

# DOGHOUSE CONFIDENTIAL

SARATOGA STRATEGIES by **Mr. X**

Mr. & Mrs. X, Kari & the Dooleys

Belmont Stakes, Saturday, June 9, 2007

## 139TH BELMONT STAKES

| PP | HORSE              | TRAINER        | JOCKEY          | ODDS |
|----|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|------|
| 1  | IMAWILDANDCRAZYGUY | Bill Kaplan    | Mark Guidry     | 20-1 |
| 2  | TIAGO              | John Shirreffs | Mike Smith      | 10-1 |
| 3  | CURLIN             | Steve Asmussen | Robby Albarado  | 6-5  |
| 4  | C P WEST           | Nick Zito      | Edgar Prado     | 12-1 |
| 5  | SLEW'S TIZZY       | Greg Fox       | Rafael Bejarano | 20-1 |
| 6  | HARD SPUN          | Larry Jones    | Garrett Gomez   | 5-2  |
| 7  | RAGS TO RICHES     | Todd Pletcher  | John Velazquez  | 3-1  |

A mile and one-half is a different race. We thought that the Derby was and is always difficult because of the distance (mile and a quarter) and the size of the field. Here we don't have to worry about the size of the field. But we do have to worry about who can run the distance, and we return to our energy distribution numbers that we used before and then after the Derby.

We have four contenders. But we can't make any money betting four horses in a seven horse field, so we need to do better. The four contenders that look like that they can make the distance are CURLIN, HARD SPUN, TIAGO, and RAGS TO RICHES.

**CURLIN** ran a great Preakness to catch our horse, Street Sense. The turns at Belmont will help him. His energy distribution seems to indicate that he can go longer, although his pedigree is a bit weak. His finishing time in the Preakness was great. It appears from his past performances that he is somewhat of an in and outer, meaning he runs a good race, then regresses a bit, then runs a good race again. His Beyer Numbers from the Preakness back are 111, 98 (Derby), 103 (Arkansas Derby), 97 (Rebel), and 101 in his Maiden win. You could say that the horse is still learning which is true, or you could make a case that he will run only 100 in the Belmont. Nevertheless, in comparison to the rest, **CURLIN** is the one to beat although I do not think he is a lock.

**TIAGO** was our second pick in the Derby off of his Santa Anita win. He had a great energy distribution number. I have no doubt that he can get the Belmont distance. His Derby race was only so-so, finishing seventh by 10 lengths, so he clearly has to improve. **TIAGO** did run by Street Sense after the Derby on the gallop out, so it could be that his trip in the Derby certainly wasn't the greatest. **TIAGO** didn't run in the Preakness, so he is fresh as well. He is a deep closer; we'll see if he can move up in class today to make an impact. By the way, last year Jazil was our second choice in the Derby and won the Belmont from off the pace, so maybe history will repeat.

**RAGS TO RICHES** looks like the real deal. Great filly with a good energy distribution from 9 furlongs. I have no doubt that she can run 10 furlongs, but I still have my doubts about the mile and one-half. Her pedigree says she can. The pace of the race is her problem. She is used to an easier pace and being close to the pace. If it is 1:12 or more for the six furlongs, she has a chance. If Hard Spun or Slew's Tizzy runs a bit faster, she could burn out. It is always difficult to run against the boys, particularly at this distance. On the other hand, Pletcher wouldn't put her in here without a realistic chance to win if Curlin doesn't run his best race. Both oddsmakers made her 3-1 here that I thought was low.

**HARD SPUN** is a wonderful and very tough horse. He has been out of the money once in his life of eight races. Therein lies the problem. The horse hasn't had a break since starting his racing in October 2006. Can he continue to hold his form even though Jones held him out five or six weeks before the Derby? We bet against him in the Preakness, and we will bet against him here. Just too many hard races.

**Here is my safe bet:**

**\$5 Exacta Box: 2-3-7**

**Total \$30**

**Here is what I will bet:**

**\$10 Exacta Box: 2-3-7 = \$60**

**\$40 Exacta: 3 with 2-7 = \$80**

**\$20 Exacta: 2-7 with 3 = \$40**

**Total \$180**

**Good luck to all.**

**Mr. X**