



The Contenders

After an exciting finish in the Kentucky Derby with three horses within a neck of each other at the wire and with a bit of delay before making the race official, the (18-1) longshot Mystic Dan had prevailed over Sierra Leone and Forever Young (Jpn). Now we head into the 2nd Leg of the Triple Crown Series with the Kentucky Derby winner **Mystic Dan** looking to become the 14th winner of the coveted **Triple Crown!**

Thus the Big Question is will Mystic Dan win the Preakness Stakes?

Mystic Dan had previously run 3rd in the Arkansas Derby, 6 ¼ lengths behind the winner Muth who has been made the (8/5) favorite for the Preakness Stakes as Mystic Dan was made the second favorite at (5/2)! It was the first time since 2012 that the Kentucky Derby winner was NOT made the morning line favorite for the Preakness!

But then on Wednesday morning trainer Bob Baffert announced that Muth would not run in the Preakness because of a fever and thus Mystic Dan is now the favorite on the morning line.

Muth was to be a LOCK for me to win the Preakness Stakes. No questions asked.

But don't fear, Baffert has another runner in the field in Imagination (6-1) who ran 2nd in the Santa Anita Derby, only beaten a neck.

Everything is pointing to another big race with big surprises and making horse racing history!

Will it be another year where no horse is able to win more than one Leg of the Triple Crown?

Could we have another year of a different horse winning in each Leg of the Triple Crown series? It has now happened in 13 of the last 18 years.

The cutback in distance in the Preakness to 1 3/16 Miles from the Kentucky Derby 1 1/4 Mile should benefit Mystic Dan as he was just able to hold off the two closing runners by a neck!

But it also could benefit the pace setters.

There are just 2 other KY Derby horses that will run back in the short 2 weeks to take another stab at Mystic Dan.

Unfortunately it has become the normal that only a few KY Derby runners come back to race in the Preakness S. They prefer to wait for another 3 weeks for the Belmont Stakes which will be held at Saratoga this year.

This is no doubt why we are seeing more “New Shooters” win the Preakness Stakes!

In the past 21 years “New Shooters” have done well: (7) Winners (average odds 9-1) – (10) Seconds (average odds 24-1) – (10) Thirds (average odds 18-1) – (8) Fourths (average odds 17-1).

Some people think that the Preakness Stakes is the easiest Leg of the Triple Crown series to win and generally they are correct. But in reality of the last 11 Kentucky Derby Favorites that were also the Favorite in the Preakness Stakes, ONLY 3 were able to win! So **Mystic Dan** is NOT exactly a Lock to win.

No doubt about it, with Muth out of the race, **Mystic Dan** is the one to beat in here as his morning line odds have been set at 5/2 as he is the Kentucky Derby winner.

There are 5 “new shooters” who are rested and ready to take on the Derby winner.

Consider this, 9 of the past 22 Preakness' have been won by the post time favorite ... ONLY 3 in the last 14 years.

The history of “Odds-on” favorites in the Preakness Stakes is 20 for 32 or 63% win percentage (*Mystic Dan will not go that low!*)

As you would expect, the real value in the Preakness is found in the *Trifecta & Superfecta* wagers.

The 10 year average payouts in the Preakness Stakes are: \$13.20 for \$2 Win, \$154 for \$2 Exacta, \$1,612 for \$2 Trifecta and \$7,252 for \$1 Superfecta.

Last year “**New-Shooter**” **National Treasure** (3-1) from Bob Baffert, who was prevented from running in the KY Derby, defeated the KY Derby winner Mage who

was the Preakness favorite and a second “New Shooter ran 2nd in Blazing Sevens (5-1). Mage finished 3rd.

In 2022, “New Shooter” **Early Voting** (6-1) defeated the KY Derby & Preakness Favorite Epicenter (3/2) for trainer Chad Brown who had also accomplished in 2017 with Cloud Computing (13-1). The \$2 Win wager paid **\$13.40**. *He is trying it again this year with **Blazing Sevens** (6-1)!*

In 2021 “New Shooter” **Rombauer** (12-1) who skipped the KY Derby won beating (3) KY Derby runners **Midnight Bourbon**(3-1), **Medina Spirit** (5/2) and **Keepmeinmind** (14-1). The \$1 Superfecta paid a nice **\$1,025** while the \$2 Trifecta brought back **\$325**.

In 2020 “New-Shooter” **Swiss Skydiver** became just the 6th Filly to win beating the KY Derby winner and Preakness favorite. She paid **\$26.20** for the Win, Authentic ran 2nd at (3/2) Odds with 2 “New Shooters” in 3rd and 4th at Odds of (41-1) and (5/2). The Trifecta paid **\$1,205** for a \$1 wager and the Superfecta paid **\$5,053** also for \$1 wager.

In 2019 the KY Derby winner did not show up, **Improbable** (favorite-trained by Baffert) ran 6th while the 7th place KY Derby runner **War of Will** won (**\$14.20**) followed by New-shooters **Everfast** (29-1) in 2nd, New-shooter Owendale (8-1) in 3rd and New-Shooter Warrior’s Charge (13-1) in 4th. The Exacta paid **\$947**, Trifecta **\$9,399** and the Superfecta **\$51,924**.

In 2018 KY Derby winner **Always Dreaming** (favorite) ran 8th while New-shooter **Cloud Computing** (\$28.80) won by a head over the second favorite Classic Empire with New-Shooter Senior Investment (32-1) in 3rd with Lookin At Lee in 4th. The Exacta paid **\$98**, Trifecta **\$1,097** and the Superfecta **\$8,162**.

In 2015 **American Pharoah** won as the (4/5) Favorite followed by 2 Longshots at 28-1 and 12-1. Payouts were very good for a winning favorite in a small 8 horse field at **\$124** Exacta, **\$985** Trifecta and **\$1,906** Superfecta!

In 2013 year the favorite Orb finished 4th and Oxbow wired the field followed by Itsmyluckyday and Mylute. The Exacta paid **\$301**, Trifecta - **\$1,030** and the Superfecta a nice \$1,817. Top 4 runners all ran in the KY Derby!

In 2011 the favorite Animal Kingdom ran 2nd with Shackelford (12-1) winning, the Trifecta paid **\$1,401** and the Superfecta gave back **\$6,212**.

In 2010 the favorite Super Saver finished out of the money and the 2nd favorite Lookin at Lucky won the Trifecta paid **\$2,771** and the Superfecta gave back **\$34,252**.

Just like in the Kentucky Derby, there is a **Winning Profile** for the Preakness Stakes. For those of you who purchased our "Proven Winning Kentucky Derby Profiles", you know the importance we put on having the correct Pedigree and the proper racing campaign for the horses' 2-year old and 3-year careers. The same holds true with the Preakness Stakes.

In addition to having the proper pedigree, the **Winning Profile** of the Preakness includes the following;

1. The winner of the Preakness is usually a horse that ran in the Derby. (*Latelty this has been changing to a "New Shooter"*)

2. If you are the Derby winner you get extra points. *Mystic Dan*

3. Derby horses that had problems can *show big improvement* in the smaller Preakness field.

4. Normally, Derby horses should show 1 and only 1 workout between the 2 races. *Mystic Dan had None*

(this is becoming less and less of a requirement as Smarty Jones, Afleet Alex, American Pharoah had zero workouts but did gallop a lot between Leg 1 and Leg 2)

5. The Preakness post time favorite is a **LOCK** to be **in-the-money** - in 31 of the past 39 years the favorite has won 45% of the time and has been in-the-money 80% and has been in the top 4 94% of the races. (*Improbable (6th)*, *Always Dreaming (8th)*, *Orb (4th)*, *Super Saver (8th)*, *Barbaro (DNF)* & *Monarchos (6th) were the only Preakness Favorites since 1993 to be off the board*)

6. The past 36 Preakness winners, 23 have paid less than \$10.00 and ONLY 5 have paid higher than \$20.00 (2021, Rombauer (\$25.60), 2020, Swiss Skydiver (\$25.40), Cloud Computing (\$28.80) 2017, Oxbow (\$32.80) 2013 and Shackelford (\$27.20) in 2011). ALL of them within the last 13 years.

7. New Faces should have run their last race within the past 30 days unless they had earned enough KY Derby Points to get into the race but opted out.

8. The winner will have earned a Beyer speed rating of at least 105 as a 3-year old. (*again this is becoming less of a requirement with the current training patterns*).

(Only Mystic Dan has gotten to this level (in the KY Derby-100 & Southwest S. 101) – NO other runners have hit the 100+ level)

9. Non-Derby Horses must have earned a triple digit Beyer speed rating as a 3-year old and should have earned triple digit BRIS Late-Pace speed rating in their most recent race or have run the last 1/4 mile in 25.3 seconds or less.

(None have earned 100+ Beyer and None got a 100+ BRIS Late speed no. in their most recent race - – Tuscan Gold was close)

10. Must have shown that they can win stalking or coming from off the pace. ***(closers must show that they can be within 10 lengths of the leader at every call)!***

Now let's look at each of these in more detail.

1. Horses that have run in the Derby and survived to race in the Preakness have shown that they are **in form** and peaking. The Derby is the most demanding race for 3-year olds and that is why we see so many defections from the Derby to the Preakness. It weeds out the pretenders and ONLY the fit and ready ones move on.
2. ***30 of the last 38 Preakness Stakes winners also ran in the Kentucky Derby***

When there is a Derby longshot winner, more Derby runners show up than usual because they think the winner was a fluke and they are better than what they showed in the race. But NOT this year as only 2 are returning!

(Only Mystic Dan, Catching Freedom and Just Steel are coming back)

3. If you are the Derby winner, you have already beaten at least 1/3 of the field 2 weeks ago and that is a huge advantage especially if you were also the Derby post time favorite.

4. This is important because if you came out of the Derby in good condition with no physical problems, you want to be working out in the mornings and the trainer only needs to make sure he does not work TOO much. If no workout is shown, then this could be an indication of a problem with the horse's soundness. If no timed workout is shown, it is important to know why. What is the trainer's reason for doing so?

(None of the Derby runners had a timed work – this has become the new training method in today's Triple Crown)

4. Because the new horses are racing against Derby conditioned & tested horses they tend to be a class below (on paper) and if they expect to compete with the Derby

horses they MUST have earned at least one Triple Digit speed rating and shown late speed in the final 1/4 mile of their last race. If they do not have this, there is **NO** way they can **Win** the race! (*the exception is when none of the horses have earned triple digit Beyers*)

(None of the “New Shooters” have earned 100+ Beyer)

(Catching Freedom earned 100+ BRIS Late speed no in the Louisiana Derby.)

5. Most people think that the Pimlico track is a speed favoring track, however, **55%** of the Preakness Stakes winners come from off-the-pace and about **35%** win while stalking the pace. *Last year National Treasure won going wire-to-wire on the front end.*

In the last 32 years, National Treasure (2023), Justify (2018-sloppy track), American Pharoah (2015-sloppy track), Oxbow (2013), Rachel Alexandra (2008) and Louis Quatorze (1996) were the **ONLY** winners that led **wire-to-wire!**

6. **Post Position #1** is not where you want to be. **ONLY** (4) winners the past 60 years (*National Treasure 2023, War of Will won in 2019 & American Pharoah in 2015*). Post Position #2 is not much better. They are the kiss of death! ***Middle and outside posts are the best to wager on.***

7. The Kentucky Derby winner should have been racing in 1st or 2nd at the ¼ pole or within 3 ¼ lengths of the leader if he wants to win the Preakness. Derby winners that made big closing moves to win do not win the Preakness!

The Preakness Stakes field size is limited to 14 horses as opposed to the Kentucky Derby where 20 is the limit. Rarely do they get a full field.

How the Race Should Setup.

With the KY Derby 4th place runner Catching Freedom and the 17th place horse Just Steel joining the Derby winner we need to determine which “New Shooters” will be setting the pace as there does not look to be much Early speed in the field!

This race looks to be a Match race between the KY Derby winner Mystic Dan and “New-shooters” Imagination, Tuscan Golds and Uncle Heavy.

This field does not look to have a LOT of Early Speed runners with the Closers being Catching Freedom.

The early speed leaders looks to be Imagination, Seize the Grey and maybe Just Steel.

Racing just behind them will be Tuscan Gold, Uncle Heavy, Mystic Dan and Mugatu.

Last will be the Closer Catching Freedom (*but expect him to be closer to the field than normal*)

The Field for the 2024 Preakness Stakes:

| Post | Horse | Trainer | Jockey | Odds |
|------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------|
| 1 | Mugatu | Jeff Engler | Joe Bravo | 20-1 |
| 2 | Uncle Heavy | Robert Reid, Jr. | Irad Ortiz, Jr. | 20-1 |
| 3 | Catching Freedom | Brad Cox | Flavien Prat | 6-1 |
| 4 | Muth | SCRATCHED b Baffert | Juan Hernandez | 8/5 |
| 5 | Mystic Dan | Ken McPeck | Brian Hernandez, Jr. | 5/2 |
| 6 | Seize the Grey | D, Wayne Lukas | Jaime Torres | 15-1 |
| 7 | Just Steel | D. Wayne Lukas | Joel Rosario | 15-1 |
| 8 | Tuscan Gold | Chad Brown | Tyle Gaffalione | 8-1 |
| 9 | Imagination | Bob Baffert | Frankie Dettori | 6-1 |

Muth (8/5) would have been my Top pick and a Lock to win for Bob Baffert as winning the Preakness is his payback to Churchill Downs that has blocked him from running in the KY Derby since 2021. But he was Scratched Wednesday morning. By Baffert winning the 2nd Leg of the Triple Crown it prevents a Triple Crown winner. Baffert always has some of the best 3-year olds in his barn. If Muth could have run in the Derby he probably would have been the favorite! Bob holds the record for most Preakness Stakes wins with 8 and had tied for the most KY Derby wins before they disqualified Medina Spirit in 2021.

Several of the “New Shooters” are major competition for Mystic Dan who will be closer to the pace setters than normal. That big effort he put in the KY Derby where he was all out to hold off the 2 closing runners, just might have taken a toll on him!

My Preakness Picks

In a (8) horse field my betting strategy requires us to identify **1A** horse, **2B** and **3C** horses that are the main Contenders for making up the Exacta, Trifecta and Superfecta wagers. The A horse (A1) is our Key horse to Win the race. My wagering strategy is explained in the Next Section but first here are my Contenders.

A1 - #9 Imagination (6-1) - Top Pick – Baffert’s other runner - has never been out of the Exacta in 6 career races – he will be one of the pace setters and looks to be 1st or 2nd out of the gate – the California shipper has been the favorite in his last 5 races – ran 2nd last out in Santa Anita Derby (only beaten a neck) - shows 2 recent Bullet

works (working with Muth) – has the “Large-heart” X-Chromosome of War Admiral or Mahmoud pedigree lines – has been on a pattern of win 1, run 2nd, win 1, run 2nd again (2nd last out so this should be a win) – Frankie Dettori comes in for the ride (he has been for the last 2 races) - trainer Baffert looking to add to his record 8 wins in Leg 2 – has Wet track pedigree (if it is wet look for to go wire-to-wire)!

B1 - #8 Tuscan Gold (8-1) – **Best Longshot** - lightly raced Chad Brown trainee – ran a very good 3rd last out in the Louisiana Derby (only beaten 1 ¾ lengths behind Catching Freedom) – has the “Large-heart” X-Chromosome of War Admiral or Mahmoud pedigree lines – Beyer speed nos. increasing with each race – looks to have the best mid race speed nos. – has Wet track pedigree – trainer Chad Brown has won this race 2 times in last 7 years and got 2nd last year all with runners that skipped the KY Derby (same as he is doing this year).

B2 - #3 Catching Freedom (6-1) – ran a good 4th in the KY Derby (only beaten 2 lengths) – tied his career best Beyer Speed of 97 in the Derby – has the “Large-heart” X-Chromosome of War Admiral or Mahmoud pedigree lines – 3 of 4 races this year were Graded Stakes – will need to be more forwardly placed today as there will be a lot of early speed.

C1 - #5 Mystic Dan (5/2) – the (18-1) KY Derby winner that took the inside path around the track to win – earned a Beyer Speed of 100 in the Derby – has the Phalaris / Non-Phalaris pedigree – his Derby race was a hard fought battle to the wire in the last 100 yards (is he may now on a Bounce cycle) – is the short 2 week break between race too little (the only other time he tried this he did not run well) – he has won on a Wet track – only 1 KY Derby winner won the Preakness in the last 8 years - a win today keeps his Triple Crown hopes alive!

C2 - #6 Seize the Grey (15-1) – won the Pat Day Mile on the KY Derby undercard – D. Wayne Lukas trains for My Racehorse syndicate – has the powerful Raise A Native sire side pedigree line - has the “Large-heart” X-Chromosome of War Admiral or Mahmoud pedigree lines - substantial foundation with 9 career races – son of Arrogate loves a Wet track – he will be forwardly placed.

C3 - #2 Uncle Heavy (20-1) – won the G3 Withers and then a 5th in the Wood Memorial (*had problems when a horse to his outside went down*) – is a Closer that comes on late (he needs a fast pace up front) – has the powerful Raise A Native sire side pedigree line - has the Phalaris / Non-Phalaris pedigree - has the “Large-heart” X-Chromosome of War Admiral or Mahmoud pedigree lines – loves a Wet track (2-2-0-0) – gets BIG jock change to Irad Ortiz, Jr.!

Notes:

If any of these horses scratch, move everyone up to fill in and add to the bottom of the choices, in order, #7 Just Steel and #1 Mugatu.

I will play a Win & Place wager on #9 Imagination along with a \$2 Exacta Bottom wheel of All with #9 and #5 (Mystic Dan) - Cost \$28.

Best Longshot: #8 Tuscan Gold (8-1)

The \$2 Exacta over the last 10 years has averaged \$153

My \$2 **Exacta ticket** will look like this:

A1 / B1B2C1C2C3 - Cost \$10

(9 / 8-3-5-6-2) and

(5 / ALL) – Cost \$14

Reverse the Exacta wager:

B1B2C1C2C3 / A1 - Cost \$10

(8-3-5-6-2 / 9)

Insurance \$1 Exacta wager:

B1B2C1C2C3 / B1B2C1C2C3 - Cost \$20

(8-3-5-6-2 / 8-3-5-6-2)

NOTE:

It is the norm for a longshot to come in 2nd at the Preakness

You may also want to play a Top Wheel Exacta of Mystic Dan (#5) & Tuscan Gold (#8) OVER ALL 10-1 and larger odds runners:

(#5 - #8 with x - x - x - x - x, etc.) = \$1 wager = \$10

I will also box Bob Baffert and D. Wayne Lucas runners when they are in a Triple Crown series race (they have more wins than any current trainers)

\$2 Exacta Box: #6-7-9) = \$12

The \$1 Trifecta payout over the past 10 years has averaged \$806.

My \$1 **Trifecta tickets** will look like this:

A1 / B1B2C1C2C3 / B1B2C1C2C3SC1SC2 - Cost \$30 or \$15 for 50Cent Wager

(9 / 8-3-5-6-2 / 8-3-5-6-2-7-1)

A second ticket like this:

B1B2C1C2C3 / A1 / B1B2C1C2C3SC1SC2 - Cost \$30 or \$15 for 50Cent Wager

(8-3-5-6-2 / 9 / 8-3-5-6-2-7-1)

I will also play **Mystic Dan** and **Tuscan Gold** on Top & Bottom with ALL in the middle. It will cost \$12 or \$6.50 for 50Cent wager.

(5-8 / ALL / 5-8)

The \$1 Superfecta payoff over the last 10 years has averaged \$7,252

My \$1 **Superfecta tickets** will look like this:

A1 / B1B2C1C2C3 / B1B2C1C2C3 / B1B2C1C2C3SC1SC2 - Cost \$100 or (\$10 for 10 CENT wager)

(9 / 8-3-5-6-2 / 8-3-5-6-2 / 8-3-5-6-2-7-1)

You may want to do an Insurance Wager look like this:

B1B2C1C2C3 / A1 / B1B2C1C2C3 / B1B2C1C2C3SC1SC2 - Cost \$100 or (\$10 for 10 CENT wager)

(8-3-5-6-2 / 9 / 8-3-5-6-2 / 8-3-5-6-2-7-1)

I will also play **Mystic Dan** and **Tuscan Gold** on Top & Bottom with ALL in 2nd and 3rd positions. It will cost \$60 for \$1 Wager or \$6 for 10Cent wager.

5-8 / ALL / ALL / 5-8

I will also play a \$1 insurance Superfecta wager of **Mystic Dan** and **Tuscan Gold** in Middle spots with ALL top and bottom positions. It will cost \$60 or \$10 for 10Cent wager

ALL / 5-8 / 5-8 / ALL

Super High 5 ticket:

#9 with #8-3-5 with #8-3-5-6 with 6-5-2 with 6-2-7 = \$37 for \$1 Wager.

Black-Eyed Susan / Preakness Stakes Double:

We will use #3 Lemon Muffin (4-1), #5 Gun Song (9/2), #7 Corposo (5/2), #6 Whocouldaskformoish (6-1) WITH #9 Imagination (6-1), #8 Tuscan Gold (8-1), #5 Mystic Dan (5-2)

The \$2 Wager will cost \$24 and it looks like this: #3-5-7-6 with #9-8-5

It WILL RAIN on Saturday: Temperatures in the mid 60%

Forecast is considerable cloudiness with 70% chance of Rain Showers for Saturday!

If the track were to come up sloppy or muddy here are the horses that will improve. If the track is rated Wet/Fast it will NOT be kind to Closers!
(remember a sloppy track benefits the speed horses and a muddy track gives the closers and/or mid-pack runners the advantage)

ALL of the runners have pedigree that should not be adversely affected by an Off-Track.

Those that have already won on a WET are Uncle Heavy, Mystic Dan, and Seize the Grey. Those with an in-the-money finish are Catching Freedom (1-0-0-1) and Just Steel (2-0-1-1).

Usually they seal the track if rain is predicted and it in turns makes the track harder which allows the speed horses to run even faster!

NOTE: In 2 of the last 5 times the Preakness Stakes was run on a sloppy track 2 Longshots won! In 1983 Deputed Testamony paid \$31.00 and in 1972 Bee Bee Bee paid \$39.40!

Minimum Wagers on Preakness Day Card are:

\$1 Exacta Box and High 5 – 50 CENT Trifecta – 10 CENT Superfecta - \$1 Daily Double – 50 CENT Pick 3 – 50 CENT Pick 4 – 50 CENT Pick 5 – 20 CENT Rainbow Pick 6

*** please review all horse post position numbers as we are not responsible for any typographical errors in this document.

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Enjoy the day at the races, have fun and good luck!!

