

POST POSITIONS

A custom-made, 20-stall starting gate designed by Australian-based Steriline Racing made its debut at the 2020 Kentucky Derby. It replaced Churchill Downs' standard starting gate, made by United Pruett, which continues to be used for all other races.

Starting gates have been in use for racing at Churchill Downs since 1930, with the first closed electronically operated 14-stall starting gate introduced in 1941. A six-stall "auxiliary starting gate" addition, which was attached to the 14-horse starting gate, was first used in 1942 and 54 times for the Kentucky Derby within that period, including 22 years in a row from 1997-2019.

The starting gates allow the loading of horses into stalls through doors that are then closed behind them. At the start of a race, doors in front of the horses swing open automatically and simultaneously at the press of a button by Churchill Downs' starter Scott Jordan. The origination of a 20-stall starting gate eliminates the wide gap between post position No. 14 in the standard gate and No. 15 in the auxiliary gate.

"We believe that a new custom-made, 20-stall starting gate will deliver a clean start for all horses and enhance safety for horses and riders in the Kentucky Derby," said Mike Ziegler, Churchill Downs Racetrack General Manager.

The contiguous 20-stall starting gate is 65-feet wide and fits comfortably within the 120-foot space on the racetrack at the quarter-mile pole for the start of the Kentucky Derby.

All starting gates at Churchill Downs are outfitted with high-quality foam padding that protects both jockeys and horses from injury. This seamless padding is applied to all metal surfaces of the starting gate, including front and rear poles, face plates, handrails, superstructure, and pontoons.

Post positions shall be determined by a nontransferable lot number being drawn for each horse named as a starter at the Closing. The lot number drawn for each starter shall determine the post position of such starter. Horses having common ties through ownership or training shall each be treated separately for purposes of determining post position.

In the event of one or more scratches after the determination of post positions and prior to the Scratch Deadline, then (i) starters with post positions higher than the post position of the scratched starter will be moved to the next lowest empty post position (i.e., toward the inside rail of the race track) and (ii) the Also Eligible Horse that becomes a starter (if any) will receive the lowest post position available after the post positions of the other starters have been moved as provided above. In the event one or more scratches occur after the Scratch Deadline, no Also Eligible Horses will be permitted to start and the post positions shall be moved, without changing the order of the starters, as determined by the stewards and CDI to be in the best interests of the safety of the race participants. Post positions shall be moved for each scratch that occurs so that there are no empty post positions in-between horses at the start of the Kentucky Derby. Detailed rules governing the post-position draw process are available from the Racing Secretary's office and will be distributed prior to the Closing.

Post Positions (since the use of a starting gate in 1930):

Post	Record	Win%	ITM%	Avg. Finish	Last Winner	Last ITM	Last Top 5
1	96-8-5-5	8.3%	18.8%	8.28	Ferdinand (1986)	Lookin At Lee (2 nd , 2017)	Hit Show (5 th , 2023)
2	96-7-6-13	7.3%	27.1%	8.11	Affirmed (1978)	Sierra Leone (2 nd , 2024)	Sierra Leone (2 nd , 2024)
3	96-6-8-8	6.3%	22.9%	8.30	Mystik Dan (2024)	Mystik Dan (1 st , 2024)	Final Gambit (4 th , 2025)
4	96-5-6-4	5.2%	15.6%	8.66	Super Saver (2010)	Danza (3 rd , 2014)	Catching Freedom (4 th , 2024)
5	96-10-8-4	10.4%	22.9%	7.56	Always Dreaming (2017)	Audible (3 rd , 2018)	Improbable (4 th , 2019)
6	96-2-8-3	2.1%	13.5%	9.53	Sea Hero (1993)	Good Magic (2 nd , 2018)	O Besos (4 th , 2021)
7	95-8-7-6	8.4%	22.1%	7.95	Mandaloun (2021)	Journalism (2 nd , 2025)	Journalism (2 nd , 2025)
8	95-9-5-5	9.5%	20.0%	8.59	Mage (2023)	Mage (1 st , 2023)	Mage (1 st , 2023)
9	92-4-6-8	4.3%	19.6%	8.72	Riva Ridge (1972)	Hot Rod Charlie (2 nd , 2021)	Disarm (4 th , 2023)
10	89-9-6-11	10.1%	29.2%	7.76	Giacomo (2005)	Zandon (3 rd , 2022)	T O Password (JPN) (5 th , 2024)
11	85-2-6-4	2.4%	14.1%	9.12	Winning Colors (1988)	Forever Young (JPN) (3 rd , 2024)	Forever Young (JPN) (3 rd , 2024)
12	81-3-3-4	3.7%	12.3%	9.56	Canonero II (1971)	Angel of Empire (3 rd , 2023)	Angel of Empire (3 rd , 2023)
13	79-5-5-7	6.3%	21.5%	8.16	Nyquist (2016)	Nyquist (1 st , 2016)	Simplification (4 th , 2022)
14	69-2-6-6	2.9%	20.3%	9.23	Carry Back (1961)	Essential Quality (3 rd , 2021)	Essential Quality (3 rd , 2021)
15	64-6-2-1	9.4%	14.1%	10.08	Authentic (2020)	Authentic (1 st , 2020)	Authentic (1 st , 2020)
16	53-5-3-3	9.4%	20.8%	10.15	Sovereignty (2025)	Sovereignty (1 st , 2025)	Sovereignty (1 st , 2025)
17	46-0-1-2	0.0%	6.5%	11.28		Forty Niner (2 nd , 1988)	Don't Get Mad (4 th , 2005)
18	38-2-4-0	5.3%	15.8%	9.42	Country House (2019)	Country House (1 st , 2019)	Owen Almighty (5 th , 2025)
19	32-1-1-1	3.1%	9.4%	12.09	I'll Have Another (2012)	Baeza (3 rd , 2025)	Baeza (3 rd , 2025)
20	19-2-0-1	10.5%	15.8%	11.05	Rich Strike (2022)	Rich Strike (1 st , 2022)	Rich Strike (1 st , 2022)
21	2-0-0-0	0.0%	0.0%	13.50			
22	1-0-0-0	0.0%	0.0%	8.00			
23	1-0-0-0	0.0%	0.0%	7.00			

Post Position Winners (since the use of a starting gate in 1930):

1	8: Ferdinand (1986); Chateaugay (1963); Needles (1956); Hill Gail (1952); Citation (1948); Gallahadion (1940); Lawrin (1938); War Admiral (1937)
2	7: Affirmed (1978); Bold Forbes (1976); Cannonade (1974); Dust Commander (1970); Tim Tam (1958); Ponder (1949) Assault (1946)
3	6: Mystik Dan (2024); Real Quiet (1998); Alysheba (1987); Spectacular Bid (1979); Foolish Pleasure (1975); Shut Out (1942)
4	5: Super Saver (2010); Seattle Slew (1977); Decidedly (1962); Pensive (1944); Whirlaway (1941)
5	10: Always Dreaming (2017); California Chrome (2014); Funny Cide (2003); War Emblem (2002); Silver Charm (1997); Strike the Gold (1991); Count Fleet (1943); Johnstown (1939); Bold Venture (1936); Twenty Grand (1931)
6	2: Sea Hero (1993); Iron Liege (1957)
7	8: Mandaloun (2021); Justify (2018); Street Sense (2007); Pleasant Colony (1981); Proud Clarion (1967); Northern Dancer (1964); Determine (1954); Gallant Fox (1930)
8	9: Mage (2023); Mine That Bird (2009); Barbaro (2006); Go for Gin (1994); Unbridled (1990); Majestic Prince (1969); Lucky Debonair (1965); Swaps (1955); Cavalcade (1934)
9	4: Riva Ridge (1972); Venetian Way (1960); Tomy Lee (1959); Count Turf (1951)
10	9: Giacomo (2005); Lil E. Tee (1992); Sunday Silence (1989); Spend a Buck (1985); Sunny's Halo (1983); Genuine Risk (1980); Secretariat (1973); Dark Star (1953); Omaha (1935)
11	2: Winning Colors (1988); Brokers Tip (1933)
12	3: Canonero II (1971); Kauai King (1966); Hoop Jr. (1945)
13	4: Nyquist (2016) Smarty Jones (2004); Forward Pass (1968); Jet Pilot (1947); Burgoon King (1932)
14	2: Carry Back (1961); Middleground (1950)
15	6: Authentic (2020); American Pharoah (2015); Orb (2013); Fusaichi Pegasus (2000); Grindstone (1996); Swale (1984)
16	5: Sovereignty (2025); Animal Kingdom (2011); Monarchos (2001); Charismatic (1999); Thunder Gulch (1995)
17	0
18	2: Country House (2019); Gato Del Sol (1982)
19	1: I'll Have Another (2012)
20	2: Rich Strike (2022); Big Brown (2008)
21	0
22	0
23	0

Derby Winner	Year	Post
Sovereignty	2025	16
Mystik Dan	2024	3
Mage	2023	8
Rich Strike	2022	20
Mandaloun	2021	7
Authentic	2020	15
Country House	2019	18
Justify	2018	7
Always Dreaming	2017	5
Nyquist	2016	13
American Pharoah	2015	15
California Chrome	2014	5
Orb	2013	15
I'll Have Another	2012	19
Animal Kingdom	2011	16
Super Saver	2010	4
Mine That Bird	2009	8
Big Brown	2008	20
Street Sense	2007	7
Barbaro	2006	8
Giacomo	2005	10
Smarty Jones	2004	13
Funny Cide	2003	5
War Emblem	2002	5
Monarchos	2001	16
Fusaichi Pegasus	2000	15
Charismatic	1999	16
Real Quiet	1998	3
Silver Charm	1997	5
Grindstone	1996	15
Thunder Gulch	1995	16
Go for Gin	1994	8
Sea Hero	1993	6
Lil E. Tee	1992	10
Strike the Gold	1991	5
Unbridled	1990	8
Sunday Silence	1989	10
Winning Colors	1988	11
Alysheba	1987	3
Ferdinand	1986	1
Spend a Buck	1985	10
Swale	1984	15
Sunny's Halo	1983	10
Gato Del Sol	1982	18
Pleasant Colony	1981	7
Genuine Risk	1980	10
Spectacular Bid	1979	3
Affirmed	1978	2
Seattle Slew	1977	4
Bold Forbes	1976	2
Foolish Pleasure	1975	3
Cannonade	1974	2
Secretariat	1973	10
Riva Ridge	1972	9
Canonero II	1971	12
Dust Commander	1970	2
Majestic Prince	1969	8
Forward Pass	1968	13
Proud Clarion	1967	7
Kauai King	1966	12
Lucky Debonair	1965	8
Northern Dancer	1964	7
Chateaugay	1963	1
Decidedly	1962	4
Carry Back	1961	14
Venetian Way	1960	9
Tomy Lee-GB	1959	9
Tim Tam	1958	2
Iron Liege	1957	6
Needles	1956	1
Swaps	1955	8
Determine	1954	7
Dark Star	1953	10
Hill Gail	1952	1
Count Turf	1951	9
Middleground	1950	14
Ponder	1949	2
Citation	1948	1
Jet Pilot	1947	13
Assault	1946	2
Hoop Jr.	1945	12
Pensive	1944	4
Count Fleet	1943	5
Shut Out	1942	3
Whirlaway	1941	4

Derby Winner	Year	Post
Gallahadion	1940	1
Johnstown	1939	5
Lawrin	1938	1
War Admiral	1937	1
Bold Venture	1936	5
Omaha	1935	10
Cavalcade	1934	8
Brokers Tip	1933	11
Burgoo King	1932	13
Twenty Grand	1931	5
Gallant Fox	1930	7

Post Positions (1900-1929)

Prior to the introduction of the starting gate in 1930, horses in the Kentucky Derby were dispatched by the use of ropes, ribbon or wooden barriers.

Post	Wins	Post	Wins
1	4	11	1
2	2	12	0
3	3	13	1
4	6	14	0
5	4	15	0
6	4	16	0
7	2	17	0
8	2	18	0
9	0	19	0
10	1	20	1

Derby Winner	Year	Post
Clyde Van Dusen	1929	20
Reigh Count	1928	4
Whiskery	1927	7
Bubbling Over	1926	11
Flying Ebony	1925	6
Black Gold	1924	1
Zev	1923	10
Morvich	1922	4
Behave Yourself	1921	1
Paul Jones	1920	2
Sir Barton	1919	1
Exterminator	1918	5
Omar Khayyam-GB	1917	8
George Smith	1916	8
Regret	1915	2
Old Rosebud	1914	6
Donerail	1913	5
Worth	1912	5
Meridian	1911	5
Donau	1910	7
Wintergreen	1909	6
Stone Street	1908	4
Pink Star	1907	6
Sir Huon	1906	4
Agile	1905	1
Elwood	1904	3
Judge Himes	1903	4
Alan-a-Dale	1902	4
His Eminence	1901	3
Lieut. Gibson	1900	3