

xb wager guide

TRAVERS STAKES

AUGUST 29, 2015 > SARATOGA



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Main Contenders

Last year, #6 UNTAPABLE capped a remarkable campaign, which included four Grade 1 victories, with a win in the Breeders' Cup Distaff. This year, she's just trying to get her groove back. A winner in just 1-of-4 starts, we haven't seen the 2014 version of UNTAPABLE yet, and the odds of us doing so are growing increasingly slim. On the other hand, #4 STOPCHARGINGMARIA is the 'now' horse. Or should we say, the 'Spa' horse. She's 4-for-5 in her career at Saratoga, and following her win in the Shuvee Handicap earlier this meet (over UNTAPABLE), trainer Todd Pletcher remarked, "You can see in STOPCHARGINGMARIA'S personality that she loves it here at Saratoga." We don't blame her.

Value Plays

With only six entered, the chances of getting a longshot home don't appear to be that good. However, #5 GOT LUCKY should offer significantly more value than the favorites, and was incredibly impressive in a pair of stakes races at Monmouth earlier this summer. We won't be surprised if she can translate her 'Jersey form to Saratoga, and a solid performance shouldn't come as a shock. Also, take note that #3 TIZ WINDY, who is completely forgotten here, was beaten just 3 1/2-lengths by STOPCHARGINGMARIA in the Shuvee, and she could hit the board and spice up the exotics as the longest shot on the board.

OUR PICKS

1. Stopchargingmaria
2. Untapable
3. Got Lucky
4. Tiz Windy

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$2 Trifecta Key:
STOPCHARGINGMARIA over TIZ WINDY,
GOT LUCKY and UNTAPABLE (\$12)
- > \$4 Exacta Box:
STOPCHARGINGMARIA and
UNTAPABLE (\$8)

Main Contenders

It's not a question of whether #2 LA VERDAD is one of the fastest females in racing – she is. It's just a question of whether she can beat a field this good while going this distance. She's 0-for-2 going seven-furlongs and was an uncharacteristic 5th in this race last year. That's a significant cause for concern. On the other hand, #6 DAME DOROTHY is a confirmed seven-furlong aficionado. She's a perfect 4-for-4 at the distance, which includes a victory in the Humana Distaff at Churchill Downs earlier this year. And while her wins are more gritty than breathtaking, she knows how to deliver. That's a great quality for a thoroughbred to possess, and it's one that makes her likely to visit the winner's circle Saturday.

Value Plays

Let's see – LA VERDAD has speed. #1 SARAH SIS may show speed. #3 MERRY MEADOW likes to race in the clear and DAME DOROTHY is never far out of things either. That could set this race up for a closer, and a great one to take a look at is #7 UNBRIDLED FOREVER. Trained by Dallas Stewart, she ran down a very talented filly, Stonetastic, in her first off a long layoff in an allowance race earlier in the meet, and she figures to be even sharper this time around. Both of the favorites are conceding 7lbs to her, so don't be surprised if she's flying at the finish.

OUR PICKS

1. Dame Dorothy
2. Unbridled Forever
3. Street Story
4. La Verdad

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$10 Exacta: DAME DOROTHY
over UNBRIDLED FOREVER (\$10)
- > \$5 Win: DAME DOROTHY and
UNBRIDLED FOREVER (\$10)

Main Contenders

Still relatively unknown, #7 HOLY BOSS has reeled off four straight victories for trainer Steve Asmussen, including Saratoga's Amsterdam Stakes last time out. His 'stalk and pounce' running style is incredibly effective, and he projects to get a nice trip in the toughest race of his life. There is an abundance of speed horses entered, which should benefit #10 MARCH. Prior to a no-show 6th in the Amsterdam, he'd reeled off two consecutive closing victories in New York sprint stakes races, and he should get a great setup this time around. #4 WATERSHED looked great breaking his maiden here earlier this month, but this is a huge step up in class for him and it'd be a surprise if he could pull this off.

Value Plays

#9 LOOSE ON THE TOWN is another that could take advantage of anticipated fast early fractions with his closing kick. He has faced older horses in both of his career starts, so today's race against three-year-olds shouldn't be a major hurdle for him. #2 GRAND BILL blazed to victory in last month's Carry Back Stakes at Gulfstream and retains the services of Javier Castellano, who knows his way to the Saratoga winner's circle. His inside draw may force Castellano's hand, but if he can shake clear early, he may hang around a bit longer than expected.

OUR PICKS

1. March
2. Holy Boss
3. Classy Class
4. Loose On the Town

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$20 Win: MARCH (\$20)

Main Contenders

There's no shortage of top contenders in the Forego, with #7 PRIVATE ZONE leading the charge. This speedy son of Macho Uno is as gritty and honest as they come, often setting extremely quick fractions and refusing to let his rivals run past him. He's the type of horse that you'd love to own, train, ride or bet, and his backers will make him one of the favorites here. #5 THE BIG BEAST loves Saratoga and was beaten a nose by Todd Pletcher's Rock Fall here on August 1. Some consider Rock Fall to be the best sprinter in the nation, so that's a huge vote of confidence for THE BIG BEAST. #6 TAMARKUZ makes his second start in the US for Kieran McLaughlin, and the Shadwell-owned son of Speightstown won the Godolphin Mile earlier this year in Dubai, and was a solid 4th in the Met Mile after stalking the early pace.

Value Plays

Just about anyone else would be a great value play. #3 BOURBON COURAGE makes his second start for Graham Motion after chasing Fast Anna at Delaware Park last out, and while he has consistently underachieved in his career, this could be a great time to get a big price on a horse that has flashed signs of talent throughout his career. After all, he closed from last to finish fourth, beaten just 2-lengths, in last year's Xpressbet Breeders' Cup Sprint at odds of 21/1.

OUR PICKS

1. The Big Beast
2. Tamarkuz
3. Bourbon Courage
4. Private Zone

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$5 Exacta: THE BIG BEAST over BOURBON COURAGE, TAMARKUZ, PRIVATE ZONE (\$15)
- > \$5 Show: BOURBON COURAGE (\$5)

Main Contenders

Andre Fabre is one of the world's most accomplished trainers, having won France's premier race, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, a record seven times. Plus, he's won top-level races in Ireland, Dubai, Hong Kong, Canada, Great Britain and the United States. Simply put, when Andre Fabre enters a horse, you need to take notice. He sends out #2 FLINTSHIRE in this year's Sword Dancer, a horse that is both well-traveled, and well-known for finishing second. A quick glance at his record – 16-4-8-1 – indicates his propensity for coming up just short, but in fairness to him, those races came against the best horses in the world, including Treve, Main Sequence and Cirrus Des Aigles. Graham Motion's #6 MESSI is seeking his third straight win since coming to the States. He has yet to face a field nearly this good, and he may be overbet based on those performances against overmatched fields.

Value Plays

#5 TWILIGHT ECLIPSE is as honest as they come, having finished first, second or third in 17-of-26 lifetime races. He has earned more than \$1.6 million on the track, and should be a fair price on the heels of two straight losses. He's not the easiest horse to get to the wire first, but Joel Rosario is as good as it gets on the lawn and should be a good fit with 'ECLIPSE. Also, don't sleep on Todd Pletcher's #4 RED RIFLE, who has won two straight in very impressive fashion.

OUR PICKS

1. Twilight Eclipse
2. Flintshire (GB)
3. Messi (GER)
4. Red Rifle

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$0.50 Trifecta Box: FLINTSHIRE, RED RIFLE, TWILIGHT ECLIPSE and MESSI (\$12)
- > \$4 Exacta: TWILIGHT ECLIPSE and MESSI over FLINTSHIRE (\$8)

Main Contenders

It's not so much that there are 'main contenders' in this year's Travers, so much as there is a 'main contender,' #2 AMERICAN PHAROAH. The Triple Crown hero has won his last eight starts, seemingly with increasing ease, and a defeat this Saturday would be nothing short of shocking. He's already defeated most of today's rivals in past races and he's the only horse in the field with a ton of early speed, putting him at a huge tactical advantage. If nobody runs with him early, and on paper, none of them can, it's tough to imagine they'll run past him late.

Value Plays

Let's face it – there's value on every other horse in this race if you aren't betting AMERICAN PHAROAH. The 8/1 morning line on #4 TEXAS RED is a huge price for a horse that won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile last fall, and he's back in top form after ailments knocked him off the Triple Crown Trail. He won the Jim Dandy here last month and his connections have had this race on their radar for months. You can expect a big performance from him Saturday. #1 UPSTART is also a big price (15/1) and should run much better than he did when he was third in the Haskell. That was his first race off the layoff and he'll take a step forward now that they've knocked the rust off.

OUR PICKS

1. American Pharoah
2. Texas Red
3. Frosted
4. Upstart

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

- > \$20 Exacta: AMERICAN PHAROAH over TEXAS RED (\$20)

Main Contenders

#1 TEPIN was a generous 9/1 when she won the Churchill Downs Distaff Turf Mile earlier this year. Unfortunately for her backers, you may never see that price on her again. She reeled off three powerful victories to start the year and was beaten just a nose in the Diana Stakes earlier in the meet, a race that was run in track-record time. Any performance close to that would make her incredibly dangerous today. Leading Saratoga trainer, Chad Brown, sends out three in here - #2 DANZA CAVALLO, #4 DACITA and #7 KITTEN'S QUEEN. None would be a surprise, and note that DANZA CAVALLO finds herself with a much better post than she had last out in the Waya Stakes.

Value Plays

This may be the right time to bet #8 COFFEE CLIQUE, who finally notched her first victory of the year last out in a Grade 3 race at Parx. This is a step back up in class for her, but we know she has talent and perhaps a confidence boost was all she needed. TEPIN beat her twice earlier this year, but don't be shocked if she's able to turn the tables on her this time around. #9 NEW PROVIDENCE has been racing exclusively in sprint races in England, but she adds Lasix here and European imports often outrun their odds in the first US start.

OUR PICKS

1. Coffee Clique
2. Tepin
3. Danza Cavallo (FR)
4. My Miss Sophia

\$20 WAGERING STRATEGY

> \$10 Exacta Box: TEPIN and COFFEE CLIQUE (\$20)



RECOMMENDED \$1 MILLION GUARANTEED PICK 4 TICKET

Race 8	Race 9	Race 10	Race 11
King's Bishop Stakes	Forego Stakes	Sword Dancer Stakes	Travers Stakes
#7 Holy Boss #8 Classy Class #9 Loose On the Town #10 March	#1 Race Day #3 Bourbon Courage #5 The Big Beast #6 Tamarkuz #7 Private Zone	#2 Flintshire (GB) #4 Red Rifle #5 Twilight Eclipse #6 Messi (GER)	#2 American Pharoah #4 Texas Red

Total Ticket Cost: \$80

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