



# BELMONT STAKES

RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

## wager guide

JUNE 10, 2017 • BELMONT PARK



Creator and jockey Irad Ortiz, Jr. (outside) win 2016 Belmont Stakes.

**xpressbet**   
your way to play

866.88XPRESS  
(866.889.7737)

National Gambling Support Line 800.522.4700

Fellow Racing Fan,

## Welcome to Xpressbet's Belmont Wager Guide!

This year, while there's no chance to witness a Triple Crown winner, the Belmont Stakes figures to attract a large field of evenly matched runners. Some of those will be familiar Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes veterans and others will attack the mile and one-half race as Triple Crown series rookies. That combination of participants will produce an interesting puzzle that's certain to challenge horseplayers.

Those seeking value in Belmont Stakes wagering pools will find attractive wagering options. Hopefully, the contents of this guide will point readers in the right direction. That's why Xpressbet has recruited top handicappers, writers and broadcasters to examine the race—Analysis, Main Contenders, Value Plays and \$100 Wagering Strategies. Inside the guide you'll also find useful Belmont Stats & Trends, a handy Exotic Wagering Chart and much more.

Wager on the Belmont Stakes and worldwide Thoroughbred and harness racing with Xpressbet online, by phone or via mobile device. New account holders are eligible for various promotional bonuses. Act now to open an account in time to wager on the Belmont Stakes. Complete details are available at [Xpressbet.com](http://Xpressbet.com).

Return to the Xpressbet web site daily beginning Tuesday, June 6 for free updates, including Johnny D's in-depth, horse-by-horse Belmont analysis, revised expert opinions and selections based on scratches, post positions, weather, etc. A revised and enhanced version of the wager guide will be available online Friday, June 9.

The folks at Xpressbet wish you an entertaining and profitable 2017 Belmont Stakes and look forward to serving as your advance deposit wagering account provider for the big day and into the future.

Sincerely,  
Ron Luniewski  
President  
Xpressbet



## SIGN UP & PICK YOUR BONUS

### \$500 SIGN UP BONUS

Promo Code: WG500

### \$20 FREE BET

Promo Code: WG20

## XPERIENCE THE BEST IN ONLINE WAGERING

- › BET THE TRIPLE CROWN
- › FREE HD VIDEO
- › FREE PAST PERFORMANCES
- › GET \$50 WHEN YOU REFER YOUR FRIENDS
- › DEPOSIT WITH VISA, PAYPAL & MORE

Conditions Apply. Visit [Xpressbet.com/Bet-the-Belmont-Stakes](https://Xpressbet.com/Bet-the-Belmont-Stakes) to learn more.

**xpressbet.com** ›  
your way to play

866.88XPRESS  
(866.889.7737)

Must be 18 or older (21 in AL, AZ, IA, KS, NH, ND, WA) to open an account with Xpressbet, LLC and reside in a state where such activity is legal.  
Void where prohibited. National Gambling Support Line 800.522.4700.



# Belmont Wagering Facts

By Jeremy Plonk [Horseplayernow.com](http://Horseplayernow.com)

*Below are some interesting and informative Belmont Stakes wagering tidbits.*

## Win-Place-Show Odds

(Last 10 Years, Odds to \$1)

### Win Odds

**Average:** 13.54

**High:** 38.50 (Da'Tara, 2008)

**Low:** .75 (American Pharoah, 2015)

**Notable:** 7 of the last 9 winners were at least 9-to-1 odds.

### Place Odds

**Average:** 8.92

**High:** 28.00 (Commissioner, 2014)

**Low:** 1.10 (Curlin, 2007)

**Notable:** The last Belmont Favorite to finish second was Curlin in 2007.

### Show Odds

**Average:** 13.32

**High:** 34.25 (Anak Nakal, 2008-DH)

**Low:** 1.25 (Mine That Bird, 2009)

**Notable:** 5 of the last 6 show horses were double-digit odds.

### Exacta Payoffs

(Last 10 Years, \$2 Payoff)

**Average:** \$286.32

**High:** \$928.00 (Ruler On Ice-Stay Thirsty, 2011)

**Low:** \$13.60 (American Pharoah-Frosted, 2015)

**Notable:** 3 of the last 4 Belmont Stakes \$2 exactas have paid at least \$269.

### Trifecta Payoffs

(Last 10 Years, \$1 Payoff)

**Average:** \$1,216.60

**High:** \$4,134.00

(Ruler On Ice-Stay Thirsty-Brilliant Speed, 2011)

**Low:** \$54.75 (American Pharoah-Frosted-Keen Ice, 2015)

**Notable:** Last year's \$1,375.50 trifecta was just the fifth four-digit \$1 payoff in the 17-year history of the wager.

## Superfecta Payoffs

(Last 10 years, \$1 Payoffs)

**Average:** \$9,749.80

**High:** \$37,026

(Ruler On Ice-Stay Thirsty-Brilliant Speed-Nehro, 2011)

**Low:** \$121.25

(Rags to Riches-Curlin-Tiago-Hard Spun, 2007)

**Average Odds of Fourth-Place Finishers:** 11.29-to-1

**Notable:** 6 of the last 9 Belmont superfectas have paid at least \$5,329 for a \$1 wager.

## Highest-Priced Runners In Superfecta

(Last 10 Years, Odds to \$1)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Odds</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Fin.</u>
<b>2008</b>	<b>38.50</b>	<b>Da'Tara</b>	<b>1st</b>
2008	34.25	Anak Nakal	3rd (dead heat)
2008	28.75	Ready's Echo	3rd (dead heat)

## Shortest-Priced Belmont Favorites

(Last 10 Years, Odds to \$1)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Odds</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Fin.</u>
2008	.30	Big Brown	dnf
<b>2015</b>	<b>.75</b>	<b>American Pharoah</b>	<b>1st</b>
2014	.85	California Chrome	4th
2007	1.10	Curlin	2nd
2009	1.25	Mine That Bird	3rd

## Odds-On Belmont Favorites

(Since 1940)

**Total Odds-On Favorites:** 34

**Winning Odds-On Favorites:** 13

**% of Winning Odds-On Favorites:** 38%

**Last Odds-On Favorite to Compete:**

American Pharoah (.75-to-1, 2015)

**Last Odds-On Favorite to Win:**

American Pharoah (.75-to-1, 2015)

## Expert Selection Grid

<b>Expert</b>	<b>Bob Neumeier</b> (NBC Sports)	<b>Laffit Pincay</b> (XBTv.com)	<b>Jeff Siegel</b> (XBTv.com)	<b>Jon White</b> (Santa Anita)	<b>Dick Jerardi</b> (Daily Racing Form)	<b>Steve Byk</b> (SiriusXM Radio)
<b>First</b>	Tapwrit	Tapwrit	Classic Empire	Classic Empire	Classic Empire	Tapwrit
<b>Second</b>	Classic Empire	Epicharis	Epicharis	Epicharis	Patch	Senior Investment
<b>Third</b>	Epicharis	Classic Empire	Twisted Tom	Lookin At Lee	Tapwrit	Classic Empire
<b>Fourth</b>	Irish War Cry	Irish War Cry	J Boys Echo	Gormley	Senior Investment	Twisted Tom

# Meet The 2017 Belmont Contenders

by Johnny D *Xpressbet.com*

## Classic Empire

Fourth in the Kentucky Derby and a close second to Cloud Computing in the Preakness, Classic Empire seeks to finally break through with a Triple Crown series victory in the Belmont Stakes. He's certainly one tough cookie. Following a 2-year-old championship season, the colt had a trying winter/spring campaign where little went right. Finally, he put it all together to win the Arkansas Derby. Bumped solidly out of the gate in Kentucky, wide and never comfortable, he continued to try determinedly through the stretch. At Pimlico, he hooked favored Always Dreaming from the start, went clear and then unsuccessfully gamely battled Cloud Computing to the finish. No question about the probable Belmont favorite's quality. What might derail him, though, is the grueling schedule he's been forced to keep.

## Lookin At Lee

Second in the Kentucky Derby as a longshot with a dream rail trip, Lookin At Lee rallied into contention in the Preakness stretch. However, he didn't follow through with his usual closing charge and Senior Investment collared him for third. On the surface it would appear that the mile and one-half Belmont distance would favor this late-running son of Lookin At Lucky, but his lack of enthusiasm in the Pimlico lane is a concern. He and Classic Empire are the only Belmont runners to compete in all three legs of the Triple Crown. The lack of early pace in the Belmont Stakes does not figure to help his closing cause.

## Senior Investment

The winner of the Grade 3 Lexington Stakes did not race in the Kentucky Derby, but managed to pass Lookin At Lee in the Preakness stretch for third. Freshness may have had something to do with his invigorated finish, but the effort didn't come from totally out of the blue. He's paired or improved Beyer Speed Figures in each of 9 lifetime starts. The Belmont distance should suit him. As with Lookin At Lee, a quicker than anticipated early pace would help him, too.

## Tapwrit

A winner in three of his first five starts, including the Grade 2 Tampa Bay Derby, this son of Tapit finished a disappointing fifth and sixth in his last two starts. On the surface that doesn't sound encouraging, but his last race was the Kentucky Derby and he ran creditably to finish less than two lengths behind probable Belmont Stakes favorite Classic Empire. Trained by eventual Hall of Famer Todd Pletcher, Tapwrit has rested since the first Saturday in May. He's talented enough to get the job done, should handle the distance and will be a decent price.

## J Boys Echo

Dismissed at nearly 50-1 odds in the Kentucky Derby, the public was correct about the chances of J Boys Echo in Louisville. He finished 15th out of 20, with little real excuse. Yes, he was bumped at the start and the track was wet, but many others took hits out of the gate and dealt with the 'off' going. This son of Mineshaft exploded on the Triple Crown prep scene with a convincing score in the Grade 3 Gotham Stakes in March. He then finished fourth in the Blue Grass before running evenly in the Derby. Trainer Dale Romans has been high on this one all along and there's some support for him at the Belmont distance of a mile and one-half, especially in the exotics. He's fresh, having skipped the Preakness and he worked well recently at his Churchill home base.

## Epicharis

Here's a real Belmont 'new shooter' for you—a Japanese-bred son of the Japanese-bred Gold Allure, who is a son of Sunday Silence. Epicharis last raced in Dubai when a close second to Thunder Snow, who was pulled up after bucking and playing right out of the Kentucky Derby starting gate. As with Thunder Snow, it's difficult to gauge how

Epicharis stacks up against North American counterparts. He's won all four starts in his homeland and has shown some early speed. While he may not be on the lead early in the Belmont, he shouldn't be far from it. And that could be a great place to be. One thing's for sure, though, Asian interest in him and the Belmont Stakes will be gigantic, as will be the amount of money wagered on the race there in a separate pool.

### BELMONT LAST TIMES...

#### The Last ...

**Kentucky Derby Runner-Up to Win:**  
Empire Maker (2003)

**Preakness Runner-Up to Win:**  
Victory Gallop (1998)

**Preakness Show Horse to Win:**  
Editor's Note (1996)

**Horse to Lay-Off Since Derby to Win:**  
Creator (2016)

**New Triple Crown Face to Win:**  
Tonalist (2014)

**Prepped Last at Belmont to Win:**  
Tonalist (2014)

**Wire-to-Wire Winner:**  
American Pharoah (2015)

**Winner to Close From 10+ Lengths:**  
Jazil (2006)

**Jockey to Win His Debut:**  
Jose Valdivia (Ruler On Ice, 2011)

**Trainer to Win His Debut:**  
Michael Matz (Union Rags, 2012)

# Win the Battle, Lose the War

by Bob Neumeier *NBC Sports Reporter*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** In World War II, both Germany and Japan won significant battles, but (thankfully) lost the war. The same can be said allegorically about the ultimate miscalculations of trainer Mark Casse and rider Julien Leparoux with **CLASSIC EMPIRE**. They decided the Preakness was a two-horse race vs. Derby winner Always Dreaming. The tactics were as clear as the nose on your face. The plan: attack 'Dreaming early and eliminate him from the race. Mission accomplished. But what Casse and Leparoux missed in retrospect was that a third horse, Cloud Computing, was an improving sort, under the crafty care of trainer Chad Brown and jockey Javier Castellano. That combo is overbet 95% of the time on turf and dirt, but paid a whopping \$28.80 in the Preakness. In fairness, a majority of handicappers concurred with the Casse-Leparoux strategy. Ehh, wrong! But for those who read the tea leaves, the pot of gold was available for the taking. The results always look easy in the aftermath.

**Main Contenders:** John Q. Public will flock to **CLASSIC EMPIRE**. But is this a good bet with his past injuries and questionable tactics? Will the mercurial Leparoux be oozing with confidence in the Belmont? Methinks not. The forgotten **TAPWRIT** was bet to 2-to-1 in the Blue Grass in Lexington and finished somewhere in Versailles, Ky. But this expensive Tapit colt is capable on his best day. **IRISH WAR CRY** is what we call an "alternator" – good race, bad race, good race, bad race. If you follow the bouncing ball, a good race is next for owner Isabelle De Tomaso, aka "the most interesting woman in the world."

**Value Plays:** It's absurd to dismiss the chances of Japanese-bred **EPICHARIS**, a grandson of the superstar Sunday Silence. Many lazy handicappers will pencil him out because of a running line next to Thunder Snow, who pulled a kangaroo stunt leaving the Derby gate. Plodders **LOOKIN AT LEE** and **SENIOR INVESTMENT** may grind out a spot at the bottom of the gimmicks.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$20 Win: **TAPWRIT** (\$20)
- \$20 Exacta Key-Box: **TAPWRIT** with **CLASSIC EMPIRE**, **EPICHARIS** (\$80)

## Party Crashers

Five of the last 10 Belmont winners were making their Triple Crown series debuts – Tonalist ('14), Ruler On Ice ('11), Drosselmeyer ('10), Da'Tara ('08) and Rags to Riches ('07).

## Stats & Trends:

### Preakness Winners in Belmont

(Last 10 Years)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Fin.</u>
2016	Exaggerator	11th
<b>2015</b>	<b>American Pharoah</b>	<b>1st</b>
2014	California Chrome	4th
2013	Oxbow	2nd
2012	did not compete	-
2011	Shackleford	5th
2010	did not compete	-
2009	did not compete	-
2008	Big Brown	dnf
2007	Curlin	2nd

### Derby, No Preakness, Won Belmont

(Since 2000)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>
2016	Creator
2013	Palace Malice
2012	Union Rags
2009	Summer Bird
2006	Jazil
2004	Birdstone
2003	Empire Maker
2000	Commendable

## Know This:

### Pair of Threes

The last time three different horses won Triple Crown races in back-to-back years was 2010 - '11, which ended a 3-year run of no horses doubling-up.

### Top Two Redux

Steve Asmussen (Creator) and Todd Pletcher (Destin) ran 1-2 in last year's Belmont. The last set of trainers to repeat a Top Two feat at Belmont were D. Wayne Lukas and Nick Zito in 1994-'95.

## Picks

1. **TAPWRIT**
2. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**
3. **EPICHARIS**
4. **IRISH WAR CRY**

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

**xpressbet**  
your way to play



# Exotic Wagering Chart

Belmont Stakes exotic wagers often produce hefty payoffs.

Use this handy Exotic Wagering Chart to plan your attack.

## **EXACTA BOX:** (\$1 Wager)

2 horse box .....	\$2
3 horse box .....	\$6
4 horse box .....	\$12
5 horse box .....	\$20
6 horse box .....	\$30
7 horse box .....	\$42
8 horse box .....	\$56

## **EXACTA WHEEL:** (\$1 Wager)

### **One Horse with All**

6 horse field .....	\$5
7 horse field .....	\$6
8 horse field .....	\$7
9 horse field .....	\$8
10 horse field .....	\$9

## **TRIFECTA BOX:** (\$.50 Wager)

3 Horse Box .....	\$3
4 Horse Box .....	\$12
5 Horse Box .....	\$30
6 Horse Box .....	\$60
7 Horse Box .....	\$105
8 Horse Box .....	\$168

## **TRIFECTA WHEEL:** (\$.50 Wager)

### **One Horse with All with All**

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

7 Horse Field .....	\$15
8 Horse Field .....	\$21
9 Horse Field .....	\$28
10 Horse Field .....	\$36

### **One Horse with Two Horses with All**

(Example: 1/2,3/All or 2,3/1/All or 1/All/2,3 or 2,3/All/1 or All/1/2,3 or All/2,3/1)

7 Horse Field .....	\$5
8 Horse Field .....	\$6
9 Horse Field .....	\$7
10 Horse Field .....	\$8

## **TRIFECTA KEY:** (\$.50 Wager)

1 Horse with 3 others .....	\$3
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4)	
1 Horse with 4 others .....	\$6
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5)	
1 Horse with 5 others .....	\$10
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	
1 Horse with 6 others .....	\$15
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	
1 Horse with 7 others .....	\$21
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	

## **SUPERFECTA BOX:** (\$.10 Wager)

4 Horse Box .....	\$2.40
5 Horse Box .....	\$12
6 Horse Box .....	\$36

## **SUPERFECTA WHEEL:** (\$.10 Wager)

### **One Horse with All with All with All**

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

7 Horse Field .....	\$12
8 Horse Field .....	\$21
9 Horse Field .....	\$33.60
10 Horse Field .....	\$50.40

### **One Horse with Two Horses with All with All**

(Example: 1/2,3/All/All or 2,3/1/All/All or 1/All/All/2,3 or 2,3/All/All/1 or All/All/1/2,3 or All/All/2,3/1)

7 Horse Field .....	\$4
8 Horse Field .....	\$6
9 Horse Field .....	\$8.40
10 Horse Field .....	\$11.20

## **SUPERFECTA KEY:** (\$.10 Wager)

1 Horse with 3 others .....	\$60
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4/2, 3, 4)	
1 Horse with 4 others .....	\$2.40
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5/2, 3, 4, 5)	
1 Horse with 5 others .....	\$6
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6/2, 3, 4, 5, 6)	
1 Horse with 6 others .....	\$12
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	
1 Horse with 7 others .....	\$21
(Example: 1/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8/2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)	

# Two Alternatives to the Favorite

by Laffit Pincay *XBTV.com* & *NBC Sports Reporter*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** We're looking at a Belmont Stakes with more meat on the bones for handicappers than most years. Sure, a Triple Crown on the line is good for TV and good for the industry, but an odds-on horse at Belmont that everyone focuses on isn't as good for the bettors. This Belmont is tailor-made for horseplayers just like last year when Creator and Destin produced big payoffs. If Always Dreaming had won the Preakness by five lengths, we'd have a short field and a shorter price.

**Main Contenders:** **CLASSIC EMPIRE** has more on the line than anyone else in the Belmont when you consider his chances at champion 3-year-old. He's also the most gifted and talented horse in the lineup. I like how stoic the Casse Camp was after the Preakness, looking forward to challenging Chad Brown and Cloud Computing to a rematch in three weeks. Four races in eight weeks bothers me with a reasonable wonder if he's a little fatigued? Cloud Computing was fresh in Baltimore and caught him late. If **CLASSIC EMPIRE** is even a little tired, the one and one-half miles of the Belmont will expose that. **TAPWRIT** was side-swiped early in the Derby, but didn't have a bad trip after that. Todd Pletcher has two wins and four seconds in the Belmont with horses coming off similar layoffs. He's at his best doing this, and sire Tapit has been responsible for two of the last three Belmont winners. What worries me is that **TAPWRIT** did his best running during the Derby on the inside, which was favorable, and the bottom side of his pedigree makes this Belmont pedigree snob leery about the distance.

**Value Plays:** It's easy to look at Lani's third last year and think **EPICHARIS** can factor. This year's raider from Japan is a much better horse and has speed and tactical ability. My XBTV.com partner Zoe Cadman reported from Dubai what a stunning specimen he is. They've pointed for this race all along and I expect a big, big effort. **IRISH WAR CRY** is the epitome of an every-other runner. He runs out of his mind and then lays an egg.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$20 Win and Place: **TAPWRIT** and **EPICHARIS** (\$80)
- \$5 Exacta Key-Box: **TAPWRIT** and **EPICHARIS** with **CLASSIC EMPIRE** (\$20)

Xpressbet Belmont Stakes Wager Guide  
**STATS & TRENDS** and **KNOW THIS** information is  
provided by **JEREMY PLONK** (Horseplayernow.com).

## Stats & Trends:

### Belmont Winners in Prior TC Races

(Since 2000)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>TC Race</u>
2016	Creator	Derby
2015	American Pharoah	Derby, Preakness
2014	Tonalist	none
2013	Palace Malice	Derby
2012	Union Rags	Derby
2011	Ruler On Ice	none
2010	Drosselmeyer	none
2009	Summer Bird	Derby
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

### Derby, Preakness Top Four Finishers

(Since 2000)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Bel. Fin.</u>
2016	Exaggerator	11th
<b>2015</b>	<b>American Pharoah</b>	<b>1st</b>
2014	California Chrome	4th
2013	Orb	3rd
2011	Shackleford	5th
2011	Animal Kingdom	6th
2009	Mine That Bird	3rd
2008	Big Brown	dnf
2007	Curlin	2nd
2007	Hard Spun	4th
<b>2005</b>	<b>Afleet Alex</b>	<b>1st</b>
2005	Giacomo	7th
2004	Smarty Jones	2nd
2003	Funny Cide	3rd
2002	War Emblem	8th
2002	Proud Citizen	5th
2000	Impeachment	5th

## Picks

1. **TAPWRIT**
2. **EPICHARIS**
3. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**
4. **IRISH WAR CRY**

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

**xpressbet**  
your way to play

# Classic Empire Seeks Classic Win

by Jeff Siegel *XBTV.com Analyst*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** Without the Derby and Preakness winner in the field, the 2017 Belmont Stakes may be viewed by some as little more than a consolation event. But don't tell that to the connections of **CLASSIC EMPIRE**. A victory will keep the Mark Casse-trained colt in strong contention for a year-end Eclipse Award, and the way the field is shaping up, **CLASSIC EMPIRE** looks very much like a probable winner. His narrow defeat in the Preakness – after doing the dirty work in running favored Always Dreaming into the ground – was at least as impressive as his Breeders' Cup Juvenile win, and there should be nobody in the Belmont field as talented as Cloud Computing, who utilized a perfect trip to edge **CLASSIC** by a head in Maryland.

**Main Contenders:** One-run deep closers like **LOOKIN AT LEE** traditionally lose their effectiveness at the Belmont's distance due to the typically slow or steady pace that usually characterizes a 12-furlong race, so let's look elsewhere. Japanese invader **EPICHARIS** has the kind of tactical speed that should allow him a free and easy trip, and his narrow defeat in the UAE Derby showed he could act in good company outside of his homeland. **TWISTED TOM** is another that fits the marathon profile and certainly seems better than his modest speed figures give him credit for. A winner of four of his last five starts, the son of Creative Cause is a fresh face worth giving strong consideration at a nice price.

**Value Plays:** **CLASSIC EMPIRE** will be a heavy favorite, so if there's money to be made it must be done in the vertical exotics. In addition to **EPICHARIS** and **TWISTED TOM**, you should also consider **J BOYS ECHO**, who has a highly rated race (his Gotham win) to go back to and legitimate excuses for below-par efforts in both the Blue Grass Stakes and the Kentucky Derby.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$35 Exacta Key: **CLASSIC EMPIRE** over **EPICHARIS** and **TWISTED TOM** (\$70)
- \$15 Exacta: **CLASSIC EMPIRE** over **J BOYS ECHO** (\$15)
- \$5 Exacta Part-Wheel: **EPICHARIS**, **TWISTED TOM** and **J BOYS ECHO** over **CLASSIC EMPIRE** (\$15)

Xpressbet Belmont Stakes Wager Guide  
**STATS & TRENDS** and **KNOW THIS** information is  
provided by **JEREMY PLONK** (Horseplayernow.com).

## Stats & Trends:

### Tried All TC Races and Won Belmont

(Since 1990)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>
2015	American Pharoah
2005	Afleet Alex
2001	Point Given
1998	Victory Gallop
1996	Editor's Note
1995	Thunder Gulch
1994	Tabasco Cat
1991	Hansel

### Belmont Minus Derby/Preakness Winners

(Last 25 Years)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Belmont Winner</u>	<u>Odds</u>
2012	Union Rags	5-2
2010	Drosselmeyer	13-1
2006	Jazil	6-1
2000	Commendable	18-1

## Know This:

### **Pharoah Flash**

American Pharoah's wire-to-wire win in 2015 was just the second runaway at Belmont since 1984. The previous came from longshot Da'Tara in 2008.

### **Better with Age**

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

### **Big Bopper**

Sarava set the Belmont Stakes record \$2 payoff in 2002 when scoring at a \$142.50 mutuel as War Emblem stumbled in his Triple Crown bid.

## Picks

1. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**
2. **EPICHARIS**
3. **TWISTED TOM**
4. **J BOYS ECHO**

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

**xpressbet**  
your way to play

# Classic Empire Looks Tough

by Jon White *Santa Anita Morning Line Oddsmaker*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** Without Kentucky Derby winner Always Dreaming or Preakness winner Cloud Computing in the Belmont field, **CLASSIC EMPIRE** figures to be the favorite and should be tough to beat. Voted a 2016 Eclipse Award as champion 2-year-old male, **CLASSIC EMPIRE** won the Arkansas Derby, ran fourth in the Kentucky Derby after almost getting knocked down in the initial strides, then finished second in the Preakness when he lost by only a head. Of course, an important issue when it comes to the Belmont is whether or not a horse has sufficient stamina to succeed at the demanding mile and one-half distance. It is encouraging for **CLASSIC EMPIRE** in this regard that he is a grandson of 2003 Belmont winner Empire Maker. I think Japan's talented **EPICHARIS** warrants respect. After **EPICHARIS** won the first four starts of his career, he lost the UAE Derby by just a head to Thunder Snow--the racehorse who suddenly became a bucking bronco in the Kentucky Derby. After Thunder Snow's Kentucky Derby fiasco, he redeemed himself to some extent by finishing second May 27 to Euro star Churchill in Ireland.

**Main Contenders:** Beyond **CLASSIC EMPIRE** and **EPICHARIS**, **LOOKIN AT LEE** does seem to have the look of a contender, especially in terms of the superfecta. **LOOKIN AT LEE** rallied from far back to finish second in the Kentucky Derby (Corey Lanerie's ride was outstanding), then ran fourth in the Preakness. In 11 career starts, **LOOKIN AT LEE** has finished worse than fourth just twice. Hall of Fame trainer Steve Asmussen has said he feels the longer a race the better for **LOOKIN AT LEE**, who now has a mile and one-half to show what he can do.

**Value Plays:** **TAPWRIT** finished sixth and **GORMLEY** ninth in the Kentucky Derby, but they might do better in the Belmont and they both should be attractive prices in the wagering. **TAPWRIT** raced 15th early in the Kentucky Derby after getting shuffled back, then actually did pretty well to finish sixth. It is interesting that both times **GORMLEY** lost prior to the Kentucky Derby, he rebounded to win his next race. **GORMLEY'S** sire is Malibu Moon, a son of 1992 Belmont winner A.P. Indy. And A.P. Indy's sire, Seattle Slew, won the 1977 Belmont to complete a Triple Crown sweep.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$80 Win: **CLASSIC EMPIRE** (\$80)
- \$20 Win: **EPICHARIS** (\$20)

## 42% Favorites

The favorite has won the Belmont Stakes 62 out of 148 times.

## Picks

1. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**
2. **EPICHARIS**
3. **LOOKIN AT LEE**
4. **GORMLEY**

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

## Stats & Trends:

### Winning Belmont Post Positions

(Since 1905)

Post	Wins	Post	Wins
1	23	8	6
2	11	9	4
3	15	10	2
4	10	11	3
5	15	12	1
6	7	13	1
7	12	14	0

### Active Jockeys to Win Belmont

Year	Jockey	Horse
2016	Irad Ortiz, Jr.	Creator
2015	Victor Espinoza	American Pharoah
2014	Joel Rosario	Tonalist
2013	Mike Smith	Palace Malice
2012	John Velazquez	Union Rags
2011	Jose Valdivia, Jr.	Ruler On Ice
2010	Mike Smith	Drosselmeyer
2009	Kent Desormeaux	Summer Bird
2008	Alan Garcia	Da'Tara
2007	John Velazquez	Rags to Riches
2006	Fernando Jara	Jazil
2005	Jeremy Rose	Afleet Alex
2004	Edgar Prado	Birdstone
2002	Edgar Prado	Sarava
2001	Gary Stevens	Point Given
1998	Gary Stevens	Victory Gallop
1995	Gary Stevens	Thunder Gulch

## Know This:

### The One & Only

The Belmont Stakes is the only Grade 1 dirt stakes race in America longer than 1 1/4 miles.

### Get Your Nose Down

Only 4 times in history has the Belmont Stakes been decided by a nose, including last year's photo finish score by Creator.

**xpressbet**  
your way to play

# Classic Empire Set to Mine Gold

by Dick Jerardi *Daily Racing Form Columnist*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** What was suspected prior to the Preakness has now become obvious – the rail at Churchill Downs for the Kentucky Derby was gold. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**'s Preakness performance was convincing evidence along with the regression by **LOOKIN AT LEE** and the dramatic regression from Derby winner Always Dreaming. Even though the Derby winner and Preakness winner Cloud Computing are stabled at Belmont Park, neither will run in the Belmont because their trainers are both in the much-more-time-between-races camp, regardless of the race's importance and tradition. So this really looks like the race **CLASSIC EMPIRE**, unlucky at the start of the Derby and unfortunate in the stretch after a duel with the Derby winner for much of the Preakness, should win.

**Main Contenders:** **CLASSIC EMPIRE** came all the way back to his brilliant Breeders' Cup Juvenile performance with his second in the Preakness where he got the same 102 Beyer he attained in November at Santa Anita. Unless the brutal racing schedule (fourth race in eight weeks) catches up to him, the \$2.5 million earner stands out over a group that has never run fast or been very consistent. That the 2-year-old champ's speed and ability to ration it gives him a tactical advantage can't be ignored either. **SENIOR INVESTMENT** runs just like a Belmont horse – relentless and forever. **TAPWRIT** fits the profile of Todd Pletcher's two Belmont winners and near-miss in 2016 with Destin (run Derby weekend, wait five weeks and fire big). That **TAPWRIT** got crushed in the mayhem at the start of the Derby and still managed to finish sixth must be considered. **LOOKIN AT LEE** has not won since August, but has only been out of the top four once in eight races, all graded stakes. **EPICHARIS**, Thunder Snow's nose from being unbeaten, will draw a huge Japanese media contingent.

**Value Plays:** **PATCH** had zero chance in the Derby from the No. 20 post and is a son of hot young sire Union Rags, the 2012 Belmont winner.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$100 Exacta: **CLASSIC EMPIRE** over **PATCH** (\$100)

Xpressbet Belmont Stakes Wager Guide free Daily Updates begin online Tuesday, June 6, and include revised expert Analysis, Wagering Strategies and Picks based on race additions, defections, post positions, etc. Updates include Johnny D's horse-by-horse Belmont analysis and much more.

## Picks

1. **CLASSIC EMPIRE**
2. **PATCH**
3. **TAPWRIT**
4. **SENIOR INVESTMENT**

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

## Stats & Trends:

### Odds-On Belmont Starters

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horse</u>	<u>Fin.</u>	<u>Odds</u>
2015	<b>American Pharoah</b>	1st	3-5
2014	California Chrome	4th	4-5
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

**Notable:** 8 of the last 9 odds-on favorites have lost.

### Where Winners Were Bred

<u>Wins</u>	<u>State/Country</u>
99	Kentucky
11	Virginia
7	New Jersey
6	England
6	Florida
3	New York, Pennsylvania Tennessee
2	California Maryland Texas Ireland
1	Canada

### Oldest Stakes Races in North America

<u>Year</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Track</u>
1867	Belmont Stakes	Belmont Park
1864	Travers Stakes	Saratoga
1860	Queen's Plate	Woodbine
1831	Phoenix Stakes	Keeneland

## Know This:

### Preak-Less

14 of the last 17 Belmont Stakes winners skipped the Preakness.

**xpressbet**  
your way to play

# Belmont Ambush

by Steve Byk *At the Races (SiriusXM) Host*



RACING FESTIVAL • JUNE 8-10

**Analysis:** Thoughts of an attempt at a Triple Crown were dashed in Baltimore when Always Dreaming came up empty, so 2017 will mark the second consecutive year we will see three different horses win the Classics. And like 2016 when Derby also-rans Creator and Destin ran a thrilling Belmont 1-2 after skipping the Preakness, a host of fresh foes look poised for a possible upset in Elmont. **CLASSIC EMPIRE** and **LOOKIN AT LEE** will be the only sophomores making the three-starts-in-five-weeks gauntlet; **MULTIPLIER** and **SENIOR INVESTMENT** return out of Preakness runs; **GORMLEY, J BOYS ECHO, TAPWRIT** (and possibly **IRISH WAR CRY** and **PATCH**) make the Derby-Belmont move; **EPICHARIS** (UAE Derby), **MEANTIME** (Peter Pan) and **TWISTED TOM** (Tesio) arrive from disparate points on the prep compass.

**Main Contenders:** **CLASSIC EMPIRE** will be favored off noble Derby-Preakness runs, but despite those performances feels like a play-against at short odds making a fourth start in eight weeks at a distance that looks beyond his scope. Todd Pletcher returns to Belmont sporting an overall mark of 19: 2-5-3 in the event since 2006 after last year's harrowing second. **TAPWRIT** has tactical speed that should see him ideally placed for the 12-furlong trip under Jose Ortiz and gives Pletcher and Destin co-owner Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners a big shot at carnation ecstasy after last year's agony. At around 4-1 odds, he is the right key horse.

**Value Plays:** Ken McPeck has a reputation of over-reaching with charges, but not when it comes to staying distances and this race in particular. Besides orchestrating the 2002 shocker with Sarava (70-1), McPeck was third with Atigun (2012) at 20-1 and Pimlico show pony **SENIOR INVESTMENT** will relish the sweeping expanse of Belmont for his sustained rally. Chad Brown starts a third different horse in the Crown troika and after the runs of Cloud Computing and Practical Joke, why discount **TWISTED TOM**, who was pointed for this spot after his Tesio triumph? **EPICHARIS** is the mystery horse and the Japanese hopeful arrives in New York having been focused on this assignment for two months and is eligible for a \$1 million bonus.

## Wagering Strategies (\$100):

- \$4 Trifecta Part-Wheel: **TAPWRIT** with **CLASSIC EMPIRE, SENIOR INVESTMENT, TWISTED TOM, EPICHARIS, LOOKIN AT LEE** with **CLASSIC EMPIRE, SENIOR INVESTMENT, TWISTED TOM, EPICHARIS, LOOKIN AT LEE** (\$80)
- \$4 Exacta Part-Wheel: **CLASSIC EMPIRE, SENIOR INVESTMENT, TWISTED TOM, EPICHARIS, LOOKIN AT LEE** with **TAPWRIT** (\$20)

## Picks

1. TAPWRIT
2. SENIOR INVESTMENT
3. CLASSIC EMPIRE
4. TWISTED TOM

Revised Wager Guide Available Friday, June 9

## Stats & Trends:

### Fastest Belmont Final Times

Year	Time	Horse
1973	2:24	Secretariat
1989	2:26	Easy Goer
1992		A.P. Indy
2001	2:26 2/5	Point Given
1988		Risen Star
2015	2:26 3/5	American Pharoah
1978	2:26 4/5	Affirmed

### Belmont Winners Since Affirmed

(Last 38 Years)

- 15 Triple Crown Series Newcomers
- 12 Derby & Preakness Runners
- 10 Derby Runners that Skipped Preakness
- 1 Preakness Runner that Skipped Derby

### Largest Belmont Crowds

Attendance	Winner	Year
120,139	Birdstone	2004
103,222	Sarava	2002
102,199	Tonalist	2014
101,864	Empire Maker	2003
94,476	Da'Tara	2008
90,000	American Pharoah	2015**
85,818	Lemon Drop Kid	1999
85,811	Union Rags	2012*

*Largest Without Triple Crown Chance:*

73,857 (Point Given, 2001)

\*TC Candidate I'll Have Another Scratched

\*\*Attendance Capped

## Know This:

### Chalk Dusted

American Pharoah (2015) is the only Belmont favorite to finish in the exacta since 2007.

### Price, Price Baby

The Belmont winner has paid at least \$20 in 7 of the last 9 years.

**xpressbet**  
your way to play



## EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR XPRESSBET WAGER GUIDE READERS

# 25% OFF THE DAILY RACING FORM BELMONT STAKES ADVANCE-ACCESS PACKAGE

PROMO CODE: XBBELMONT

## INCLUDING

- › ADVANCE FORMULATOR PPS
- › UNLIMITED FORMULATOR PPS FOR BELMONT DAY
- › 10 DAYS OF DRF+ PRO
- › ULTIMATE BELMONT STAKES FAN GUIDE
- › DRF HANDICAPPER PICKS
- › DRF'S DIGITAL PAPER

Get Yours at [www.DRF.com/Belmont-Stakes-Package](http://www.DRF.com/Belmont-Stakes-Package)

**xpressbet.com** › 866.88XPRESS  
your way to play (866.889.7737)

Must be 18 or older (21 in AL, AZ, IA, KS, NH, ND, WA) to open an account with Xpressbet, LLC and reside in a state where such activity is legal.  
Void where prohibited. National Gambling Support Line 800.522.4700.