

Kentucky Derby 2018

Twenty One of the best three year olds in North America will contest the 2018 Kentucky Derby on Saturday, May 5th, at Churchill Downs. It is said to be the strongest Derby field in recent history and the early favorite is an unbeaten colt called Justify that, however, did not race at two which is a historical problem since it is well over 100 years since such a lightly raced horse has won the Derby.

The pedigrees are what are of most interest to me regardless of their performance to date. In recent years there has been a distinct trend among the participants of winners showing maternal crosses of Northern Dancer and/or Mr Prospector and Justify is one that continues that pattern.

Justify is by Scat Daddy whose dam is by Mr Prospector and second dam by Nijinsky, a son of Northern Dancer. Justify's dam, Stage Magic is by Ghostzapper, a Northern Dancer line sire and the third dam is by Baldski, a son of Nijinski. She is also inbred maternally Mr Prospector.

Here is the list in starting order with their pedigrees and a notation of the significant maternal crosses.

1. Firenze Fire - A double/double pedigree with multiple maternal lines through Nearco and with a dam that combines Northern Dancer and Mr Prospector lines.
2. Free Drop Billy - Double maternal inbred to both Northern Dancer and Mr Prospector and has a double/double pedigree since his grandsire Dixie Union has the same lines maternally.
3. Promises Fulfilled - Maternal double to Mr Prospector who is the sire line of Shackleford's dam as well as the sire line of the dam of Promises Fulfilled whose sire Marquetry is also a combination of Mr Prospector and Northern Dancer lines.
4. Flameaway - The lone Canadian foaled entry in the field is inbred maternally 3x3 to Mr Prospector and to Nijinsky 4x5. His sire Scat Daddy is also inbred maternally to Mr Prospector while his dam, Vulcan Rose, is inbred maternally to Northern Dancer.
5. Audible - The only New York bred is an outlier to the pattern with no significant crosses to either Mr P or ND. There is an inbreeding to the Nearco line as well as to Raise A Native, sire of Mr P.
6. Good Magic - The top two year old last year is double inbred maternally to Northern Dancer and from a dam that is maternally inbred to Raise A Native and linebred to the Northern Dancer line.
7. Justify - As noted above
8. Lone Sailor - Double inbred maternally to ND and Mr P and has a double/double pedigree with several Nearco lines. He is a longshot listed as 50/1 but his pedigree may make him a surprise.
9. Hofburg - Also double inbred maternally to ND and Mr P.
10. My Boy Jack - Out of a mare that is inbred 3x3 maternally to Mr P.
11. Bolt D'Oro - Fastest two year old on Beyer last year and has no significant Mr P or Northern Dancer connections
12. Enticed - Has a dam that is inbred to Mr Prospector and a second dam linebred to ND and inbred maternally to Mr P but no maternal crosses of these sires to his sire Medaglia Doro.
13. Bravazo - He is by Awesome Again who combines Nearco and Mr P lines maternally

and there is a line through ND in the dam but nothing stands out.

14. Mendelssohn - Inbred to ND and the dam is also inbred maternally to Northern Dancer. No maternal sign of Mr P though.

15. Instilled Regard - Double inbred to Northern Dancer and to Raise A Native, sire of Mr Prospector.

16. Magnum Moon - Inbred to Mr Prospector maternally and from a dam inbred to Mr P. Inbred maternally to Northern Dancer as well although well back in the pedigree.

17. Solomini - Inbred to ND maternally 5x4 and double inbred to the Nearco line. No Mr P.

18. Vino Rosso - Inbred maternally to Deputy Minister, grandson of ND and from a mare by Mr Prospector making him a linebred 3x4 to that sire. In fact the sire and the dam are both combinations of Mr Prospector and Northern Dancer lines - a bit unusual but it is working so far for this colt.

19. Noble Indy - His sire is a combination of ND and Mr P lines and the dam is linebred to ND and inbred maternally to Mr P. Could be some fireworks from this horse in more ways than one.

20. Combatant - The fourth entry by Scat Daddy and with a similar pedigree to the others being double inbred to both ND and Mr P. An added bonus is the maternal link to Damascus in the maternal line of Johannesburg, sire of Scat Daddy, which makes this pedigree a double double.

21. Blended Citizen - The dam has both ND and Mr P but nothing across the pedigree of interest.

So there you have it. Since there appears to be no clear favorite, given that the two with the lowest morning line odds are both afflicted with the two year old curse this may be a longshot Derby, especially since the ones with double/double pedigree patterns are among the least favored to date. Looks like a win by a son of Scat Daddy to me but Justify will be the favorite. Perhaps I will bet on his Canadian son Flameaway.