

Globeform's Kentucky Derby Special '26

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



9

5:14 ET



GLOBEFORM RANKING

OPENING VERSE STAKES (LR) 8 fur Turf, Churchill Downs, Thur. April 30

Horses ranked in pounds (0.45kg). 1 length = 2.5 pounds over this distance

Rank	No.	Name of horse	Globeform	GF most recent runs	Trainer / Jockey
From right to left (most recent first)					
0 / 6	5	CHASING THE CROWN <i>GF 113 in Jan & Aug '25</i>	113 / 107	104 - 107 - 102+	Maker / J J Hernandez
1p	4	QUATROCENTO	114p	113 - 114p - 102	Gutierrez / Leparoux
1	8	LAGYNOS	116	116 - 114 - 106	Asmussen / J L Ortiz
(1) 3	3	BALNIKHOV <i>GF 112 in May '24</i>	(112) 110	101 - 106 - 93 - 109	D'Amato / Rosario
4p	6	GIOCOSO	111p	111p - 110p - 108	Desormeaux / Graham
4	7	MI BAGO	109	98 - 109 - 89	M Casse / Velazquez
5	1	LAYABOUT	110	109 - 110 - 107	Biancone / Alvarado
12	9	WEST HOLLYWOOD	101	101 - 95 - 92 - 101	B Cox / Prat
13p	2	MINARET STATION	100p	100p - 99p - ?p	Walden / C Torres

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 Opening Verse

2025	BRILLIANT BERTI	GF 111p	Cherie DeVaux	Brian Hernandez Jr
2024	CARL SPACKLER	GF 112	Chad Brown	Tyler Gaffalione
2023	ANNAPOLIS	GF 117+	Todd Pletcher	Irado Ortiz Jr
2022	GRAY'S FABLE	GF 111	Roger Attfield	Luis Saez
2021	SET PIECE	GF 112	Brad Cox	Florent Geroux

Average winning Globeform: 112.6



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GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

CHASING THE CROWN tops the ranking here, as he has twice run to **Globeform 113** but that was back in January and August last year (with a break between the two runs) and he form since has not been up to that level. He's a bit hard to fancy but note that he has a solid record both here at Churchill Downs and over a mile. He last ran when fourth, 3 3/4 lengths behind **LAGYNOS**, in the Muniz Memorial over 9 furlongs at the Fair Grounds, though - ratings wise - his effort in the Pegasus World Cup was a bit better.

He was beaten 3 1/4 lengths in fifth place behind Test Score in the big 9-furlong event at Gulfstream Park in January. Having run third in the race in 2025, he lost his form late in the '25-season but he returned GF 107 in this year's Pegasus Turf - an indication that he *could* be rounding back into form. There was some progress in his last three starts leading up to the Pegasus. The first of those was a dull race when he returned from a nine-week break in the River City at Churchill Downs in November. Never in the hunt, he passed the winning post with six horses in front of him, more than ten lengths behind our 12-1 winner Wolfie's Dynaghost. Chasing the Crown ran much better when meeting that rival again in the Fort Lauderdale at Gulfstream Park in December; on that day he was beaten 3 1/2 lengths in fifth place (without being given a hard time by his rider once his winning chance had gone). The Pegasus Turf performance a month later was another step in the right direction - but then came a one-paced effort in the Muniz Memorial.

His good run in the 2025 Pegasus World Cup Turf was no fluke though. The Mike Maker trainee ran just four times last season, and on both of his first two outings he produced **Globeform 113** - which is his career best. Going off at 64-1 he overcame a wide post and finished strongly from off the pace to reach the winning post 1 1/2 lengths behind Spirit of St. Louis in the Pegasus Turf. Spirit of St. Louis went on to win the Turf Classic at Churchill Downs, and Chasing the Crown confirmed his form by winning an competitive handicap over a mile at Kentucky Downs, where he beat Lambeth by half a length while spotting him 4lbs. Chasing the Crown came from well off the pace in last year's Pegasus and he was ridden from just off the pace at Kentucky Downs. Such tactics were employed also in his three races this winter.

QUATROCENTO goes into this mile contest on the back of two good wins. Having led every step up the way to win the Tampa Bay Stakes in January, he followed that win up with another in the Appleton Stakes over a mile at Gulfstream Park in March, when he also set the pace and kept on gamely to hold on by 3/4 length from the late rallying longshot Westside Tide. Westside Tide is just an allowance winner but Qatrocento was giving him 5lbs and, with Beach Gold third and Spirit of St Louis fourth, the form was solid enough. His performance was on the same level as when he beat better rivals at Tampa Bay.

The 5yo son of War Front improved markedly on his previous form when going gate to wire in the Tampa Bay Stakes over 8.5 furlongs in late January. Dominating throughout, he had the race won as he came into the home straight and won as he pleased, beating Tom's Magic by 3 3/4 lengths. Quatrocento returned **Globeform 114p** with this performance, and the form was given a boost when Tom's Magic split **LAGYNOS** and Program Trading in the Muniz Memorial on his next start. Quatrocento had clearly turned a corner this winter and his connections knew, that's for sure (he was odds-on at Tampa). He won two valuable mile events over the undulating Kentucky Downs course last year, producing his best form in the second race, when he won comfortably by 4 1/4 lengths from Nineleventurbo and improved to GF 108. Like he had also when beating Degree of Risk by 2 lengths ten days earlier, Quatrocento made all when outclassing Nineleventurbo, who was a length better than the third placed Big Blue Line. Quatrocento did not beat stakes performers at Kentucky Downs, where he took to the course in a way few horses do. Still, he ran a very respectable race when moving right up to G1 level in the Coolmore Mile at Keeneland in October, finishing sixth 3 lengths behind Rhetorical, who franked the form when fourth in the Breeders' Cup Mile next time out. Two sixth placed efforts followed for Quatrocento; 7 lengths behind Wolfie's Dynaghost in the River City at Churchill Downs and 3 1/2 lengths behind the same rival in the Fort Lauderdale at Gulfstream Park in December. He has become a better, more ruthless and efficient horse since those runs, and he has a good chance in the Opening Verse. >>>



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LAGYNOS is also coming off two solid wins, the most recent when beating last year's Breeders' Stakes winner **TOM'S MAGIC** (who was exiting a second to **QUATROCENTO** in the Tampa Bay Stakes) and G1 winner Program Trading in the 9-furlong Muniz Memorial Stakes at the Fair Grounds in March (with **CHASING THE CROWN** 4 3/4 lengths behind him in fourth place). Partnered by Jose Ortiz, who has had the mount in his three runs this year and jumps on board again this time, he was given a very confident ride; placed just off the pace for most of the way, Lagynos proved much the best coming down the lane. Tom's Magic got to within a length of him but he was never a serious threat. He passed the winning post a length in front of Program Trading, a high class turf runner (but below par on the day). Lagynos improved to **Globeform 116** in the Muniz Memorial, and if he runs to that level again he is a strong win contender. He has run well at Churchill Downs in the past and the drop down to a mile is unlikely to inconvenience him. His PPs show no wins from five runs over a mile; technically correct, though he was tacking 1 mile 70yds when he won the Tapit Stakes at Kentucky Downs last summer. That's a more testing course but Lagynos has good tactical speed and this race should get a good pace. The only worry would be if we get rain, and the riders decide to go slowly early (as so often happens when they spot a couple of umbrellas in the crowd). Hopefully the weather will co-operate during Derby week and Lagynos gets to run on ground no worse than good - also gets an honest pace to attack; giving him no excuses and an excellent chance. He's the selection.

Prior to his win in the Muniz Memorial, Lagynos took the Fair Grounds Stakes in February, also contested over 9 furlongs. Facing a group of in-form rivals he was given another efficient 'just off the pace' ride by Ortiz, and quickened up smartly to win by 2 1/4 lengths from Montador (winner of the Woodchopper Stakes 18 days earlier). Kupuna, who had beaten Lagynos by 1 1/4 lengths in the Colonel Bradley four weeks earlier, checked in third in the Fair Grounds. Lagynos ran to GF 114, the same mark he had achieved when taking the Tapit Stakes over an extended mile at Kentucky Downs last August. The son of Kantharos improved on his previous form as he ran out an easy 5 1/4-length winner from Ohana Honor in the Tapit. Breaking well from the outside post in a nine-runner field, he was always prominent and he dominated in the home stretch. The further he went the better he looked, and the win made him favorite for the Mint Millions over the same course nine days later. He put up another good performance in the big race, but had to settle for second, 2 lengths behind Epic Ride. A two-month break led to the River City at Churchill Downs - where he was third to Wolfie's Dynaghost -, then a similar rest before the Colonel Bradley.

GIOCOSO is set for his seasonal debut, and this is an interesting 4yo who has been rested since producing a career best effort in the Commonwealth Turf Cup over 8.5 furlongs at Churchill Downs last November. Delivered with a strong kick from off the pace, he got up to win by a head from Chapman's Peak, who was a length in front of the third placed Outrunner. Chapman's Peak (beaten in a pair of stakes subsequently but has won a Keeneland allowance race this term) was coming off an easy allowance win at Keeneland, while Outrunner was third in the Old Dominion Derby at Colonial Downs on his previous start. Spotting these two 5lbs and beating them, Giocoso improved to **Globeform 111p** in the Commonwealth. He had previously returned GF 107 when beating Simulate by a length in the one-mile Secretariat Stakes at Colonial Downs in August and moved up to GF 110p in the Bryan Station Stakes over the same distance at Keeneland in October, when he ran third behind Troubleshooting and Tenacious Leader over a mile. Giocoso is open to further improvement and he is good enough to go close in the Opening Verse Stakes. A bit further than this mile trip would perhaps suit him better but a good pace can be expected and that will suit his closing style. Any rain might turn this into a slowly run affair, with Giocoso likely to be compromised. Note that top pilot Jose Ortiz, who rode him so well at Keeneland, is now on Lagynos; with run of the mill jockey James Graham booked to ride Giocoso for the first time.

LAYABOUT comes here on the back of three good runs at Gulfstream Park, where he won the 8.5-furlong Tropical Park Derby back in December - but he improved on that form when stepped up in distance in the 12-furlong W L McKnight Stakes, a race he took by going gate to wire. Layabout kept on gamely, despite setting quite solid fractions he had enough left to win by 1 1/4 lengths from Padiddle, who was a neck in front of the third placed **BALNIKHOV**. Layabout moved up to a career best **Globeform 110** with that performance, and he ran to GF 109 when fourth, 1 1/4 lengths behind Grand Sonata in the 11-furlong Mac Diarmida next time out. He is a stakes winner over 8.5 furlongs but this son of Laoban is best served by a stamina test and this mile trip will probably be a bit too sharp for him. Most likely, he will be asked to go forward as the the gates one, in an attempt at making this a stamina test. It might not be too easy.

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BALNIKHOV's best piece of form dates back to May 2024, when he took the Dinner Party Stakes on heavy ground at Pimlico, but he has been close to that level a few times since and he fits well into this grade; but he has also developed into more of a long distance runner. His best in 2025 was a win in an allowance heat over 11 furlongs at Del Mar in November, and he was a respectable third to **LAYABOUT** in the W L McKnight Stakes over 12 furlongs at Gulfstream Park in January. Cutting right back to a mile can't be ideal - but we will have to mark him up a bit if rain makes the turf course very testing.

MINARET STATION is an intriguing runner having his first start since June last year, when he came off a nine-month break to win the American Derby over 8.5 furlongs at Churchill Downs. He had won the Bourbon Stakes at Keeneland as a juvenile 2024, when he bested two good next out winners, and he confirmed that level of form in the American Derby; finishing well from a stalking position to win by half a length and the same from Native Runner and Freedom's Not Free. Minaret Station ran to **Globeform 101p**, looking an exciting prospect, but unfortunately he was sidelined again. Native Runner was coming off an allowance win over Anegade, who has since won three stakes races and developed into one of the better long distance turf runners around. Freedom's No Free went into the American Derby after winning the Cinema Stakes at Santa Anita and he ran second both in the La Jolla Stakes and the Del Mar Derby after meeting Minaret Station at Churchill Downs, so Minaret Station's form was good. Guessing his fitness level this week is, well, just guessing, and he has to improve a fair bit to be competitive here; but he's so lightly raced so why should he not improve; and we know he can fire straight off the bench. His trainer William Walden is sporting an impressive 28% strike rate in 2026 and Minaret Station appeals as a Trifecta horse.

CONCLUSION: With Layabout (virtually certain to be sent to the lead from post one) and the speedy duo Mi Bago and Quatrocento in the field, this should be a strongly run mile contest. That will suit Lagynos. He takes the best form to the table and his last run was his career best. The Steve Asmussen trainee is not an absolutely clear cut selection; as this is a competitive race; but he is the most likely winner and thus the logical A-horse. Giocoso, who is more of a deep closer, will also benefit from a hot early pace, making him a horse to consider underneath. Quatrocento is the strongest of the three speed runners, while Minaret Station is the 'dark horse' - this 4yo comes back from yet another lengthy break but if there is a horse in here with significant improvement to come it's him.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	8 LAGYNOS
B	4 QUATROCENTO, 6 GIOCOSO
C	2 MINARET STATION

Quatrocento / Appleton Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srZPO-EHsnE>

Quatrocento / Tampa Bay Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPj3flycq3c>

Lagynos / Fair Grounds Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ2wKRJrsfo>

Lagynos 2nd / Col. Bradley Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORYmSafeLs0>

Giocoso / Commonwealth Turf Cup: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKX9m5O0Wgl>

Giocoso / Secretariat Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8wQOoDGZmM&t=5s>

Chasing the Crown / Hcap, Kentucky Downs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBoBSrKD5pk>

Chasing the Crown 3rd / Pegasus World Cup Turf '25: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klgUMaM-gqA>

Layabout / W L McKnight Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXemTKB0Nyo>

Layabout / Tropical Park Derby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXVKLSAho6o>



Globeform Service 2026

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Belmont Stakes Week | Saratoga meet | Kentucky Downs

Breeders' Cup Service | Thanksgiving Week

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LOUISVILLE WEATHER FORECAST | DERBY WEEK

Mon 27	83°/63°		Partly Cloudy	📉 14%
Tue 28	76°/57°		AM T-Storms	📉 73%
Wed 29	72°/49°		AM Showers	📉 46%
Thu 30	67°/45°		Partly Cloudy	📉 24%
Fri 01	61°/42°		Rain	📉 64%
Sat 02	63°/41°		Partly Cloudy	📉 22%