KENTUCKY DERBY WAGERING GUIDE 2020

#4 – Field Pass could get the perfect trip with so many horses wanting the lead. He was the public's choice the last time he matched up with **SMOOTH LIKE STRAIT** but was doomed by a bad start. A clean exit might be enough to flip the result.

#5 – Smooth Like Strait is making his second start following about three-months on the sidelines. He won his first with the highest, last race speed figure and his resume says he'll be better in round two. Trainer Michael McCarthy hits at 18% in second starts.

#8 – Fancy Liquor faced our top choice twice and gave up the lead late in both, coming home close thirds. He's improved since their last meeting two races back, but not sure by enough to make up the difference.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOTS**

#1 – Taishan rides the 20% winning rail, albeit in a limited number of races. This will be his first start on grass and trainer Richard Baltas strikes at 12% with dirt to turf angle. He does have a win and second in tow races on an off, dirt track, suggesting he might take to turf.

#3 – Sugoi has raced twice on grass and could have won both. He scored in his last start, which was on grass and missed by a neck at the wire three back. The near miss was at Churchill, tying for his best speed number.

#2 – American Butterfly has finished in the money nine of his last 10 starts but will try turf for the first time. Trainer D. Wayne Lucas only hits at 4% with horses trying grass for the first time. However, you cannot overlook AMERICAN BUTTERFLY's consistency.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
American Butterfly, Sugoi, Smooth Like Strait, Sunsation, King Theo, Fancy Liquor

STALKERS:
Taishan, Field Pass

CLOSERS:

Early Race Outlook: Almost every horse in the field wants the lead. Are they going to go six wide into the first turn? Maybe. **FANCY LIQUOR** has the top, last race pace figure on turf, but he's going to need to clear a lot of horse before turning left. TAISHAN has the inside draw and has hurried to the front in a few dirt starts, not sure what to expect on grass. **SMOOTH LIKE STRAIT** is going to keep tabs on the leaders. The rest might be cheap speed.

Distance/Surface Bias: Ten of the 15 to score at the distance and surface came from off the pace. Of the five speed to win, four went wire to wire.

Post Position Stats: The rail has won three of the 15, posts two through seven have played evenly with winning rates dipping slightly from the inside out.

THE **PLAY**

FIELD PASS has a win, place and show in three Churchill starts. He's made up ground late in six straight and should get a fast pace to close into. **SMOOTH LIKE STRAIT** has four wins in seven turf starts, including one for one at the distance. **FANCY LIQUOR** has never missed the board in five starts, four on turf, and is training well for this one. **TAISHAN's** wet dirt record hints at possible success in his first try on turf.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	2-1	4	Field Pass Smooth
PLACE	8/5	5	Like Strait Fancy
SHOW	9/2	8	Liquor Taishan
WILD CARD	15-1	1	Sugoi
ALT 1	8-1	3	American Butterfly
ALT 2	12-1	2	

EXACTA:
4,5,8/1,4,5,8

TRIFECTA:
4,5,8/1,4,5,8/1,3,4,5,8

#2 – Echo Town will be making his first start past 7 furlongs. The extra distance should not be a problem as he's gained ground late in five of his seven starts. He's never missed the board in the seven runs and is one for one at Churchill.

#1 – Cezanne recorded the highest, last race speed figure in a fourth-place finish in the Shared Belief Stakes. He has a tough start and faded just a touch at the end. A recent bullet workout suggest he remains sharp.

#9 – Rushie has only finished behind horses that qualified for the Kentucky Derby (Charlatan would be in but was DQd) in his last four starts. Obviously, none of these are KD stuff; otherwise, they's be running later in the day.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOT**

#7 – No Parole threw in a stinker as the public's choice in his last. He finished ninth of 11 behind **ECHO TOWN** and **TAP IT TO WIN**. He's all or nothing with five wins and two blown tires in seven races. The last time he bombed, he came back to win two in a row.

#6 – Tap It to Win can compete and beat any of the top four, somebody has to be ranked fifth. He held the lead in the stretch in his last before **ECHO TOWN** ran by him by 3 ½ lengths. He's faded in the last two and might be running on tired legs in his fifth outing without a break.

#4 – Vertical Threat is a lightly raced horse on the rise. He won his last in big fashion, smoking a short field of four by 5 ¼ lengths. However, his fractions were noticeably slower than his previous start. Maybe it's because he wasn't threatened, nonetheless, slower times are a yellow flag.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
Vertical Threat, No Parole

STALKERS:
Cezanne, Echo Town, Tap It to Win, Rushie

CLOSERS:
Shashashakemeup, Digital, Sonneman

Early Race Outlook: NO PAROLE is going to the front out of the gate. He could be up a length or so on **VERTICAL THREAT, CEZANNE** and **TAP IT TO WIN** at the jump, but the trio will be in hot pursuit.

Distance/Surface Bias: Tactical early speed is the way as 20 of the 30 winners during the last meet were labeled speed, but the average winner races second or third at the ¼ mile marker and first or second by the half.

Post Position Stats: Winning percentages rise as horses move away from the rail.

THE **PLAY**

This is an extremely competitive race; we can make a case for six of the nine to win. **ECHO TOWN** ran well in his lone Churchill start and the distance looks like it is a good fit for him. **CEZANNE** might have been our top pick if not for the rail draw. **RUSHIE** has an outside post with tactical speed, a good combo for the distance/surface. **NO PAROLE** probably wins if he is leading in the stretch. He could get loose on the lead and make it hard to be passed.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	7/2	2	Echo Town
PLACE	3-1	1	Cezanne
SHOW	4-1	9	Rushie
WILD CARD	6-1	7	No Parole Tap
ALT 1	4-1	6	It To Win
ALT 2	8-1	4	Vertical Threat

EXACTA:
1,2,7,9 Box

TRIFECTA:
1,2,9,7/1,2,9/1,2,6,7,9

#10 – Therideofalifetime ran the highest, last race speed figure in a second-place finish in the Grade II, Saratoga Special. His early fractions were better in the place finish than they were in his 8 ¼ length win in his previous start.

#7 – Pico d'Oro has is getting better race after race. He won his last race and put in a bullet workout afterwards. His uptrend should continue.

#3 – Super Stock is a head away from winning last two on dirt after debuting on grass. He'll be running more than 5 ½ Furlongs for the first time. Trainer Steven Asmussen wins first routes at 16%.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOTS**

#5 – Dreamer's Disease bombed on dirt in his debut, wired the field on grass in his second start and returns to dirt today. Trainer Robertino Diodoro wins at 27% flipping from turf to dirt.

#8 – Midnight Bourbon has been the betting favorite in his two start, running third in his first effort and winning his last by a strong 5 ½ lengths. Meanwhile, his winning mile time was more than two seconds faster than his debut.

#1 – Drop Anchor broke outwardly in his first start, beginning seventh of eight by 6 ¾ lengths. He turned on the jets and then ran by everybody for the win.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
A Thread of Blue, Weekly Call

STALKERS:
Social Paranoia, Marquee Prince, The Black Album

CLOSERS:
Digital Age, Seismic Wave, Forever Mo, Casa Creed, Avie's Flatter, War Film, Henley's Joy, Louder Than Bombs

Early Race Outlook: These are two-year-olds and they can be speed horse one race and closers the next. You just don't know what to expect, especially with a field where most are coming off their debuts. **DREAMER'S DISEASE** took to the lead in a field of 10 on the turf in is last, he'll most likely try the same path today. **MIDNIGHT BOURBON** is one of the few with multiple races and he pressed forward in both. There is no reason to believe he won't try the same today. **UTLIMATE BADGER** looks more like a co-pilot than a pilot, up close, but not in front.

Distance/Surface Bias: Tactical early speed is the way as 20 of the 30 winners during the last meet were labeled speed, but the average winner races second or third at the ¼ mile marker and first or second by the half.

Post Position Stats: Winning percentages rise as horses move away from the rail.

THE **PLAY**

Again, two-year-olds, so anything can happen. **THERIDEOFALIFETIME** should make a middle move that puts him on/near the lead coming out of the turn. **PICO D'ORO's** won his last and trainer Robertino Diodoro follows a W with another at 22%. **SUPER STOCK** has two trips on fast dirt with a win and a second, but can he handle the extra distance? **DREAMER'S DISEASE** showed a ton of improvement in his second start. A similar jump in round three and he could be in for a winners' photo shoot.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	7/5	10	Therideofalifetime
PLACE	5-1	7	Pico d'Oro
SHOW	6-1	3	Super Stock
WILD CARD	12-1	5	Dreamer's Disease
ALT 1	6-1	8	Midnight Bourbon
ALT 2	15-1	1	Drop Anchor

EXACTA:
3,5,7,10 Box

TRIFECTA:
3,7,10/3,5,7,10/3,5,7,8,10

#4 – Newspaperofrecord has finished first five time and second twice in eight races. She just failed to show up in the lone miss. She's tried the distance twice, winning them both, no surprise.

#3 – Juliet Foxtrot has finished in the money in seven of her eight starts since coming to the US from Great Britain. She hasn't raced since early July, trainer Chad Brown knows when to bring them back to work, hitting at 23% with horses on breaks of 46 to 90 days.

#1 – She'sonthewarpath posted the top, last race speed figure and has won three of her last five races with a second. The distance appears to be one of her favorites with two wins, a second and a third in five starts.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOTS**

#6 – Beau Recall finished fifth as the 6/5 favorite in her last start. She got off to a sluggish start and tried to make up for it with a blistering last pace number. She should get off to a better start and trainer Brad Cox rebounds at 29% the next time out with beaten favs.

#5 – Harmless is making his second start for a new trainer following a claim, a 24% winner for trainer Philip D'Amato. She should be near the lead in a race where the pace might be moderate.

#2 – Daddy Is a Legend is another making her second start after being claimed for trainer George Arnold, II. He's won with two of his last five with horses making second starts post claim. DADDY has tried Louisville grass twice before with a pair of thirds.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
Juliet Foxtrot, Newspaperofrecord, Harmless

STALKERS:
She'sonthewarpath, Belle Laura

CLOSERS:
Daddy Is a Legend, Beau Recall, La Signare

Early Race Outlook: **NEWSPAPEROFRECORD** wins on the lead and will try to be on the front from beginning to end. **JULIET FOXTROT** and **HARMLESS** are to the immediate inside and outside of **NEWSPAPEROFRECORD** and will try to keep pace with the morning line favorite.

Distance/Surface Bias: There were only 17 races at the distance in the May/June meet with nine going the way of stalkers/closers.

Post Position Stats: The inside three gates have struggled to find the winners' circle. Win percentages rise as horses move away from the rail.

THE **PLAY**

NEWSPAPEROFRECORD has a win and second in her two starts on Churchill's turf course, winning the one at todays distance by 6 ¾ lengths. **JULIET FOXTROT** is overdue for a win as she's been close in four of her last five. **SHE'SONTHEWARPATH** has been running her best lately, getting better race after race. If she continues on the same path, then she could pull off the upset. **BEAU RECALL** has four wins and four seconds in 10 at the distance.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	4/5	4	Newspaperofrecord
PLACE	5-1	3	Juliet Foxtrot
SHOW	15-1	1	She'sonthewarpath
WILD CARD	5-1	6	Beau Recall
ALT 1	12-1	5	Harmless
ALT 2	6-1	2	Daddy Is a Legend

EXACTA:
1,3,4/1,3,4,6

TRIFECTA:
1,3,4/1,3,4/1,3,4,5,6

#9 – Bellafina finished second behind **SERENGETI EMPRESS** as the post-time favorite in the Grade I Ballerina Sakes in her last outing. Trainer Simon Callaghan rebounds at 27% the next time out with beaten chalk.

#8 – Serengeti Empress ran the top, last race speed figure in her last start and could be better in her third start off the bench. Trainer Thomas Amoss wins rounds threes at 26%, one of his top angles.

#1 – Mia Mischief is a horse for the Churchill course with five wins in nine races, for wins in 14 races anywhere else. Overall, she's hit the board in eight of nine in Louisville and in her last six races.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOTS**

#10 – Ce Ce is making her second start off the bench. Her history suggests she'll be better in race number two than race number one. Her last was close enough to good enough, any improvement and she can cash the winners' check.

#7 – Lady Kate is also scheduled to run it the La Troienne Stakes on Friday. She's on a two-race win streak versus lesser company. She'll try to take the field gate to wire, which will be a difficult, very difficult task for her. If she can take and hold the lead in the stretch, she could be tough to pass as she's won the last four times she led late.

#4 – Bell's the One has a win and two seconds in three at Churchill and has finished in the money in four of five at the distance (5: 1-2-1). She hasn't raced since July 11th but tends to run her best fresh.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
Mia Mischief, Shesomajestic, Lady Kate, Serengeti Empress

STALKERS:
Wildwood's Beauty, Bellafina, Ce Ce

CLOSERS:
Bell's the One, Crazy Sexy Munny, Sally's Curlin

Early Race Outlook: MIA MISCHIEF, LADY KATE and SERENGETI EMPRESS will all press for the early advantage. MIA MISCHIEF has the edge with the inside post while LADY KATE and SERENGETI EMPRESS will need to clear some horses to their inside to catch up with MIA. The danger is they set a pace that's too fast to hustle to the front.

Distance/Surface Bias: 18 of the 32 winners during the spring/summer meet where considered speed horses, but just a pair went wire to wire.

Post Position Stats: All posts play fairly even with the rail winning at the highest clip of 9%.

THE **PLAY**

It would not surprise us if any of our top four picks win. **BELLAFINA** has never missed the board in six at the distance. **SERENGETI EMPRESS** has two wins and a second in three at the distance and has won two of four at Churchill. **MIA MISCHIEF** has cashed a top three check in 19 of 23 starts and is always a threat. **CE CE** has four wins, a second and third in seven starts. She's probably the most consistent horse in the field, but also seems to lack the ability to expand her upside.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	5/2	12	Bellafina Serengeti
PLACE	5-1	2	Empress Mia
SHOW	12-1	13	Mischief
WILD CARD	8-1	10	Ce Ce
ALT 1	8-1	9	Lady Kate
ALT 2	8-1	1	Bell's the One

EXACTA:
1,8,9,10 Box

TRIFECTA:
1,8,9/1,8,9,10/1,7,8,9,10

#8 – Sacred Life's trainer and jockey combo of Chad Brown and Paco Lopez have won four of their last nine together. Since coming to the US from France he has two wins, three seconds and a fourth in a race where he ran his best speed figure.

#4 – Digital Age is another Chad Brown horse with a solid trainer/jockey combo as he's won at 26% with rider Javier Castelllano. **DIGITAL AGE ran** one of his best races on Churchill grass winning last year's American Turf.

#1 – Factor This would be rated higher if not for the disadvantage of being a speed horse on the rail (see below). He has four starts at the distance and won three of them. He's on a three race win streak and could step forward in his third start off the break, a 29% hit rate for trainer Brad Cox.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOT**

#2 – Bowies Hero ran the highest, last race speed figure in his second start off the pine. The inside post should not hurt as he is a closer. In fact, he's gained ground on the field in nine of his last 10 starts. His late pace figures say watch out if he's close coming out of the final turn.

#3 Rockemperor is going to attract money and we almost didn't want to put him here. A mile and an eighth might be too short for him. In his three US race at 1 ¼ miles he has two seconds by a neck and a nose and a third by 1 ¼ lengths. In his two at less than 1 ¼ miles, third by 3 ¾ and sixth by 4 ¼.

#9 – Somelikeithotbrown should be on the lead as fastest outside speed horse. He's hit the board in six of seven on turf with twos across the board. He's making his second start after a short layoff and his record says he'll be better in round two. This is a case where the distance might be too much as he's backed up late in turf routes.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
Factor This, Somelikeithotbrown, Spectacular Gem

STALKERS:
Bowies Hero, Rockemperor, Mr Dumas

CLOSERS:
Digital Age, Dontblamerocket, True Valour, Sacred Life

Early Race Outlook: Normally you would say the inside speed horse has the advantage because he/she doesn't have to clear traffic to his inside to get to the lead. Ah, but the start is 7/8ths the way trough the backstretch turn for home. That means the inside three horses start turning out of the gate while the outside horses get to run a straight line. **SOMELIKEITHOT** and **SPECTACULAR GEM** could use the odd starting situation to their advantage and get the jump on **FACTOR THIS.**

Distance/Surface Bias: Not many races, just 14, at the distance/surface with eight of the 14 winners considered speed types. However, the typical winner was fourth at the ¼ mile market and second or third after the ½ mile call. Stalkers seem to be the better fit.

Post Position Stats: The inside three have struggled to win; whereas; four and out have won at similar rates.

THE **PLAY**

SACRED LIFE is making his second start of the sidelines. He won the first by 4 lengths and should be as good or better today. **DIGITAL AGE** will be making his first start since July 18th. His training has been strong, and he tends to run well off the bench, accounting for three of his four wins and one of his two seconds. **FACTOR THIS** has won four in a row and could be at his best in his third start following a layoff, a 29% angle for Brad Cox, post position is a big negative. **BOWIES HERO** owns the highest speed figure at the distance, meaning he has the most upside.

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	6-1	8	Sacred Life
PLACE	6-1	4	Digital Age
SHOW	3-1	1	Factor This
WILD CARD	6-1	2	Bowies Hero
ALT 1	7/2	3	Rockemperor
ALT 2	8-1	9	Somelikeithotbrown

EXACTA:
1,2,4,8 Box

TRIFECTA:
1,4,8/1,2,4,8/1,2,3,4,8

#17 – Tiz the Law is a heavy favorite. In our opinion, no horse should be 3/5 in a field of 18 with quality horses. However, he has been the best horse on the Derby Trail and already has the Belmont Stakes Belt. The KD favorite has won six of the last seven Kentucky Derbies (**MAXIMUM SECURITY** was the second choice.)

#18 – Authentic has nearly the perfect setup, outside post and likely to be on the lead in what could be a moderate pace for the KD. If he can run the first half mile in 47 seconds or more, the others might not catch him. His training sessions have been swift, Bob Baffert has him ready.

#16 – Honor A. P. should get a really good trip. He's got and outside post with tactical speed. Jockey Mike Smith should put him in close contact with the leaders while running at a comfortable pace. His late pace figures are on par with TIZ THE LAW. He'll give the favorite hell if they are side by side in the stretch.

VALUE PLAYS **AND LONGSHOT**

#8 – South Bend is our longshot that always seems to screw up exactas and trifectas because nobody has them. He popped a competitive speed figure in his last start, his second on dirt after five on grass. That was a fourth-place finish behind **TIZ THE LAW** in the Travers. He brushed the gate at the start; so, maybe he closer this time with a clean start?

#15 - Ny Traffic is one of the grittiest horses you'll see. He just fights, fight and never gives up. He damn near caught **AUTHENTIC** in the Haskell when the **AUTHENTIC's** jockey Mike Smith geared down late. He's training well, will be near the front, and if he gets the right pace, could fight his way to the front at the end.

#2 – Max Player is on the upswing and just come off the bench to run his best, speed figure by a wide decent margin. His resume says to expert more in round two off the bench. A similar race two step forward as he showed form his debut to second start would make him a top tier competitor; however, the post works against him.

PACE ANALYSIS **AND TRACK BIAS**

EARLY SPEED:
Thousand Words, Ny Traffic, Authentic

STALKERS:
Finnick the Fierce, Storm the Court, King Guillermo, Money Moves, Attachment Rate, Honor A. P., Tiz the Law

CLOSERS:
Max Player, Enforceable, Major Fed, South Bend, Mr. Big News, Necker Island, Sole Volante, Winning Impression

Early Race Outlook: All these horses and only three that usually take to the lead. **AUTHENTIC** has the best early pace figures for the front-runners and might not have to work that hard to get to the front. **NY TRAFFIC** has stood up to better competition than **THOUSAND WORDS**. The pair should leave be right behind AUTHENTIC at the ¼ pole.

Distance/Surface Bias: The last six winners ran in the first three to the ¼ mile pole. Yes, we include **MAXIMUM SECURITY** because he was first to the checkered flag and has proved without a doubt that he was the best horse in last year's field.

Post Position Stats: You probably want to look posts seven and out as seven of the last 10 to wear the roses started from seven and beyond; nine of 10 from gate five and out.

THE **PLAY**

TIZ THE LAW ran the top last race speed figure and checks off every box for a Kentucky Derby winner. He is the one to beat. **AUTHENTIC** has the best chance to take the field from gate to wire. He's won four of five with a second where he got off to a slow start. It's could be telling that jockey Mike Smith picked **HONOR A.P.** over **AUTHENTIC**. Although he's ridden **A.P.** in every race, he was on **AUTHENTIC** in his Haskell win. **SOUTH BEND** kept popping up no mater how we ranked them. His late Race figures are as good as any of the rest and he's won two of three at Churchill. Why not at 50-1?

OUR **PICKS**

PICK ORDER	M/L ODDS	HORSE #	HORSE NAME
WIN	3/5	17	Tiz the Law
PLACE	8-1	18	Authentic
SHOW	5-1	16	Honor A.P.
WILD CARD	50-1	8	South Bend
ALT 1	20-1	15	Ny Traffic
ALT 2	30-1	2	Max Player

EXACTA:
16,17,18/8,16,17,18

TRIFECTA:
16,17,18/8,16,17,18/
8,15,16,17,18