

Globeform's Saratoga Service



Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell

10



GLOBEFORM RANKING

ALABAMA STAKES (G1) 10 fur dirt, Saturday August 16

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	6	LA CARA	116	116 - 86 - 110p	M Casse / D Davis
2	2	GOOD CHEER	114	93 - 114 - 111+	Cox / L Saez
5p	4	NITROGEN	111p	108 - ?+ 111p	M Casse / J L Ortiz
17	1	MARGIE'S INTENTION	99	98 - 99 - ?+	Cox / I Ortiz Jr
18	3	KINZIE QUEEN	98	94 - 98 - ?+	Compton / Alvarado
28	5	QUEEN AZTECA	88	85 - ? - 88	Petersen / Rosario

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 Alabama Stakes

2024	POWER SQUEEZE	GF 113	Jorge Delgado	Javier Castellano
2023	RANDOMIZED	GF 119p	Chad Brown	Joel Rosario
2022	NEST	GF 121	Todd Pletcher	Irada Ortiz Jr
2021	MALATHAAT	GF 116	Todd Pletcher	John Velazquez
2020	SWISS SKYDIVER	GF 121	Kenneth McPeck	Tyler Gaffalione

Average winning Globeform: 000

GOOD TO KNOW ||| In the previews, when a horse's ratings is referred to as "Globeform 111" in bold it denotes that this was a career best; while when you see "GF 111" it means that the horse ran to that figure but has earned a higher rating in another race or in other races.



Globeform's Saratoga Service

GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

A small but interesting field has been drawn for this year's Alabama, an important race in the 3yo fillies' division. Eight went to post last year and the race had ten runners two years ago - so one can say that just six this time, in effect no more than five as the import Queen Azteca is way out of her depth, is somewhat disappointing; but this is often what happens when two or three standout contenders go for a big race. Others get scared off and seek easier options elsewhere.

LA CARA's connections must have been devastated when she had to scratch out of the Coaching Club American Oaks due to a case of strangles in her barn. That race would have suited her so well - and the question this time is how well she can cope with 10 furlongs? Her front-running style makes that a particularly valid question. She takes the highest rating to the battle but will she be able to reach that level over the Alabama trip? One job is to look at her pedigree but first let's pause a bit and guess the likely pace scenario here. The only other filly with early speed is Casse's other runner, Nitrogen. All the others prefer to come from off the pace. Could it be that Nitrogen will join La Cara on the lead? Of course not.

Her pedigree has no objections to a 10-furlong race, especially as the lone speed. Her sire Street Sense was a Kentucky Derby winner and her dam Cara Catarina (a well bred 0-for-8 filly) is a daughter of Bernardini. He won the 10-furlong Travers and followed up with another top class performance beating older horses over the same distance in the Jockey Club Gold Cup the same year. Furthermore, La Cara's dam is a full-sister to To Honor and Serve, who won the 9-furlong Remsen Stakes at two and the 9-furlong Woodward Stakes as an older horse. What can we draw from this? Probably that there is no reason to say that La Cara *can't* take them all the way in the Alabama. In this setup, she probably can.

La Cara failed to make an impact in the Kentucky Oaks, only to bounce back with a career high in the 9-furlong Acorn Stakes at Saratoga in early June. Both of these events were run over a wet track, so it probably wasn't the conditions that made the difference. A typical front-runner, she tired at Churchill Downs - at Saratoga she just kept going and ran out a decisive 3-length winner from Look Forward, with subsequent CCA Oaks winner Scottish Lassie third. Look Forward was coming off a solid win in the Eight Belles Stakes at Churchill Downs. La Cara was much the best in the Acorn Stakes and she improved to **Globeform 116**, having run to GF 110p when capturing the Ashland Stakes over 8.5 furlongs at Keeneland in April - on that occasion beating Take Charge Milady by 1 1/4 lengths.

GOOD CHEER ran inexplicably badly when fifth of six in the Acorn Stakes, passing the winning post 9 1/4 lengths behind gate to wire winner **LA CARA**. The track was sloppy, as it was also when she captured the Kentucky Oaks, and it was hard to come up with any excuses for Good Cheer. She had stretched her unbeaten record to seven races when landing the odds in the Kentucky Oaks, when **LA CARA** was the one gasping at the back. However, this year's Kentucky Oaks was not a vintage renewal and Good Cheer only needed **Globeform 114** to win the 9-furlong classic. Beating longshots Drexel Hill and Bless the Broken does not represent top class form. That's not to say that Good Cheer can't improve and become a top class horse. It is still possible and if it were to happen it's likely to be over 10 furlongs. Every time she has raced she has indicated that the longer the trip the better it would be for her. Her stamina stood her in good stead on the first Friday in May and she should love the Alabama distance. Despite her reverse in the Acorn, Good Cheer might go off favorite here - though is it wise to take a short price about a filly with this profile? Even if we forgive her Acorn flop, we are looking at a contender that was undoubtedly using the first few months of the season well as she prepared for Churchill Downs. Winter to spring form does not guarantee success in the second half of the season. >>>

Globeform's Saratoga Service

NITROGEN was doing on turf what Good Cheer did on dirt in the first half on 2025, winning race after race without facing to notch competition. Her winning run came to an end when Fionn caught her in the very last stride and snatched the Belmont Oaks by a nose here at Saratoga in July. Losing that race didn't seem too bad at the time but Opulent Restraint, who was only 3/4 length behind the two in third place, was a 19-1 shot without strong form in the book; and she was beaten much further when third to Laurelin in the Saratoga Oaks last week. Nitrogen failed to run up to her best in the Belmont Oaks, no doubt about that. She was better in the 8.5-furlong Edgewood Stakes back in May. After taking that event, she enjoyed a most comfortable 17-length win in the Wonder Again Stakes, run over a sloppy dirt track on Belmont Stakes day. Her time was not far off Raging Torrent's clocking in the Met Mile and she won in a canter. This filly really is a bit unique but that run is impossible to assess in figures. She had improved to **Globeform 111p** when outclassing Lush Lips by 3 1/2 lengths plus two pounds in Edgewood Stakes at Churchill Downs, and Lush Lips franked that piece of form by taking the Tepin Stakes on her next start.

Three weeks prior to the Edgewood, Nitrogen ran to GF 109p to win the Appalachian Stakes over a mile at Keeneland; beating her barnmate Vixen readily by 2 1/4 lengths, with Fionn another 1 1/4 lengths back in third place. Fionn next won the Regret Stakes over 9 furlongs at Churchill Downs, and then gained her revenge on Nitrogen in the Belmont Oaks. So here we are; Nitrogen has two questions to answer; can she bounce back after an odds-on defeat and is she as good on dirt as the Wonder Again romp might suggest? In the view of below par efforts subsequently by the three that followed him home in the Met Mile, Raging Torrent's rating for that race has been adjusted down two pounds to Globedorm 119 - but a time comparison still makes Nitrogen's performance in the Wonder Again impressive. The clock can mislead us though, and this may be a good case. After all, it was a three-runner race and who knows how much the wet track might have changed from race to race. If she really is *that* good, why did she lose against Fionn?

CONCLUSION: It seems that Good Cheer will be the favorite for this race, and Nitrogen will probably take money too; so I'm going to ask for a straight win bet only on La Cara hoping for a bit of value on the most likely winner. She has so much going for her. Yes, the tenth furlong may prove to be a bridge too far, but who's going to press her early? If La Cara gets into a nice rhythm on the lead she will be hard to peg back.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	6 LA CARA
B	2 GOOD CHEER
C	4 NITROGEN

La Cara / Acorn Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7A73L0Lzbw>
5th Good Cheer

Good Cheer / Kentucky Oaks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXLDKqHogYA>
9th La Cara

Nitrogen / Wonder Again Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fO1m7dA6Vlo>