



THE DERBY DISPATCH

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ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY CONCLUDES WITH LEXINGTON STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, April 11, 2024) – Just one race remains on the Road to the Kentucky Derby, the \$400,000 Lexington Stakes (Grade III) run on Saturday at Keeneland.

Throughout the last seven months, the field for this year's 150th running of the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) took shape and, on Saturday, some horses running in the Lexington could garner enough points to qualify for this year's race.

Hades, the upset winner of the Holy Bull Stakes (GIII), currently has 30 qualifying points on the Road to the Kentucky Derby and would need to win the Lexington to make the top 20 point earners. Another potential Kentucky Derby contender could be **Encino**, who has 20 qualifying points after winning the John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway. Should Encino win the Lexington, he'd earn an additional 20 points and would need at least one defection (depending on where Hades finishes) to make the field for the Kentucky Derby.

There will be a lot of moving parts throughout the next three weeks until the Kentucky Derby but Saturday's Lexington Stakes is a major part of deciding who's in and who's out of this year's field.

BREEDERS' FUTURITY RUNNER-UP THE WINE STEWARD TABBED AS 5-2 MORNING LINE FAVORITE IN SATURDAY'S LEXINGTON STAKES – **Paradise Farm Corp** and **David Staudacher's** Breeders' Futurity (Grade I) runner-up **The Wine Steward** is set to make his first start in more than six months as the 5-2 morning line favorite in Saturday's \$400,000 Lexington Stakes (GIII) at Keeneland, the final race on the Road to the Kentucky Derby.

Run at 1 1/16 miles, the Lexington will go as Race 10 with a post time of 5:48 p.m. The Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series race will award the top five finishers qualifying points on a 20-10-6-4-2 scale in their final attempt to make the field for the 150th running of the \$5 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI).

Trained by **Mike Maker**, The Wine Steward has three wins from just four lifetime starts in his young career. The talented New York-bred son of Vino Rosso finished a game second to **Locked** in the Breeders' Futurity (GI) at Keeneland, his first start trying two-turns. Four weeks later, The Wine Steward was scheduled to compete in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) but bypassed the race with a minor issue. The Wine Steward returned to Maker's base at Gulfstream Park early this winter to begin preparing for his return.

Another top contender that entered the Lexington is **DJ Stable** and **Robert Cotran's Hades**. The winner of the Holy Bull (GIII) in January, Hades would secure his spot in the starting gate for the Kentucky Derby with a victory in the Lexington. The speedy son of Awesome Slew will be ridden for the first time by **Jose Ortiz**.

Another colt attempting to qualify for the Kentucky Derby is **Godolphin's Encino**. The homebred son of Nyquist was victorious six weeks ago in the John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway Park, earning 20 qualifying points on the Road to the Kentucky Derby. The Lexington will be Encino's first start on dirt.

Tabbed as a 15-1 longshot, **Secret Chat** will break from the rail under **Joel Rosario** for trainer **Roderick Rodriguez**. He's followed in post position order by (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds) The Wine Steward (Luis Saez, Maker, 5-2); **Dilger** (Tyler Gaffalione, Saffie Joseph Jr., 12-1); **Footprint** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Kenny McPeck, 10-1); Hades (Ortiz, Orseno, 7-2); **How's Ur Attitude** (Adam Beschizza, John Ennis, 30-1); **Everdoit** (Axel Concepcion, Kevin Rice, 30-1); Encino (Florent Geroux, Brad Cox, 5-1); **Liberal Arts** (Irad Ortiz Jr., Robbie Medina, 4-1); and **Lucky Jeremy** (Gerardo Corrales, Bill Morey, 8-1).

SIERRA LEONE CLINCHES TOP SPOT ON ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY – Following his victory in Saturday’s Blue Grass Stakes (Grade I), **Sierra Leone** clinched the top spot on the Road to the Kentucky Derby leaderboard with 155 qualifying points.

Only Saturday’s Lexington Stakes (GIII) remains on the Road to the Kentucky Derby to decide the field for the first Saturday in May.

Here are the top 24 horses on the Road to the Kentucky Derby Leaderboard:

Rank	Horse	Trainer	Arrival Date	Current Location	RTKD Points
1	Sierra Leone	Chad Brown	Week of April 21	Keeneland	155
2	Fierceness	Todd Pletcher	TBD	Palm Beach Downs	136
3	Catching Freedom	Brad Cox	March 25	Churchill Downs	125
4	Stronghold	Phil D'Amato	TBD	Santa Anita	125
5	Resilience	Bill Mott	April 9	Churchill Downs	110
6	Forever Young (JPN)	Yoshito Yahagi	Week of April 14	Meydan	100
7	Endlessly	Michael McCarthy	March 23	Churchill Downs	100
8	Dornoch	Danny Gargan	April 10	Churchill Downs	60
9	Just a Touch	Brad Cox	April 7	Churchill Downs	75
10	Track Phantom	Steve Asmussen	March 27	Churchill Downs	70
11	West Saratoga	Larry Demeritte	TBD	Thoroughbred Center	67
12	Just Steel	Wayne Lukas	TBD	Oaklawn	65
13	Honor Marie	Whit Beckman	March 27	Churchill Downs	65
14	Domestic Product	Chad Brown	Week of April 21	Payson Park	60
15	Catalytic	Saffie Joseph Jr.	TBD	Gulfstream Park	50
16	Deterministic	Christophe Clement	TBD	Aqueduct	50
17	Society Man	Danny Gargan	April 10	Churchill Downs	50
18	Mystik Dan	Kenny McPeek	April 7	Churchill Downs	46
19	No More Time	Jose D'Angelo	Week of April 14	Palm Meadows	45
20	T O Password (JPN)	Daisuke Takayanagi	April 25	Nakayama	Japan RTKD Invite
AE 21	Grand Mo the First	Victor Barboza Jr.	TBD	Gulfstream Park	40
AE 22	Common Defense	Kenny McPeek	March 28	Churchill Downs	37
AE 23	Epic Ride	John Ennis	TBD	Thoroughbred Center	35
AE 24	Hades	Joe Orseno	TBD	Gulfstream Park	30

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UPCOMING WORK TAB – It will be a busy work tab Saturday and Sunday at Churchill Downs with several Kentucky Derby and Longines Kentucky Oaks contenders scheduled to have breezes.

Nearly two inches of rain fell in Louisville on Wednesday and Thursday causing the track to be “sloppy” during training hours and making trainers slightly alter their work plans.

On Saturday, Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII) winner **Endlessly** is scheduled to breeze at 5:30 a.m. ET. About two hours later, Louisiana Derby (GII) winner **Catching Freedom** is scheduled to work for trainer **Brad Cox**.

Sunday’s work tab is once again scheduled to feature Louisiana Derby runner-up **Honor Marie** and Risen Star (GII) runner-up **Track Phantom**.

Trainer **Kenny McPeck** reported Southwest (GIII) winner **Mystik Dan** and Rebel (GII) runner-up **Common Defense** are slated to have works this weekend.

DOWN THE STRETCH

As of Thursday morning, there were six possible Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) contenders at Churchill Downs: **Into Champagne** (Barn 26), **Just F Y I** (Barn 19), **Our Pretty Woman** (Barn 38), **Tarifa** (Barn 22), **Thorpedo Anna** (Barn 6) and **Where’s My Ring** (Barn 30).

Stakes nominations for all Kentucky Derby week races closed Wednesday. The full list of nominations will be available in the coming days. ...

The first day of the exclusive Kentucky Derby/Kentucky Oaks training window begins Saturday, April 20 from 7:30-7:45 a.m. ...

Only 23 days remain until the Kentucky Derby.

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 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 and Race and Sports Book. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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