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Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



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GLOBEFORM RANKING

OAKLAWN HANDICAP (G2) 9 fur dirt, Oaklawn Park Apr 19

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)					
0 / 4+	3	FIRST MISSION <i>GF 118 in May '24</i>	118 / 114+	114+ 96 - 111	Cox / Prat
1	7	BANISHING	118	118 - 112 - 117	Jacobson / Santana Jr
3	4	SKIPPYLONGSTOCKING	117	117 - 116 - 109	Joseph Jr / I Ortiz Jr
3	8	RED ROUTE ONE	114	114 - 0 - 0	S Asmussen / E Asmussen
6	6	TARANTINO	109	106 - 107 - 109	Eurton / Maldonado
7	5	ALEXANDER HELIOS	110	110 - 105 - 105	Joseph Jr / L Saez
(-1) 9	2	DISARM <i>GF 117 in Aug '23</i>	(117) 107	107 - 100 - 104	S Asmussen / K Asmussen
?	1	GO WEST GO	?	? - ? - ?	Caster / Bacon

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 Oaklawn Handicap

2024	SKIPPYLONGSTOCKING	GF 117	Saffie Joseph Jr	Jose L Ortiz
2023	PROXY	GF 116	Michael Stidham	Joel Rosario
2022	LAST SAMURAI	GF 114	Dallas Stewart	Jon Kenton
2021	SILVER STATE	GF 114p	Steve Asmussen	Ricardo Santana Jr
2020	BY MY STANDARDS	GF 120	W Bret Calhoun	Gabriel Saez

Average winning Globeform: 116.2

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GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

FIRST MISSION made a good start to his 2024 campaign when beaten just a head and a neck behind **ALEXANDER HELIOS** and **BANISHING** in the Razorback Stakes here at Oaklawn Park in March. Racing just off the pace he was very much part of an exciting finish, and he is 4lbs better off with both rivals here. That weight shift equals about two lengths over this distance, today's longer trip will favor him and Alexander Helios and Banishing both had the benefit of being race fit going into the Razorback. So there's three factors pointing to First Mission being likely to turn the tables today and here's a fourth; this race will probably get a strong pace and First Mission's stamina will become a crucial factor.

The Razorback was First Mission's first run back since last August, when he ran well below his best to finish seventh in the Whitney Stakes at Saratoga. He ran no sort of a race there and perhaps something was amiss (he was absent from the work tab the next four months). He preceding run, in the Stephen Foster at Churchill Downs, was better; he ran fourth, 4 3/4 lengths behind Kingsbarns. His very best form, however, dates back to the Alysheba Stakes on Kentucky Oaks day at Churchill Downs, when he improved to **Globeform 118**. Like he had done in the Essex Stakes (over a fast track), he raced prominently throughout and won both very easily, beating T O Saint Denis by 5 lengths. First Mission is well drawn in stall 3, he returned GF 114+ in the Razorback, telling us that he has retained his ability aged five, and he appears to be set for a big run.

BANISHING franked the Razorback form by winning the Oaklawn Mile in late March, improving to Globeform 118 as he beat Saudi Crown by a length while spotting him 5lbs. That was an impressive performance in more ways than one; being able to what he did under a tough weight was one thing, but the performance also showed what a tough and durable horse he has become. His five most recent starts, dating back to November 24, returned GF 113p - 116 - 117 - 112 - 118. That's proper high class consistency, and these race were over distances between 6 and 8.5 furlongs.

He absolutely deserves his place in the Oaklawn Handicap but Banishing will be facing an extra rival this time; the distance. He ran well but was not at his best when stepping up to 8.5 furlongs in the Razorback and covering nine panels in even better company might stretch his stamina too much. An excellent \$80,000 purchase from the 2024 Fasig-Tipton June Sale, Banishing was improving towards the end of last year, winning allowance races over 7 furlongs at Oaklawn Park and 6 furlongs at Churchill Downs, and he stepped up again when outclassing his rivals in the 6-furlong Byerley Turk Stakes at Oaklawn in January, a month before he failed by just a head in his attempt at making all in the Razorback, where **ALEXANDER HELIOS** got the better of him in the last few jumps. There's plenty of pace signed on here - something that won't help Banishing's chances.

SKIPPYLONGSTOCKING won this race in 2024 and he is just as good these days, coming off a good win in the 8.5-furlong Challenge Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs (a race he has won the last three years). Using his favored, prominent running style, he took that race by 1 1/4 lengths from the improving 4yo Most Wanted - who proved to be a stubborn foe but was in the end turned back by Skippylongstocking, one on the toughest horses in training. He ran right back to his best, Globeform 117, having returned GF 116 when finishing third behind his outstanding barnmate White Abarrio and Locked in the Pegasus World Cup at Gulfstream Park in January. Locked advertised the form of that race by demolishing the (admittedly sub-standard) Santa Anita field on his next start.

Skippylongstocking's good Pegasus run came after a rest since running sixth in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile at Del Mar in early November, when the son of Exaggerator checked in 5 3/4 lengths behind Full Serrano. Skippylongstocking was third in the BC Dirt Mile back in 2023, running one of his best races as he was chasing Cody's Wish and National Treasure. He is a tough, battle hardened and honest performer who has run to **Globeform 117** on a few occasions, and there's every chance he will do so again in the Oaklawn Handicap - but he has to give weight all of his rivals, most notably 2lbs to First Mission, and with more speed signed on he might become vulnerable at the business end of the contest. >>>

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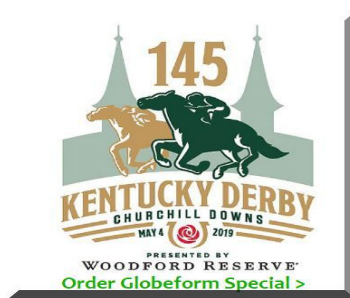
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RED ROUTE ONE's was a 5-1 winner of the Essex Handicap, run over this trip just under a month ago, but this 5yo son of Gun Runner had back class (he was top ranked by GF based on his old form) and the win was not a fluke. In fact, it was an impressive, solid performance and Red Route One is clearly in very good form. The reason he wasn't a shorter price in the Essex was that he had run way below form both in the Tinsel Stakes at the Razorback Handicap, where he finished seventh 12 lengths behind **ALEXANDER HELIOS**. A quick look at that result and one would think he has no chance here - but such a conclusion is probably a mistake. Having to to GF 112 in the spring of 2024, he improved to **Globeform 114** as he powered home by 4 1/2 lengths from the good yardstick **TARANTINO** in the Essex. If he can reproduce that form he is in with a chance of hitting the board here; and there's a good chance that the Oaklawn Handicap will set up perfectly for Red Route One. He came from well off the pace, just like he did also when beating next out stakes winner Touchuponastar in the New Orleans Handicap last year, and a strong early pace - which seems likely - will be just what he wants. A tasty 15-1 shot on the morning line, Red Route One must be included by Trifecta / Superfecta players. >>>

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ALEXANDER HELIOS took a good step forward when he managed to beat **BANISHING** and **FIRST MISSION** in the Razorback Handicap over 8.5 furlongs at Oaklawn Park in February. Coming off a solid allowance win at Gulfstream Park, he was up with the pace from start to finish and fought on bravely to hold Banishing by a head, with First Mission a neck further back in third. Those two are both better off at the weights this time, however, and this added half-furlong is also likely to pose a new challenge to Alexander Helios. Having to to **Globeform 110** in the Razorback, he looks more like a miler than a horse wanting to stretch out to 9 furlongs. Too shorty at 4-1 on the morning line, he is one to oppose this time.>>>

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TARANTINO, a likely part of the pace, failed to see the trip out when beaten 4 1/2 lengths by **RED ROUTE ONE** in the Essex Handicap over this course and distance in March. He has been effective over the distance at Del Mar and Santa Anita and he is very consistent - but he really isn't good enough to make an impact against the best in this field, especially given his running style.

DISARM returned to winning form when beating Bendoog by a neck in an 8.5-furlong allowance heat at Oaklawn Park in mid-March. It was his first run as a 5yo and it was game effort - but he ran to no more than GF 107 in the process. That's a bit better than what he was able to do in five starts last year, but nowhere near his second placed finish in the 2023 Travers Stakes, when he was a length behind Arcangelo and ran to **Globeform 117**. He had no previous results indicating that he was up to that sort of level and he has had no results to back it up since, so let's not factor him into our betting plans for this highly competitive event. He ran a good race on his return but it was not a performance suggesting that he would be sitting on a big performance next time out.

CONCLUSION: The Razorback is the traditional prep race for the Oaklawn Handicap and that certainly worked this year, as we get the to see the first three finishers in that race clash again in today's \$1,250,000 contest. It seems unlikely that they will pass the winning post in the same order though.

No horse has done the double since Todd Pletcher's Race Day managed the feat in 2015. It didn't seem unusual at the time; Lynn Whiting's Cyber Street did the same in 2013, as did Don Hemel's Alternation in 2012. First Mission, who probably needed the race last time and he gets a healthy 4lbs weight pull with the two that beat him in the Razorback. He ooks the one to go for. He is not a *clear* number one but track, distance, likely pace scenario and timing (second start off a break) sets him apart. Skippylongstocking is the obvious danger, Banishing can't be dismissed just due to the distance (he is at the top of his form), while Red Route One, also coming off a career best effort, is a 'must use horse' underneath in the betting plans.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	3 FIRST MISSION
B	4 SKIPPYLONGSTOCKING
C	7 BANISHING, 8 RED ROUTE ONE

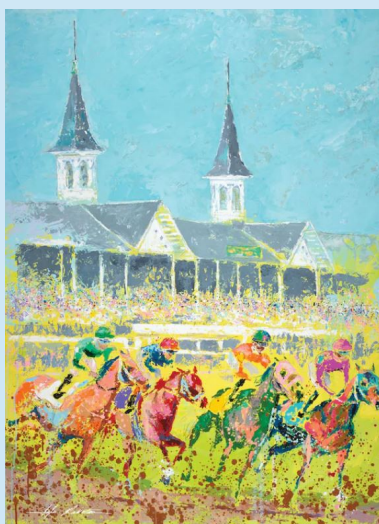
Razorback Handicap: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4IDbD9iPoE&t=147s>
1st Alexander Helios, 2 Banishing, 3rd First Mission

Skippylongstocking / Challenger Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfPjuUmTOQE>

Skippylongstocking 3rd / Pegasus World Cup: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU2b3B2dqNg>

Banishing / Oaklawn Mile: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d1E3CbDDNI>

Red Route One / Essex Handicap: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L25INHWJeag>



Races covered in
Globeform's Kentucky Derby Weekend Special

May 2 **Kentucky Oaks**
Alysheba Stakes
Edgewood Stakes
Eight Belles Stakes
La Troienne Stakes
Modesty Stakes
Unbridled Sidney Stakes

May 3 **Kentucky Derby**
American Turf Stakes
Churchill Downs Stakes
Churchill Distaff Turf Mile
Derby City Distaff Stakes
Knicks Go Stakes
Old Forester Bourbon Turf Classic
Pat Day Mile
Twin Spires Turf Sprint