

Globeform Subscription Service

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



12

6:34 ET

GLOBEFORM RANKING

THE WOOD MEMORIAL (G2), 9 fur dirt Aqueduct, Sat. Apr 4

Horses ranked in pounds (0.45kg). 1 length = 2 pounds over this distance

Rank	No.	Name of horse	Globeform	GF most recent runs	Trainer / Jockey
From right to left (most recent first)					
0p	1	NAPOLEON SOLO	114p	88 - 114p - ?p	Summers / Lopez
5p	2	TALK TO ME JIMMY	109p	109p - 99p - ?p	Rodriguez / Silvera
9p	13	IRON HONOR	105p	105p - 100p	Brown / Franco
13	12	BUETANE	101	95+ 99 - 101	Baffert / Franco
15	9	BRAVARO	99	90 - 99 - 98	Joseph Jr / E Gonzalez
20p	7	ALBUS	94p	94p - 93p - ?	R Mott / Torres
20	8	COURTING	94	87 - 94 - 85+ 92p	Pletcher / Carmouche
?p	4	STEEL	?p	?p	W Mott / Civaci
21p	3	RIGHT TO PARTY	93p	93p - 90p - 74	McPeck / Elliott
22	5	OCELLI <i>Also ent. Blue Grass, Kee</i>	92	92 - 90 - 92	Beckman / Ramos
24	11	OTTINHO <i>Also ent. Blue Grass, Kee</i>	90	86 - 90 - 88p	Brown / D Davis
?p	10	RED ZONE RUNNER	?p	?p	Padilla / Sanchez
28p	6	MINORINCONVENIENCE	86p	84 - 86p - ?p	Green / J Rodriguez

Globeform ratings are expressed in pounds. The "Rank" column shows the horse best in at the weights based on Globeform ratings on top, with other horses ranked down in pounds. For example; rank figure 6 tells us that the horse is 6lbs below the top ranked horse. Length values: 5-6 furlongs: 3lbs per length. 7 fur: 2.5lbs. 8 - 11 fur: 2lbs. 12 fur: 1.5lbs

Globeform rating with a "p" attached = this was the horse's best rating to date and the horse is likely to improve
Globeform rating with a "+" = this was not its best rating but the horse ran better than the rating suggests

Most recent winners of the Wood Memorial

2025	RODRIGUEZ	GF 114	Bob Baffert	Mike Smith
2024	RESILIENCE	GF 106p	William Mott	John Velazquez
2023	LORD MILES	GF 107	Saffie Joseph Jr	Paco Lopez
2022	MO DONEGAL	GF 114p	Todd Pletcher	Joel Rosario
2021	BOURBONIC	GF 109	Todd Pletcher	Kendrick Carmouche

Average winning Globeform: 110

GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

NAPOLEON SOLO was a distant fifth when making his seasonal debut in the Fountain of Youth Stakes at Gulfstream Park in late February. The race was won by subsequent Florida Derby winner Commandment, who beat Chief Wallabee (third in the Florida Derby), so Napoleon Solo was up against strong opposition - but it was still very disappointing. Beaten almost twelve lengths, he ran way below his juvenile form. He may not have been particularly fit, we have seen three-year-olds take a big jump up on their second start of the season many times and Napoleon Solo could well do just that. He has the best form in the book in this field and it's too soon to write him off as a Kentucky Derby contender. It was a bit strange, however, that he was supplemented to the Arkansas Derby last week, only to be rerouted to the Wood Memorial.

He delivered a high class performance when making all for an easy 6 1/2-length win in the Champagne Stakes over a mile at Aqueduct last October - earning **Globeform 114p** on what was only his second start; two months after he had impressed with a wide margin maiden win over 6 furlongs at Saratoga. Napoleon Solo raced with great zest throughout in the Champagne and he turned the odds-on favorite It's Our Time away already as they were halfway around the turn. From there on and in the race was all but over. He was way clear coming into the straight and won as he pleased, passing the winning post with more up his sleeve and galloping out with pricked ears. He also came back full of energy. Talkin ran on to be second, three parts of a length in front of Universe. Whereas Talkin disappointed in the Remsen Stakes next time out (running as if something was amiss), Universe went on to run second both in the Street Sense Stakes and the Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes at Churchill Downs before the year was out. It's Our Time, who paid the price for having tried to chase Napoleon Solo's incredible speed, faded to be a distant fourth - and he probably went wrong when he could manage only fifth in an allowance heat at Churchill Downs in November (he has had no public works since). It's well worth remembering that It's Our Time had won by 17 1/2 lengths when making his debut at Saratoga; yet he was simply unable to live with Napoleon Solo at Aqueduct.

Napoleon Solo was being rated in the Fountain of Youth, clearly in an attempt at turning him into a Kentucky Derby horse. Whether it was the new tactics, lack of fitness or that he simply hasn't trained on at three that caused his dull effort is impossible to say. It will be interesting to see how he's ridden this time. With his inside post one would assume he'll go forward - but he is not the lone speed in this field. Most likely, this will create a strong pace and stamina will be needed to win. His sire Liam's Map was a top class performer who captured the Breeders' Cup Mile and the 9-furlong Woodward Stakes. He has sired three G1 winners with a fair bit of stamina; Deterministic, Colonel Liam and Burnham Square, who won last year's Blue Grass Stakes. Napoleon Solo's dam, Atomic Blonde, was a turf runner who won the 7.5-furlong South Beach Stakes at Gulfstream Park as a 4yo, and ran second in the 8.5-furlong Winter Memories Stakes at Aqueduct as a 3yo. By Scat Daddy, Atomic Blonde was out of Volver, an Irish bred runner with wins from 8 to 10.5 furlongs in France.

TALK TO ME JIMMY was an impressive winner of the Withers Stakes at Aqueduct in early February. Making his seasonal debut, and covering the same 9-furlong trip as the Wood Memorial, he made all and came home 11 lengths clear of Grittiness, with **OTTINHO** half a length further adrift in third. Talk to Me Jimmy was 12-1 for the race and it may be easy to underestimate his performance, given that this cheaply bought son of Modernist is 'just a New York bred'. Let's not make that mistake; the Withers form was strong, no doubt about that. Despite racing far too freely in the early part of the race, Talk to Me Jimmy powered away to leave his rivals in a different zip code. Grittiness franked the form by running second in the Virginia Derby next time out, when he was 4 lengths behind Incridibolt but 2 1/2 lengths in front of **BUETANE**. Ottinho was coming off a maiden win over the same distance in December, and Schoolyardsuperman, who was fourth in the Whitney, was a good second to another Chad Brown trainee, Hedge Ratio, in an allowance race last Sunday (the two drew well clear of the rest). Talk to Me Jimmy earned **Globeform 109p** in the Withers, and examining his maiden win last November also puts him in a good light. Going gate to wire over a mile, he won by 5 1/2 lengths from Sunday Boy. Sunday Boy took the New York Stallion Series Stakes by 2 3/4 lengths next time out; beating Combat Mission, who was a 5 3/4-length maiden winner four weeks later. Formlines are positive here and there's a fair bit to like about this modestly bred contender. His sire Modernist won the Risen Star at three and the Excelsior at four (both over 9 furlongs), while his dam, Prairie Trip, was a low level winner of 10 races who was successful from 5 to 8 furlongs. >>>

IRON HONOR was unfortunate to end up in stall 13; a difficult starting point - not least for a horse that seems to prefer being up with the pace in his races. He has only had two runs so it's too soon to that he has to be ridden that way - but it is what has worked thus far, and it has worked well. He was in the first two all the way when beating next out winner Crossingthechannel by 1 1/2 lengths over 6 furlongs at Aqueduct in December, and again when he won the one-mile Gotham Stakes over the same track in late February. Keeping on gamely and sending out signals indicating he was capable of better still, he won the Gotham by a length from Crown the Buckeye. He was exiting an unplaced effort in the Lecomte but prior to that he was a close third to subsequent Risen Star Stakes runner-up Chip Honcho in the Gun Runner Stakes. **RIGHT TO PARTY**, who was third in Iron Honor's maiden race, then won a maiden himself, ran third to him again in the Gotham, beaten 7 1/2 lengths. It's hard to see him closing that gap in the Wood.

BUETANE was a bit unlucky and could have been closer to the winner when fourth, beaten 6 1/2 lengths behind Incredibolt, in the Virginia Derby, but this Bob Baffert trainee is beginning to look rather exposed already and he another to have drawn wide. He improved to **Globeform 101** when beaten 2 lengths by So Happy in the 7-furlong San Vicente Stakes at Santa Anita in January, but has not been able to better that rating in his two subsequent starts. He ran close to his San Vicente form when third in the Southwest Stakes at Oaklawn Park two starts back, beaten 3 1/4 lengths by Silent Tactic, who was beaten 4 lengths by Renegade in the Arkansas Derby last week. Buetane was traveling well on the home turn in the 9-furlong Virginia Derby (the pace was only average), but met some traffic coming down the lane - and might have been second with a clear run. He's now in a race where the pace is likely to be strong, something that will put emphasis on stamina at the finish. By Tiz the Law out of sprint winner Taboo, he is a half-brother to stakes winning turf sprinter Let My People Go; so perhaps one should not be surprised that his best form to date happened over 7 furlongs.

BRAVARO regressed when beaten 11 lengths in fourth place behind Commodore in the Fountain of Youth Stakes at Gulfstream Park, having won the 8-furlong Sleepy Hollow Stakes at Aqueduct last year and finished second to 5 3/4-length winner Nearly in the Holy Bull Stakes at Gulfstream in January. With Commodore winning the Florida Derby, Bravaro's run in the Fountain of Youth should not be knocked too hard, but he was beaten a long way and perhaps his good early season form has reached its peak.

ALBUS was entered for the Florida Derby last week but scratched in order to wait for the Wood. Perhaps that entry was made in case some of the big guns were to drop out late in that contest. This is an easier spot for the Riley Mott trainee - but it's still a big step up in class. He ran to GF 93p when fourth to Liberty National in a good maiden at Churchill Downs last fall, and moved up to **Globeform 94p** when making a winning reappearance over an extended mile at Tampa Bay Downs in February. Much the best, he was close to the pace all the way in the six-runner field and drew off for an easy 6 3/4-length win. The competition seemed weak and such performances are hard to assess. Argent Heir, who ran second, was making his debut for the Pletcher barn, while the third placed Mo Beach Time (beaten 15 1/2 lengths) was having his seventh start. He next ran seventh of ten in another Tampa maiden on March 27, beaten 12 lengths behind the Chad Brown trained favorite Arizona Territory (who was coming off a fifth on debut at the same venue in February). Albus, a late foal by top class sprinter Yaupon, looked like a stamina horse at Tampa and 9 furlongs will probably suit. His dam, Adream (Bernardini) ran just three times without getting placed. She is a half-sister to Song of Spring, who won the 9-furlong Allaire du Pont Distaff as a four-year-old.

STEEL, trained by Mott senior, is also an intriguing entry here. He broke slowly and came from way off the pace when winning by a nose in a mile maiden on his debut at Gulfstream Park in late February. Going off at 18-1 (not at all unusual for newcomers from this barn), he nailed Royal Crescent on the wire, with Moonstocity 3 1/2 lengths behind in third place. Steel falls into the 'could be anything' bracket; he is probably tons better than those he met first time out and he is one to consider him underneath in Trifectas. Royal Crescent had been third at 18-1 in an ordinary maiden on debut in January, and Moonstocity was coming off a moderate eighth when 17-1 on his debut three weeks prior. Note that the latter is set to run in the Blue Grass at Keeneland (post time 12 min. prior to this race). It's tight, but do check that result before deciding what to do with Steel. A son of Tapit out of the Soto mare Snuggs and Kisses, he is a half-brother to O Besos, who was fourth in the Kentucky Derby and placed in other graded stakes between 7 - 10 furlongs. >>

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CONCLUSION: Napoleon Solo wins this if he's back to his best and proves effective over 9 furlongs. That's a couple of 'ifs' one could do without at this stage of the Derby trail. The switch to the Wood after having been supplemented to the Arkansas Derby threw up another question mark, so it's hard to go for the top ranked horse in this prep. Iron Honor has done everything right in his two starts and he has an obvious chance; he's also badly drawn though and - as most Chad Brown runners - he is likely to be poor value in the betting. This big field has a lot of speed signed on and it has a number of horses whose form doesn't warrant a start at G2 level. Such contests often create traffic jam scenarios; on paper it might look like we need to find a deep closer - but a deep closer could be running into trouble as no-hopers begin to tire and drop rapidly back. Perhaps a prominent position is the best solution after all, though not unless you have a horse with proven stamina. The one that fits the bill is Talk to Me Jimmy. He wasted energy early on in the Withers, still had plenty left at the finish and romped away. The fact that his runner-up was seven lengths closer to the winner when second to Incredibolt in the Virginia Derby should not be overlooked. That's a big margin. Talk to Me Jimmy seems to be a horse players have underrated every time he has raced and perhaps he will go off at a good price also in the Wood. He is much more likely to get a good trip than what's the case for Iron Honor, and he may have more stamina than Napoleon Solo. The plan in this office is to earmark most of the money for a bet on Talk to Me Jimmy only (across the board / each way if price is big enough), and not get too heavily involved in the exotics pools. Boxing the top three in the selections box in Exactas and Trifectas is okay, and adding a smaller plan including the two Mott trainees is also interesting (palying potential improvers from top class handlers); but this race has so many unknown factors otherwise; trying to sort of a few more to add in for a more expensive plan would involve far too much guesswork for my liking.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	2 TALK TO ME JIMMY
B	1 NAPOLEON SOLO, 13 IRON HONOR
C	4 STEEL, 7 ALBUS, 12 BUETANE

Napoleon Solo / Champagne Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdOIVnPsWt4>

Iron Honor / Gotham Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs7IU22vNUs>

Talk to Me Jimmy / Withers Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRQrFsQq-Os>

Steel / Gulfstream Park maiden: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GNL6YfZaZA

Buetane 4th / Virginia Derby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BXmva5bTOo>

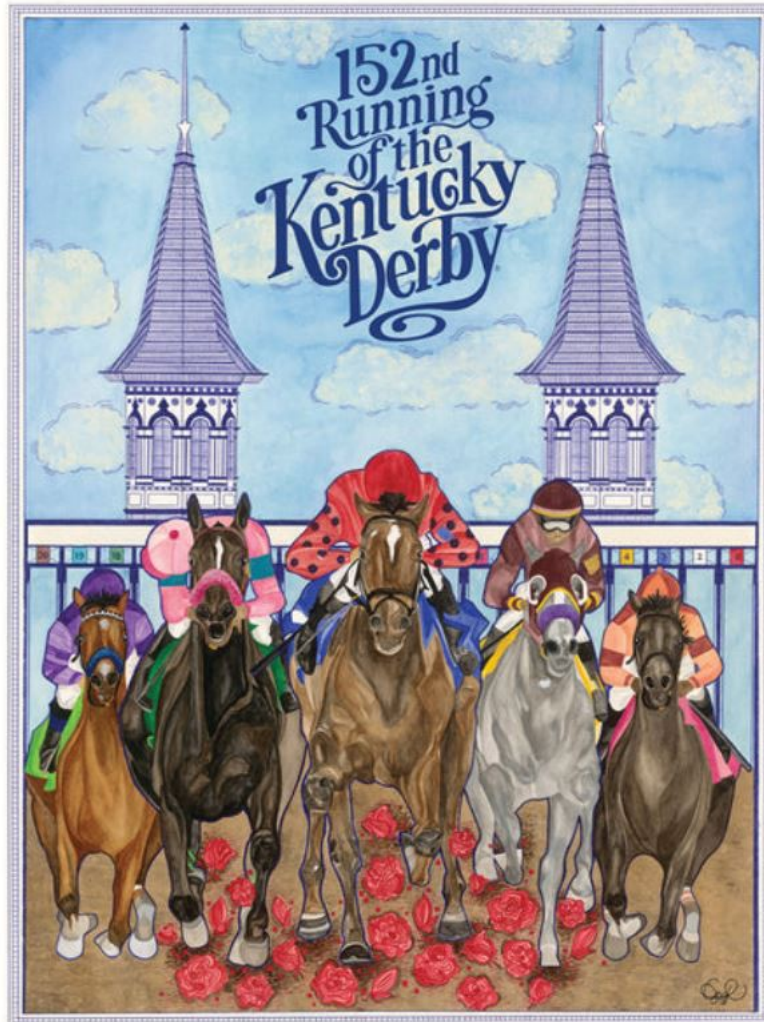
Buetane 2nd / San Vicente Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BxTH9pnvaU>

Albus / Tampa Bay Downs maiden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzBDC2VA8Dg>

WEATHER FORECAST, NEW YORK

Wed 01	76°/47°		Mostly Cloudy	◇ 24%
Thu 02	50°/43°		Cloudy	◇ 13%
Fri 03	65°/59°		AM Clouds / PM Sun	◇ 24%
Sat 04	72°/53°		Partly Cloudy	◇ 13%
Sun 05	67°/46°		Rain	◇ 80%

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