



THE DERBY DISPATCH

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ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES WINDS DOWN WITH BLUE GRASS, SANTA ANITA DERBY, WOOD MEMORIAL

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, April 7, 2022) – Derby fans will be on the edge of their seats Saturday afternoon as a trio of Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series events will give a more clear picture of the field for “America’s Greatest Race.”

Saturday’s Championship Series action will start at 4:45 p.m. (all times Eastern) with the \$750,000 Wood Memorial (Grade II) at Aqueduct featuring the duo of undefeated 3-year-old graded stakes winners **Early Voting** and **Morello**. A half-hour later, Grade II winner **Smile Happy** will face 11 rivals in the \$1 million Blue Grass (GI) at Keeneland. The action will close at approximately 5:30 p.m. when the speedy two-time Grade II winner **Forbidden Kingdom** takes on runaway 15-length Robert B. Lewis (GIII) champ **Messier** in the \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (GI).

All three races will award the top four finishers points on a 100-40-20-10 scale toward qualification to the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) on Saturday, May 7.

Fans can wager on all three races on www.TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby. The trio of stakes will be broadcast on NBC from 4:30-6 p.m.

SMILE HAPPY TABBED AS 9-5 FAVORITE IN \$1 MILLION BLUE GRASS – **Lucky Seven Stable’s** \$400,000 Kentucky Jockey Club (Grade II) winner **Smile Happy** was made the early 9-5 favorite against 11 rivals as he attempts to stamp himself as one of the top choices for this year’s Kentucky Derby (GI) in Saturday’s \$1 million Blue Grass (GI) at Keeneland.

The 98th running of the Blue Grass will go as Race 9 of 11 at 5:15 p.m. First post is 12:30 p.m. The Blue Grass will be televised on NBC from 4:30-6 p.m. and fans can wager on www.TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby. The Blue Grass will award a total of 170 qualifying points to the top four finishers on a 100-40-20-10 scale toward a spot in the starting gate in the Run for the Roses.

Smile Happy, trained by **Kenny McPeck**, made his 3-year-old debut in the \$400,000 Risen Star (GII) at Fair Grounds where he closed from five lengths off the early pace to finish second behind top Kentucky Derby contender **Epicenter**. Smile Happy will be ridden by **Corey Lanerie**, who was aboard the colt for his victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club.

Another top contender in the Blue Grass is **Jeff Drown’s** Risen Star third-place finisher **Zandon**. Trained by **Chad Brown**, Zandon finished a half-length behind Smile Happy in the Risen Star after encountering trouble at the start. The son of Upstart will be ridden by **Flavien Prat** from post 4.

Here’s the complete field for the Blue Grass from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Commandperformance** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Todd Peltcher, 12-1); **Fenwick** (Paco Lopez, Kevin McKathan, 20-1); **Trademark** (Rafael Bejarano, Vicki Oliver, 30-1); Zandon (Prat, Brown, 5-2); **Volcanic** (Adam Beschizza, Mark Casse, 20-1); **Emmanuel** (Luis Saez, Todd Pletcher, 5-1); **Golden Glider** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Mark Casse, 20-1); **Ethereal Road** (Luis Contreras, D. Wayne Lukas, 15-1); **Rattle N Roll** (Brian Hernandez Jr., McPeck, 8-1); Smile Happy (Lanerie, McPeck, 9-5); and **Blackadder** (Florent Geroux, Rodolphe Brisset, 20-1); **Grantham** (Tyler Gaffalione, Mike Maker, 15-1).

SPEEDY FORBIDDEN KINGDOM FACES MESSIER IN SANTA ANITA DERBY – MyRaceHorse and Spendthrift Farm's speedy two-time Grade II winner **Forbidden Kingdom** is set to battle 15-length Robert B. Lewis (GIII) champ **Messier** in Saturday's \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (GI).

The 1 1/8-mile Santa Anita Derby will go as Race 6 of 12 with a post time of 5:30 p.m. The Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series race will award the top four finishing horses points on a 100-40-20-10 scale towards a spot in the starting gate on the first Saturday in May.

Forbidden Kingdom, trained by Hall of Famer **Richard Mandella**, drew post No. 4 for the Santa Anita Derby. The son of American Pharoah won his last two starts, the \$200,000 San Vicente (GII) and \$400,000 San Felipe (GII), in front-running fashion. The chestnut colt will be ridden by **Juan Hernandez** at morning line odds of 6-5.

Drawn one post to his outside is **SF Racing, Starling Racing, Madaket Stables, Robert Masterson, Jay Schoenfarber, Waves Edge Capital, Catherine Donovan, Golconda Stable** and **Siena Farm's** \$200,000 Robert B. Lewis winner **Messier**. Now trained by **Tim Yakteen**, **Messier** became one of Southern California's top 3-year-old prospects as a juvenile when he won the \$100,000 Bob Hope (GIII) at Del Mar and followed that with a one-length runner-up finish to **Slow Down Andy** in the \$300,000 Los Alamitos Futurity (GII). The Empire Maker colt dominated his 3-year-old bow in the Robert B. Lewis. **Messier** will be ridden by **John Velazquez** and was made the even-money morning line favorite by oddsmaker **Jon White**.

Here's the complete field for the Santa Anita Derby in order of post position (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Happy Jack** (Abel Cedillo, Doug O'Neill, 20-1); **Armagnac** (Drayden VanDyke, Yakteen, 20-1); **Forbidden Kingdom** (Hernandez, Mandella, 6-5); **Messier** (Velazquez, Yakteen, even); **Win the Day** (Umberto Rispoli, O'Neill, 20-1); and **Taiba** (Mike Smith, Yakteen, 4-1).

Fans can wager on the Santa Anita Derby at www.TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby. The race will be shown NBC as part of a 90-minute broadcast from 4:30-6 p.m. which also features the \$1 million Blue Grass and \$750,000 Wood Memorial.

UNDEFEATED GRADED STAKES WINNERS EARLY VOTING, MORELLO CLASH IN GRADE II WOOD MEMORIAL – Undefeated graded stakes winning colts **Early Voting** and **Morello** will clash against six other 3-year-old rivals in Saturday's \$750,000 Wood Memorial (Grade II) at Aqueduct.

The 1 1/8-mile Wood Memorial, which offers points on a 100-40-20-10 scale towards the Kentucky Derby (GI), will go as Race 8 of 11 with a post time of 4:45 p.m.

Klaravich Stables' Early Voting, who is undefeated in two starts, drew post No. 3 in the Wood Memorial. Trained by **Chad Brown**, **Early Voting** was a front-running 4 1/2-length winner of the \$250,000 Withers (GIII) in early February. A son of former Horse of the Year Gun Runner, **Early Voting** will attempt to give New York-based Brown his first victory in the Wood Memorial.

"He went first time around two turns and he passed the test well," Brown said. "He definitely gained experience and he appears to be training well. He prefers to be forwardly placed, so hopefully he'll be there again."

Early Voting will be ridden by 2019 Wood Memorial-winning jockey **Jose Ortiz**.

Diamond T Racing, Blue Lion Thoroughbreds and **Craig Taylor's** \$300,000 Gotham (GIII) winner **Morello** will put his unbeaten streak on the line Saturday from post 5. Trained by Hall of Famer **Steve Asmussen**, **Morello** has steadily progressed in distance since his six-furlong debut in late November at Aqueduct. In his next start, the son of Classic Empire won the \$100,000 Jimmy Winkfield at seven furlongs before winning the one-mile Gotham. **Morello** will once again be ridden by **Jose Lezcano**.

Here's the field for the Wood Memorial from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Mo Donegal** (Joel Rosario, Todd Pletcher); **Golden Code** (Kendrick Carmouche, Pletcher); **Early Voting** (Ortiz, Brown); **Long Term** (Javier Castellano, Pletcher); **Morello** (Lezcano, Asmussen); **Skippylongstocking** (Junior Alvarado, Saffie Joseph Jr.); and **A. P.'s Secret** (Manny Franco, Joseph); **Barese** (Dylan Davis, Mike Maker).

Fans can wager on the Wood Memorial at www.TwinSpires.com, the official wagering provider of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby. The Wood Memorial will be the opening race broadcast on NBC from 4:30-6 p.m. The broadcast will also feature the \$1 million Blue Grass and \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby.

CYBERKNIFE, WHITE ABARRIO, TIZ THE BOMB VAULT INTO DERBY CONTENTION – Following Saturday’s trio of Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series races, Arkansas Derby (GI) winner **Cyberknife**, Florida Derby (GI) winner **White Abarrio** and Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII) winner **Tiz the Bomb** are all headed to the first Saturday in May.

Here is the updated leaderboard with four races remaining on the Road to the Kentucky Derby:

<u>Horse</u>	<u>Trainer</u>	<u>Resume</u>	<u>Possible Next Start</u>	<u>Points</u>
Epicenter	Steve Asmussen	1 st – Louisiana Derby 1 st – Risen Star 1 st – Gun Runner 2 nd – Lecomte	May 7: Kentucky Derby	164
White Abarrio	Saffie Joseph Jr	1 st – Florida Derby 1 st – Holy Bull 3 rd – Kentucky Jockey Club	May 7: Kentucky Derby	112
Tiz the Bomb	Kenny McPeck	1 st – Jeff Ruby Steaks 1 st – John Battaglia Memorial	May 7: Kentucky Derby	110
Cyberknife	Brad Cox	1 st – Arkansas Derby	May 7: Kentucky Derby	100
Crown Pride (JPN)	Koichi Shintani	1 st – UAE Derby	May 7: Kentucky Derby	100
Simplification	Antonio Sano	1 st – Fountain of Youth 2 nd – Holy Bull 3 rd – Florida Derby	May 7: Kentucky Derby	74
Classic Causeway	Brian Lynch	1 st – Tampa Bay Derby 1 st – Sam F. Davis 2 nd – Ky Jockey Club 3 rd – Breeders’ Futurity	April 9: Blue Grass	66
Slow Down Andy	Doug O’Neill	1 st – Sunland Derby 1 st – Los Alamitos Futurity	May 7: Kentucky Derby	60
Barber Road	John Ortiz	2 nd – Arkansas Derby 2 nd – Smarty Jones 2 nd – Southwest 3 rd – Rebel	May 7: Kentucky Derby	58
Un Ojo	Ricky Courville	1 st – Rebel 2 nd – Withers	May 7: Kentucky Derby	54
Forbidden Kingdom	Richard Mandella	1 st – San Felipe	April 9: Santa Anita Derby	50
Morello	Steve Asmussen	1 st – Gotham	April 9: Wood Memorial	50
\$- Summer Is Tomorrow	Bhupat Seemar	2 nd – UAE Derby	May 7: Kentucky Derby	40
Charge It	Todd Pletcher	2 nd – Florida Derby	May 7: Kentucky Derby	40
Tawny Port	Brad Cox	2 nd – Jeff Ruby Steaks	May 7: Kentucky Derby	40
Smile Happy	Kenny McPeck	1 st – Ky Jockey Club 2 nd – Risen Star	April 9: Blue Grass	30
Pioneer of Medina	Todd Pletcher	3 rd – Louisiana Derby 4 th – Risen Star	TBA	25
Grantham	Mike Maker	2 nd – Tampa Bay Derby 4 th – Withers	April 9: Blue Grass	21
Rich Strike	Eric Reed	3 rd – Jeff Ruby Steaks	TBA	20

\$ - Late Triple Crown nominee

LOUISIANA DERBY WINNER EPICENTER MADE 5-1 FAVORITE IN FINAL DERBY FUTURE WAGER POOL – Fans will have the final pari-mutuel opportunity to bet on this year’s Kentucky Derby in advance of the May 7 race beginning Thursday at noon (all times Eastern) through Saturday at 4:30 p.m. for Pool 5 of the Kentucky Derby Future Wager (“KDFW”).

Pool 5 of the KDFW features 24 betting interests and the 5-1 early morning line favorite is **Winchell Thoroughbreds’ \$1 million TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (Grade II) winner Epicenter**.

Unlike the previous three-day Kentucky Derby Future Wager opportunities, Pool 5 will feature an early start on Thursday and will close Saturday at 4:30 p.m. prior to the first Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series event held that day.

Nine individual betting interests in Saturday’s pool are expected to run in that day’s \$1 million Blue Grass (GI), \$750,000 Santa Anita Derby (GI) and \$750,000 Wood Memorial (GI).

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Betting for Pool 5 of the KDFW is available at simulcast centers throughout the country as well as most wagering platforms, including www.TwinSpires.com, the official ADW of the Kentucky Derby and Churchill Downs.

Epicenter stamped himself as the early Kentucky Derby favorite with an authoritative 2 ½-length score in the Louisiana Derby. The **Steve Asmussen** trainee was offered in each of the first four KDFW pools and closed at 52-1 in Pool 1, which closed Nov. 28. Over the next three months, bettors quickly began to take notice of Epicenter's Kentucky Derby potential as he closed at odds of 24-1 in Pools 2 and 3 and 13-1 in Pool 4.

One of the other top betting choices in Pool 5 of the KDFW is **Lucky Seven Stable's** \$400,000 Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) winner **Smile Happy**. The Runhappy colt, trained by **Kenny McPeck**, is the 9-5 morning line favorite in Saturday's Blue Grass at Keeneland.

Here is the complete field for Pool 5 of the KDFW (with trainer and morning line odds): #1 **Barber Road** (John Ortiz, 50-1); #2 **Charge It** (Todd Pletcher, 12-1); #3 **Crown Pride (JPN)** (Koichi Shintani, 50-1); #4 **Cyberknife** (Brad Cox, 12-1); #5 **Early Voting** (Chad Brown, 20-1); #6 **Emmanuel** (Todd Pletcher, 20-1); #7 **Epicenter** (Steve Asmussen, 5-1); #8 **Ethereal Road** (D. Wayne Lukas, 50-1); #9 **Forbidden Kingdom** (Richard Mandella, 8-1); #10 **In Due Time** (Kelly Breen, 50-1); #11 **Messier** (Tim Yakteen, 8-1); #12 **Mo Donegal** (Todd Pletcher, 20-1); #13 **Morello** (Steve Asmussen, 20-1); #14 **Pioneer of Medina** (Todd Pletcher, 30-1); #15 **Simplification** (Antonio Sano, 15-1); #16 **Slow Down Andy** (Doug O'Neill, 50-1); #17 **Smile Happy** (Kenny McPeck, 6-1); #18 **Summer Is Tomorrow** (Bhupat Seemar, 50-1); #19 **Tawny Port** (Brad Cox, 50-1); #20 **Tiz the Bomb** (Kenny McPeck, 12-1); #21 **White Abarrio** (Saffie Joseph Jr, 8-1); #22 **Zandon** (Chad Brown, 20-1); #23 **Zozos** (Brad Cox, 30-1); and #24 **"All Other 3-Year-Olds"** (15-1)

More information, Brisnet.com past performances, and real-time odds are available at www.kentuckyderby.com/futurewager.

DOWN THE STRETCH

Grade II winner **Nest** headlines a field of eight 3-year-old fillies in Friday's \$600,000 Ashland (GI) at Keeneland. The Ashland will award the top 4 finishers points on a 100-40-20-10 scale toward the \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI). The Ashland will be the featured ninth race at 5:16 p.m. ...

Top California-based filly **Adare Manor** tops a field of five that entered the \$400,000 Santa Anita Oaks (GII). The race, which offers 100 points to the winner, 40 to the runner-up, 20 for third and 10 for fourth toward the Kentucky Oaks, has a post time of 4:30 p.m. ...

Busher Invitational winner **Venti Valentine** heads a field of eight 3-year-old fillies entered in Saturday's \$250,000 Gazelle (GIII), a Championship Series race on the Road to the Kentucky Oaks. The Gazelle will offer 170 total points to the top 4 finishers on a 100-40-20-10 scale. The 1 1/8-mile Gazelle goes as Race 11 at 5:55 p.m. ...

Gold Mark's Arkansas Derby winner **Cyberknife** arrived Wednesday morning at Churchill Downs to begin his Derby preparation. Cyberknife is stabled in trainer Brad Cox's Barn 22 along with Derby-bound stablemates **Tawny Port** and **Zozos**. ...

Winchell Thoroughbreds' Epicenter is scheduled to work Sunday at Churchill Downs for the first time since his TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby victory. The second-place finisher in the Louisiana Derby, **Zozos**, is slated to work Saturday, according to their respective connections. ...

Briland Farm's multiple graded stakes winner **Secret Oath** returned to trainer **D. Wayne Lukas'** Barn 40 at Churchill Downs Tuesday afternoon. The Longines Kentucky Oaks-bound filly finished third in last Saturday's Arkansas Derby (GI). ...

Hall of Fame trainer **Todd Pletcher** is planning on keeping a string of horses at Churchill Downs throughout the spring and summer. Pletcher will be stabled in Barn 35. Another trainer that plans to keep a large presence of horses at Churchill Downs is **Chad Brown**. His horses will be stabled in Barn 25. ...

Trainer **Mark Casse** confirmed Florida Derby (GI) fourth-place finisher **Pappacap** would target the \$500,000 Pat Day Mile presented by LG&E and KU (GII). ...

Arkansas Derby (GI) runner-up **Barber Road** will stay at Oaklawn for about a week before he returns to Churchill Downs, according to trainer **John Ortiz**. ...

UAE Derby (GII) winner **Crown Pride (JPN)** will remain stabled in one of Churchill Downs' Quarantine barns until the Kentucky Derby. The colt typically trains at 7:40 a.m. ...

The owners of the iconic Louisville restaurant **Wagner's Pharmacy** will now operate the Churchill Downs Track Kitchen. The track kitchen will open in the coming days to those with a Kentucky Horse Racing Commission license. ...

Training hours at Churchill Downs are 5:30-10 a.m. with two track renovation breaks from 7-7:30 a.m. and 8:30-9 a.m. The exclusive 15-minute window for Kentucky Derby and Oaks horses from 7:30-7:45 a.m. will begin Saturday, April 23. ...

Jockey **Umberto Rispoli**, one of the top riders in Southern California, will shift his tack to Churchill Downs for the upcoming Spring Meet. Rispoli, a native of Italy, was a member of the Hong Kong Jockey Club before moving to the U.S. in 2019. ...

The Road to the Kentucky Oaks will close Sunday at Keeneland for the seven-furlong, \$400,000 Beaumont. The race will award the top four finishers points on a 10-4-2-1 scale.

After this weekend, the Road to the Kentucky Derby will conclude with the \$400,000 Lexington (GIII) over 1 1/16 miles at Keeneland. Points will be awarded on a 20-8-4-2 scale. Known possible starters (with trainer): **Bye Bye Bobby** (Todd Fincher); **Call Me Midnight** (Keith Desormeaux); and **Dash Attack** (Kenny McPeck).

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack ("CDRT"), the world's most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The saddling paddock and the stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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