

Globeform's Kentucky Derby Special '26

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



10

4:50 ET

GLOBEFORM RANKING

THE CHURCHILL DOWNS STAKES (G1) 7 fur dirt, Churchill Downs May 2

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)					
0p	6	KNIGHTSBRIDGE	124p	124p - 123p - 117p	W Mott / Alvarado
4p / 9	1	DISCO TIME	120p / 115	115 - 98 - 120p	Cox / Velazquez
4	7	IMAGINATION	120	117+ 120 - 119p	Baffert / Prat
5p	8	T O ELVIS	119p	119p - 110p - ?p	Takayanagi / Sakai
5 / 9	10	BANISHING <i>GF 119 in this race '25</i>	119 / 115	115 - 104 - 99	Jacobson / Gaffalione
8 / 15+	9	CRAZY MASON <i>GF 116 in Apr & Aug '25</i>	116 / 109+	109+ 106 - 114+	Sacco / M Franco
9p	2	CORNUCOPIAN	115p	115p - 114p - ?p	Baffert / J J Hernandez
9p	5	DISRUPTOR	115p	115p - 109p - 91	Pletcher / I Ortiz Jr
9	11	POINT DUME	115	115 - 113 - 109p	Kreiser / E Gonzalez
9	3	MACHO MUSIC <i>GF 115 CD in May '25 (sloppy)</i>	115	98 - 100 - 106	Crichton / Castellano
12	4	HALL OF FAME	112	106 - 112 - 111	Asmussen / J L Ortiz

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 Churchill Downs

2025	MINDFRAME	GF 120p	Todd Pletcher	Irak Ortiz Jr
2024	GUN PILOT	GF 116	Steve Asmussen	Cristian Torres
2023	CODY'S WISH	GF 123+	William Mott	Junior Alvarado
2022	JACKIE'S WARRIOR	GF 129	Steve Asmussen	Joel Rosario
2021	FLAGSTAFF	GF 116	John Sadler	Luis Saez
2019	MITOLE	GF 123	Steve Asmussen	Ricardo Santana Jr

This race was not run 2020

Average winning Globeform: 121.1

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GLOBEFORM ANALYSIS

KNIGHTSBRIDGE, a half brother to top class performer Speaker's Corner, has looked like another superstar for Bill Mott's team in recent starts. He has been a late developing horse and, now aged five, he's raced just eight times. Various 'little problems' according to his trainer has meant that they had to be patient and give him time. There seems to be precious little wrong with him these days though; he has won his last four races, improving with each and every start, and he will probably be hard to beat in the Churchill Downs Stakes. This is a much, much deeper field than those he has humiliated in three graded stakes wins at Gulfstream Park but the way he has been cruising home in those events one might wonder how good this son of Kentucky Derby winner actually is. He could be as good as Sovereignty. Knightsbridge ran to GF 123p when beating Back Em Up by 4 3/4 lengths while conceding 6lbs in the Fred Hooper Stakes over a mile in January, and he returned **Globeform 124p** when he took the Gulfstream Park Mile a month later. Steal Sunshine and Flying Liam ran second and third that day. They are not high class but they are useful runners and Knightsbridge beat them by 11 lengths (with plenty more up his sleeve). Last year' Cigar Mile runner-up Miko finished fourth, tiring badly after trying to match Knightsbridge's speed early. His runner-up in the Fred Hooper, Back Em Up, has since run a good second in the Army Mule Stakes. Prior to these mile wins Knightsbridge took the 7-furlong Mr Prospector Stakes in December, when he hammered multiple G3 winner Super Chow to win by 4 3/4 lengths. Knightsbridge has a high cruising speed and 7 furlongs suits him just as well as a mile. His half-brother also did the Fred Hooper / Gulfstream Park Mile double - and what happened next? He won a G1 event over 7 furlongs, taking the Carter Handicap at Aqueduct on his next start.

DISCO TIME looked potentially top class when winning the Dwyer Stakes last year, but he was a very disappointing favorite in the 9-furlong Pegasus World Cup at Gulfstream Park in January; when he also had post one - ran fast on the lead and folded before the second turn. He restored his reputation somewhat when second to **DISRUPTOR** (see further down) in the 8.5-furlong Challenger Stakes at Tampa Bay Downs in March, though this is much tougher. He has early speed but cutting right back to 7 furlongs and doing so from a bad post position, how is that going to pan out? Disco Time stays further so perhaps he will be rated - in which case he may find trouble on the inside. He took a perfect 5-for-5 record going into the Pegasus, having impressed in the Dwyer Stakes over a mile at Aqueduct in November. He had just three to beat and he was a hot favorite, but the son of Not This Time strolled home to win by 9 3/4 lengths from Crudo, who was second 5 lengths in front of Tip Top Thomas. Crudo had a bit of a mixed campaign, also trying turf, but let's not forget how easily he won when taking the Sir Barton Stakes on Preakness day at Pimlico back in May '25. Tip Top Thomas, like Crudo a Todd Pletcher trainee, went into the Dwyer off of wins in the Indiana Derby and the Smarty Jones Stakes at Parx. Disco Time met decent horses in the Dwyer and outclassed them; he carried his speed strongly to the wire and earned **Globeform 120p** in the process. If he can come up with that figure again he's a strong contender, though he ran to GF 115 last time out and that's probably the figure we should use as we assess his chances this week. He is bred more for 8 to 9 furlongs, than for sprinting but Brad Cox makes few mistakes and that Dwyer performance is hard to forget.

IMAGINATION will be making his first start of the year on American soil here, but this Bob Baffert trainee has already got the year off to a good start by winning the lucrative Riyadh Dirt Sprint over 6 furlongs in Saudi Arabia. Run on Saudi Cup day in February, the race was dominated by US raiders, as Imagination came from off the pace to beat the Elite Power Stakes winner Just Beat the Odds by 3/4 length. Muqtahem (beaten 3 3/4 lengths by Straight No Chaser in the '25-edition of the race) was third 3/4 length behind Just Beat the Odds and 2 3/4 lengths in front of the fourth placed American Stage, a Japanese trained horse who ran fourth 4 1/4 lengths behind Bentornato at the Breeders' Cup last year (when Imagination was second).

Imagination ran a solid race as he came from well off the pace in Saudi, but it was not his best performance to date; that happened when he ran to **Globeform 120** in the 6-furlong Breeders' Cup Sprint at Del Mar in November. Bentornato, a proper top class horse, beat him by 2 1/4 lengths that day, but Imagination was a game runner-up, though just a nose ahead of Dr. Venkman, who he had beaten 1 3/4 lengths when they filled the exacta in the Santa Anita Sprint Championship back in September. Imagination was racing over longer distances as a young horse; he was second in the 9-furlong Santa Anita Derby; but his for improved markedly when Baffert decided to switch him to sprinting. A very efficient closer, he should be well suited by the 7-furlong trip of the Churchill Downs Stakes. >>>

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T O ELVIS, a US bred son of Volatile, represents Japan in this contest, and he is a fast improving young sprinter. Definitely a horse to respect, he is on a four-race win streak. All his wins have come over 1200 metres (about 6 furlongs) but the way he runs one would not doubt his ability to cover a seventh panel. The streak began in allowance company at Hanshin March '25, whereafter he took a break up to August, when he took a minor event at Chukyo by a length. He did not beat high class rivals on that occasion, but met better horses when winning a similar contest at Hanshin in September; this time outclassing a decent sprinter named Strength by 4 lengths. Strength was coming off two straight minor event wins and he ran second twice in such company on his following starts. T O Elvis was now beginning to look really smart but he had still not been in a race qualifying him for a Globeform ratings (his provisional mark was GF 110p).

Stepped up in class in the Capella Stakes, a 16-runner G3 event over 1200 metres at Nakayama in December, the Daisuke Takayanagi trainee put up his best performance to date. After travelling really well held up at the back, he powered home by 5 lengths from Yamanin Cerchi while stopping the clocks in a sharp 1:08.6 and thus getting close to the track record. He moved up to **Globeform 119p** on that occasion. The formlines are positive and there is probably better still to come from this 4yo. His runner-up in the Capella had won three Listed races on the trot going into the race and Ecoro Azel, who was beaten 6 lengths in third place, ran second in another stakes event next time out, then won a stakes himself.

Don't let it put you off this horse that Yamanin Cerchi and Gabby's Sister (who as fourth in the Capella) were both well beaten when 12th and 6th respectively in the Riyadh Dirt Sprint in Saudi Arabia in February; a race won by Bob Baffert's Imagination. Yamanin Cerchi ran poorly there but Gabby's Sister went down by 8 1/2 lengths behind Imagination, beaten 1 3/4 lengths further than in her Capella defeat behind T O Elvis (who had more up his sleeve). Gabby's Sister performed better in the Capella than she did in Saudi Arabia, and this is an interesting comparison; it suggests that T O Elvis is just as good as Imagination. The reason he bypassed the Saudi Cup meeting was that his connections decided to wait for the Golden Shaheen on Dubai World Cup day at Meydan; but they changed that plan due to travel / safety issues. This means that T O Elvis will come off a long break when he goes for the Churchill Downs Stakes but it's probably not a cause for concern; he had been rested for more than three months when winning the Capella and his allowance win in August came after an even longer layoff. He looks in interesting contender.

CORNUCOPIAN, like Imagination trained by Baffert, has a different running style. This 4yo son Into Mischief is more about speed. He was seen as a possible Kentucky Derby contender last year, but soon explained that he was not born to go long. After a 6-furlong maiden win on his debut he was thrown into the Arkansas Derby, where he tired badly after flashing speed for the first half of the contest. He faded to be a distant fourth behind Sandman, who was unplaced in the Kentucky Derby but then ran third in the Preakness. Cornucopian was next seen in a three-runner allowance heat over a mile at Aqueduct. Once more a short priced favorite, he lost that race by 3 1/4 lengths to the Chad Brown trained Garamond. Garamond raced just twice thereafter, both times running poorly, and Cornucopian was sidelined for nine months. He resurfaced in allowance company over 6.5 furlongs at Santa Anita in January this year. Ridden from just off the pace, he won that contest very comfortably by 3 lengths from Red Flag. He was stopped by traffic and lost ground on the turn - but recovered quickly to speed through a gap by the rail. He outclassed his rivals, winning with plenty in hand and improving to **Globeform 115p**.

Cornucopian took another step in the right direction by winning the 7-furlong San Carlos Stakes over the same track in late March. Once more sitting just off the pace, he took command coming into the straight and won by from Listenupshance. Bartholdy, a smart sprinter on his day but 'too fast too soon' and tiring was third, beaten 7 1/4 lengths. Cornucopian improved to **Globeform 115p** in the San Carlos, but the reason his margin was almost three lengths was mainly that the rider of Listenupshance eased up a bit in the closing stages. Listenupshance was coming off a second also in the Palos Verdes, where he was beaten 1 1/2 lengths by Man O Rose, who was spotting him 2lbs (he met Cornucopian at level weights). Cornucopian is finally on the right track now, he needs to improve again to have a chance in the Churchill Downs, but a lightly raced and progressive runner like this should always be respected. There's every chance that he is capable of around GF 120 but it's a surprise to see him as the 7-5 morning line favorite. This horse has been odds-on in all of his five races to date but he has done nothing to justify favoritism in a Grade 1 and he has a tough inside post. >>>

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DISRUPTOR, who was sidelined for ten months after being a badly beaten third favorite in last year's Florida Derby (10-lengths fifth to **TAPPAN STREET**), has come back with all guns blazing this year. He slammed a decent field to win by 3 1/2 lengths in allowance company at Tampa Bay Downs in January, and stepped successfully up in class to beat last year's impressive Dwyer Stakes winner **DISCO TIME** by a length in the Challenger Stakes over 8.5 furlongs at the same venue in March. Disco Time was giving him 2lbs but, with the third placed Solo Venturi 7 1/2 lengths further back in third, Disruptor improved to **Globeform 115p** with that front-running win. His previous win was strong - probably better than most observers realize. He took that race by coming from off the pace, and his runner-up, Little Thunder, won an allowance heat by 7 1/4 lengths next time out (beating a rival who was coming off a 4 1/4-length win in similar company). This son of Gun Runner, bought for \$1,150,000 as a yearling, could be in for a strong 4yo campaign. Note that he is cross entered in Alysheba Downs Stakes on Friday.

BANISHING was beaten just a neck by Mindframe when running a dead heat with another top class horse, Nysos, for second in this race last year - and he has been a bit of an iron horse; turning up for several tough races and kept his form remarkably well. He ran to **Globeform 119** in the Churchill Downs Stakes twelve months ago, having returned the same figure also when second in the Oaklawn Handicap on his preceding start, but his form did tail off a little bit in the second half of the year. He bounced back to winning form in the Godolphin Mile at Meydan in March (having been unplaced in the Saudi Cup in February). His Dubai win was gained at the expense of the 3-2 favorite Commissioner King, who was coming off an easy win in a G3 serving as the prep race (but he is not top class). Banishing returned GF 115 in the Godolphin Mile.

POINT DUME has improved nicely through his last three starts, and he moved up to **Globeform 115** when upsetting the high class G1 winner Book'em Danno (who was making his seasonal debut) in the 7-furlong Carter Stakes at Aqueduct in April. Point Dume made all and got the run of the race but it was a game effort. More will be needed here, however, and he is unlikely to get his favored position on the lead.

CONCLUSION: This is a highly competitive sprint but Knightsbridge is an easy horse to land on as the selection. He is top rated, he is coming off wide margin wins, he has speed and stamina, jhe si well drawn, he can improve again, he is bred for the job and he represents a team that has been in flying form this season. Bob Baffert's duo Imagination and Cornucopian look like the most likely threats, while the one that is massively overpriced to the morning line is T O Elvis. How he should be as big as **30-1** is hard to understand. Horses at such odds are runners hardly anyone give the slightest of chances; and that is certainly not the case with this high class sprinter from Japan. It would come as no surprise as all to see him finishing in the first three or four, something that would boost the Trifecta and Superfecta payoffs. He is well worth an across the board or each way bet. Looking for a Trifecta plan, the way to go is using Knightsbridge with a few underneath. Trips, traffic and luck in running will be factors, so there are quite a few who might hit the board. Disruptor is a Tri candidate if he runs here, as is his Tampa Bay runner-up Disco Time.

GLOBEFORM SELECTIONS

A	6 KNIGHTSBRIDGE
B	2 CORNUCOPIAN, 7 IMAGINATION, 8 T O ELVIS
C	1 DISCO TIME, 5 DISRUPTOR

Knightsbridge / Gulfstream Park Mile: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqBYY-QWAZA>

Knightsbridge / Fred Hooper Stakes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etTLbmm24ag>

Imagination / Riyadh Dirt Sprint: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVDMIi0y9Zc>

Imagination 2nd / Breeders' Cup Sprint: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSCPve_okns

T O Elvis / Capella Stakes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWGWdUh_4hw

Cornucopian / Santa Anita Allowance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poY7nqqYt34>

Cornucopian / San Carlos Stakes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKir1JB6_2w