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**BELMONT
STAKES**

WAGERING GUIDE

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BELMONT PARK

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Fellow Racing Fan,

Welcome to the second edition of XpressBet's Belmont Stakes Wagering Guide!

MEC, XpressBet and HRTV are pleased to offer this **FREE Belmont Stakes Wagering Guide**.

Although there's no Triple Crown on the line this season, if the **Belmont** lives up to the excitement of the **Kentucky Derby** and **Preakness Stakes**, we're in for a grand old time in Elmont, NY.

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Inside the guide you will find everything you need to watch and wager on the **Belmont Stakes** like an expert. We've recruited top handicappers, writers and broadcasters to examine the **Belmont—Analysis, Main Contenders, Value Plays** and **Wagering Strategies**.

In addition to race-by-race expert commentary, you'll also find lots of useful **Stats and Trends**, a handy **Exotic Wagering Chart**, and a host of other information.

XpressBet hopes your **2009 Belmont Stakes** wagering experience is fruitful and we look forward to serving as your advance deposit account wagering provider for the big day and into the future.

Sincerely,
Ron Luniewski
President
XpressBet

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**BELMONT STAKES
WAGERING GUIDE UPDATES
Available Online Daily
Beginning June 2**

Belmont Wagering Facts

by Jeremy Plonk, *Horseplayerpro.com* and *ESPN.com* analyst

*Below are some interesting and informative wagering tidbits from past Belmont Stakes events.
Use them to help you to decide how to play this year's event.*

WIN, PLACE, SHOW ODDS:

(Last 10 Years—Odds to \$1)

Average Win Odds: **20.83**

High Win Odds: **70.25 (Sarava, 2002)**

Low Win Odds: **1.15 (Afleet Alex, 2005)**

Notable: 5 of the last 10 winners were 18-1 or more.

Average Place Odds: **11.36**

High Place Odds: **54.75 (Vision and Verse, 1999)**

Low Place Odds: **.35 (Smarty Jones, 2004)**

Notable: 7 of the last 9 runner-ups were single-digit odds.

Average Show Odds: **11.38**

High Show Odds: **31.50**

(Anak Nakal/Ready's Echo dead-heat, 2008)

Low Show Odds: **1.00 (Funny Cide, 2003)**

Notable: 3 of the last 5 show horses have been 20-1 or more.

EXACTA PAYOFFS

(Last 10 Years)

Average \$2 Exacta Payoff: **\$522.78**

High \$2 Exacta Payoff: **\$2,454.00**

(Sarava-Medaglia d'Oro, 2002)

Low \$2 Exacta Payoff: **\$20.60**

(Point Given-A P Valentine, 2001)

Notable: Average Belmont exacta this decade has paid more than 5 times that of the average Preakness exacta.

TRIFECTA PAYOFFS

(Last 10 Years)

Average \$1 Trifecta Payoff: **\$1,945.70**

High \$1 Trifecta Payoff: **\$12,504.50**

(Sarava-Medaglia d'Oro-Sunday Break, 2002)

Low \$1 Trifecta Payoff: **\$33.75**

(Empire Maker-Ten Most Wanted-Funny Cide, 2003)

Notable: The \$1 trifecta has been an IRS signer (\$602.20-plus) in 6 of the past 10 years.

SUPERFACTA PAYOFFS

(Wager Available on 8 Occasions)

Average \$1 Superfacta Payoff: **\$14,420.63**

High \$1 Superfacta Payoff: **\$72,667.00**

(Sarava-Medaglia d'Oro-Sunday Break-Magic Weisner, 2002)

Low \$1 Superfacta Payoff: **\$91.75**

(Point Given-A P Valentine-Monarchos-Dollar Bill, 2001)

Average Odds of Fourth-Place Finishers: **11.36-to-1**

Notable: With 10 or more starters, the Belmont superfacta has never paid less than \$542.50 for a \$1 payout.

2008 BELMONT HANDLE TOTALS

Win, Place, Show: **\$18.1 million**

Exacta: **\$11.1 million**

Trifecta: **\$15.1 million**

Superfacta: **\$7.3 million**

Pick Four: **\$1.9 million**

Pick Six: **\$1.9 million**

HIGHEST-PRICED BELMONT RUNNERS IN SUPERFACTA

(Last 10 Years)

<u>Odds to \$1</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Finish</u>	<u>Year</u>
70.25	Sarava	1st	2002
54.75	Vision and Verse	2nd	1999
38.50	Da'Tara	1st	2008
36.00	Birdstone	1st	2004
34.25	Anak Nakal	3rd	2008
29.75	Lemon Drop Kid	1st	1999

LOWEST-PRICED BELMONT FAVORITES

(Last 10 Years)

<u>Odds to \$1</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Finish</u>	<u>Year</u>
.30	Big Brown	dnf	2008
.35	Smarty Jones	2nd	2004
1.00	Funny Cide	3rd	2003
1.10	Curlin	2nd	2007
1.15	Afleet Alex	1st	2005
1.25	War Emblem	8th	2002
1.35	Point Given	1st	2001

BELMONT SELECTION GRID

Host	Bob Neumeier (NBC Sports)	Mike Battaglia (NBC Sports)	Jeff Siegel (HRTV)	Jon White (HRTV)	Dick Jerardi (Phila. Daily News)	Steve Byk (Sirius Radio)	Gary West (FW Star-Telegram)
First	Dunkirk	Charitable Man	Rachel Alexandra	Rachel Alexandra	Rachel Alexandra	Mine That Bird	Dunkirk
Second	Charitable Man	Mine That Bird	Charitable Man	Charitable Man	Mine That Bird	Dunkirk	Charitable Man
Third	Rachel Alexandra	Rachel Alexandra	Mine That Bird	Mine That Bird	Dunkirk	Miner's Escape	Mine That Bird
Fourth	Mine That Bird	Dunkirk	Dunkirk	Dunkirk	Summer Bird	Mr. Hot Stuff	Flying Private

MEET THE BELMONT CONTENDERS

by Johnny D, XpressBet

MINE THAT BIRD

The game gelding, who prepped for the Kentucky Derby at Sunland Park and travelled to the first two legs of the Triple Crown in a trailer hitched to a truck driven by his crutch-bearing, cowboy hat-wearing trainer, has been a breath of fresh air for Thoroughbred racing fans. From **Mine That Bird's** spectacular rail-skimming ride under Calvin Borel into Derby lore, to his closing charge under Mike Smith which fell just one-length shy of victory in the Preakness, the little guy has made a huge name for himself. Now it's on to the Belmont Stakes. At this writing no one knows for sure who will ride the Derby winner. Smith is committed to ride in California and Borel is waiting for **Rachel Alexandra's** connections to decide if she's running or not. Somehow, after all he's achieved, the name of the jockey to ride him seems like a minor detail.

RACHEL ALEXANDRA

She may or may not be in the Belmont starting lineup. If she is, the Preakness winner will be a force to be reckoned with. If she isn't, well, feel free to skip the rest of this. Until a few years ago, many thought it nearly impossible for a filly to win the Belmont. But Rags to Riches accomplished the feat in 2007 and defeated ultimate two-time Horse of the Year Curlin in the process. Ironically, Curlin's owner Jess Jackson now owns **Rachel Alexandra**, a filly with good enough credentials to win the Belmont. Detractors argue that the mile and one-half of the Belmont is not the filly's best distance and that **Mine That Bird** would have nailed her at Pimlico with more real estate. On the other hand, speed horses have done very well in the Belmont and **Rachel Alexandra** has the quickness to control the early pace and that might make the difference in the end.

DUNKIRK

Remember him? He's the lightly-raced gray runner who drew enough attention in the Kentucky Derby to be second choice in wagering behind Friesan Fire. Well, whatever experience **Dunkirk** was missing before the Derby, he sure should have it now. After stumbling and steadying at the start of the race, he pretty much had a rotten afternoon May 3, and checked-in 11th of 19 runners. Trainer Todd Pletcher, who saddled Rags to Riches to win the Belmont, figures time off since that effort should be just enough to put **Dunkirk** back on his game. It will be interesting to see if his Derby supporters return to back him in the Belmont, or if they give up quickly on the promising runner.

CHARITABLE MAN

This guy has won three of four starts and boasts two wins in two tries over Belmont's main surface. One of those scores came in the Peter Pan Stakes May 9, so the timing for the Belmont is perfect. **Charitable Man's** lone defeat occurred in the Blue Grass Stakes over an artificial surface. It also was his first start since September 2008.

Light on experience, but seemingly very long on talent while racing over a track he loves, **Charitable Man** is a good fit in the Belmont.

CHOCOLATE CANDY

Owned by diet guru Jenny Craig, **Chocolate Candy** may have an ironic name, but there's nothing strange about the way he runs. He's won four of ten starts, including three stakes races, and he was a troubled fifth in the Kentucky Derby. Top jock Garrett Gomez takes over from Mike Smith in the saddle for trainer Jerry Hollendorfer. **'Candy** has the right style for the Belmont, especially if he doesn't get squeezed at the start like he did in the Derby.

TRIPLE CROWN WINNERS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>
1978.....	Affirmed
1977.....	Seattle Slew
1973.....	Secretariat
1948.....	Citation
1946.....	Assault
1943.....	Count Fleet
1941.....	Whirlaway
1937.....	War Admiral
1935.....	Omaha
1930.....	Gallant Fox
1919.....	Sir Barton

BOUNCE GOES THE BOUNCE

by Bob Neumeier
NBC Sports



ANALYSIS: That three-year-old race horses can improve overnight is the only plausible explanation for **Mine That Bird's** stunning triumph in the Kentucky Derby. His fast-closing second to **Rachel Alexandra** in the Preakness seems to debunk other explanations of his Derby shocker -- namely that it was a fluke; that it was due to the sloppy track; or that it was the result of jockey Calvin Borel's exploiting the so-called "positive rail bias" at Churchill Downs that day. His fine Preakness stretch run also put the muzzle over the mouths of "bounce" handicappers such as me, who did not believe he could possibly put together back-to-back quality efforts. Furthermore, the brilliant Preakness victory by **Rachel Alexandra** forced crow down the throats of bounce handicappers, who were convinced that her 20-length blowout win in the Oaks would knock her out with just a 15-day recovery time. Oops.

MAIN CONTENDERS: Granted, those who believe in the "bounce" are a stubborn lot. Projecting the trend into the Belmont Stakes will force us bounce believers to look beyond **'Rachel** and **Mine That Bird** to unearth the winner. **Charitable Man** is the logical place to turn. Impressive in the Peter Pan prep, he has the speed and the stamina to be forwardly placed in the first or second flight -- always an advantage in the marathon distance. Short on experience, but long on talent, 5-1 odds seem reasonable if both **Rachel Alexandra** and **Mine That Bird** are in the final Belmont field.

VALUE PLAYS: Another possibility to consider is my Derby selection, **Dunkirk**, who ran horribly in the run for the roses. Perhaps his recent bullet workout over the Belmont main track signifies that he could be back to the form he showed at Gulfstream Park in the Florida Derby.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

Let's save gimmick wagering for another opportunity.

- \$80 Win: **CHARITABLE MAN** or **DUNKIRK**, playing longest price (\$80)
- \$20 Win: **CHARITABLE MAN** or **DUNKIRK**, saver bet on shorter price of the two (\$20)

STATS & TRENDS:

ODDS-ON BELMONT FAVORITES

(Since 1940 adoption of pari-mutuel wagering in NY)

Total odds-on favorites: 31

Winning odds-on favorites: 12

% of Winning odds-on favorites: 38.7%

Last odds-on favorite to compete:

Big Brown, 2008, dnf, .30-to-1

Last odds-on favorite to win:

Affirmed, 1978, .60-to-1

ODDS-ON BELMONT BUSTS

The last 7 odds-on favorites to compete in the Belmont Stakes have lost.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Finish</u>	<u>Odds</u>
2008	Big Brown	dnf	1-5
2004	Smarty Jones	2nd	1-5
1998	Real Quiet	2nd	4-5
1989	Sunday Silence	2nd	4-5
1987	Alysheba	4th	4-5
1981	Pleasant Colony	3rd	4-5
1979	Spectacular Bid	3rd	1-5

KNOW THIS:

Three for the Crown?

Since 1980, three different horses have won the Triple Crown races 12 times. It last happened in 2007 when Street Sense, Curlin and Rags to Riches shared the TC trio. The previous occasion occurred in 2006 when Barbaro, Bernardini and Jazil shared the spotlight.

Start Spreading The News

The largest crowds in Belmont Park history have come in recent Triple Crown bids, topped by Smarty Jones drawing 120,139 on-track in 2004. War Emblem's 2002 attempt lured 103,222 fans, while Funny Cide attracted a rain-soaked mob of 101,864 in 2003.

SELECTIONS:

1. DUNKIRK
2. CHARITABLE MAN
3. RACHEL ALEXANDRA
4. MINE THAT BIRD

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Exotic Wagering Chart

Belmont Stakes exotic wagers usually produce hefty payoffs. Use this handy Exotic Wagering Chart to help plan your attack.

EXACTA BOX: (\$2 Wager)

2 horse box	\$4
3 horse box	\$12
4 horse box	\$24
5 horse box	\$40
6 horse box	\$60
7 horse box	\$84
8 horse box	\$112

EXACTA WHEEL: (\$2 Wager)

One Horse with All

6 horse field	\$10
7 horse field	\$12
8 horse field	\$14
9 horse field	\$16
10 horse field	\$18

TRIFECTA BOX: (\$1 Wager)

3 Horse Box	\$6
4 Horse Box	\$24
5 Horse Box	\$60
6 Horse Box	\$120
7 Horse Box	\$210
8 Horse Box	\$336

TRIFECTA WHEELS: (\$1 Wager)

One Horse with All with All

(Example: 1/All/All or All/1/All or All/All/1)

7 Horse Field	\$30
8 Horse Field	\$42
9 Horse Field	\$56
10 Horse Field	\$72

One Horse with Two Horses with All

(Example: 1/2/All or 2/1/All or 1/All/2 or 2/a All/1/1 or All/1/2 or All/2/1)

7 Horse Field	\$10
8 Horse Field	\$12
9 Horse Field	\$14
10 Horse Field	\$16

TRIFECTA KEYS: (\$1 Wager)

1 Horse with 3 others	\$6
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4)</i>	
1 Horse with 4 others	\$12
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5)</i>	
1 Horse with 5 others	\$20
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6)</i>	
1 Horse with 6 others	\$30
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)</i>	
1 Horse with 7 others	\$42
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)</i>	

SUPERFACTA BOX: (\$1 Wager)

4 Horse Box	\$24
5 Horse Box	\$120
6 Horse Box	\$360

SUPERFACTA WHEELS: (\$1 Wager)

One Horse with All with All with All

7 Horse Field	\$120
8 Horse Field	\$210
9 Horse Field	\$336
10 Horse Field	\$504

(Example: 1/All/All/All or All/1/All/All or All/All/1/All or All/ All/ All/1)

One Horse with Two Horses with All with All

7 Horse Field	\$40
8 Horse Field	\$60
9 Horse Field	\$84
10 Horse Field	\$112

(Example: 1/2/ All/ All or 2/ 1/ All/ All or 1/ All/ All/ 2 or 2/ All/ All/ 1 or All/ All/ 1/ 2 or All/ All/ 2/ 1)

SUPERFACTA KEYS: (\$1 Wager)

1 Horse with 3 others	\$6
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4)</i>	
1 Horse with 4 others	\$24
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5)</i>	
1 Horse with 5 others	\$60
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6)</i>	
1 Horse with 6 others	\$120
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)</i>	
1 Horse with 7 others	\$210
<i>(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)</i>	

LOOKING FOR 'CHARITY'

by Mike Battaglia
NBC Sports Racing Analyst



ANALYSIS: Rachel Alexandra would be favored and very tough to beat if she goes. She came out of the Preakness a tired horse, but that was to be expected with the effort that she put in. The thinking here is that if she isn't 100 percent she won't race; but if co-owner Jess Jackson and trainer Steve Asmussen decide to go, then you have to assume she will be ready. **Mine That Bird** proved that his Derby was no fluke -- he is the real deal. That being said, he still has had two tough races, and we all know the toll that the Triple Crown can take. If the filly doesn't run, **Mine That Bird** probably will be overbet in the Belmont. **Charitable Man** is an interesting alternative. He rebounded from his only career loss in the Blue Grass and looked very sharp in the Peter Pan. He has the speed to be on or near the lead and he is a perfect 2-for-2 at Belmont. **Dunkirk** was not a factor in the Derby, but Todd Pletcher's runners have a history of showing big improvement after a poor outing.

MAIN CONTENDERS: Rachel Alexandra is an outstanding filly. She could be one of the best ever, but I have to believe that running her back in three weeks might be asking a bit too much. Throw in the short price and, even though I have a lot of respect for her, it would be tough to bet on her in this spot. **Mine That Bird** will be running at the end again. Chip Woolley has done a great job with him and he is definitely peaking at the right time. He can't be left out of the gimmicks.

VALUE PLAYS: Charitable Man figures to be a major player even if Rachel decides to go. And, if she takes a pass, then he becomes the one to beat. His speed and affinity for the Belmont surface move him right to the top of my list. I also like the fact that he comes into the Belmont relatively fresh and I expect a big effort from him. **Mr. Hot Stuff** may be a live long shot.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$42 Exacta: CHARITABLE MAN over MINE THAT BIRD (\$42)
- \$22 Exacta: MINE THAT BIRD over CHARITABLE MAN (\$22)
- \$6 Trifecta Key: CHARITABLE MAN over MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK and MR. HOT STUFF (\$36)

STATS & TRENDS:

FOREIGN-BRED BELMONT WINNERS

England: Saxon (1874), Bowling Brook (1898), Hourless (1917), Johren (1918), Gallant Man (1957), Celtic Ash (1960)

Ireland: Cavan (1958), Go and Go (1990)

Canada: Victory Gallop (1998)

STATES TO PRODUCE BELMONT WINNERS

Wins	State
91	Kentucky
11	Virginia
7	New Jersey
5	Florida
3	New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee
2	California, Maryland, Texas

FASTEST BELMONTS

Time	Horse	Year
2:24	Secretariat	1973
2:26	Easy Goer	1989
	A.P. Indy	1992
2:26-2/5	Risen Star	1988
	Point Given	2001
2:26-4/5	Affirmed	1978

FILLIES TO WIN THE BELMONT

Horse	Year
Rags to Riches	2007
Tanya	1905
Ruthless	1867

KNOW THIS:

Fewer Preakness Players

During the decade of the 2000s, the only Belmont winners to have participated in the Preakness were Point Given (2001) and Afleet Alex (2005).

SELECTIONS:

1. CHARITABLE MAN
2. MINE THAT BIRD
3. RACHEL ALEXANDRA
4. DUNKIRK

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GOING WHERE NO FILLY HAS EVER GONE

by Jeff Siegel
HRTV Analyst



ANALYSIS: By winning the Belmont Stakes, **Rachel Alexandra** can become the first filly in racing history to capture two jewels of the Triple Crown, and if she's anywhere close to her best – and she likely won't be entered unless she is – the Steve Asmussen-trained filly should have a much easier time of beating the boys than she did three weeks ago in the Preakness. Blessed with the high cruising speed of a top-class stayer, and in a race that most likely will have a soft early pace, **Rachel Alexandra** should relish the Belmont's mile and one-half trip. We consider her to be at least as good as the filly Rags to Riches, who got the best of Curlin in the Belmont two years ago. And there ain't no Curlins in here.

MAIN CONTENDERS: Kentucky Derby winner **Mine That Bird** lost nothing in defeat when second to **Rachel Alexandra** in the Preakness, while verifying his impressive performance in Louisville. However, he's a one-run deep closer and that style rarely projects well at 12 furlongs, where the pace is slower and gallopers have the edge. He's too genuine to completely dismiss, but I consider him vulnerable. Peter Pan Stakes winner **Charitable Man** should be primed for another forward move, and like **Mind That Bird**, is a son of a Belmont winner, so the distance should be within his scope. **Dunkirk** still has a chance to develop into a high-class colt, but his pedigree suggests he may be best-suited at a middle distance.

VALUE PLAYS: **Rachel Alexandra** was too good to pass up at 9-5 in the Preakness, and she'd be a bargain at that price again in the Belmont, assuming we can get it. With the wise guys expecting her to fall apart in her third race in five weeks (hey, they were right about Big Brown!), an overlay on the filly isn't out of the question. **Charitable Man** has a good recent win over the track and **Mine That Bird** will lay his body down once again. Those would seem to be the main contenders, but remember - if Da'Tara can win a Belmont Stakes, anybody can.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$50 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **CHARITABLE MAN** (\$50)
- \$30 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **MINE THAT BIRD** (\$30)
- \$20 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **DUNKIRK** (\$20)

SELECTIONS:

1. RACHEL ALEXANDRA
2. CHARITABLE MAN
3. MINE THAT BIRD
4. DUNKIRK

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STATS & TRENDS:

DERBY WINNERS IN BELMONT

(Last 10 years)

Year	Horse	Finish	Odds
2008	Big Brown	dnf	1-5 *
2007	none		
2006	none		
2005	Giacomo	7th	5-1
2004	Smarty Jones	2nd	1-5 *
2003	Funny Cide	3rd	1-1 *
2002	War Emblem	8th	6-5 *
2001	Monarchos	3rd	5-1
2000	none		
1999	Charismatic	3rd	8-5 *

* Favorite

BELMONT WINNERS TO COMPETE IN ALL 3 TRIPLE CROWN LEGS

(Since 1990)

Horse	Year	Derby-Preakness-Belmont
Afleet Alex	2005	3rd-1st-1st
Point Given	2001	5th-1st-1st
Victory Gallop	1998	2nd-2nd-1st
Editor's Note	1996	6th-3rd-1st
Thunder Gulch	1995	1st-3rd-1st
Tabasco Cat	1994	6th-1st-1st
Hansel	1991	10th-1st-1st

KNOW THIS:

Front-End Heists

It's not easy taking the Belmont field wire-to-wire over a mile and one-half. In fact, Da'Tara's wire job last year was the first in the final jewel of the Triple Crown since Swale in 1984.

Woody's World

Woody Stephens' unfathomable streak of saddling five consecutive winners of the Belmont Stakes began when Conquistador Cielo came back just 5 days after winning the Grade 1 Met Mile to score in the 1982 Belmont. Stephens also won with Caveat, Swale, Crème Fraiche and Danzig Connection. Only Swale went postward as the favorite.

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BELMONT IS PERFECT FOR RACHEL

by Jon White
HRTV and Santa Anita Analyst



ANALYSIS: **Mine That Bird** won the Kentucky Derby at 50-1. Filly sensation **Rachel Alexandra** took the Preakness Stakes as the 9-5 favorite. So now what's going to happen in the Belmont? At this writing, the Belmont status of **Rachel Alexandra** was undecided. If she does run, I think she wins. Hal Wiggins, **Rachel Alexandra's** ex-trainer, made an excellent point when he said in the *New York Daily News* that the Belmont is "the perfect race for **Rachel Alexandra** because of her speed." The fractions will be slower, Wiggins noted, and jockey Calvin Borel can "get that filly to relax." **Rachel Alexandra** is 6-for-6 in races around two turns. Her sire (Medaglia d'Oro) finished second in the 2002 Belmont.

MAIN CONTENDERS: In addition to **Rachel Alexandra**, **Mine That Bird** certainly is a main contender. He proved his Kentucky Derby victory was not a fluke by finishing a strong second in the Preakness despite not having the best of trips. **Mine That Bird's** sire (Birdstone) won the 2004 Belmont.

VALUE PLAYS: **Charitable Man** is 3-for-3 on the dirt. His sire (Lemon Drop Kid) won the 1999 Belmont. **Chocolate Candy** strikes me as someone who might be a tough customer going 1 1/2 miles. The talented **Dunkirk** is dangerous. I'm drawing a line through his Kentucky Derby because he stumbled at the start and was steadied a furlong into the race while in traffic.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$30 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **CHARITABLE MAN** (\$30)
- \$15 Exacta Box: **CHARITABLE MAN** and **MINE THAT BIRD** (\$30)
- \$10 Exacta: **CHARITABLE MAN** over **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** (\$10)
- \$10 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **MINE THAT BIRD** (\$10)
- \$10 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **DUNKIRK** (\$10)
- \$10 Exacta: **CHARITABLE MAN** over **DUNKIRK** (\$10)

SELECTIONS:

1. RACHEL ALEXANDRA
2. CHARITABLE MAN
3. MINE THAT BIRD
4. DUNKIRK

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STATS & TRENDS:

BIGGEST BELMONT BLOWOUTS (Since 1905)

Margin	Horse	Year
31 lengths	Secretariat	1973
25 lengths	Count Fleet	1943
20 lengths	Man o' War	1920
14 3/4 lengths	Risen Star	1988
14 lengths	Conquistador Cielo	1982
14 lengths	Bet Twice	1987
12 1/2 lengths	Point Given	2001

DERBY-PREKNESS RUBBER MATCHES Since 1990

Year	Derby	Preakness	Belmont
2005	Giacomo	Afleet Alex	Afleet Alex
2001	Monarchos	Point Given	Point Given
1994	Go For Gin	Tabasco Cat	Tabasco Cat
1993	Sea Hero	Prairie Bayou	Colonial Affair
1991	Strike the Gold	Hansel	Hansel

SKIPPING THE PREKNESS (Last 10 years)

Belmont Winners Who Bypassed the Preakness After Competing in Derby

Horse	Year
Jazil	2006
Birdstone	2004
Empire Maker	2003
Commendable	2000
Lemon Drop Kid	1999*

* raced in Peter Pan

KNOW THIS:

Oldest Triple Crown Event

The Belmont Stakes, first run in 1867, is the oldest of the Triple Crown events. It predates the Preakness by six years and the Kentucky Derby by eight.

WHEN BIG SANDY TURNS SLOPPY

Wet weather has been a consistent nemesis to Belmont Stakes performers over the years, with a surprising 36 final jewels of the Triple Crown being contested over "off" tracks. That's more than 26 percent of the time.

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GIVE ME ANOTHER DOSE OF CALVIN

by Dick Jerardi
Philadelphia Daily News Columnist



ANALYSIS: Do jockeys matter? It is the age-old question. The obvious answer is that the horses matter more. Well, during this Triple Crown, the jockey really matters. I like whatever horse Calvin Borel rides in the Belmont Stakes. If it's Preakness winner **Rachel Alexandra**, I like the filly who is 6-for-6 with Borel. If he rides Kentucky Derby winner **Mine That Bird**, I like the Preakness runner-up who won the Derby with that legendary ride by Borel. The filly and the gelding could not have more different running styles, serious early speed and deep closer. Unlike the Preakness when Big Drama put serious pace pressure on the filly, the Belmont appears to have much less potential early heat. In fact, the vast majority of likely starters are strictly closers. If the filly can cruise near or on the front for half the race in moderate fractions, I don't see the Derby winner or any other horse running her down.

MAIN CONTENDERS: **Mine That Bird** proved the Derby win was not a fluke by making that great stretch charge in the Preakness. **Rachel Alexandra** is perfect in 2009, but she has had a very busy schedule. **Charitable Man** dominated the Peter Pan Stakes and looks like the live, fresh Belmont horse. **Dunkirk** proved in his second-place finish in the Florida Derby that he is fast enough to win a Grade 1 race.

VALUE PLAYS: **Dunkirk** certainly is better than his 11th-place finish in the Derby. After passing the Preakness, the \$3.7 million colt could be very dangerous at a square price. **Summer Bird** was about a hundred wide coming into the stretch of the Derby and never stopped trying.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$40 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **DUNKIRK** (\$40)
- \$30 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **MINE THAT BIRD** (\$30)
- \$20 Exacta: **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** over **SUMMER BIRD** (\$20)
- \$10 Exacta: **SUMMER BIRD** over **RACHEL ALEXANDRA** (\$10)

STATS & TRENDS:

WINNING BELMONT POST POSITIONS (Since 1905)

Post	Wins	Post	Wins
1	- 23	8	- 6
2	- 11	9	- 4
3	- 13	10	- 2
4	- 9	11	- 2
5	- 14	12	- none
6	- 7	13	- none
7	- 11	14	- none

KNOW THIS:

First Post Parade

The first post parade ever conducted in America took place with the fifth running of the Belmont Stakes in 1871. Prior to that, the horses went directly from the paddock to the post.

BELMONT "LAST TIMES"

The last ...

Kentucky Derby winner to win:

Thunder Gulch (1995)

Preakness winner to win: Afleet Alex (2005)

New Triple Crown face to win:

Da'Tara (2008)

Kentucky Derby runner-up to win:

Empire Maker (2003)

Preakness runner-up to win:

Victory Gallop (1998)

Kentucky Derby show horse to win:

Afleet Alex (2005)

Preakness show horse to win:

Editor's Note (1996)

Horse to lay-off since Kentucky Derby to win:

Jazil (2006)

Horse Prepped at Belmont to win:

Lemon Drop Kid (1999)

Jockey to win back-to-back:

Laffit Pincay, Jr. 1982-'84 three-peat on Conquistador Cielo, Caveat and Swale

Jockey to win his debut:

Fernando Jara (2006) aboard Jazil

SELECTIONS:

1. RACHEL ALEXANDRA

3. DUNKIRK

2. MINE THAT BIRD

4. SUMMER BIRD

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BELMONT INTRIGUES MINUS CROWN BID

by Steve Byk

At the Races with Steve Byk (Sirius Radio) Host



ANALYSIS: One of the more memorable Triple Crown seasons in recent years draws to a close with this year's Belmont, and whether or not Preakness winner **Rachel Alexandra** and Derby winner **Mine That Bird** meet again, the "Test of the Champion" figures to be contentious. Seven of the prospective 11 runners have direct pedigree ties to previous winners of the 12-furlong standard, including sons of 2004 upsetter Birdstone (**Mine That Bird** and **Summer Bird**) as well as 1999 winner Lemon Drop Kid (**Charitable Man**).

MAIN CONTENDERS: **Mine That Bird** is being dismissed as the "wrong type" for this race, but don't buy into that theory. Jazil came from 11 lengths back after a half in 2006 when the leader made three-quarters in 1:12.0, typical for the first half of a Belmont Stakes. **Dunkirk** has been quietly working for this spot after an eventful Derby, and note that Todd Pletcher has been first (Rags to Riches, 2007), second (Bluegrass Cat, 2006) and third (Ready's Echo-DH, 2008) in the last three Belmonts. Even if **Rachel Alexandra** runs, and I doubt she will, she is a play-against in this race. And if she runs, she figures to duel with **Charitable Man** and set it up for the pressers/closers. Charitable Man would make a comfortable lead if the Preakness winner doesn't go.

VALUE PLAYS: Nick Zito's **Miner's Escape** found success stretching out to 9 furlongs and is bred to excel at the trip (by Mineshaft out of a Broad Brush mare). Like 1995 Belmont winner Thunder Gulch, Eoin Harty's **Mr. Hot Stuff** hails from a Turkoman mare and gets added distance power being by Tiznow.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$2 Trifecta Part-Wheel: **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** with **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** with **ALL** (\$36)
- \$1 Trifecta Part-Wheel: **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** with **ALL** with **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** (\$18)
- \$2 Exacta Part-Wheel: **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** with **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK, MINER'S ESCAPE, MR. HOT STUFF, CHARITABLE MAN, CHOCOLATE CANDY, SUMMER BIRD, FLYING PRIVATE** (\$28)
- \$1 Exacta: **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK, MINER'S ESCAPE, MR. HOT STUFF, CHARITABLE MAN, CHOCOLATE CANDY, SUMMER BIRD, FLYING PRIVATE** with **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** (\$14)
- \$2 Exacta Box: **MINE THAT BIRD, DUNKIRK** (\$4)

STATS & TRENDS:

CLOSEST BELMONT FINISHES (SINCE 1905)

Margin	Horse	Year
Nose:	Granville	1936
	Jaipur	1962
	Victory Gallop	1998
Head:	Colin	1908
	Affirmed	1978
	Hansel	1991
	Lemon Drop Kid	1999
	Rags to Riches	2007

KNOW THIS:

So Much for Form

Of the 140 previous editions of the Belmont Stakes, 60 have been won by the betting favorite (42.9 percent). However, 5 of the last 10 Belmont winners have been a juicy 18-to-1 or more at post time.

No Soup for You

Geldings were not permitted to run in the Belmont Stakes from 1919 though 1957. The only gelding to win the Belmont was 1985 champion Crème Fraiche. Notable geldings Rockhill Native and Funny Cide both finished third.

BELMONT "LAST TIMES"

The last ...

Trainer to win back-to-back:

D. Wayne Lukas (1994-'96) three-peat with Tabasco Cat, Thunder Gulch and Editor's Note.

Trainer to win his Debut:

Kiaran McLaughlin (2006) with Jazil

Filly to compete:

Rags to Riches (2007), won

Gelding to win:

Crème Fraiche (1985)

Wire-to-wire winner:

Da'Tara (2008)

Winner to close from more than 10 lengths back:

Jazil (2006)

SELECTIONS:

1. MINE THAT BIRD
2. DUNKIRK
3. MINER'S ESCAPE
4. MR. HOT STUFF

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PLETCHER NOT "DUN" YET

by Gary West
Fort Worth Star-Telegram Columnist



ANALYSIS: I don't expect **Rachel Alexandra** to run in the Belmont simply because the reasons not to run her seem more weighty than any reason to run – specifically the three Grade 1 stakes offered for 3-year-old fillies in New York over the next three months. Actually, I can't even think of a good reason for her to run. Nor do I expect to see **Mine That Bird** in the winner's circle. The 1 1/2 miles, combined with a dawdling pace, often work to the disadvantage of horses with his one-run style.

All of that said, I love **Dunkirk** here. He stumbled leaving the gate in the Derby and then stumbled again; he had no chance, as it turned out, in Kentucky. But he has more natural speed than he's often credited with; he should be close early. And remember that Florida Derby, where he finished in :36.71 for the final three-eighths; it was an effort that still suggests he could be among the best.

MAIN CONTENDERS: OK, the 'Bird's win in Kentucky wasn't a fluke. He returned two weeks later and matched that effort with an equally sparkling Preakness. And **Charitable Man** is intriguing. Although lightly raced, he never has lost on dirt, his only loss coming in the plastic Blue Grass.

VALUE PLAYS: **Flying Private** had some throat problems early in the year that compromised his performances, but D. Wayne Lukas has this handsome son of Fusaichi Pegasus rolling in the right direction. **Flying Private** finished well to be fourth despite a troubled trip in Baltimore. **Summer Bird** and **Chocolate Candy** ran deceptively well in Kentucky, and **Mr. Hot Stuff** is better than he showed in the Derby.

WAGERING STRATEGIES (\$100):

- \$4 Trifecta Part-Wheel: **DUNKIRK** and **CHARITABLE MAN**, first and second, over **MINE THAT BIRD**, **FLYING PRIVATE**, **SUMMER BIRD**, **CHOCOLATE CANDY** and **MR. HOT STUFF** (\$40)
- \$4 Trifecta Part-Wheel: **DUNKIRK** and **CHARITABLE MAN**, first and third, with **MINE THAT BIRD**, **FLYING PRIVATE**, **SUMMER BIRD**, **CHOCOLATE CANDY** and **MR. HOT STUFF** in the second position. (\$40)
- \$5 Exacta Part-Wheel: **DUNKIRK** over **CHARITABLE MAN**, **FLYING PRIVATE**, **SUMMER BIRD** and **MR. HOT STUFF** (\$20)

SELECTIONS:

1. DUNKIRK
2. CHARITABLE MAN
3. MINE THAT BIRD
4. FLYING PRIVATE

Daily Late-Breaking Online Updates Begin June 2

STATS & TRENDS:

ACTIVE JOCKEYS TO WIN BELMONT

Jockey	Year	Horse
John Velazquez	2007	Rags to Riches
Fernando Jara	2006	Jazil
Jeremy Rose	2005	Afleet Alex
Edgar Prado	2004	Birdstone
	2002	Sarava
Rene Douglas	1996	Editor's Note
Mick Kinane	1990	Go and Go

THREE'S A CROWD

Prior Triple Crown Appearances by Recent Belmont Winners

Year	Horse	Race
2008	Da'Tara	none
2007	Rags to Riches	none
2006	Jazil	Derby
2005	Afleet Alex	Derby, Preakness
2004	Birdstone	Derby
2003	Empire Maker	Derby
2002	Sarava	none
2001	Point Given	Derby, Preakness
2000	Commendable	Derby

BROOKLYN BOMBERS

Nick Zito's Belmont Longshots

Year	Horse	Odds-to-\$1	Finish
2008	Da'Tara	38.50	1 st
2008	Anak Nakal	34.25	3 rd (DH)
2005	Andromeda's Hero	11.90	2 nd
2004	Birdstone	36.00	1 st
2004	Royal Assault	27.75	3 rd

KNOW THIS:

'Run For The Carnations'

While it may not have the same panache as 'Run for the Roses,' the Belmont Stakes can be called the 'Run for the Carnations' since the winner traditionally is draped in a blanket of white carnations. The blanket worn by the winner takes 10 man-hours to create and includes 300 to 400 carnations which are glued onto a green velveteen spread. Flowers are shipped to Belmont from California or Bogata, Columbia.

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