

# MEET THE CONTENDERS

2026

## LOUISIANA DERBY

1



### PAVLOVIAN



TRNR: DOUG O'NEILL

**PRO:** Pressed and then beat heavy favorite in Sunland Park Derby.  
**CON:** Has several losses against softer fields.

2



### AUTOBAHN



TRNR: BRAD COX

**PRO:** Won convincingly in two-turn debut at Gulfstream.  
**CON:** Improving fast but concedes experience versus winners.

3



### CHIP HONCHO



TRNR: STEVE ASMUSSEN

**PRO:** Big run in Risen Star (G2) against Paladin; major threat.  
**CON:** Might not get as easy a trip on front end this time.

4



### UNIVERSE



TRNR: KENNY MCPEEK

**PRO:** Multiple graded-placed colt enters off a bullet 5f workout.  
**CON:** Has not developed as much as others this year.

5



### GOLDEN TEMPO



TRNR: CHERIE DEVAUX

**PRO:** Blinkers might help this talented closer stay more in touch.  
**CON:** Whether he gets sufficient pace remains to be seen.

6



### SPIRIT OF ROYAL



TRNR: DALLAS STEWART

**PRO:** Given run style, this distance should suit.  
**CON:** Hard to endorse off uncompetitive Southwest (G3) run.

7



### BLACKSMITH



TRNR: BOB BAFFERT

**PRO:** Placed in Los Alamitos Futurity (G2) before belated maiden win.  
**CON:** Speed ratings have been up and down.

8



### EASTERLY



TRNR: BRAD COX

**PRO:** Showed natural improvement to graduate second out for top barn.  
**CON:** Perhaps asking a bit much to beat them all off maiden score.

9



### EMERGING MARKET



TRNR: CHAD BROWN

**PRO:** Earned 99 Brisnet speed rating on debut; plenty fast.  
**CON:** Inexperienced and form of maiden win not recently flattered.