



KY DERBY

139

STORY & PHOTOS BY: STEVE HEUERTZ

139TH KENTUCKY DERBY



Orb schools in the Churchill paddock in preparation for the Derby.

The Kentucky Derby Presented by Yum! Brands (Gr. 1) is an annual renewal occurring the first Saturday of each May and the pinnacle of Thoroughbred Racing in America. Every year, this timeless adaptation generates an ensemble of characters and stories that captures the hearts and minds of an eager audience. The 139th edition of “The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports” was no different.

Amidst this year’s headliners were jockey Rosie Napravnik, who aboard Mylute would attempt to become the first female rider to win the roses. Joining Napravnik in the starting gate, Kevin Krigger aimed to be the first African-American winning jockey since 1902. A win for Krigger on the speedy Santa Anita Derby (Gr. 1) winner, Goldencents, would subsequently provide back-to-back victories for trainer Doug O’Neill who won the 2012 Derby with I’ll Have Another. Hall of Fame Jockey Gary Stevens hoped to

NORMANDY INVASION



Normandy Invasion receives words of encouragement leading up to his run for the roses.

On a rainy Saturday afternoon and beneath the watch of twin spires, the sun did not exactly shine on “My Old Kentucky Home.” Instead, the son of Malibu Moon rose and Orb shined in the Kentucky Derby.



Horses and mint juleps are regular sights at the Kentucky Derby.

spoil these bids. Returning to the irons after ending his seven year retirement earlier in the year, Stevens now sought his fourth Derby win while riding Oxbow for fellow Hall of Fame member and four-time winning trainer, D. Wayne Lukas. Todd Pletcher searched for his second Derby victory by stacking the odds in his favor and loading a remarkable five-pack of trainees into the starting gate including the undefeated and powerful Wood Memorial (Gr. 1) winner, Verrazano, and the gutsy and game Louisiana Derby (Gr. 2) winner, Revolutionary. Revolutionary would be guided by recent Hall of Fame inductee Calvin Borel, who searched for his fourth win in seven years.



Above: Orb draws post position 16 and is installed as the 7-2 morning line favorite in the 139th Kentucky Derby; right: The Derby trophy on display at the post position draw.



While the stories ran even deeper, one of the biggest developments of Derby week was the ominous weather forecast that predicted a steady rain throughout the day and greatly increased the chances the race would be contested over a sloppy track. As many of the contenders had little to no experience running on such a surface, the Derby was likely to become both literally and figuratively muddy as it was unclear how this would affect the pace and outcome of the race.

VERRAZANO



DOUG O'NEILL



Despite the forecast, everything seemed to be in place until one last story developed. On the eve of the Derby, trainer Kelly Breen scratched Black Onyx (1) out of the race with a minor injury. Black Onyx would be healthy and safe but the defection left the Derby field with 19 entrants instead of the maximum 20. As a result, the stewards decided to leave post position 1 vacant and allow the remaining 19 entrants to start from their previously assigned positions.

Clockwise from above: Undefeated Wood Memorial (Gr. 1) winner; Verrazano, takes a bath outside trainer Todd Pletcher's barn; Trainer Doug O'Neill answers questions regarding his bid to win back-to-back Derby's; Another Derby week morning on the Churchill Downs backstretch; Rosie Napravnik continues her quest to become the first female jockey to win the Derby.

ROSIE NAPRAVNIK



Saturday, May 4th was met with an accurate forecast and Churchill Downs found itself soaked in rain. Although never becoming excessively hard, the steady rain proceeded throughout the day and the track became increasingly wet until it was officially listed as sloppy. Despite this, and almost as a gesture from the "Racing Gods" themselves, the only reprieve from the weather occurred for the eleventh race on the card. Although the track remained sloppy, the rain subsided and 19 horses were called to the post. As the first hoof stepped into the muddy mess, the 151,616 in attendance sang in unison and welcomed the magnificent 19 to the Kentucky Derby.



Left: The saddlecloth and tack of 2012 Juvenile Female Champion and Kentucky Oaks contender, Beholder; below: There is nothing like a bath after a good morning workout.



REVOLUTIONARY



Above: Louisiana Derby (Gr. 2) winner, Revolutionary, gallops toward the first Saturday in May; right: Santa Anita Derby (Gr. 1) winner, Goldencents, returns to his barn after a workout; below: Team O'Neill aims to win their second consecutive Kentucky Derby.

GOLDENCENTS



The moment had come. The gates would soon open and the Derby hopefuls would pass beneath the twin spires on their chase toward history. The stories leading up to the race would each play out in the course of two minutes until one would emerge above the rest and a single horse would write their finish adorned in a garland of roses.

The 19 horse field broke sharply from the gate with only Java's War (19) slow to exit. Verrazano (14), Falling Sky (13) and Itsmyluckyday (12) started best of all and made a push for the lead. Golden-cents (8) quickly flashed his early speed and stuck a nose in front for a moment until giving way to Palace Malice (10) the first time under the wire. Joining the early leaders were Oxbow (2) near the rail and Vyjack (20) on the outside. Palace Malice was a surprise leader setting unexpectedly grueling fractions over the sloppy and challenging racetrack. He blazed the first 1/4 mile in 22.57 seconds and 1/2 mile in 45.33 seconds. Much further back a second



MINE THAT BIRD

Above: 2009 Kentucky Derby winner, Mine That Bird, surveys his new home outside the Kentucky Derby Museum at Churchill Downs; right: Jockey Calvin Borel greets Mine That Bird in the paddock and thanks him once again for their memorable Derby victory four years ago at odds of 50-1.



GOLDEN TICKET

Above: Golden Ticket wins a Derby week race. In 2012, Golden Ticket finished in a dramatic dead heat with Alpha during the Travers Stakes (Gr. 1) at Saratoga. Below: "Lilies for the Fillies";



race was developing as Golden Soul (4) ran in 15th, Orb (16) in 16th, Mylute (6) in 17th and Revolutionary (3) in 18th. Heading into the far turn, Palace Malice continued the torrid pace through 3/4 miles in 1:09.80. Around the turn, Normandy Invasion (5) made a bold move and surged for the lead. On the rail, Oxbow poked his head in front for a moment, but Normandy Invasion quickly collared him and lead the field into the stretch. Meanwhile, in 17th position with 3/4 miles to go, Orb made a tremendous move six wide around the field and passed 11 horses in a mere 1/4 miles. Gobbling up the slop, Orb surged for the lead. Normandy Invasion began to tire and veered out but Orb easily skipped around him and was in front with 1/8 miles to go. Revolutionary shot up the inside while Golden Soul followed behind Orb

ICONIC TWIN SPIRES



Clockwise from left: The iconic twin spires of Churchill Downs; Trainer Kelly Breen and jockey Joe Bravo announce the scratch of Black Onyx from the Kentucky Derby; Hats and fashion remain a Derby tradition; The first Saturday in May means its time for a mint julep; Princess of Sylmar, with Mike Smith up, duels with Beholder and wins the the 139th Kentucky Oaks!



PRINCESS OF SYLMAR



and Mylute closed on the outside. However Orb was too strong as he finished the 1 1/4 miles in 2:02.89 and passed the wire 2 1/2 lengths in front of Golden Soul. Revolutionary finished 3rd, one length further back while Normandy Invasion was 4th, a head back and Mylute 5th, another head behind.

The pace indeed made the race as the fast fractions cooked the pacesetters and they each finished well back, while the top three finishers all came from off the pace and 15th place or further back. The only horse near the fast pace that stayed remotely close at the finish was Oxbow, who finished 6th, six lengths behind Mylute.

Once the trophy was presented, the garland removed and television interviews completed, it became clear that Orb's dance through the mud was no accident. Instead it was a choreographed plan, long in the making and a testament to and reminder of what racing once was, when horses were bred in the purest of forms, developed in private stables and raced in home silks. Despite the modern movement toward purchasing a racing stable via the auctions sales ring, first cousins Stuart Janney III and Ogden Mills "Dinny" Phipps continued their family traditions of enacting thoughtful planning to carefully craft strong bloodlines that could be repeated through multiple generations. When accompanied with patience, the formula worked and rewarded the families with horses such as the Janney's legendary Ruffian and the Phipps' tenacious Easy Goer and unbeaten Personal Ensign. Despite their longstanding success, the families never experienced victory in the Kentucky Derby. Instead, they were left with moments such as Easy Goer's loss to Sunday Silence in the 1989 Derby and a famous coin flip in 1969



ARISTIDES



WISE DAN



GARY STEVENS

Clockwise from top left: The statue of the first Kentucky Derby winner, Aristides, awaits an eventual new champion to be saddled in the Churchill paddock; Despite the rain, the Derby would soldier on; Rain or shine, hats are always on display at the Kentucky Derby; At age 50, Gary Stevens enjoys a romp in the mud after returning to riding from a seven year retirement.; The rain and mud only lead to more in-field fun! ; The steady rain left the track listed as sloppy for the Derby; 2012 Horse of the Year, Champion Older Male and Champion Male Turf Horse, Wise Dan, with Jose Lezcano up, pours it on and easily wins the Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (Gr. 1) on the Derby undercard;



when the Phipps family lost the rights to an unborn foal of Somethin'groyal. Although Dinny's father Ogden won the toss, he chose a filly out of Hasty Matelda, leaving Penney Chenery with that unborn foal... who would later become known as...Secretariat.

Despite this, much of the reason the Derby remained elusive for the Janney's and Phipps' was due to their belief that a horse should not be pushed to run in the Derby simply because they can. Instead, they chose to exemplify patience and prioritize the individual needs of each of their home-bred runners while operating under the assumption that the horse will show them when they are ready to contest the 1 1/4 miles midway through their three-year-old season.



Left to right from top: "The Run for the Roses"; Kevin Krigger was confident leading up to his first ride in the Kentucky Derby; Thumbs up for Itsmyluckyday on the Derby walkover; Gary Stevens and Oxbow lead the Derby post parade; Palace Malice focuses on the task at hand; Palace Malice sets grueling fractions as he leads the Derby field beneath the spires for the first time.

KEVIN KRIGGER



Trainer Shug McGaughey mirrors these beliefs. Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2004, McGaughey is one of the most accomplished and well-respected trainers in racing. He too values patience and care for his horses while waiting for them to tell him when and where they should run. While he has regularly dreamed of winning the Derby and views it as the sports greatest achievement, like the Janney's and Phipps', McGaughey remained winless in the race after six previous starters. His closest previous finish was Easy Goer's second in 1989.

ITSMYLUCKYDAY



OXBOW



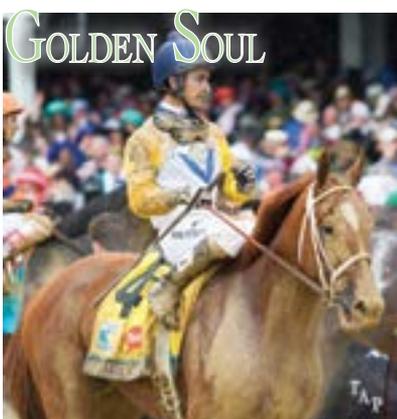
PALACE MALICE



However, on February 24, 2010, Janney, Phipps and McGaughey would see their Derby luck begin to change when a bay colt by Malibu Moon out of the Unbridled mare Lady Liberty was born in Kentucky. In homage to his sire, the Janney and Phipps homebred colt was named Orb. Although talented, Orb demonstrated immaturity and difficulties as a youngster. In his two-year-old maiden race at Saratoga, Orb broke from the gate

last of all when he instead jumped off all four feet and directly into the air. In a testament to his ability, he would rally to finish third in the race. Still, McGaughey had his work cut out for him.

Eventually this work started to pay off and the colt began to develop both physical and mental maturity. After two consecutive wins, Orb graduated to graded stakes competition early in his three-year-old sea-



GOLDEN SOUL

Left to right from top: A muddy mess ensues as the calvary charge races into the clubhouse turn. Orb and Joel Rosario surge through the mud to rally and win the 139th Kentucky Derby by 2 1/2 lengths!; Golden Soul, with Robby Albarado up, was a surprise second place finisher; Orb returns as Derby champion! ; Trainer Shug McGaughey adds his first Derby to his Hall of Fame career; Celebrating the moment.

KENTUCKY DERBY CHAMPION, ORB



A befitting champion. At long last, Orb tries the roses on and wears them well.

son. In February, he won the Fountain of Youth (Gr. 2) at Gulfstream Park over the highly touted Violence and a few weeks later followed up his performance with a victory in the Florida Derby (Gr. 1) over possible early Derby favorite, Itsmyluckyday. The win stretched his streak to four. Orb was now talking and McGaughey listened. For the first time since 2002, McGaughey had a horse that was telling him he was ready to run for the roses.

Orb arrived at Churchill Downs and continued to improve with every passing day. On April 29th, his final breeze before the Derby was a scorching four furlong move that stopped the clocks in 47 4/5 seconds. He drew post 16 in the gate and was installed as the 7-2 morning line favorite. Orb was ready and the public agreed. Despite the only question being how he might handle the sloppy racetrack, Orb was sent off as the 5-1 Derby favorite. That question was answered two minutes after the gates opened.

Orb's Kentucky Derby was nothing short of spectacular. The ease at which he passed his opponents and skipped away to victory validated him as the best three-year-old horse in America. After the race, the typically reserved McGaughey said, "He was very settled in the race. Can't wait for the Preakness." Still, McGaughey was clearly emotional

and moved by his horse's remarkable performance. Orb's jockey, Joel Rosario, came into the race as the hottest rider in the country. In March he won the world's richest race, the Dubai World Cup, aboard 2011 Kentucky Derby winner, Animal Kingdom, and followed that performance in April by breaking the riding record at the prestigious Keeneland spring meet. Now, he added the Derby to an impressively growing resume and said about the race and Orb, "It's awesome. I won the \$10 million Dubai World Cup and to win the Derby now it's like a dream. I am so happy for Shug McGaughey. I feel awesome. I was so far behind, I just let him be calm and relaxed and he was available to do it."

Available and very willing he was. Two minutes earlier, Orb and his connections were just another of the many stories crowding into the Derby starting gate. Now, that crowd had thinned and Orb stood alone, covered in mud and draped in roses. As is the case after every Derby, talk jumps to the hope and possibility that this, after 35 years, may be the one to capture that most elusive of crowns. Orb would move onto to the middle jewel of the Triple Crown and be a heavy and legitimate favorite in the Preakness Stakes. Regardless of the outcome in two weeks at Pimlico Race Course, Orb's name will always be one of the 139 that are preceded with Kentucky Derby winner.