

DOGHOUSE CONFIDENTIAL

SARATOGA STRATEGIES by Mr. X

Mr. X & Mrs. X and the Pencil Neck's on Lucy's Birthday

Saturday, May 20, 2006

PREAKNESS 131 FIELD				
Purse: \$1,000,000 added - 1 3/16 miles				
Post	Horse	Jockey	Trainer	M/L Odds
1	Like Now	Garrett Gomez	Kiaran McLaughlin	12-1
2	Platinum Couple	Jose Espinoza	Joseph Lostritto	50-1
3	Hemingway's Key	Jeremy Rose	Nick Zito	30-1
4	Greeley's Legacy	Richard Migliore	George Weaver	20-1
5	Brother Derek	Alex Solis	Dan Hendricks	3-1
6	Barbaro	Edgar Prado	Michael Matz	Even
7	Sweetnorthernstaint	Kent Desormeaux	Michael Trombetta	4-1
8	Bernardini	Javier Castellano	Tom Albertrani	8-1
9	Diabolical	Ramon Dominguez	Steve Klesaris	30-1

Analysis

As good as Barbaro's performance was in the Derby, you would think that he would regress in the Preakness and be beaten by one of the obvious contenders, Brother Derek or Sweetnorthernstaint. But I can envision no scenario where he will get beat. He is a fresh horse, he wasn't taxed in the Derby, and in my opinion, he may improve from the 111 Beyer. I say this because I believe he has a major pace advantage over the other two: his cruising speed is just too fast for the other two.

Brother Derek will try to win (not run second). If he tries to run with Barbaro, he will have nothing left at the end. Brother Derek's connections want to get into an eyeball to eyeball race, but in the end, I think it will be Barbaro who will stare down Brother Derek and grind him away. Brother Derek is a very game horse, but I just don't believe he can sustain a fast pace and still have something left.

Sweetnorthernstaint may bounce back as well here, but again he offers no value, and I'm not convinced that he is ready to run. His works before the Derby were stiff-legged, and the clockers didn't like his action.

All that said, it looks like Barbaro will go off at 3-5, and the exacta with Brother Derek if he survives the 'duel' will be miniscule. I don't think that Sweetnorthernstaint will be much better and is likely to run out.

Of all the remaining contenders, the only horse that looks like he will move forward is Bernadini. Here we have a horse who has never run beyond a mile being thrust into the Triple Crown after three races. His 104 Beyer in the Withers is intriguing. It is a great deal to ask an improving horse to step up to run at 9.5f in such an important race. But he is fresh, working well, and has speed. My numbers say that he will be two lengths in front of Like Now at the 6f marker, and four lengths in front of Barbaro. I'll take **Barbaro** to catch him, but for **Bernadini** to hold on to make the exacta. This is the only value bet that I will make, recognizing that it is somewhat of a longshot play.

Here is the safe bet:

\$2 exacta box: 6 with 5-7-8

Here is what I will bet:

\$80 exacta: 6-8

\$20 exacta: 8-6

Good Luck!

Mr. X