

# THE AUXILIARY GATE PODCAST

(AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY, APPLE, SOUNDCLOUD, IHEARTRADIO, YOUTUBE AND MORE)

## KENTUCKY DERBY DAY SELECTIONS FOR CHURCHILL DOWNS

**MAY 4, 2024**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Race (7-2-1-6)**

7 Culprit returns off a 10 month layoff after failing on the grass in New York and Canada. Interesting that Ward chooses to return on Derby day and legs up Johnny V. Had some decent works at Keeneland leading up to this. Think we might see the version of what this son of Justify was meant to be. 2 Pure Force debuts for Cox/Juddmonte and comes into this with a strong series of works in tow. 1 Evan On Earth has faced Mystik Dan, Doncho, and Just a Touch in his first 3 starts. Doesn't seem to be anything in here like that, so he should enjoy the class relief. Outworked multiple stakes winner Bango recently.

-CC Broaddus

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Race (6/10-2-1)**

There is a standout that I will be heavily relying on that makes her 3rd start on the form cycle and coming out of the Doubledogdare stakes at Kee where she was the favorite but placing in the minors – Scylla the 6 for Juddmonte and Bill Mott-trained. Horse sat off the pace last out and stayed on – this horse is lightly raced and should have a big campaign ahead of her for 2024.

I thought 10, Secret Statement could run at this level proving it last Year at Churchill on November 1st. She has time off and making her first start of 2024 with good consistent works.

Underneath I like 2, Zawish, again coming off a break and just okay morning works but has run with this company and has experience at CD. Last time she came back from a rest, she placed at a big price...expect a good effort today.

#1 Navy Goat gets top rider Tyler G and returns to dirt for the first time since September of 2023 and has been working well at Turfway Park.

-Brandon Jagers

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Race (3-1-11)**

3 Elephants Ear was shuffled back early then forced wide the whole way, but still found a way to break his maiden on 4/6 at Keeneland. He can win right back at a nice number with another reasonable step forward. #1 Cartucho could not have been any more impressive winning his debut, easily looping the field after not breaking very well. Should have no issue with the added distance. #11 Mindframe ran very fast in his 13 length debut victory, but was driven out and will likely be overbet based on speed figures and connections.

-Geoff Riggs

### **4<sup>th</sup> Race (6-1-7-10-11)**

#### **The Knicks Go**

Knicks Go was previously trained by the local boy, Brad Cox, and he has a very good actor in this one, 6, Best Actor with leading rider, Flavian Prat aka FlavoMan. Expect this cut back in distance to be just what the trainer ordered and a tough one to beat since last out late March. Right next to him is Kupuna, #7, the son of Hard Spun blasted off last out at Evangeline Downs drawing away, all in hand last out. Really like this one at a price especially off that last effort. Two others I think that will also be competitive from barns that are heating up are the 10 Five Star General and 11 Oscar Eclipse with Jose Ortiz.

A special mention goes to 1 Strong Quality for conditioner Mark Casse. This horse primarily raced on Turf and is coming to the dirt with speed and pace setting form...if the horse takes to the dirt, watch out.

-Brandon Jagers

### **5<sup>th</sup> Race (4-8-5)**

#### **The Twin Spires Turf Sprint**

#4 Motorious was absolutely flying in this race last year to finish second vs. eventual Breeder's Cup Turf Sprint winner, Nobals who broke like a shot from the rail. He validated that race in two subsequent starts and despite the layoff, should get first run on the deep closers under his main guy, Flavian Prat. #8 Mischief Magic is a BC Turf Sprint winner himself, and will be charging hard down the lane and looms the legit main threat. At 20-1, #5 Mo Stash could find himself the beneficiary of trip & pace under the aggressive Luis Saez and is the long shot to watch in this field.

-Alan Schneider

## **6<sup>th</sup> Race (10-9-7)**

### **Derby City Distaff**

10 Vahva ran well in 1<sup>st</sup> start off the bench for great outfit. Should be ready to move forward in start 2 of 4 year old campaign. Gets speed to run at and should get the perfect setup to get her Grade 1. 9 Red Carpet Ready landed on the lead last time and that's not where you need to be with a filly like Alva Starr in the field. She needs to be stalking early and try to make her run around the turn. 7 Alva Starr showed a new dimension last time by stalking the early pace of Red Carpet Ready. There's probably even more speed in this spot and it's certainly possible that she comes up wanting in the lane. Regardless, she's a speedy, gritty filly.

-CC Broaddus

## **7<sup>th</sup> Race (11/9/2)**

### **Churchill Distaff Turf Mile**

11 Coppice (GB) is a European import for Juddmonte and they usually campaign some good ones. Of all the great fillies that Chad Brown trains, he chooses this one to represent him here. Has faced some unreal competition in Europe – Inspiral, Nashua, Via Sistina, etc. Presence of all time great jockey, Frankie Dettori, just adds to the appeal. Will be my single in many wagers.

9 Not So Close has good early speed and turns back in distance to the mile. Should be the lone speed here with the scratch of 8 Heavenly Sunday. Think she's an exciting proposition at 20-1.

2 Walkathon is 2 for 3 at Churchill. She's fit for this and should sit a perfect pocket trip under Brian Hernandez, Jr.

-CC Broaddus

## **8<sup>th</sup> Race (3-8-12)**

### **Pat Day Mile**

Two things stand out in this contest A) this race didn't come up near as strong as everybody thought it would and B) the pace is going to be nuclear early. If that is indeed the case, then I'll tab 3 Northern Flame to run them down in the lane backing out of Derby preps. On 4/20 he had a nice work with Derby contender Mystik Dan and held his own. He'll be a big price. 8 Top Conor was so well-regarded, he was entered into the Blue Grass Stakes in his 2<sup>nd</sup> start. After setting a blistering pace, he wilted to be well-beaten. If he can relax early here, he should have every chance late. 12 Nash is another one that should be coming late. He finally landed his first stakes win last time at Oaklawn and has a win over this Churchill Downs dirt.

-CC Broaddus

### **9<sup>th</sup> Race (12-7-6/14,5,10)**

#### **American Turf Stakes**

One of my all time favorite grass horses (besides Wise Dan), Divisdero won this race twice years ago and returns with his offspring siring the 12, Abrumar for the Ramsey Family and bred by Brereton Jones. Saffie Joseph trains and Paco Lopez retains the mount. I think this horse has a chance and has won at this distance with only 4 starts – 3 are wins. A west coast shipper also draws my attention, #7 Stay Hot. From a small barn and a jockey by the name of Antonia Fresu...could be the biggest win of his career. Horse started in the most prestigious two-year-old race in Breeders Cup and gave a good effort beaten by 5 lengths and placing 10th. The horse has come back to win its last 3 starts and I expect a strong effort here...could be distance challenged. Staying in the mid pack, #6 Neat. Winner of the Grade 3 Transylvania last out by a nose on yielding turf, I like this horse coming off the pace and closing. I have seen many close this early meet on the turf at CD just yesterday. Other honorable mentions and probably favored by the public but tough post is Agate Road number 14 who has not won since 2023 and # 5 Legend of Time for big time turf trainer, Charlie Appleby.

Trying to beat the Favorites

-Brandon Jagers

### **10<sup>th</sup> Race (1-10-4/3,2)**

#### **Churchill Downs Stakes**

Incredibly difficult race that features what could be a vulnerable favorite with 11 Hoist the Gold. Taking a stab with 1 Raise Cain, who is very efficient at this 7 furlong distance. He's fast enough to stay close to what could be a tepid early tempo. Needed the last effort and should be ready for a progressively better effort here. 10 Gun Pilot is in career form for trainer Asmussen. Had a cup of coffee on the Derby trail last spring before eventually going to the sidelines. He's returned as a better horse and looks ready to threaten at this level. 4. Mr. Wireless showed a new dimension when demolishing an allowance field at the Fair Grounds last time. If he duplicates that effort here, he should be tough in the lane.

-CC Broaddus

## **11<sup>th</sup> Race (6/11-3)**

### **Old Forester Bourbon Turf Classic**

Race 11 Old Forester Bourbon Turf

Simply put, #6 I'm Very Busy has been in superb form in 2024. He followed up a troubled near miss against world-class runner Warm Heart in Florida with a resounding triumph in the Muniz Memorial in Louisiana (with a wide draw to boot) and looks poised to capture this Grade 1 event.

Stablemate #5 Program Trading is coming off a layoff, but also looks primed for a big effort as does #11 Naval Power the always dangerous Charlie Appleby. #3 Cellist is in and out, but his last race was impressive and could be a threat at big odds, but I'm Very Busy is the solid pick for the win.

-Alan Schneider

## **12<sup>th</sup> Race (4-11/14-5)**

### **KENTUCKY DERBY**

4 CATCHING FREEDOM lands as my top selection. The later runner will need the set up, and it looks like he'll get it with plenty of pace signed on that should ensure fast enough early fractions closers need to do their thing. His final fraction times are among the fastest. He did that at 9.5f last time out and handled it fine. So, the extra 1/16 of a mile should pose no problem. Closers always present a tricky proposition because of the traffic they have to navigate to get through and make their run. This one has one of the best pilots to do it, and if he gets the trip, he rates a big chance to take it all.

11 FOREVER YOUNG ranks just behind as my second choice. I typically downgrade the UAE Derby winner for various reasons, including the travel, field quality and just a track record of underperforming after a lot of hype. This year seems different. First, more and more Japanese bred and based horses have been competing in that race. A Japanese bred and based horses are on a collision course with a Kentucky Derby. The only variable is time. Second, the boy that cried wolf finally seems to have chased the hype away. The great grandson of SUNDAY SILENCE comes in with the least amount of fanfare for a UAE Derby winner in awhile. He had the same post position that last race, broke sharp, settled mid-pack wide and pounced. He should get a similar trip here and then it's if he's good enough. He also boasts some of the fastest final fractions of the field.

### **Honorable Mentions**

14 ENDLESSLY impressively and professionally won the Jeff Ruby's Steaks with some of the fastest final fractions in the field. He's another one that will be coming off the pace, and it looks like he'll get the set up he needs. His pedigree suggests he'll have the stamina. The big

question: can he translate his turf and synthetic form to dirt? Don't be surprised if it does, and if it does, he can win this race.

5 CATALYTIC made a big speed figure jump in his last race, the Florida Derby, which was only his third career race. That suggests he may be improving rapidly and ready to take another big step forward. Next, he has impressed me the most of any horse in the mornings when going out and watching training. He glides over the surface. I would not be surprised to see him run a big race, but I don't see him winning as he does lack the necessary seasoning.

Fading

FIERCENESS presents a risky proposition as the favorite. It's his race to lose. If he breaks clean and running and secures good position going into the first turn, the race is likely over. However, in previous races, when faced with adversity, he's thrown in the towel. The likelihood that he'll experience some type of adversity (bad break, rough start or not getting the lead or close to the lead going into the first turn for whatever reason) in this 20 horse field is high enough to make the odds you'll get a bad betting proposition.

SIERRA LEONE's performances are not as fast as they appear to be. His Blue Grass Stakes final fractions are some of the slower ones in the field. Many think the 10f won't be an issue, but I don't necessarily see it in his pedigree, especially on the dam side.

Usable in Trifectas and Superfectas

MYSTIK DAN, JUST STEEL, HONOR MARIE, DOMESTIC PRODUCT and FIERCENESS

-Will Nefzger

### **13<sup>th</sup> Race (2-7-9/13-11-1)**

2 Discreet Mischief dominated a decent field of maidens at Keeneland last time and earned a huge speed figure to boot. He looks like he could land in stakes company soon. 7 Jefferson Street also ran a big number in his blowout win at Keeneland. Don't think he beat as much as the top choice, but he has a bright future nonetheless. 9 General Partner makes his first start since finishing far behind Derby favorite Fierceness in the Breeders Cup. Could need a race but he's talented enough to make his presence felt late in the game, especially if the track comes up muddy.

-CC Broaddus

### **14<sup>th</sup> Race (12-2-8-1)**

If you've made this far into the marathon card, you deserve a nice-priced winner, and hopefully 12 Timeout will be just that. He closed rapidly late on a speed-favoring surface at Keeneland to nap second vs a runaway favored winner. The amount of lengths beaten will make him a square price, but there does appear to be real talent here in a talent-laden field. 2 Gun Party Just

missed against the highly regarded Cornishman and will be tough to beat. 8 D'Oro Unbridled put in a strong effort in the common race with Timeout in his debut and will appreciate more ground at a nice price. Morning Line favorite #1 Dive Bomber should be tough, but draws the rail and returns from a layoff, so we'll try to beat him.

-Alan Schneider