

Globeform Service

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



FLORIDA DERBY CONTENDER COMMANDMENT IN FOCUS



Fountain of Youth: Commandment beats Chief Wallabee (6) / Photo Coglianese

COMMANDMENT went off favorite and he delivered in the Fountain of Youth Stakes over 8.5 furlongs at Gulfstream Park in February, and there must be a good chance that he goes off as the chalk also in the Florida Derby. The betting will be fascinating in this important prep though, as he won't be the only one getting plenty of support. Commandment, who was off the bridle as the field went into the home turn in the Fountain of Youth, gradually found his best stride - and he also found a nice gap by the inside rail at the finish. Chief Wallabee, who also came from a few lengths off the pace but went wide (while traveling better than Commandment), was the one to catch; and Commandment got to him in the last few strides. Both colts produced a strong performance, with Commandment prevailing by a neck. Swale Stakes winner Solitude Dude

was 2 lengths further adrift in third place, 8 1/2 lengths in front of Bravaro, who was coming off a second to Nearly in the Holy Bull Stakes. With Solitude Dude's Swale runner-up Class President going on to success in the Rebel Stakes, these formlines read very well. Giving 2lbs to Chief Wallabee, Commandment improved to **Globeform 113p** in the process. Opinions are sure to be divided when he meets Chief Wallabee again in the Florida Derby. Chief Wallabee was making only his second start and he must have plenty of improvement in him. Being three wide on the turn wide was not in his favor in the Fountain of Youth but one advantage was that he was going a bit better than Commandment at that stage. Commandment did concede weight though, he was the one who came out on top, and he was the one who seemed to be inconvenienced by the short run to the first winning post. The Florida Derby is half a furlong longer and it goes to the second post. Commandment's main plus points this time; definitely the weight and probably the distance. 'Probably' when it comes to the added distance, as we don't know as much about Chief Wallabee at this stage. Though we can be fairly confident that Commandment will like the 9-furlong test. He'll probably love it.

This Brad Cox trainee made good strides through his three starts taking him to the Fountain of Youth; he improved to GF 100p in the Mucho Macho Man Stakes over a mile at Gulfstream Park in January, when he came through from off the pace to win by 6 3/4 lengths from Roger That Dan, who was 1 3/4 lengths better than the third placed Thunder Chuck. Those two had both been well beaten when placed in minor stakes last year and they were both well beaten next time out after the Mucho Macho Man (Roger That dan was 9th in the Tampa Bay Derby). Commandment did not beat potential G1 horses in the Mucho Macho Man, but he proved capable of doing so in the 'FOY' - and he's a strong contender for the Florida Derby.

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FLORIDA DERBY CONTENDER COMMANDMENT IN FOCUS



Commandment's sire Into Mischief needs no introduction. A highly successful stallion, he has sired Kentucky Derby winners Sovereignty, Authentic and Mandaloun, who was nowhere near as good as the other two but moved up to first place upon the disqualification of Medina Spirit. While last year's champion Sovereignty is out of a daughter of Travers Stakes and Jockey Club Gold Cup winner Bernardini and Authentic is out of daughter of high class sprinter Mr Greeley, Mandaloun's broodmare was a daughter of Belmont Stakes winner Empire Maker. That's also the case for Into Mischief's Dubai World Cup winning son Laurel River, and recent Riyadh Dirt Sprint winner Imagination is also an Into Mischief son out of a daughter of Empire Maker.

Plotting campaigns for racehorses purely based on pedigrees can lead the best of trainers up the wrong alley. Even Bob Baffert would probably agree. He trained Laurel River as a young horse and ran him in sprint races - but when Laurel River moved to Dubai he became a top class 10-furlong horse. When Imagination, who was bred along similar lines, came along Baffert set out to make him a Kentucky Derby horse, something that didn't work out. Now, three years later, Imagination is one of the best sprinters around.

So the conclusion might be that there is no conclusion; Into Mischief can sire all sorts of horses with mares from all sorts of families. His offspring seldom lack tactical speed though, and that may be the most interesting point in this context - simply because Commandment doesn't quite fit that bill. While he travels well enough early in his races, he is not a horse with excellent tactical speed; he had to be urged along when lying in fifth place heading into the home turn in the Fountain of Youth, a race he won in a way indicating 'the further the better'. In the Mucho Macho Man, where Commandment was 1/2 favorite, the story was a bit similar; he was urged along in fifth around the turn, then he outclassed inferior rivals coming down the lane.

Is this colt a typical Into Mischief? Not if a typical Into Mischief is a top class horse who travels really well throughout in his races. Does he take after his dam and other relatives? His dam, Sippican Harbor, ran only four times as a juvenile and was never given a stamina test. She came from well off the pace when winning the 7-furlong Spinaway Stakes at Saratoga, a performance telling us further would suit. Prior to Commandment, she produced Sippican Shop (Medaglia d'Oro), a twice raced maiden who was placed over 6.5 furlongs at Saratoga as a 3yo. Sippican Harbor is a half-sister to Awesome Result (Justify), a Listed winner over 10 furlongs / dirt in Japan, where she has won 8 of his 11 starts. Furthermore, Sippican Harbor is a daughter of Kentucky Derby winner Orb, so there is stamina in the bottom half of Commandment's pedigree. He has been racing very much like a horse who will appreciate stepping up to 10 furlongs, but the worry with this colt were he to make it to Churchill Downs, must be whether he will be in a good striking position as the leaders hit the top of the lane. Predicting the Kentucky Derby pace in March makes no sense, but if it's strong, well, come the final quarter so will he be.

Commandment / Fountain of Youth Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uSDARQeagE&t=3s>

Commandment / Mucho Macho Man S (R10 / 23:30): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw3UOqeMkCg&t=632s>



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