

Globeform's Santa Anita Special

Opening Weekend Dec 26-27-28, 2024

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GLOBEFORM RANKING

THE MALIBU STAKES (G1), 7 fur dirt, Santa Anita Dec 26

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

Rank	No.	Name of horse	GF	GF most recent runs	Trainer / Jockey
From right to left (most recent first)					
0	1	BENTORNATO	126	126 - 107p - 102+	D'Angelo / L Saez
5	8	RAGING TORRENT	121	107 - 121 - 113+	D O'Neill / Dettori
9	6	MYSTIK DAN	117	0 - 112 - 117	McPeck / Hernandez Jr
16	7	STRONGHOLD	110	110 - 105 - 103	D'Amato / Fresu
17 / 21	5	IMAGINATION <i>GF 108 in Apr '24</i>	108 / 104	104 - 103 - 95	Baffert / Rosario
19p	2	PILOT COMMANDER	105p	105p - 101p - 99	Baffert / J Hernandez
20p	3	WINTERFELL	104p	104p - ?p - ?p	Baffert / Velazquez
27p	4	SENIOR OFFICER	97p	97p - ?p	B Cox / Prat

Most recent winners of the Malibu

2023	SPEED BOAT BEACH	GF 123	Bob Baffert	Flavien Prat
2022	TAIBA	GF 122+	Bob Baffert	Mike Smith
2021	FLIGHTLINE	GF 140p	John Sadler	Flavien Prat
2020	CHARLATAN	GF 122p	Bob Baffert	Mike Smith
2019	OMAHA BEACH	GF 121p	Richard Mandella	Mike Smith

Average winning Globeform 125.6 (122 without Flightline)

Bentornato 2nd / Breeders' Cup Sprint: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFgScO9iy6Q&t=571s>
(Raging Torrent 7th)

Raging Torrent / Pat O'Brien Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6PXSCg95ec&t=340s>

Pilot Commander / Allowance Santa Anita: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vw5JH3EPowo>

Mystik Dan / Kentucky Derby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5Yb-2xEMzg>

Winterfell / City of Laurel Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIQ45EKa2E4>

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GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

BENTORNATO found dramatic improvement to run second in the Breeders' Cup Sprint, beaten just half a length by our 6-1 winner (also advised 14-1 future bet) Straight No Chaser at Del Mar. Bentornato, who went off at 28-1 for the championship event, had nice form in the book but already but nothing even close to the form he produced at Del Mar. Racing up with the pace from gate to wire, he looked like pulling off a big upset a furlong out though Straight no Chaser's final surge proved too tough for the three-year-old. He beat Mullikin by 2 1/2 lengths for second, improved to **Globeform 126**, and became the best 3yo sprinter around. The BC Sprint is run over 6 furlongs, Del Mar's home straight is 71 feet shorter than Santa Anita's, were he will now be asked to stretch out to 7 furlongs. Bentornato has won over this distance and he was third in the one-mile Saudi Derby, but both of those performances were well below the level he reached at the Breeders' Cup. So the question is; will he be as good in the Malibu as he was at the Breeders' Cup? One can counter with another, just as relevant, question; does he need to be? If Raging Torrent turns up in top shape the answer to that is that Bentornato needs to run close to his best to win, but Raging Torrent was dull in the BC Sprint and if he is not in good form, well, then the Malibu is a race Bentornato can win with a below par effort. Yes, there is a lot of speed here but the BC Sprint had a much stronger field and the pace was hot. Bentornato was up to it and he is the logical selection. The inside post is not ideal and there's always the fear of a bounce after such a big effort but he is so much the best and, Raging Torrent aside, which one of the others would we actually feel comfortable backing?

RAGING TORRENT faded from a stalking position at the Breeders' Cup, finishing seventh in the 11-runner field, beaten 6 1/4 lengths behind Straight No Chaser. It was not because he doesn't like Del Mar, and it's just possible that it was the cut back from 7 to 6 furlongs. He is 3-for-4 over this distance but he has lots of speed and the Breeders' Cup run was disappointing. It came after a 14-week break since the Pat O'Brien Stakes, which he won in gritty style. He got the better of the local star The Chosen Vron after a head to head battle when taking the Pat O'Brien. All his wins have come over 7 furlongs; he made all in each race, however, setting solid (not wild) fractions as he pulled most of his rivals out of their comfort zones. The Chosen Vron headed him narrowly early in the straight in the O'Brien, but Raging Torrent fought back bravely to win by a neck. Big City Lights was beaten almost four lengths into third place, giving the form a solid look. Raging Torrent improved to **Globeform 121** with that win, having run to GF 120p when crushing a good allowance field at Churchill Downs back in May. In between these high class performances he won the Maxfield over inferior rivals at Churchill Downs. A back to form Raging Torrent would be a tough horse to beat here, he has the best post position, he gets Dettori on his back and he must be respected.

MYSTIK DAN, the Kentucky Derby winner, is set to make his return after having been out of action since the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga in early June. He was way, way below his best in the third leg of the Triple Crown; beaten 15 3/4 lengths he had just two horses behind him passing the winning post. It was his sixth run of the season already. Having won the Kentucky Derby, he was unable to follow up in the Preakness Stakes, looking a bit flat two weeks after his big effort in the Kentucky Derby, looking like a tired horse in need of a break. He ran a solid race at Churchill Downs, where he was also given a fine ride. Things did really go his way in the Derby though, and he had no excuse in the Preakness - where he enjoyed almost a carbon copy trip but looked very flat coming down the home stretch. He was beaten 2 1/4 lengths by Seize the Grey and just held second by a head when Catching Freedom came with a late rally.

Looking at the Kentucky Derby result, it's easy to think that Mystik Dan is a top class horse - as he won a triple photo finish against Sierra Leone and Forever Young (first and third in the Breeders' Cup Classic six months later) - but he simply isn't. The Derby win was fortunate, it fell into his lap due to circumstances on a day when his main rivals were unlucky, not quite ready and - in Sierra Leone's case - immature. With Catching Freedom beaten just 1 3/4 lengths in fourth and the Japanese allowance winner T O Password beaten 4 3/4 lengths in fifth, the form simply wasn't particularly strong. Mystik Dan ran to **Globeform 117**. Not only does he need to improve to match strides with Bentornato and Raging Torrent, he needs to do so after a lengthy break *and* running over a distance that is almost certainly much too short for his liking.

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PILOT COMMANDER and **WINTERFELL**, two of Bob Baffert's three runners, are interesting contenders open to further improvement. They have contrasting running styles. Pilot Commander, coming off a good win in a 6-furlong allowance race at Santa Anita in early October (when he looked like more distance would suit), is the pacey colt who might not be done any favors if we get an early speed duel, while Winterfell, exiting an easy off the pace win in the City of Laurel Stakes over 7 furlongs four weeks ago (when trained by Brittany Russell), is a colt who would love a really strong pace, inviting him in with a closing finish. These are both worth considering using for Trifecta players.

STRONGHOLD won a sub-standard edition of the Santa Anita Derby in April, beating **IMAGINATION** by a neck over the 9-furlong distance. His crack at the Kentucky Derby resulted in a fading seventh place finish and he was beaten fair and square by Dragoon Guard in the Indiana Derby, then bounced back to form in the Pennsylvania Derby, running second, 2 3/4 lengths behind Seize the Grey, this time beating Dragoon Guard by a head for the place and improving to **Globeform 110**. Like the Santa Anita Derby, that was also over 9 furlongs, and he is now set to try sprinting. Stronghold ran second in the 7-furlong Bob Hope Stakes as a juvenile but he was beaten almost nine lengths behind a cruising Nysos that day, and he had just two behind him; so that result seems irrelevant in today's context. A (likely) hot early pace will help him in the Malibu though it's hard to see him being in with a winning chance.

CONCLUSION: The second leg of the Pick 5 and the first leg of an appealing Pick 4, the Malibu looks like a race where using two horses is going to get us safely through to the next leg; Bentornato and Raging Torrent are such good sprinters and it seems unlikely that they will both have an off day. Going against Mystik Dan makes a lot of sense, also in Trifecta plans.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	1 BENTORNATO
B	8 RAGING TORRENT
C	2 PILOT COMMANDER, 3 WINTERFELL

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