

Globeform's Belmont Week Special

Previews and ratings by Geir Stabell



BELMONT STAKES CONTENDER GOLDEN TEMPO IN FOCUS

GOLDEN TEMPO found significant improvement when winning the Kentucky Derby on his fifth career start. Coming from way off the pace, he looked a bit special as he went by horses coming down the lane to get up for a win over **RENEGADE** - who also came from the tail end of the field to run a game second; beaten a neck by Golden Tempo. Going into the race it looked quite an open classic with no standout but the stretch run of the top two made it an exciting race to watch - though what was the value of the form? With the maiden **OCELLI**, who looked a possible winner half a furlong out, beaten just a length in third place, there were reasons to doubt that the 2026 Kentucky Derby was a good edition. **CHIEF WALLABEE** ran fourth despite meeting some trouble in running at a crucial stage coming down the lane, beaten 3 lengths by Golden Tempo. The first three home all came from the back in a field that was well strung out, the fourth placed horse came from mid-pack while Japan's Danon Bourbon was fifth after being ridden far too close to a hot pace. Much has been written about how the Derby pace actually wasn't *that* strong. I agree and I disagree. Perhaps it was not as wickedly fast as it seemed but it was plenty strong enough for this class of three-year-olds. This was not a Kentucky Derby to compare with last year's edition, won by Sovereignty from Journalism and Baeza, or other recent fast track editions won by proper Grade One performers.

Golden Tempo's Kentucky Derby performance now stands at **Globeform 115p**, rather low for a winner of the first leg of of the Triple Crown. We need more evidence to set a rating in stone but subsequent events have dragged the form down, no doubt about that. Ocelli and Incredibolt (sixth, beaten 4 1/4 lengths) both went for the Preakness Stakes, where they filled fourth and fifth, beaten more than seven lengths behind Napoleon Solo. That was a race where the speed did not come back, so quite different to the Kentucky Derby, but it was still telling that they never threatened at Laurel. If this year's Derby was up to scratch, horses with such placings at Churchill would not have been humiliated like these were in the Preakness. Incredibolt didn't have any excuses; he won from just off the pace when taking the Virginia Derby, where Ocelli ran sixth. Ocelli came from the back when third in the Wood Memorial though, so what happened with the fractions at Churchill Downs clearly suited him. It worked against Danon Bourbon, as his rider Atsuya Nishimura put him in a pace pressing position. The colt did well to stick around for fifth - and we have since learned that he suffered a bone chip in the race. So here we have a horse that was not too cleverly ridden, *and* picked up an injury, beaten just over three lengths in a Kentucky Derby. It does little to promote the form.

Danon Bourbon's partner is a good jockey but he has little experience with US racing. People were queuing up to criticize Nishimura for his ride; though few - if any - mentioned the vastly experienced top jockey Mike Smith, who did exactly the same on the suspect stayer So Happy, who tired and checked in seventh.

Another piece in the Derby puzzle, and by no means the least important one, is Renegade. While the race panned out exactly as expected for the winner, it most certainly didn't for Renegade. He was crushed by horses coming in on him as the gates opened, and he looked very unlikely to hit the board as they passed the winning post for the first time. The Arkansas Derby winner was out of his comfort zone and he was much further back than he would have been with a clean break. Irad Ortiz let him find his feet and rode a patient race. Renegade gradually got into a good rhythm and he picked up to stay on gamely at the finish. The jury is still out on exactly how good he is, but horses with such bad trips aren't supposed to get within a neck of winning a Triple Crown race. Unless, of course, it is a sub-standard Triple Crown race. >>>

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Bred to improve with age

Still, we should not knock Golden Tempo too hard. Undoubtedly a colt getting good at the right time, and a runner with stamina, he has a good chance of following up in the Belmont. It's too soon to predict the pace scenario but he brings the best form into the race and the jump he took up from his previous form suggested that he can improve again. A son of the outstanding Curlin, he is out of the Bernardini mare Carrumba. Winner of the Top Flight Stakes over 9 furlongs at Aqueduct as a four-year-old, she comes from the family of champion filly Heavenly Prize; who captured eight Grade Ones from age two to four; and Metropolitan Mile winner Dancing Forever. What these relatives had in common was that they all improved with age. That is probably the most important pedigree factor to bear in mind when we try to assess Golden Tempo's future prospects.

Golden Tempo / Kentucky Derby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUPIScW1umY>

Most recent winners of the Belmont Stakes

2025	SOVEREIGNTY	GF 130	William Mott	Junior Alvarado
2024	DORNOCH	GF 121p	Danny Gargan	Luis Saez
2023	ARCANGELO	GF 114p	Jena Antonicci	Javier Castellano
2022	MO DONEGAL	GF 120	Todd Pletcher	Irad Ortiz Jr
2021	ESSENTIAL QUALITY	GF 120	Brad Cox	Luis Saez
2020	TIZ THE LAW	GF 120p	Barclay Tagg	Manuel Franco

Average winning Globeform: 120.8

Most recent winners of the Kentucky Derby

2026	GOLDEN TEMPO	GF 115p	Cherie DeVaux	Jose L Ortiz
2025	SOVEREIGNTY	GF 127p	William Mott	Junior Alvarado
2024	MYSTIK DAN	GF 117	Ken McPeck	Brian Hernandez Jr
2023	MAGE	GF 119p	Gustavo Delgado	Javier Castellano
2022	RICH STRIKE	GF 121	Eric Reed	Sonny Leon
2021	MANDALOUN *	GF 118	Brad Cox	Florent Geroux
2020	AUTHENTIC **	GF 125p	Bob Baffert	John Velazquez

* 2021: Medina Spirit (GF 119) first past the post, subsequently disqualified

** 2020: Kentucky Derby staged on September 5

Average winning Globeform: 120.3