

Globeform's Kentucky Derby Special '26

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell

Churchill Downs Stakes contender

T O ELVIS IN FOCUS

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**, who also goes for the Churchill Downs Stakes. Yamanin Cerchi ran poorly in Saudi but Gabby's Sister was 8 1/2 lengths behind Imagination; beaten 1 3/4 lengths further than in her Capella defeat behind T O Elvis (who had at least a length 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 and 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 is an interesting contender.

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

