



BETTING GUIDE

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BELMONT STAKES 158 BETTING GUIDE



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RACE SCHEDULE AND WAGER MENU

FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026

New York (G1)	\$750,000 Guaranteed
Acorn (G1)	\$500,000 Guaranteed
Ogden Phipps (G1)	\$500,000 Guaranteed
Bed o' Roses (G2)	\$300,000 Guaranteed

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026

True North (G3)	\$400,000 Guaranteed
Jaipur (G1)	\$500,000 Guaranteed
Just A Game (G1)	\$500,000 Guaranteed
Woody Stephens (G1)	\$500,000 Guaranteed
Metropolitan H. (G1)	\$1,000,000 Guaranteed
Manhattan (G1)	\$1,000,000 Guaranteed
Belmont Stakes (G1)	\$2,000,000 Guaranteed



RACE	POST TIME	WAGERING MENU
1	11:00	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P5
2	11:37	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P4 QUI
3	12:15	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P5
4	12:53	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P4 QUI
5	1:31	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P5
6	2:09	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P4
7	2:47	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P5
8	3:25	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P6
9	4:13	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P5 GS
10	4:52	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P4 P5
11	5:32	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3 P4
12	6:11	WPS EX TRI SPR DD P3
13	7:04	WPS EX TRI SPR DD
14	8:02	WPS EX TRI SPR

AT A GLANCE

Saratoga At a Glance September 1, 2025.

AVG. WINNING ODDS: 4.94 - 1

FAVORITE WIN%: 35% **FAVORITE ITM%:** 73%

EXOTICS	PAYOFF
Quinella	28.46
Exacta	77.36
Daily Double	78.66
Trifecta	437.79
Pick 3	519.46
Superfecta	2,356.67
Pick 6	75,929.82
Pick 4	3,293.71
Pick 5	23,791.10
Grand Slam	128.41



TRACK BIAS MEET(07/10 - 08/31)

Distance	# Race	% Wire	Best Style	Best Posts
6.0fDirt	66	26%	E/P	Rail/Ins
7.0fDirt	48	21%	E	Rail/Ins
1 MileDirt	42	29%	E/P	Outside
1 1/8mDirt	39	23%	E/P	Rail/Ins
Turf Sprint	60	18%	E/P	Ins/Mid
InTf Routes	77	23%	E	Rail
Turf Routes	28	18%	P	Inside

TRACK BIAS WEEK(08/25 - 08/31)

Distance	# Race	% Wire	Best Style	Best Posts
6.0fDirt	9	11%	P	Middle
7.0fDirt	9	11%	P	Rail/Ins
1 MileDirt	6	17%	P	Outside
1 1/8mDirt	1	0%	E/P	Inside
Turf Sprint	9	0%	E/P	Inside
InTf Routes	13	46%	E	Outside
Turf Routes	6	50%	E	Rail/Ins

WHO'S HOT, WHO'S NOT

HOT TRAINERS	STARTS	WINS	PLACE	SHOW	AVG. ODDS	WINNING FAVORITES	'24-'25 WIN %
Asmussen Steven M.	15	6	4	1	7.34	2	16%
Brion Keri	8	3	0	2	9.94	1	12%
Walden William	5	2	0	1	1.31	2	21%
Rodriguez Gustavo	6	2	0	0	12.10	0	16%

HOT JOCKEYS	STARTS	WINS	PLACE	SHOW	AVG. ODDS	BEATEN FAVORITES	'22-'23 WIN %
Velazquez John R.	12	4	2	1	10.12	1	15%
Zayas Edgard J.	14	4	0	1	12.85	1	18%

COLD TRAINERS	STARTS	WINS	PLACE	SHOW	AVG. ODDS	BEATEN FAVORITES	'22-'23 WIN %
Rodriguez Rudy R.	24	0	3	3	17.36	1	11%
Hennig Mark A.	11	0	0	2	22.92	0	8%

COLD JOCKEYS	STARTS	WINS	PLACE	SHOW	AVG. ODDS	BEATEN FAVORITES	'22-'23 WIN %
Lezcano Jose	11	0	1	2	14.84	0	16%
Luzzi Lane J.	11	0	0	1	23.27	1	8%

EXPERT PICKS FOR BELMONT WEEKEND

We've assembled an expert team of handicappers to give their top picks for select graded stakes race for Belmont Stakes Day,

SATURDAY, JUNE 6



Dean Keppler
@Keppskorner



Vance Hanson
@VPHanson



Kellie Reilly
@GallantFox1930



James Scully
@James_Scully111



Keele Johnson
@J_Keelerman

JUST A GAME S.

2 Sandtrap	2 Sandtrap	4 Mandanaba	3 Segesta	2 Sandtrap
3 Segesta	3 Segesta	2 Sandtrap	2 Sandtrap	3 Segesta
4 Mandanaba	5 And One More Time	3 Segesta	4 Mandanaba	1 Classic Q

JAIPUR S.

5 Reef Runner	6 Ag Bullet	5 Reef Runner	3 Litigation	6 Ag Bullet
6 Ag Bullet	10 My Boy Prince	6 Ag Bullet	5 Reef Runner	5 Reef Runner
10 My Boy Prince	5 Reef Runner	1 Governor Sam	10 My Boy Prince	10 My Boy Prince

WOODY STEPHENS S.

6 Crude Velocity	8 Civil Liberty	2 Obliteration	7 Englishman	6 Crude Velocity
3 Six Speed	6 Crude Velocity	6 Crude Velocity	6 Crude Velocity	7 Englishman
1 Gilded Bandit	2 Obliteration	7 Englishman	8 Civil Liberty	8 Civil Liberty

METROPOLITAN H.

1 Nysos	3 Antiquarian	1 Nysos	7 Journalism	7 Journalism
6 Knightsbridge	1 Nysos	3 Antiquarian	1 Nysos	1 Nysos
7 Journalism	7 Journalism	7 Journalism	3 Antiquarian	6 Knightsbridge

MANHATTAN S.

6 Bright Picture	6 Bright Picture	8 One Stripe	6 Bright Picture	6 Bright Picture
7 Rhetorical	8 One Stripe	7 Rhetorical	4 Integration	7 Rhetorical
2 Test Score	7 Rhetorical	6 Bright Picture	7 Rhetorical	8 One Stripe

BELMONT S.

8 Emerging Market	8 Emerging Market	4 Renegade	2 Powershift	4 Renegade
4 Renegade	4 Renegade	8 Emerging Market	4 Renegade	2 Powershift
9 Golden Tempo	3 Chief Wallabee	7 Commandment	6 Growth Equity	9 Golden Tempo



BELMONT STAKES ENTRIES



The 2026 Belmont Stakes (G1) is drawing closer and attention is turning toward the field expected for the final leg of the Triple Crown. This year could feature top runners from the Kentucky Derby along with fresh contenders looking to make an impact in one of the most demanding races in Thoroughbred horse racing.

POST POSITIONS	HORSE	ML ODDS	TRAINER	OWNER(S)	JOCKEY
1	Vitruvian Man	30-1	Doug O'Neill	Glenn Sorgenstein WC Racing Inc.	Antonio Fresu
2	Powershift	12-1	Todd A. Pletcher	Repole Stable	Luis Saez
3	Chief Wallabee	3-1	William I. Mott	Michael & Katherine G. Ball	Junior Alvarado
4	Renegade	2-1	Todd A. Pletcher	Robert & Lawana L. Low & Repole Stable	Irada Ortiz Jr.
5	Ottinho	20-1	Chad C. Brown	Three Chimneys Farm, LLC	Dylan Davis
6	Growth Equity	12-1	Chad C. Brown	Klaravich Stables, Inc.	Manuel Franco
7	Commandment	6-1	Brad H. Cox	Wathnan Racing	John R. Velazquez
8	Emerging Market	6-1	Chad C. Brown	Klaravich Stables, Inc.	Flavien Prat
9	Golden Tempo	9-2	Cherie DeVaux	Phipps Stable and St. Elias Stable	José Ortiz



MEET THE CONTENDERS



VITRUVIAN MAN



Doug O'Neill

PRO: Distant third in Santa Anita Derby (G1), but form of that race took a hit five weeks ago.
CON: Bred to excel at distance but class concerns likely insurmountable.



POWERSHIFT



Todd Pletcher

PRO: One of the few here with early foot, so might last a while if he can slow it down.
CON: Maiden winner not without potential but this is a big step up in class.



CHIEF WALLABEE



Bill Mott

PRO: Given relative inexperience, ran quite well to finish fourth in Kentucky Derby (G1).
CON: Has fallen short three times at this level; perhaps a slight cut below?

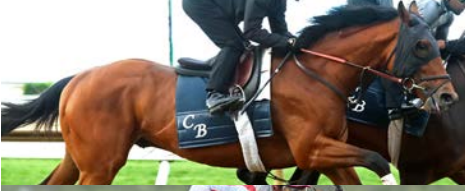


RENEGADE



Todd Pletcher

PRO: Arguably best in Kentucky Derby after horrendous trip in the opening furlong.
CON: A strong pace would obviously help but little speed entered here.



OTTINHO



Chad Brown

PRO: The freshest entrant after running a distant second in Blue Grass (G1) nine weeks ago.
CON: From a class perspective, this is his toughest challenge yet.



GROWTH EQUITY



Chad Brown

PRO: Peter Pan (G3) winner has the early foot which most of these seem to lack.
CON: Hasn't faced a field this good and stamina will be tested.



COMMANDMENT



Brad Cox

PRO: Flattened out after middle move in Derby; likely better than that.
CON: Like several of these, lack of pace might blunt effectiveness.



EMERGING MARKET



Chad Brown

PRO: Tenth after racing prominently and losing shoe in Derby; remains with upside.
CON: A veteran of only three races, so inexperience still a concern.



GOLDEN TEMPO



Cherie DeVaux

PRO: Got the trip and pace meltdown he needed to upset the Churchill classic.
CON: Hard to envision a similar scenario here and obviously will be a shorter price.

TWINSPIRES TIPSHEET



158TH RUNNING OF THE BELMONT STAKES

A fantastic field of nine three-year-olds will travel 1 1/4 miles on the dirt at Saratoga in Saturday's third leg of the Triple Crown, the \$2 million Belmont (G1).

POST	HORSE	ML ODDS
1	Vitruvian Man	30-1
2	Powershift	12-1
3	Chief Wallabee	3-1
4	Renegade	2-1
5	Ottinho	20-1
6	Growth Equity	12-1
7	Commandment	6-1
8	Emerging Market	6-1
9	Golden Tempo	9-2

TOP PICKS

#4 Renegade

#3 Chief Wallabee

#7 Commandment

2026 BELMONT STAKES WAGERS

\$40 win #4 Renegade

\$20 exacta box 3-4

50-cent superfecta 3,4 with 3,4,7,8 with 3,4,7,8,9 with 3,4,7,8,9

powered by **brisnet.com**

#1 VITRUVIAN MAN (30-1): Doug O'Neill trainee was a distant third in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) in his lone run of 2026 and gets the rail for his New York debut. The Vino Rosso colt has won or placed in each of his three dirt runs in advance of the race, but the bay will need marked improvement to challenge for a share in this demanding spot under Antonio Fresu.

#2 POWERSHIFT (12-1): Lightly raced prospect was a strong maiden winner at Churchill Downs on Derby Day and will take a major class hike on this occasion. The first of two from the Pletcher shedrow has a lot of ability and room to grow, and he could be an exotics contender with a move forward on Saturday. Luis Saez picks up the mount.

#3 CHIEF WALLABEE (3-1): A solid win threat from the barn of Bill Mott, the colt was a brave fourth in the Kentucky Derby (G1) despite having an unfavorable trip in Louisville, and the son of Constitution looms large with clear sailing in the Belmont. The bay homebred has trained well as of late and should move up while racing with blinkers on for the second time in his career. Third in the Florida Derby (G1), he will stalk the pace while always in range beneath Junior Alvarado.

#4 RENEGADE (2-1): Morning-line choice and top pick ran a winning race in defeat in the Run for the Roses and gets top billing for Pletcher. The \$975,000 yearling purchase has been very good in each of his three assignments this campaign and appears to be coming up to the race in fine fashion, too. Irad Ortiz will once again guide the stout late runner.

#5 OTTINHO (20-1): The first of three from the Chad Brown shedrow rallied to be a distant second in the Blue Grass (G1) in his latest endeavor. The Quality Road colt, who is a half-brother to the mighty Gun Runner, did improve with the addition of blinkers last time, and he should also appreciate the added ground in this spot. Dylan Davis will take the reins and have the sophomore making one run from well off the early tempo.

#6 GROWTH EQUITY (12-1): Klaravich color bearer was much the best in his Peter Pan (G3) triumph on May 9 and is an interesting longshot in the group. The Chad Brown pupil possesses good tactical foot in a field lacking pace, and the son of Nyquist figures to be well placed turning for home with Manny Franco inheriting the mount.

#7 COMMANDMENT (6-1): Florida Derby (G1) victor ran evenly late in the Derby and is eligible to improve for conditioner Brad Cox. The millionaire son of Into Mischief has impressed on multiple occasions this season, and his best performance puts him right there with any contender in the cast. He picks up two-time Belmont winner John Velazquez, too.

#8 EMERGING MARKET (6-1): Third from the powerful Brown barn was empty late in Louisville five weeks back, but the talented son of Candy Ride was making just his third lifetime run in the race and will benefit from the experience. The Kentucky-bred chestnut drilled a swift four panels on the Oklahoma training surface last weekend, and if he runs to that morning move, then the sophomore has to be given a chance with Flavien Prat staying in the irons.

#9 GOLDEN TEMPO (9-2): Kentucky Derby (G1) hero receives another wide post draw but has never been better since blinkers were added two races back. The Curlin homebred has reportedly been training in consistently good fashion in advance of his Saratoga debut, and the colt will likely have less to do turning for home on Saturday in a race where the pace will be moderate at best. Regular pilot Jose Ortiz will be in the stirrups.

THE BEST LONGSHOT TO BET IN THE 2026 BELMONT STAKES

by Vance Hanson

“Longshot” is a relative term in the \$2 million Belmont (G1) at Saratoga on Saturday. The two longest prices in the market will be Vitruvian Man and Otinho, neither of whom seriously contended in prior stakes attempts (though they did place).

The other likely double-digit prices are Powershift and Growth Equity. Powershift arguably underperformed in the Tampa Bay Derby (G3), but the leap from maiden win to classic success is a bit of a stretch. Growth Equity certainly remains with a high ceiling following his Peter Pan (G3) score, though he beat little that day and has never faced a field of this quality.

If not them, then the choice comes down to deciding between Commandment and Emerging Market, both of whom were pegged at 6-1 on the morning line. Commandment was my top selection in the Kentucky Derby (G1), and though he can perhaps be excused for the dull try off fast wins in the Fountain of Youth (G2) and Florida Derby (G1), I’m not getting the sense he will return to his best. Note his last three riders chose to side with others here.

That leaves #8 Emerging Market (6-1) as the best longshot to bet in this Belmont. While he fared the worst of the Kentucky Derby starters in this field, finishing 10th, keep in mind he was racing closer to the hot pace than any of them in that closer-dominated race. He also reportedly lost a shoe, which might have affected how he finished in the final quarter mile.

Most of all, the Derby was only the third lifetime start for Emerging Market. A lot of “Derby Rules” have fallen by the wayside in this century, but the relative inexperience Emerging Market brought with him to Louisville was always going to be, and will continue to be, a tough hurdle.

Of course, you have to give Emerging Market credit for beating the eventual Derby winner, Golden Tempo, in the Louisiana Derby (G2) off a single previous start. It’s evidence of his raw talent and an indication that he can step forward with a big effort here while facing a field only half the size of the Derby. Another plus is that in a relatively paceless race, like this one appears to be on paper, Emerging Market could get the jump on most of the leading contenders.

Emerging Market appears to be thriving coming into this 1 1/4-mile test. I very much like his chances to spring the mild upset.



2026 BELMONT STAKES: BRISNET SPEED RATING REPORT

by James Scully

Nine horses are set for the final leg of the 2026 Triple Crown, Saturday's 158th running of the \$2 million Belmont (G1), and the top five contenders on the morning line are exiting the Kentucky Derby (G1) five weeks ago.

Let's review Brisnet Speed ratings for previous Belmont winners and analyze the 2026 field.

PAST WINNERS

The Belmont will be held over 1 1/4 miles for the third and final year at Saratoga, switching back to a 1 1/2-mile distance at Belmont Park in 2027. The last two Belmont winners, Sovereignty and Dornoch, returned from a five-week rest after competing in the Kentucky Derby.

Seven of the last 10 Belmont winners lost their last start, with 2018 Triple Crown hero Justify, 2026 Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty, and 2023 Peter Pan (G3) winner Arcangelo the exceptions.

Winner	Last Speed
Sovereignty	103
Dornoch	77
Arcangelo	101
Mo Donegal	98
Essential Quality	99
Tiz the Law	103
Sir Winston	101
Justify	98
Tapwrit	89
Creator	84

Seven of the last 10 Belmont winners registered a Brisnet Speed rating of 98 or higher in the last start. The exceptions, Dornoch, Creator, and Tapwrit, rebounded from disappointing efforts in the Kentucky Derby, but Dornoch and Creator had registered triple-digit numbers previously. And multiple Grade 2 winner Dornoch had a career-best rating of 98.

2026 BELMONT FIELD

Runners	Last Speed	Top Speed
Golden Tempo	98	100
Renegade	98	98
Chief Wallabee	95	103
Growth Equity	94	94
Powershift	94	98
Ottinho	93	93
Commandment	92	103
Vitruvian Man	92	92
Emerging Market	92	102

Golden Tempo got up in the final strides to edge Renegade by a neck in the Kentucky Derby, the fastest last-out race in this year's Belmont field. But the Kentucky Derby did not come back particularly fast, with the top two finishers registering 98 Brisnet Speed ratings, and little separates the Kentucky Derby alumni from a Speed rating perspective.

Golden Tempo, Chief Wallabee, Commandment, and Emerging Market all registered triple-digit Speed ratings in early-season prep races.

Chief Wallabee did not experience a clean trip rallying up the inside for fourth in the Kentucky Derby, getting roughed up in midstretch, and he drew well in post 3 Saturday with his tactical ability. Commandment probably moved too early after a slow start and could not sustain his run at Churchill Downs, finishing seventh. He's eligible to receive a better trip this time around.

Emerging Market lost a shoe and was too close to a hot early pace last time, weakening to 12th under the Twin Spires. The lightly raced colt desperately lacked seasoning in a bulky field, making only his third career outing on Derby Day, and Emerging Market is a candidate to improve significantly from the experience.

The 2-1 morning line favorite, Renegade, has yet to reach the century threshold, netting a pair of 97 Speed ratings for convincing wins in the Arkansas Derby (G1) and Sam F. Davis (G3) prior to the Kentucky Derby, but Renegade certainly rates as a candidate to step up with a career-best performance following a troubled trip at Churchill Downs. He's trained by three-time Belmont winner Todd Pletcher.

Growth Equity, Ottinho, Powershift, and Vitruvian Man will make their first Triple Crown race appearance in the Belmont.

Growth Equity owns the best credentials of the group, recording a two-length win as the favorite in the Peter Pan (G3) on May 9, but his Speed ratings (career-best 94 last time) remain a little light.

Ottino must also improve his numbers following a pair of non-threatening stakes placings, finishing 11 lengths back of Further Ado when second in the Blue Grass (G1) last out. Vitruvian Man owns the lowest figures in the field.

Powershift received a commendable 98 Speed rating finishing a close second to Emerging Market in his first start, a two-turn maiden special weight at Tampa Bay Downs in early February. The Pletcher trainee jumped straight to stakes competition in the Tampa Bay Derby (G3) but never fired after missing the break. Powershift graduated stylishly on the Kentucky Derby undercard, dominating a maiden special weight on the front end. And while he faces a major class check, Powershift rates as the projected Belmont pacesetter, and his Speed ratings are close to the major contenders.

EVERYTHING TO KNOW ABOUT THE 2026 BELMONT STAKES POST POSITIONS

by Keeler Johnson

How much of an impact will post positions have on the outcome of the 2026 Belmont (G1)? That's a tricky question to answer.

Post positions for the 158th running of the Triple Crown's third jewel were drawn on Monday, with nine horses entering the \$2 million race. The Belmont dates back to 1867, so it's tempting to review decades of history to determine which post positions are most likely to produce winning horses.

However, there are some important caveats to keep in mind.

Since the Belmont moved to its primary home of Belmont Park in 1905, the race has been contested 119 times. Reviewing the post position statistics, it appears post 1 is the most advantageous, as it has produced by far the most winners (24) while simultaneously yielding the highest win percentage (20.3%). This bodes well for Santa Anita Derby (G1) third-place finisher Vitruvian Man, who will start from post 1 in the 2026 Belmont.

Post Position	Starts	Wins	Win %	Wins since 2000	Last winner	2026 Belmont entrant
1	119	24	20.2	2	Justify (2018)	Vitruvian Man
2	119	14	11.8	3	Sovereignty (2025)	Powershift
3	117	16	13.7	4	Arcangelo (2023)	Chief Wallabee
4	111	10	9	2	Summer Bird (2009)	Renegade
5	103	15	14.6	2	American Pharoah (2015)	Ottinho
6	98	9	9.2	2	Dornoch (2024)	Growth Equity
7	85	14	16.5	3	Sir Winston (2019)	Commandment
8	75	7	9.3	2	Tiz the Law (2020)	Emerging Market
9	57	4	7.0	2	Afleet Alex (2005)	Golden Tempo
10	40	1	2.5	0	Thunder Gulch (1995)	None
11	28	3	10.7	2	Tonalist (2014)	None
12	11	1	9.1	1	Palace Malice (2013)	None
13	7	1	14.3	1	Creator (2016)	None
14	3	0	0.0	0	None	None
15	1	0	0.0	0	None	None

But the inherent biases in post position statistics favor inside posts, inflating their success metrics. Many editions of the Belmont have featured small fields. There's always a horse breaking from post 1, but only 57 Belmonts have featured a horse breaking from post 9. Naturally, post 1 will compile more wins.

In addition, when there are only four horses in a race, any given post position has a 25% shot at producing the winner. In a 10-horse field, the chance of the winner starting from a particular post is only 10%. Thus, inside post positions tend to generate higher win percentages than outside posts.

With this in mind, the 16.5% win rate compiled by post 7 is eye-catching. It's the second-highest win percentage among Belmont post positions. In the 2026 Belmont, Florida Derby (G1) winner Commandment will break from post 7.

But there's an even bigger caveat. The Belmont normally takes place over 1 1/2 miles at Belmont Park, the configuration used for 97 of the 119 Belmonts in our sample. But Belmont Park is being rebuilt, so for the third year in a row, the Belmont is taking place over a shortened 1 1/4-mile distance at Saratoga.

The shift in distance and location is significant. Whereas the dirt track at Belmont Park is 1 1/2 miles in circumference, Saratoga's oval is only 1 1/8 miles around. Applying post position stats from 1 1/2 miles at Belmont Park to 1 1/4 miles at Saratoga isn't an apples-to-apples comparison.

For this reason, we've also included post position statistics from the last 35 editions of the Travers (G1), a prestigious 1 1/4-mile dirt race for three-year-olds held at Saratoga each summer. Since the Travers is held on the same configuration as the 2026 Belmont, Travers post position statistics may prove more relevant for identifying favorable (or unfavorable) posts.

Post Position	Starts	Wins	Win %
1	35	2	5.7
2	35	4	11.4
3	35	3	8.6
4	35	7	20.0
5	35	6	17.1
6	33	5	15.2
7	30	5	16.7
8	20	1	5.0
9	16	1	6.3
10	12	2	16.7
11	7	0	0.0
12	4	0	0.0
13	1	0	0.0

The Travers statistics suggest posts 4 through 7 are most favorable when three-year-olds race 1 1/4 miles over the Saratoga dirt. They've produced more wins than the posts farther inside or outside, and each post from 4 to 7 has compiled a win rate above 15%.

Based on the Travers statistics, Renegade, Ottinho, Growth Equity, and Commandment have all drawn favorable post positions in the 2026 Belmont. Since post 7 has also been strong throughout the Belmont's long history, one can argue Commandment has landed the best position of any horse entered in the final leg of the 2026 Triple Crown.

STUDY: IS SKIPPING THE PREAKNESS BENEFICIAL FOR BELMONT HORSES?

by Keeler Johnson

reprint from 2025



We've all seen the statistics: Kentucky Derby (G1) starters who skip the Preakness (G1) to target the Belmont (G1) win the Triple Crown's final leg with regularity. This strategy has proven successful on 10 occasions since 2004, and it's by far the most common preparation approach employed by Belmont winners these days.

But does skipping the Preakness give these horses an advantage in the Belmont? Or has this prep approach simply become so widespread that victories are inevitable? Without knowing how many Kentucky Derby starters skip the Preakness to await the Belmont, as opposed to how many horses run in all three Triple Crown races, comparing the success rates of the two strategies is meaningless.

Here's a hypothetical (and extreme) example to illustrate what we mean—if 95% of Belmont starters run in the Kentucky Derby and skip the Preakness, but they win only 50% of Belmonts, they're underperforming. If 5% of Belmont starters contest all three Triple Crown races, and they win 50% of Belmonts, they're overperforming. In this hypothetical example, running in all three Triple Crown races is the better strategy, even though the two categories produce the same number of winners (50%) at first glance.

Fortunately, it doesn't take a supercomputer to determine whether Kentucky Derby starters who skip the Preakness or horses who contest all three legs of the Triple Crown perform best in real-world Belmonts. All we need are some past performance records, a large handful of result charts, and a calculator.

IS SKIPPING THE PREAKNESS BENEFICIAL FOR BELMONT HORSES: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To ascertain whether skipping the Preakness results in a greater likelihood of a Kentucky Derby starter winning the Belmont, we'll first tally up how many Kentucky Derby/Belmont starters have skipped the Preakness since 2004. Excluding 2020, when the Triple Crown races were run out of order due to COVID-19, this provides a 20-year sample size.

Then we'll add up how many horses have contested all three legs of the Triple Crown during the same timeframe. Lastly, we'll turn the number of winners, runners-up, third-place finishers, and in-the-money finishers produced by the two categories into percentages based on the number of horses in each category, so the two groups can be directly compared.

IS SKIPPING THE PREAKNESS BENEFICIAL FOR BELMONT HORSES: DATA ANALYSIS

The data isn't necessarily what one might expect, but the results tell a fascinating story:

RECORDS OF BELMONT STAKES STARTERS, 2004-2024

	Starts	Wins	Seconds	Thirds	In-the-money
Skipped the Preakness Stakes	75	10 (13%)	9 (12%)	9 (12%)	28 (37%)
Contested entire Triple Crown	26	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	9 (35%)

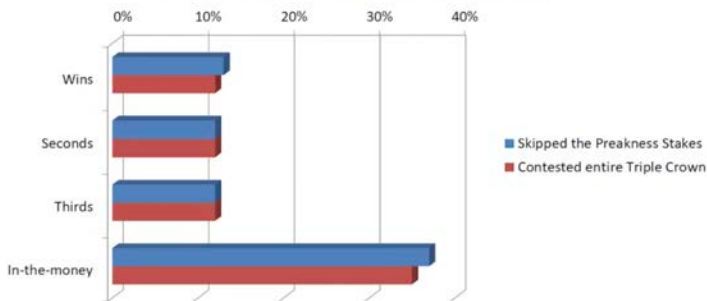
Since 2004, 75 horses have run in the Kentucky Derby, skipped the Preakness, and returned for the Belmont. They have recorded 10 wins courtesy of Birdstone (2004), Jazil (2006), Summer Bird (2009), Union Rags (2012), Palace Malice (2013), Creator (2016), Tapwrit (2017), Essential Quality (2021), Mo Donegal (2022), and Dornoch (2024). That's a 13% win rate.

In contrast, horses who contested all three legs of the Triple Crown have won the Preakness three times in the last 20 years. The winners were Afleet Alex (2005), American Pharoah (2015), and Justify (2018). But the sample size contains only 26 horses, so the win percentage for this category is 12%—nearly identical to the success rate for horses who skipped the Preakness.

Horses who passed on the Preakness have recorded nine seconds and nine thirds in the Belmont since 2004, which for each position is 12% of starters. Horses who ran in all three legs of the Triple Crown finished second three times and third three times, yielding matching 12% rates.

All told, horses who skipped the Preakness recorded 28 in-the-money finishes, representing 37% of starters. Horses who contested all three legs of the Triple Crown posted nine in-the-money finishes, a nearly identical 35% of starters.

RECORDS OF BELMONT STAKES STARTERS, 2004 - 2024 (EXCLUDING 2020)



CONCLUSIONS

When horseplayers handicap the Belmont, they shouldn't assume Kentucky Derby starters who skipped the Preakness have a better chance to finish first, second, or third than horses who ran in all three Triple Crown races. Although the raw number of in-the-money finishers produced by the first category is about three times higher, the number of starters is likewise three times higher.

It leads to a stark conclusion: in the Belmont Stakes, there is no meaningful difference in the success rates of Kentucky Derby starters who skip the Preakness vs. those who compete in all three Triple Crown legs.

This isn't to say that individual horses aren't better suited to skipping the Preakness than running in all three races. Some of the Kentucky Derby starters who skipped the Preakness and recorded top-three finishes in the Belmont might have performed worse if they'd contested the Preakness in between.

But when Belmont day arrives and bettors must weigh the chances of each horse in the entries, there's no statistical reason to doubt a runner who has proven durable enough to contest both the Kentucky Derby and Preakness. They're almost exactly as likely to factor in the Belmont as Kentucky Derby starters who skip the Preakness.



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12 Cathryn Sophia (E/P 5) Own: Cash Is King Lic Green, Multi-colored Crown, Green Shamrocks On White CASTELLANO JAVIER (0 0-0-0 0%)		B. f. 3 FTMSEP 2014 \$30k Sire: Street Boss (Street Cry (IRE)) \$12,500 Dam: Sheave (Mineshaft) Brdr: Robert T Manfuso (MD) Trnr: Servis John C (0 0-0-0 0%)		Prime Power: 147.1 (1st) Life: 5 4- 0- 1 \$385,520 102 2016 3 2- 0- 1 \$295,520 99 2015 2 2- 0- 0 \$90,000 102 CD 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 0		Fst (109) 5 4- 0- 1 \$385,520 102 Off (109) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 Dis (108) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 Trf (110) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 AW 0 0- 0- 0 \$0		E1 92 E2/Late 99 SPD 99 Sire Stats: AWD 6.7 15%Mud 241MudSts 1.57spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.3 15%Mud 820MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000	
+2016 494 22% 54% -0.54 +JKYw/EP types 591 26% 57% -0.15 +JKYw/Trn L60 2 50% 100% +10.60 +JKYw/ Routes 107 22% 54% -0.28		+2016 69 33% 57% +0.92 Graded Stakes 28 7% 36% -1.84 +Btn favorite 74 30% 54% +0.13 +Routes 482 18% 43% -0.05		Sire Stats: AWD 6.7 15%Mud 241MudSts 1.57spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.3 15%Mud 820MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000		Sire Stats: AWD 6.7 15%Mud 241MudSts 1.57spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.3 15%Mud 820MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000		Sire Stats: AWD 6.7 15%Mud 241MudSts 1.57spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.3 15%Mud 820MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000	
★ Finished 3rd in last race ★ Best Dirt Speed is fastest among today's starters ★ Hot Jockey in last 7 days (13 4-5-1)		Failed as favorite in last race ● Poor 'Graded Stakes' trainer record: 7% wins 28 sts		DATE TRK DIST RR RACETYPE CR E1 E2/ LP 1c 2c SPD PP ST 1C 2C STR FIN JOCKEY ODDS Top Finishers Comment 09Apr16Kee6 1 1/16 ft :24 :47 1:11 1:43 117 Ashland-G1 118 92 106/ 80 +7 +13 94 3 3 1/2 3 1/2 3 1/2 1hd 3 1/2 CastellanoJJ121 L *0.50 WpNMmrkRclsVIntn ^{nk} CtrnSp ² Bold bid 4w; hung 5 27Feb16GP5 1m ft :24 :47 1:11 1:36 117 DvonaDal-G2122 83 88/ 103 -4 -7 96 4 3 1/2 4 1/2 3 1/2 1 2 1/2 17 CastellanoJJ122 Lf *0.20 CthrynSp ⁷ LwsBy ² Drst ¹³ 1/2 Pressed3w;bid1/4;handy 6 30Jan16GP3 7f ft :22 3 :45 2:09 1:22 116 FrwdGal-G2121 84 91/ 104 -5 -11 99 1 6 4 4 3 1/2 1 1/2 1 5 1/2 RosarioJ120 Lf *0.10 CthrynSp ¹⁵ 1/2IsIndSnt ⁴ 2BallDiva ³ Off step slowin hand 6 05Dec15Lrl5 7f ft :23 :46 3:11 1:23 114 GinTalkingB 100k121 97 101/ 98 -1 -6 102 5 1 1 1/2 1 2 1/2 1 8 116 RosadoRJ119 Lf *0.10 CthrynSp ¹⁶ Prgnss ⁵ 3ThndrngSk ¹ 1/2 On left lead; handily 6 30Oct15Prl5 6f ft :22 2 :46 3:58 1:11 112 Mdn 50k 119 94 94/ 102 -3 -11 99 2 3 1 1/2 1 2 1/2 1 5 112 RosadoRJ122 L *2.40 CtrnSp ¹² AWnndSn ⁵ 3Wrlbrsfl ² 1/2 Sharp; handy fashion 9					
23Apr Kee 5f ft :59 3 B 1/36 03Apr Kee 4f ft :48 1 B 5/37 26Mar Pmm 6f ft 1:13 B 1/1 13Mar Pmm 4f ft :48 2 B 2/42 20Feb Pmm 4f ft :48 B 1/66 24Jan Pmm 4f ft :50 2 B 89/103 16Jan Pmm 5f ft :59 3 B 1/13 08Jan Pmm 5f ft 1:00 3 B 2/23 31Dec15 Pmm 4f ft :48 B 1/76 20Dec15 Pmm 4f ft :48 1 B 1/37 25Nov15 Prx 5f ft 1:00 3 B 1/14 16Nov15 Prx 5f ft :59 3 B 1/13		Ch. f. 3 OBSAPR 2015 \$130k Sire: Bellamy Road (Concerto) \$7,500 Dam: Belle Watling (Pulpit) Brdr: Jack Swain III (KY) Trnr: O'Neill Doug F (0 0-0-0 0%)		Prime Power: 139.7 (4th) Life: 8 2- 4- 1 \$472,000 97 2016 3 1- 2- 0 \$324,000 93 2015 5 1- 2- 1 \$148,000 97 CD 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 0		Fst (107) 7 1- 4- 1 \$430,000 97 Off (106) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 Dis (107) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 Trf (108) 1 1- 0- 0 \$42,000 82 AW 0 0- 0- 0 \$0		Sire Stats: AWD 7.2 20%Mud 492MudSts 1.22spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.5 17%Mud 142MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: OBSAPR 2015 \$130k (10/10) SireAvg: \$130k StudFee: \$15,000	
2016 214 14% 45% -0.40 +JKYw/S types 114 11% 44% -0.20		+2016 228 19% 45% -0.13 +JKYw/ Routes 135 20% 39% -0.25		Sire Stats: AWD 7.2 20%Mud 492MudSts 1.22spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.5 17%Mud 142MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: OBSAPR 2015 \$130k (10/10) SireAvg: \$130k StudFee: \$15,000		Sire Stats: AWD 7.2 20%Mud 492MudSts 1.22spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.5 17%Mud 142MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: OBSAPR 2015 \$130k (10/10) SireAvg: \$130k StudFee: \$15,000		Sire Stats: AWD 7.2 20%Mud 492MudSts 1.22spi Dam's Sire: AWD 7.5 17%Mud 142MudSts 2.23spi Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi SoldAt: OBSAPR 2015 \$130k (10/10) SireAvg: \$130k StudFee: \$15,000	

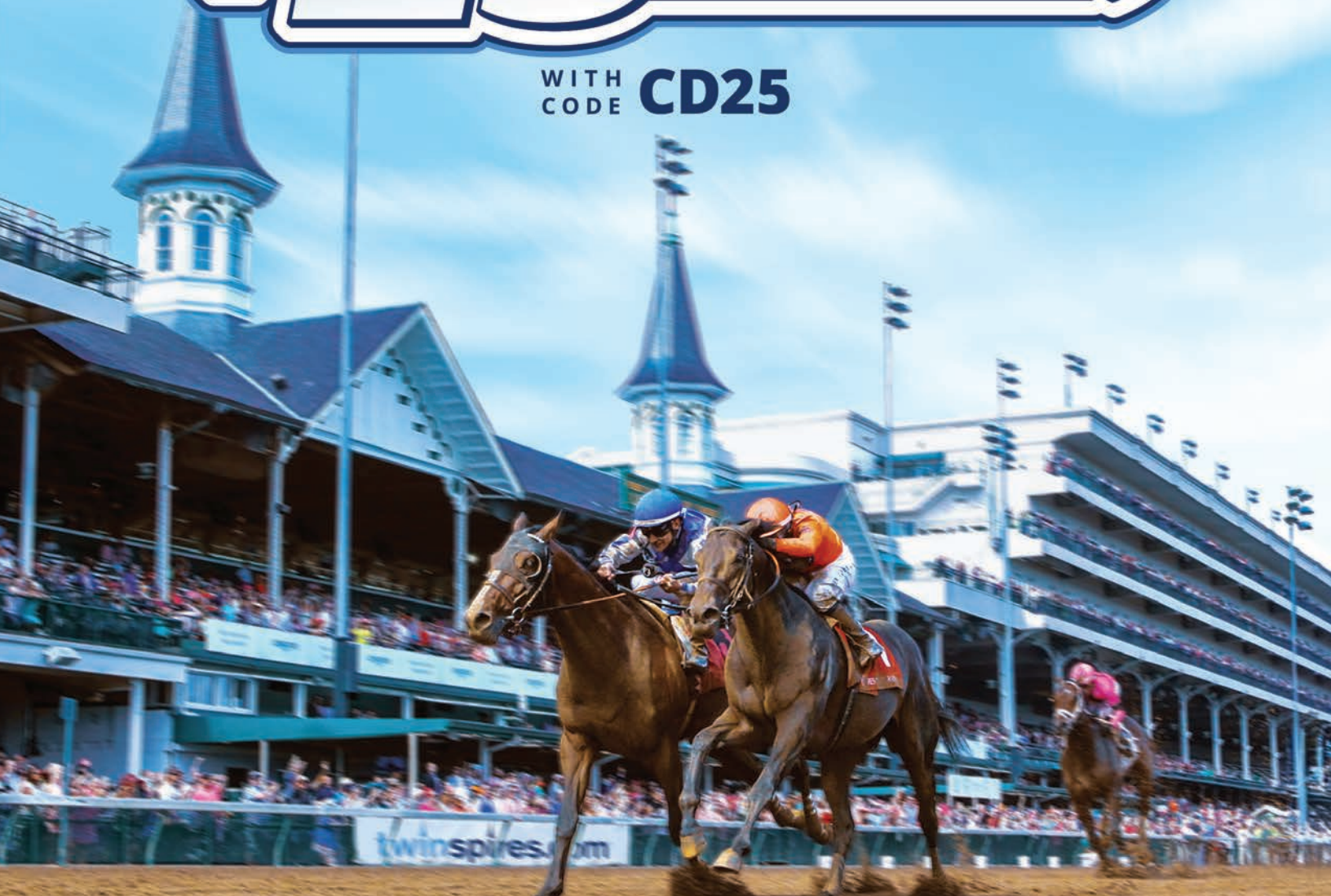
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- 2 Jockey Stats
- 3 Trainer Stats
- 4 Dam Stats
- 5 Sire Stats
- 6 Sales Stats
- 7 Horse's Pedigree, Sales & Breeding Information
- 8 BRIS Prime Power Rating
- 9 Run Style Stats
- 10 BRIS Pedigree Rating
- 11 Medication, Equipment, and Weight the Horse Will Carry
- 12 Horse's Lifetime Start Information
Owner & Jockey Silks
- 13
- 14 Positive and Negative Comments
- 15 Date of Race, Track, and Race Number
- 16 Surface, Distance, and Track Conditions
- 17 Fractional Times of Leader, Final Time, and Age Designation
- 18 BRIS Race Rating and Class Rating
- 19 Race Type
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- 21 Post Position, Placement Throughout Race, and Finish
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