different horses winning at The Spa than at Belmont.

The next thing to understand about Saratoga turf sprints, before anything else, is that outside posts rule. In larger turf sprint fields with more than eight horses, winning from the three inside posts — especially the rail — is very difficult, unless the horse is lone speed or much the best.

As a general rule, you can pass on betting the inside-drawn horses in Saratoga turf sprints (posts 1,2,3). However, all is not lost because inside posts actually set up horses to a great betting angle in their next starts. Take note of the horses who lose from the rail early in the meet and look for opportunities to bet them back next time if not drawn inside.

I recommend steadfastly sticking with this turf sprint post position angle because it has been too much a part of being able to be a winning handicapper at Saratoga over the course of more than a decade. Examples of this inside post futility in turf sprints included Post 1 winning just 1-for-43 in 2009, and 2010 when Post 1 went 2-for-45. In 2011, the rail was awful again, going just 1-for-41 (2%).

If you are saying to yourself, "those are old stats, so what have you done for me lately?" the answer is simple. Over the last five years, Saratoga has begun running turf sprints with eight

or fewer starters. This skews the overall stats, which recently have shown inside horses can and do win. However, when inside horses do win at 5 1/2F on the grass at Saratoga, it almost always happens in fields of eight horses or less (two-year-old grass sprints top-out at eight horses, for example). Small fields make it possible for inside horses to win. In big fields of turf sprinters with 10 or 12 starters, however, outside posts still dominate.

What are the reasons that inside posts are bad and outside posts are good in Saratoga's 5 1/2F turf sprints? Well, if you are a late-running horse with an inside post, it is very difficult to drop back, work your way outside, and then circle around the field and get up in time with so little real estate to work with. If you are a stalker drawn inside, you get buried down on the rail behind the speed horses who send from the rail or drop over from the outside. Inside speed horses are forced to "send," but unless a horse has enough speed to get a clear lead, they end up being at the mercy of the outside-drawn speed horses who are the ones able to control the pace. Outside horses with clear runs benefit from momentum and less traffic, and ground loss on the turn seems to be no detriment whatsoever in the turf sprints.

Something like post position seems like such a trivial handicapping tool, but in these wide open Saratoga turf sprints, any way you can narrow down the field can be helpful.

The same set of trainers tends to win the overwhelming vast majority of Saratoga turf sprints and we expect this to continue in 2019. Trainers to bet in Saratoga turf sprints are led by all-time Spa turf sprint queen Linda Rice, as well as Jason Servis, Christophe Clement, and Kiaran McLaughlin, who each can win in the 25% range in these races throughout the Spa meet. Joe Sharp also specializes at turf sprints when he ships to New York for Saratoga. Two trainers who attract plenty of support and win many races every meet — Todd Pletcher and Chad Brown — are terrible bets in The Spa's turf sprints, both in terms of win percentage and ROI.

Bet the five trainers listed above, especially when their horses are drawn off the inside three posts, and you can have success in 5 1/2F turf races, which are some of the most common and plentiful races run during the summer racing season at Saratoga.

# FIVE SIMPLE WINNING TIPS CAN GIVE YOU THE EDGE AT SARATOGA

by Noel Michaels

The 2019 Saratoga meet opens Thursday, July 11, and it's time to start brushing up on some tips and trends that can help you win at the highly anticipated 40-day season that lasts throughout the heart of the summer until Labor Day, Monday, September 2. Here are five money-making tips that can help you win at Saratoga based on the winning track profile and best running styles and post positions in various types of races.

1. Saratoga's main track is speed favoring at all distances, no doubt about it. The speed bias is especially prevalent in races at six furlongs and shorter, particularly with two-year-olds. Early speed horses on the pace or within a length of the lead at the first call win nearly 50 percent of all dirt sprints shorter than six furlongs. Pressers and the occasional stalker tend to win the rest. Speedsters and pressers also do very well at the commonly run distance of six furlongs.
2. With the move to Saratoga, the focus in route racing flip-flops from benefiting one-turn route specialists at Belmont Park to favoring route horses that do their best running around two turns – and at 1 1/8 miles – as opposed to one mile or 1 1/16 miles. Look down the past performances and bet horses whose best route races came on more traditional two-turn layouts such as Aqueduct, Gulfstream, Churchill, Keeneland, the mid-Atlantic region, or in past races at Saratoga, but not at Belmont. This is particularly true if a horse has run past races around two turns at 1 1/8 miles (Saratoga cards no dirt races at one mile and 1 1/16 miles). Give these two-turn main track distance horses the edge against overbet horses that do their best running in Belmont's unique one-turn route races.
3. Downgrade the three inside posts in turf sprints, particularly the rail, while upgrading horses drawing far outside posts. This is mainly important in large turf sprint fields with more than eight runners. Combine this with good handicapping and your turf sprint ROI at the meet will soar. Even with no handicapping at all, you can blindly box the outside three or four horses in turf sprints with more than nine runners and still do pretty darn good.
4. Outside posts are negative factors on the Saratoga turf courses in routes to varying degrees. Posts 8 and outward are slight disadvantages on both turf courses at most distances, while far outside posts 10-12 are usually poor bets. The inside three posts can offer a good advantage to horses running on the inner turf course at the distances of one mile and 1 1/16 miles.
5. In Saratoga grass route races, early speed generally is not an advantage. The pace profile of the average turf winner at Saratoga is a horse that is roughly about four lengths off the pace at the first call and 2 1/2 lengths off the pace at the second call. Hold more strictly to this pace preference on the Mellon (outer) course.

Play these trends in the various types of races at Saratoga, and you will have a solid starting framework for what it takes to help you win throughout the meet. Best of luck!



# SARATOGA JUVENILE SEASON KICKS OFF WITH SCHUYLERVILLE ON OPENING DAY

by John Mucciolo

The opening of Saratoga on Thursday highlights many of the best things about our sport, including outstanding two-year-old racing. No meeting across the nation showcases the stars of tomorrow more than 'The Spa' does, and they take little time in putting some fine prospects on display.

Nine juvenile fillies will go six furlongs on the dirt in the \$150,000 Schuylerville (G3), and the exciting race looks to have multiple talented youngsters in the cast.

Trainer Doug O'Neill has a pair of entrants that posted robust 97 BRIS Speed figures on debut — SHIPPY and COMICAL. The former left little doubt as to why she was 2-5 at first asking at Laurel in her unveiling for then-conditioner Timothy Kreiser. The daughter of Midshipman blitzed her foes by 10 widening lengths and came back with a solid half-mile drill at Belmont in the interim.

Comical debuted at Santa Anita on May 26 and was much the best en route to a six-length romp. The Into Mischief filly also posted a healthy four-furlong move at Belmont, and she will get Javier Castellano to ride.

Todd Pletcher has made it a habit of dominating the baby races at Saratoga in recent history, including saddling six winners of the Schuylerville. He will send out a pair in the 2019 edition led by KISS THE GIRL. By Into Mischief, the \$210,000 yearling purchase was a facile winner at first asking at Belmont Park and figures to improve with one under her belt. She will have John Velazquez, who has piloted five winners of this race, in the silks.

AURELIA GARLAND is from the first crop of Grade-1 winner Constitution for trainer Wesley Ward. The \$185,000 yearling buy looks like a bargain purchase following her five-length waltz at Belmont in her debut performance. The chestnut retains the services of Joe Bravo.

HIS GLORY will have to prove herself at this level, but she was visually impressive in a powerful debut score at Indiana Grand. Tom Amoss trainee is closely related to champion juvenile Classic Empire and looks like an interesting prospect.

The Gary Contessa-trained BUXOM BEAST will make her debut in this salty affair, and the daughter of freshman sire The Big Beast is bred to be a good one. She is a half-sister to millionaire Gourmet Dinner and descends from the same female line as champion female sprinter Musical Romance, Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (G1) victor Battle of Midway, and 2018 Cigar Mile (G1) hero Patternrecognition.

Any number of the fillies entered in the field could go on to do great things. Hall of Fame members La Prevoyante, Cicada, and Ashado, as well as champions Meadow Star and Sacahuista, are some of the notable past heroines of the affair. And it is possible that the 2019 Schuylerville will produce yet another future superstar.

Happy opening day!



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