

~ *Run for the Roses* ~

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KENTUCKY DERBY

&

KENTUCKY OAKS

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AI WAGERING INTELLIGENCE

Churchill Downs · Louisville, Kentucky

Saturday, May 2, 2026 · Post Time 6:57 PM ET

Featuring all 14 races on the Derby Day card

The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports

Last Updated: 5/1/26 · 9:42 PM PDT

Welcome to Derby Day 2026

A complete handicapping guide for the 14-race Churchill Downs card

This year's report features **AI-powered handicapping** from **Claude** and **ChatGPT**, alongside a consensus panel of industry expert analysts.

How to Read This Guide

Every race shows side-by-side picks from **Claude** and **ChatGPT**, including Win/Place/Show selections, a "Next Best" longshot, a single Best Bet recommendation, and additional exotic wager suggestions. The pace rating (1–5 dots) indicates how contested the early speed will be, higher numbers favor closers.

What's Inside

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Quick Pace Key

●○○○○ = Slow pace, favors front-runners ●●●●● = Hot pace, favors closers

MEET THE HANDICAPPERS

Who's behind the picks in this guide

CLAUDE

AI Model

Anthropic's AI assistant, contributing handicapping analysis based on pedigree, prep race form, pace projections, and historical Derby trends. Treats every race as a fresh data problem to reason through.

CHATGPT

AI Model

OpenAI's conversational AI, weighing in with picks built from past performances, prep race results, and racing trends. Often diverges from Claude on placement and longshot selections.

PAPA DUDE

Veteran

Long-time horseplayer with decades of Derby Day experience. Known for sharp eye on Bob Baffert runners and a knack for spotting overlooked maiden talent.

VINNY BLOND

Contrarian

The contrarian voice on the panel, frequently fades the favorite and digs for value at higher prices. Strong opinions, defensible logic, occasional fireworks.

JON WHITE

Industry

Veteran racing analyst with deep institutional knowledge of the Triple Crown trail. Picks lean toward classic, well-bred contenders with proven graded stakes form.

AI

Algorithm

Algorithmic model factoring speed figures, pace, class, and pedigree weights into a composite ranking. Pure numbers, no narrative, no preference for trainers or jockeys.

BEST SPEED

Speed Figs

Picks built around the fastest recent speed figures and final-fraction times. Identifies horses peaking at the right moment regardless of public perception.

BEST LONG SHOT

Value

Dedicated to finding price plays that hit the board. Targets double-digit-odds horses with hidden form, trainer angles, or pace setups that suit them.

△ A NOTE ON THE AI HANDICAPPERS: The AI models in this guide (Claude, ChatGPT, and the AI consensus column) are tools whose outputs derive from approximately the last 100 years of Thoroughbred racing knowledge, pedigree data, prep race results, historical Derby trends, and known form patterns. They do **not** have access to real-time race day factors that often determine outcomes: track conditions on the morning of the race, weather, surface bias, last-minute jockey changes, paddock observations, body language in the post parade, late scratches, or shifting pari-mutuel odds. Their picks should be treated as one informed perspective among many, not a substitute for live track analysis. Always cross-reference with current track conditions and the latest morning-line moves before placing wagers.

RACE-BY-RACE BREAKDOWNS

All 14 races · Picks · Best Bets · Race Notes

RACE 1 Maiden Special Weight

PACE ●○○○○

CLAUDE

WIN **11** POWERSHIFT PLACE **3** SILENT WAY
SHOW **9** WINSTON AVE NEXT **8** BOURBON DREAM

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #11 Powershift

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,11/3,9,11
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,11/3,8,9,11/3,8,9,11
- ◆ Superfecta - 3,8,9,11 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 3,11 / 4,8

CHATGPT

WIN **3** SILENT WAY PLACE **11** POWERSHIFT
SHOW **9** WINSTON AVE NEXT **2** STAKEHOLDER

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #3 Silent Way

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,11/3,9,11
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,11/2,3,9,11/2,3,9,11
- ◆ Superfecta - 2,3,9,11 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 3,11 / 4,8

RACE NOTES We kick things off with #11 Powershift squaring off against #3 Silent Way, a matchup featuring two horses with serious upside. Also in the field, Bob Baffert's #9 Winston Ave stands out, boasting the kind of pedigree that suggests a big future.

RACE 2 Allowance Optional Claiming

PACE ●○○○○

CLAUDE

WIN **8** TAPTASTIC PLACE **4** MEMORY
SHOW **1** OUT OF THE WOODS NEXT **2** SOVEREIGN LAW

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #8 Taptastic

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,8/1,4,8
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,8/1,2,4,8/1,2,4,8
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,8 / 5,6

CHATGPT

WIN **4** MEMORY PLACE **8** TAPTASTIC
SHOW **1** OUT OF THE WOODS NEXT **2** SOVEREIGN LAW

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #4 Memory

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 1,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 1,2,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,8 / 5,10

RACE NOTES This shapes up as a stakes-caliber showdown. #4 Memory turned heads with a dominant maiden special weight victory last time out, while #8 Taptastic held his own with a strong third in the Arkansas Derby. With multiple rising talents in the mix, this field is loaded with potential stars.

RACE 3 Allowance Optional Claiming

PACE ●●●●●

CLAUDE

WIN **5** JOHN HANCOCK PLACE **6** WHO DEY
SHOW **12** PRAETOR NEXT **9** KEEWAYDIN

★ BEST BET
SKIP

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 5,6,12 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 5,6,9,12 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 5,6,9,12 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 5,6 / 4,5

CHATGPT

WIN **10** VIBE PLACE **5** JOHN HANCOCK
SHOW **6** WHO DEY NEXT **12** PRAETOR

★ BEST BET
\$5 Double - 5,10 / 5

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Win - #10 Vibe
- ◆ Exacta - 5,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 5,6,10,12 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 5,6,10,12 BOX

RACE NOTES This race is wide open with no clear standout. Keep a close eye on the pace scenario. If the field stays intact, it sets up nicely for the closers. On paper, the early fractions look blazing, which could tilt the advantage toward runners coming from off the pace.

RACE 4 Derby City Distaff Stakes (G1)

PACE ●○○○○

CLAUDE

WIN **5** SPLENDORA PLACE **4** WAYS AND MEANS
 SHOW **6** R DISASTER NEXT **2** HAULIN ICE

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #5 Splendor

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,5/4,5,6
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,5/2,4,5,6/2,4,5,6
- ◆ Superfecta - 4,5/4,5/2,6/2,6
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,5 / 3,9

CHATGPT

WIN **5** SPLENDORA PLACE **4** WAYS AND MEANS
 SHOW **2** HAULIN ICE NEXT **1** USHA

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #5 Splendor

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,5/2,4,5
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,5/1,2,4,5/1,2,4,5
- ◆ Superfecta - 5/4/1,2/1,2
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,5 / 3,9

RACE NOTES *It may be a short field, but it packs serious punch with two major standouts. #4 Ways and Means has looked like a powerhouse, while #5 Splendor comes in razor-sharp, riding a big wave of momentum after capturing last year's Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint.*

RACE 5 Twin Spires Turf Sprint Stakes (G2)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **3** MY BOY PRINCE PLACE **9** LITIGATION
 SHOW **7** YELLOW CARD NEXT **10** JOE SHIESTY

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #3 My Boy Prince

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,7,9 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,7,9,10 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 3,7,9,10 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 3,9 / 4,10

CHATGPT

WIN **9** LITIGATION PLACE **3** MY BOY PRINCE
 SHOW **7** YELLOW CARD NEXT **10** JOE SHIESTY

★ BEST BET
\$5 Double - 3,9 / 4,10

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Win - #9 Litigation
- ◆ Exacta - 3,7,9 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,7,9,10 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 3,7,9,10 BOX

RACE NOTES *This race is always one of the most electric on Derby Day, featuring a full field of elite turf sprinters charging down the five-furlong course. With such a short distance, early speed is often at a premium, but this year it might be setting up for closers like #3 My Boy Prince and #9 Litigation. Expect a chaotic, blanket finish.*

RACE 6 Knicks Go Overnight Stakes

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **10** CAPITAL IDEA PLACE **4** BE YOU
 SHOW **6** TOUR PLAYER NEXT **2** DRAGOON GUARD

★ BEST BET
SKIP

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 2,4,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 2,4,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,10 / 2,3

CHATGPT

WIN **10** CAPITAL IDEA PLACE **4** BE YOU
 SHOW **2** DRAGOON GUARD NEXT **6** TOUR PLAYER

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #10 Capital Idea

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 2,4,10 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 2,4,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 2,4,6,10 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,10 / 3,8

RACE NOTES *With a full field and multiple runners who prefer to be involved early, the pace scenario looks hot, which should set things up for a stalker or well-timed closer to capitalize in the stretch. Go as deep as your budget allows. This race has produced big prices in the past, and could again this year.*

RACE 7 Churchill Distaff Turf Mile Stakes (G2)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **3** PORTFOLIO DURATION PLACE **2** SWEET REBECCA
 SHOW **4** TEMPTABLE NEXT **8** PIN UP BETTY

★ BEST BET
 SKIP

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 2,3,4 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 2,3,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 2,3,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 2,3 / 1,6

CHATGPT

WIN **8** PIN UP BETTY PLACE **3** PORTFOLIO DURATION
 SHOW **2** SWEET REBECCA NEXT **4** TEMPTABLE

★ BEST BET
 \$10 Double - 3,8 / 1

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Win - #8 Pin Up Betty
- ◆ Exacta - 2,3,8 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 2,3,4,8 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 2,3,4,8

RACE NOTES We'll see if #2 Sweet Rebecca can keep her hot streak going as she steps into a tougher spot today. #3 Portfolio Duration looms as the main threat, with several others also looking ready to make some noise in a competitive field.

RACE 8 Pat Day Mile Stakes (G2)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **1** ENGLISHMAN PLACE **6** CRUDE VELOCITY
 SHOW **7** CROWN THE BUCKEYE NEXT **2** TROUBLE CALLING

★ BEST BET
 \$20 Win - #1 Englishman

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 1,6/1,6,7
- ◆ Trifecta - 1,6/1,2,6,7/1,2,6,7
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,6,7 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 1,6 / 4,12

CHATGPT

WIN **1** ENGLISHMAN PLACE **6** CRUDE VELOCITY
 SHOW **4** SECURED FREEDOM NEXT **5** STOP THE CAR

★ BEST BET
 \$20 Win - #1 Englishman

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 1,6/1,4,6
- ◆ Trifecta - 1,6/1,4,5,6/1,4,5,6
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,4,5,6 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 1,6 / 4,12

RACE NOTES This shapes up as a true showdown. #1 Englishman and #6 Crude Velocity have both arrived on the 3-year-old scene just a bit too late for the Kentucky Derby, but they've made their presence felt in a hurry. A win here would stamp either one as a major player.

RACE 9 American Turf Stakes (G1)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **4** STARK CONTRAST PLACE **12** REMEMBER MAMBA
 SHOW **7** ALPYLAND NEXT **8** GREENWICH VILLAGE

★ BEST BET
 \$10 Win - #4 Stark Contrast

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,7,12 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,7,8,12 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 4,7,8,12 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,12 / 6,7

CHATGPT

WIN **4** STARK CONTRAST PLACE **12** REMEMBER MAMBA
 SHOW **7** ALPYLAND NEXT **8** GREENWICH VILLAGE

★ BEST BET
 \$20 Win - #4 Stark Contrast

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,7,12 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,7,8,12 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 4,7,8,12 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 4,12 / 2,6

RACE NOTES Another outstanding race for the 3-year-old turf division. #4 Stark Contrast had enough points to make the Kentucky Derby field, but opting for this race looks like the savvy call. The addition of Prat in the irons only adds to the appeal.

RACE 10 Churchill Downs Stakes (G1)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **6** KNIGHTSBRIDGE PLACE **7** IMAGINATION
 SHOW **2** CORNUCOPIAN NEXT **1** DISCO TIME

★ BEST BET
\$50 Win - #6 Knightsbridge

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 6,7/2,6,7
- ◆ Trifecta - 6,7/1,2,6,7/1,2,6,7
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,6,7 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 6,7 / 6,9

CHATGPT

WIN **6** KNIGHTSBRIDGE PLACE **2** CORNUCOPIAN
 SHOW **7** IMAGINATION NEXT **1** DISCO TIME

★ BEST BET
\$40 Win - #6 Knightsbridge

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 2,6/2,6,7
- ◆ Trifecta - 2,6/1,2,6,7/1,2,6,7
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,6,7 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 2,6 / 5,6

RACE NOTES This race once again delivers a strong renewal. #6 Knightsbridge has been outstanding this season, but he'll have plenty to handle with a pair of Bob Baffert runners adding serious firepower. Also keep an eye on #1 Disco Time, who shortens up in distance. The adjustment could sharpen his effectiveness.

RACE 11 Old Forester Turf Classic Stakes (G1)

PACE ●○○○○

CLAUDE

WIN **6** RHETORICAL PLACE **9** TEST SCORE
 SHOW **3** ASBURY PARK NEXT **1** CORRUPTION

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #6 Rhetorical

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,6,9 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 1,3,6,9 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,3,6,9 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 6,9 / 6,9,12,18

CHATGPT

WIN **5** MERCANTE PLACE **6** RHETORICAL
 SHOW **4** PROGRAM TRADING NEXT **9** TEST SCORE

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #5 Mercante

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 4,5,6 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 4,5,6,9 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 4,5,6,9 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 5,6 / 6,9,14,18

RACE NOTES Traditionally, this race serves as the final race before the Kentucky Derby, and this year's edition looks especially competitive. #6 Rhetorical headlines a wide-open field as he stretches out in distance for the first time at this level. The key question is whether he can handle the added ground.

RACE 12 KENTUCKY DERBY (G1)

PACE ●●●●○

CLAUDE

WIN **6** COMMANDMENT PLACE **18** FURTHER ADO
 SHOW **9** THE PUMA NEXT **12** CHIEF WALLABEE

★ BEST BET
\$.50 Trifecta - 6,9,12,18 / 6,9,12,18 / 1,6,7,8,9,12,15,18

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Win - #6 Commandment
- ◆ Exacta - 6,9,12,18 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 6,18 / 6,9,12,18 / 6,9,12,18 / 1,6,7,8,9,12,15,18
- ◆ Daily Double - 6,18 / 8,11

CHATGPT

WIN **18** FURTHER ADO PLACE **9** THE PUMA
 SHOW **6** COMMANDMENT NEXT **14** POTENTE

★ BEST BET
\$.50 Trifecta - 6,9,18 / 6,9,14,18 / 1,6,7,8,9,11,12,14,15,16,18,19

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Win - #18 Further Ado
- ◆ Exacta - 9,18/6,9,18,14 | 1,12,14/18
- ◆ Superfecta - 6,9,18 / 6,9,14,18 / 1,6,9,12,14,18 / 1,6,7,8,9,12,14,15,18,19
- ◆ Daily Double - 9,18 / 8,11

RACE NOTES After weeks of speculation, the pace scenario looks legitimately hot, which should benefit closers and mid-pack runners if it unfolds as expected. #1 Renegade sits as the early favorite but draws the rail, a historically tricky spot in a large, fast-paced field. Meanwhile, #18 Further Ado could end up taking favoritism after the draw, especially off a sharp 106 Beyer in the Blue Grass Stakes. #6 Commandment is another major player who will attract plenty of attention and rounds out a loaded group of contenders at the top of the board.

RACE 13 Allowance Optional Claiming

PACE ●●●○○

CLAUDE

WIN **8** GILDED BANDIT PLACE **11** NOBLE AFFAIR
SHOW **1** SMALL TOWN NEXT **10** BUETANE

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #8 Gilded Bandit

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 8,11/1,8,11
- ◆ Trifecta - 8,11/1,8,10,11/1,8,10,11
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,8,10,11 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 8,11 / 7,9

CHATGPT

WIN **8** GILDED BANDIT PLACE **11** NOBLE AFFAIR
SHOW **1** SMALL TOWN NEXT **2** HEARTILY

★ BEST BET
\$20 Win - #8 Gilded Bandit

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 1,8,11 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 1,2,8,11 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 1,2,8,11 BOX
- ◆ Daily Double - 8,11 / 3,9

RACE NOTES An intriguing race coming out of the Kentucky Derby, with several rising contenders looking to step forward. #8 Gilded Bandit was impressive last time out but now faces a significantly tougher field. He'll need to raise his game, especially with the likes of #10 Buetane and #11 Noble Affair adding serious depth.

RACE 14 Maiden Special Weight

PACE ●●●○○

CLAUDE

WIN **9** BIG JAKE PLACE **7** ACT OF PARLIAMENT
SHOW **3** INTERROGATOR NEXT **8** FIND NO FAULT

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #9 Big Jake

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,7,9 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,7,8,9 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 3,7,8,9 BOX

CHATGPT

WIN **3** INTERROGATOR PLACE **9** BIG JAKE
SHOW **7** ACT OF PARLIAMENT NEXT **14** BRAVE PILOT

★ BEST BET
\$10 Win - #3 Interrogator

MORE SUGGESTED BETS

- ◆ Exacta - 3,7,9 BOX
- ◆ Trifecta - 3,7,9,14 BOX
- ◆ Superfecta - 3,7,9,14 BOX

RACE NOTES Thanks to everyone who joined us. Hope you enjoyed and had a fun and profitable Kentucky Derby Day!

MULTI-RACE WAGERS

Pick 4s · Pick 5s · Suggested ticket structures

Race	Bet Type	Bet Details	Cost
R1	\$.50 Pick 5	3,9,11 / 4,8 / 5,6,9,12 / 4,5 / 3,7,9,10	\$96
R2	\$.50 Pick 4	4,8 / 5,6,9,12 / 4,5 / 3,7,9,10	\$32
R3	\$.50 Pick 5	5,6,9,12 / 4,5 / 3,9 / 4,6,10 / 2,3,4,8	\$96
R4	\$.50 Pick 4	4,5 / 3,9 / 4,6,10 / 2,3,4,8	\$24
R5	\$.50 Pick 5	3,7,9 / 2,4,6,10 / 2,3,4,8 / 1,6 / 4,12	\$96
R6	\$.50 Pick 4	2,4,6,10 / 2,3,4,8 / 1,6 / 4,12	\$32
R8	\$.50 Pick 5	1,6 / 4,7,8,12 / 6 / 3,6,9 / 1,6,7,8,9,12,15,18	\$96
R9	\$.50 Pick 4	4,7,8,12 / 6 / 3,6,9 / 1,6,7,8,9,12,15,18	\$48
R10	\$.50 Pick 5	6,7 / 3,6,9 / 6,9,12,18 / 8,11 / 3,7,8,9	\$96
R11	\$.50 Pick 4	3,6,9 / 6,9,12,18 / 8,11 / 3,7,8,9	\$48

10 TRENDS TO KNOW

Historical patterns shaping the 152nd Run for the Roses

#1 Early Class Matters

Notes: Only four horses in the last 50 years have won the Kentucky Derby without running in a graded stakes at age 2 or before March 31 of their 3-year-old season: Genuine Risk, Sunny's Halo, Mine That Bird, and Always Dreaming.

Takeaway: *If they didn't step up early, they're already behind. This race doesn't wait for late bloomers. They need to be battle-tested against real competition.*

#2 Proven Winners Only

Notes: Since 1973, only six Kentucky Derby winners failed to win a graded stakes race prior to the Derby.

Takeaway: *No class, no chance. If they haven't proven they can win at the graded level, history says they're not winning this.*

2026 Horses That Fit: Chief Wallabee, Pavlovian, Right to Party, Danon Bourbon, Chip Honcho, Great White

#3 Be There Turning for Home

Notes: 59 of the last 62 Derby winners were 1st or 2nd with a furlong to go in at least one of their final prep races.

Takeaway: *They better be in the fight turning for home. Deep closers sound fun... until they're spinning their wheels passing tired horses for 5th.*

#4 No Last-Minute Experiments

Notes: No Kentucky Derby winner in over 50 years has added or removed blinkers in their final prep.

Takeaway: *This isn't the time to experiment. You want a finished product. Not a horse whose connections are still guessing. We're looking at you, Chief Wallabee.*

#5 No Layoff Legends

Notes: Excluding 2020, no horse has crossed the wire first in the Derby off a layoff of six weeks or longer in nearly 70 years.

Takeaway: *Recency matters. Fitness matters. You don't show up to the biggest race of your life off the couch.*

2026 Horses That Fit: Fulleffort, Emerging Market, Pavlovian, Incredibolt, Golden Tempo, Stark Contrast, Chip Honcho

#6 Experience at 2 Is (Almost) Mandatory

Notes: Only three horses ever (Apollo, Justify, and Mage) have won the Derby without racing at age 2.

Takeaway: *Can it happen? Sure. Is it likely? Not even close. You're asking a horse to do something almost no one ever has.*

2026 Horses That Fit: The Puma, Emerging Market, Potente, Chief Wallabee

#7 You Need More Than Potential

Notes: Horses with just one or two lifetime starts almost never win the Derby. Leonatus (1883) is the lone exception.

Takeaway: *You can't fake experience in this race. If they haven't been through the fire, they're probably not suddenly becoming legends. (Cough) Emerging Market (cough).*

#8 Fade the Internationals

Notes: In the last 50 years, horses with experience outside the U.S. and Canada are 0-for-50 in the Derby. Exclusively international runners are 0-for-18 since 1992.

Takeaway: *Different racing styles, different surfaces, different everything. And it hasn't translated. Until it does, we're fading.*

2026 Horses That Fit: Danon Bourbon, Wonder Dean, Six Speed

#9 Dead Rail

Notes: Post 1 hasn't produced a winner since 1986. Post 2 hasn't since 1978.

Takeaway: *The inside is a nightmare in a 20-horse cavalry charge. Traffic, pressure, no escape route. Until proven otherwise... these are auto-toss territory.*

#10 Pedigree Legends

Notes: 13 of the last 16 Derby winners were sired by stallions who won a Grade 1 race at 1 1/16 miles or longer.

Takeaway: *Distance pedigree isn't optional. It's everything. If they're not bred to get the trip, good luck getting 10 furlongs on the first Saturday in May.*

2026 Horses That Fit: Commandment, Further Ado, Renegade, Fulleffort, The Puma, Emerging Market, Potente, Pavlovian, Right to Party, Incredibolt, Golden Tempo, Iron Honor, Danon Bourbon, Chief Wallabee, Litmus Test, Napoleon Solo

CONSENSUS PICKS

Top 4 from each handicapper across all 14 races

Race 1

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Powershift	Silent Way	Winston Ave	Bourbon Dream
ChatGPT	Silent Way	Powershift	Winston Ave	Stakeholder
Papa Dude	Powershift	Silent Way	Bourbon Dream	Winston Ave
Vinny Blond	Powershift	Winston Ave	Silent Way	Bourbon Dream
Jon White	Powershift	Silent Way	Winston Ave	Bourbon Dream
AI	Powershift	Winston Ave	Silent Way	Cromwell
Best Speed	Powershift	Silent Way	Winston Ave	Cromwell
Best Long Shot	Cromwell	Bhatia	Bourbon Dream	Ingleborough
Consensus	Powershift	Silent Way	Winston Ave	Cromwell

Race 2

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Taptastic	Memory	Out of the Woods	Sovereign Law
ChatGPT	Memory	Taptastic	Out of the Woods	Sovereign Law
Papa Dude	Taptastic	Make My Day	Memory	Our Moneyman
Vinny Blond	Make My Day	Memory	Taptastic	Our Moneyman
Jon White	Taptastic	Memory	Out of the Woods	Make My Day
AI	Memory	Taptastic	Out of the Woods	Lincoln's Law
Best Speed	Taptastic	Memory	Make My Day	Our Moneyman
Best Long Shot	Make My Day	Lincoln's Law	Our Moneyman	Very Connected
Consensus	Taptastic	Memory	Make My Day	Out of the Woods

Race 3

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	John Hancock	Who Dey	Praetor	Keewaydin
ChatGPT	Vibe	John Hancock	Who Dey	Praetor
Papa Dude	John Hancock	Who Dey	Praetor	Keewaydin
Vinny Blond	Praetor	Vibe	Who Dey	Racing Driver
Jon White	Praetor	Vibe	Who Dey	John Hancock
AI	Praetor	John Hancock	Who Dey	Vibe
Best Speed	Praetor	Who Dey	Keewaydin	Arro Smash
Best Long Shot	John Hancock	Keewaydin	Vibe	Bullard
Consensus	Praetor	John Hancock	Who Dey	Vibe

Race 4

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Splendor	Ways and Means	R Disaster	Haulin Ice
ChatGPT	Splendor	Ways and Means	Haulin Ice	Usha
Papa Dude	Splendor	Usha	Ways and Means	R Disaster
Vinny Blond	Splendor	Ways and Means	R Disaster	Haulin Ice
Jon White	Ways and Means	Splendor	Usha	Haulin Ice
AI	Splendor	Ways and Means	Usha	R Disaster
Best Speed	Ways and Means	Splendor	R Disaster	Haulin Ice
Best Long Shot	R Disaster	Usha	Haulin Ice	Autumn Evening
Consensus	Splendor	Ways and Means	R Disaster	Usha

Race 5

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	My Boy Prince	Litigation	Yellow Card	Joe Shiesty
ChatGPT	Litigation	My Boy Prince	Yellow Card	Joe Shiesty
Papa Dude	My Boy Prince	Yellow Card	Mondogetsbuckets	Joe Shiesty
Vinny Blond	My Boy Prince	Litigation	Yellow Card	Mondogetsbuckets
Jon White	Yellow Card	My Boy Prince	Litigation	Mondogetsbuckets
AI	Yellow Card	Litigation	My Boy Prince	Mondogetsbuckets
Best Speed	My Boy Prince	Joe Shiesty	Litigation	Mondogetsbuckets
Best Long Shot	Joe Shiesty	Mondogetsbuckets	Yellow Card	Bear River
Consensus	My Boy Prince	Yellow Card	Litigation	Joe Shiesty

Race 6

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Capital Idea	Be You	Tour Player	Dragoon Guard
ChatGPT	Capital Idea	Be You	Dragoon Guard	Tour Player
Papa Dude	Be You	Dragoon Guard	Tour Player	Capital Idea
Vinny Blond	Tour Player	Capital Idea	Be You	Moonlight
Jon White	Tour Player	Dragoon Guard	Be You	Will Take It
AI	Dragoon Guard	Tour Player	Capital Idea	Be You
Best Speed	Dragoon Guard	Moonlight	Capital Idea	Be You
Best Long Shot	Capital Idea	Moonlight	Will Take It	Banjo Chris
Consensus	Capital Idea	Dragoon Guard	Tour Player	Be You

Race 7

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Portfolio Duration	Sweet Rebecca	Temptable	Pin Up Betty
ChatGPT	Pin Up Betty	Portfolio Duration	Sweet Rebecca	Temptable
Papa Dude	Sweet Rebecca	Pin Up Betty	Classic Q	Vina Arana
Vinny Blond	Temptable	Maggie Go	Sweet Rebecca	Portfolio Duration
Jon White	Classic Q	Pin Up Betty	Portfolio Duration	Sweet Rebecca
AI	Classic Q	Pin Up Betty	Sweet Rebecca	Movin' On Up
Best Speed	Sweet Rebecca	Movin' On Up	Pin Up Betty	Temptable
Best Long Shot	Movin' On Up	Classic Q	Italian Soiree	Maggie Go
Consensus	Sweet Rebecca	Pin Up Betty	Classic Q	Portfolio Duration

Race 8

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Crown the Buckeye	Trouble Calling
ChatGPT	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Secured Freedom	Stop the Car
Papa Dude	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Crown the Buckeye	Creole Chrome
Vinny Blond	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Stop the Car	Secured Freedom
Jon White	Crude Velocity	Englishman	Secured Freedom	Trouble Calling
AI	Crude Velocity	Englishman	Trouble Calling	Creole Chrome
Best Speed	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Crown the Buckeye	Secured Freedom
Best Long Shot	Crown the Buckeye	Creole Chrome	Secured Freedom	Trouble Calling
Consensus	Englishman	Crude Velocity	Crown the Buckeye	Secured Freedom

Race 9

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Stark Contrast	Remember Mamba	Alpyland	Greenwich Village
ChatGPT	Stark Contrast	Remember Mamba	Alpyland	Greenwich Village
Papa Dude	Stark Contrast	Street Beast	Alpyland	Remember Mamba
Vinny Blond	Blackout Time	Stark Contrast	Vasy	Remember Mamba
Jon White	Stark Contrast	Remember Mamba	Final Score	Street Beast
AI	Stark Contrast	Greenwich Village	Remember Mamba	Vasy
Best Speed	Stark Contrast	Honey Dutch	Blackout Time	Street Beast
Best Long Shot	Blackout Time	Alpyland	Honey Dutch	Vasy
Consensus	Stark Contrast	Remember Mamba	Blackout Time	Alpyland

Race 10

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Knightsbridge	Imagination	Cornucopian	Disco Time
ChatGPT	Knightsbridge	Cornucopian	Imagination	Disco Time
Papa Dude	Knightsbridge	Disco Time	Imagination	T O Elvis
Vinny Blond	Knightsbridge	Imagination	Banishing	Crazy Mason
Jon White	Knightsbridge	Imagination	Disco Time	Cornucopian
AI	Knightsbridge	Cornucopian	Imagination	Banishing
Best Speed	Knightsbridge	Disco Time	Hall of Fame	Imagination
Best Long Shot	Disco Time	Imagination	Point Dume	Hall of Fame
Consensus	Knightsbridge	Imagination	Disco Time	Cornucopian

Race 11

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Rhetorical	Test Score	Asbury Park	Corruption
ChatGPT	Mercante	Rhetorical	Program Trading	Test Score
Papa Dude	Rhetorical	Test Score	Program Trading	Corruption
Vinny Blond	Program Trading	Gold Phoenix	Test Score	Asbury Park
Jon White	Rhetorical	Test Score	Program Trading	Asbury Park
AI	Test Score	Program Trading	Corruption	Rhetorical
Best Speed	Rhetorical	Mercante	Corruption	Test Score
Best Long Shot	Corruption	Mercante	Gold Phoenix	Asbury Park
Consensus	Rhetorical	Test Score	Program Trading	Mercante

Race 12

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Commandment	Further Ado	The Puma	Chief Wallabee
ChatGPT	Further Ado	The Puma	Commandment	Potente
Papa Dude	Commandment	Further Ado	Renegade	The Puma
Vinny Blond	Emerging Market	Further Ado	Chief Wallabee	Renegade
Jon White	Danon Bourbon	Emerging Market	Further Ado	The Puma
AI	Further Ado	Renegade	So Happy	Commandment
Best Speed	Further Ado	So Happy	Renegade	The Puma
Best Long Shot	So Happy	Potente	Chief Wallabee	The Puma
Consensus	Further Ado	Commandment	So Happy	Emerging Market

Race 13

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Gilded Bandit	Noble Affair	Small Town	Buetane
ChatGPT	Gilded Bandit	Noble Affair	Small Town	Heartily
Papa Dude	Noble Affair	Gilded Bandit	Heartily	Buetane
Vinny Blond	Buetane	Gilded Bandit	Noble Affair	Thunder Buck
Jon White	Gilded Bandit	Noble Affair	Buetane	Small Town
AI	Buetane	Gilded Bandit	Small Town	Noble Affair
Best Speed	Gilded Bandit	Buetane	Noble Affair	Heartily
Best Long Shot	Heartily	Small Town	Hulkamania	Cruisin Chuck
Consensus	Gilded Bandit	Noble Affair	Buetane	Small Town

Race 14

Handicapper	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Claude	Big Jake	Act of Parliament	Interrogator	Find No Fault
ChatGPT	Interrogator	Big Jake	Act of Parliament	Brave Pilot
Papa Dude	Find No Fault	Interrogator	Chianti Town	Prize Pick
Vinny Blond	Brave Pilot	Boylston	Big Jake	Don's Winner
Jon White	Interrogator	Big Jake	Brave Pilot	Act of Parliament
AI	Prize Pick	Find No Fault	Big Jake	Great Moment
Best Speed	Great Moment	Chianti Town	Bestball	Prize Pick
Best Long Shot	Great Moment	Chianti Town	Don's Winner	Boylston
Consensus	Interrogator	Big Jake	Great Moment	Find No Fault

Sources & References

This betting guide synthesizes handicapping insights and historical data from a variety of trusted horse racing publications and analysis platforms.

- **TenFurlongs**, Comprehensive Kentucky Derby contender analysis, pedigree breakdowns, and pace projections (referenced for distance pedigree and prep race analysis)
- **Racing Dudes Wagering Brief**, Original race card breakdowns and pick structure
- **TwinSpires**, Pedigree profiles and contender rankings for the 2026 Kentucky Derby
- **Daily Racing Form (DRF)**, Past performances, expert handicapping analysis
- **NBC Sports**, Field analysis, odds, and post-position data
- **Horse Racing Nation**, Live leaderboard and contender rankings
- **Churchill Downs / KentuckyDerby.com**, Official race-day information and morning-line odds

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