

Globeform Service

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



FLORIDA DERBY CONTENDER NEARLY IN FOCUS



NEARLY impressed when winning the Holy Bull Stakes over 8.5 furlongs at Gulfstream Park on January 31, four weeks after taking an allowance race at the same venue with similar ease. Immediately pressing the 3-2 favorite Cannoneer, he was part of a hot pace and he edged ahead to take the lead coming into the straight and drew off to win by 5 3/4 lengths from Bravaro, a New York bred who took the Sleepy Hollow Stakes last year, but failed to build on his Holy Bull form when a well beaten fourth behind Commandment in the Fountain of Youth Stakes in February. Project Ace, third and beaten 8 1/2 lengths in the Holy Bull, was a narrow maiden winner at Churchill Downs for Dale Romans last fall. Nearly probably didn't beat future G1 horses in the Holy Bull but he

did it the hard way, and he stood incredibly well up to the challenge. Earning **Globeform 112p**, he has quickly become one of the the best sophomores around and he must have a good chance in the Florida Derby. Interestingly, this Todd Pletcher trainee was not ridden like a horse needing to be conserved in order to get the distance after having won over a sprint trip previously. Quite the opposite; John Velazquez rode Nearly like there were no stamina doubts - and his mount ran the opposition into the ground. The colt was pricking his ears soon after the winning post and he came back in full of energy.

The Holy Bull is obviously the race most observers will focus on when assessing Nearly, but let's not overlook his allowance win in early January, when he slammed the odds-on favorite Confessional by 5 lengths over 7 furlongs, with Timeless Victory beaten almost ten lengths in third. It was only a four-runner field but Confessional (who impressed at Keeneland in the fall) was beaten a similar margin when third to Incredibolt in the Virginia Derby; and also note what happened next with Timeless Victory. He won an allowance heat on his subsequent start, outclassing Hawk by 6 lengths. Hawk is no star but he's not a cheap claimer either and these formlines indicate that Nearly's allowance win was well above average for such a midwinter race. He has taken a big jump in each of his three winning runs at Gulfstream Park, and anyone who might think that his Holy Bull performance looked a bit better than it actually was could be badly (or perhaps costly) wrong about this colt. He is a horse going places and the way he took the Holy Bull one would have no doubts about his ability to step up to 9 furlongs. Looking further ahead, the question about 10 furlongs is harder to answer. >>>

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FLORIDA DERBY CONTENDER NEARLY IN FOCUS



A son of success stallion Not This Time, Nearly is out of Ib Prospecting. A daughter of Mineshaft, this mare only won a couple of cheap claimers - both over 6 furlongs at Santa Anita. She has also produced Diente d'Oro (Bolt d'Oro), a moderate maiden who was placed twice over a mile. Ib Prospecting is a daughter Stormy Frolic, winner of the 8.5-furlong Tropical Park Oaks and placed in a handful of stakes, including a third in the 8.5-furlong Pimlico Breeders' Cup Distaff. Stormy Frolic's best offspring is Calder Oaks and Ginger Brew Stakes winner Frolic's Revenge. Frolic's Revenge became the dam of Drew's Gold, a smart sprinter who hit the board in the Woody Stephens and Amsterdam Stakes as a 3yo. This is not a distaff side that screams Kentucky Derby prospect, that's for sure, but Nearly - a strong, attractive colt with scope - made \$350,000 as a yearling and, being out of a granddaughter of A.P. Indy, he is bred along similar lines to last year's Pennsylvania Derby and Clark Stakes winner Magnitude (a Dubai World Cup candidate).

Nearly / Holy Bull Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1stdwYxu6hI>

Nearly / Gulfstream Park Allowance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0-BYXaf1Ds>

Most recent winners of the Florida Derby

2025	TAPPAN STREET	GF 113p	Brad Cox	Luis Saez
2024	FIERCENESS	GF 128	Todd Pletcher	John Velazquez
2023	FORTE	GF 118+	Todd Pletcher	Irada Ortiz Jr
2022	WHITE ABARRIO	GF 117	Saffie Joseph Jr	Tyler Gaffalione
2021	KNOWN AGENDA	GF 115p	Todd Pletcher	Irada Ortiz Jr
2020	TIZ THE LAW	GF 119p	Barclay Tagg	Manuel Franco
2019	MAXIMUM SECURITY	GF 120p?	Jason Servis *	Luis Saez
2018	AUDIBLE	GF 119	Todd Pletcher	John Velazquez
2017	ALWAYS DREAMING	GF 115	Todd Pletcher	John Velazquez
2016	NYQUIST	GF 117+	Doug O'Neill	Mario Gutierrez

Average winning Globeform: 118.1

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