

OAKLAWN  
ANYWHERE

# OAKLAWN RACE MEET BETTING GUIDE

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- Kentucky Derby Prep Races at Oaklawn



# OAKLAWN RACE MEET BETTING GUIDE

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*Content and production by TwinSpires*

# HOW TO READ BRISNET PAST PERFORMANCES

## OAKLAWN ANYWHERE CUSTOMERS GET FREE BRISNET PPs FOR TRACKS THEY WAGER ON

The Brisnet.com Ultimate PPs are the most detailed past performance product on the market and include speed ratings, pace figures, exclusive Prime Power and Class ratings, detailed jockey and trainer statistics, and pedigree information. Start using Ultimate PPs and discover why Brisnet.com is the handicapper's edge.

**12** **Cathryn Sophia (E/P 5)**  
**9/2** Own: Cash Is King Lic  
 Green, Multi-colored Crown, Green Shamrocks On White  
 CASTELLANO JAVIER (0 0-0-0 0%)

2016 494 22% 54% -0.54  
 +JKYw/EP types 591 26% 57% -0.15  
 +JKYw/Trn L60 2 50% 100% +10.60  
 +JKYw/ Routes 107 22% 54% -0.28

B. f. 3 FTMSEP 2014 \$30k  
 Sire: Street Boss (Street Cry (IRE)) \$12,500  
 Dam: Sheave (Mineshaft)  
 Brdr: Robert T Manusso (MD)  
 Trnr: Servis John C (0 0-0-0 0%)

2016 69 33% 57% +0.92  
 Graded Stakes 28 7% 36% -1.84  
 +Btn favorite 74 30% 54% +0.13  
 +Routes 482 18% 43% -0.05

Prime Power: 147.1 (1st)  
 Life: 5 4- 0- 1 \$385,520 102 Fst (109) 5 4- 0- 1 \$385,520 102  
 2016 3 2- 0- 1 \$295,520 99 Off (109) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0  
 2015 2 2- 0- 0 \$90,000 102 Dis (108) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0  
 CD 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 0 Trf (110) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0  
 AW 0 0- 0- 0 \$0

Sire Stats: AWD 6.7 15%Mud 241MudSts 1.57spi  
 Dam's Sire: AWD 7.3 15%Mud 820MudSts 2.23spi  
 Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi  
 SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000

★ Finished 3rd in last race ★ Best Dirt Speed is fastest among today's starters  
 ★ Hot Jockey in last 7 days (13 4-5-1) ● Failed as favorite in last race ● Poor 'Graded Stakes' trainer record: 7% wins 28 sts

DATE TRK	DIST	RR	RACETYPE	CR	E1	E2	LP	1c	2c	SPD	PP	ST	1C	2C	STR	FIN	JOCKEY	ODDS	Top Finishers	Comment			
09Apr16Kee6	1 <sup>1/16</sup> ft	:24	:47	1:11	1:43 <sup>2</sup>	117	@Ashland-G1	118	92	106/	80	+7	+13	94	3	3 <sup>1/2</sup>	3 <sup>1/2</sup>	3 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>hd</sup>	3 <sup>1/2</sup>	CastellanoJJ <sup>121</sup>	L *0.50 WpNMrr <sup>k</sup> RclsVlntn <sup>rk</sup> CtrnSp <sup>2</sup>	Bold bid 4w; hung 5
27Feb16GP5	1m ft	:24	:47	1:11	1:36 <sup>3</sup>	117	@DvonaDal-G2 <sup>122</sup>	83	88/	103	-4	-7	96	4	3 <sup>1/2</sup>	4 <sup>1</sup>	3 <sup>1/2</sup>	1 <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>7</sup>	1 <sup>7</sup>	CastellanoJJ <sup>122</sup>	Lf *0.20 ChryrnSph <sup>7</sup> LwsBy <sup>3</sup> Drst <sup>13</sup>	Pressed3w;bid1/4;handy 6
30Jan16GP3	7f ft	:22 <sup>3</sup>	:45	1:09 <sup>4</sup>	1:22	116	@FrwrGal-G2 <sup>121</sup>	84	91/	104	-5	-11	99	1	6	4 <sup>4</sup>	3 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>1/2</sup>	1 <sup>5</sup>	1 <sup>5</sup>	RosarioRJ <sup>120</sup>	Lf *0.10 ChryrnSph <sup>5</sup> IsindSnt <sup>4</sup> BaltDiv <sup>3</sup>	Off step slowjn hand 6
05Dec15Lrl <sup>5</sup>	7f ft	:23	:46	1:11	1:23	114	@GinTalkingB	100k <sup>121</sup>	97	101/	98	-1	-6	102	5	1	1 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>8</sup>	1 <sup>16</sup>	RosadoRJ <sup>119</sup>	Lf *0.10 ChryrnSph <sup>16</sup> Prgnss <sup>5</sup> ThndrngSk <sup>1</sup>	On left lead; handily 6
30Oct15Prx <sup>5</sup>	6f ft	:22 <sup>2</sup>	:46	:58 <sup>3</sup>	1:11 <sup>1</sup>	112	@Mdn 50k	119	94	94/	102	-3	-11	99	2	3	1 <sup>1</sup>	1 <sup>2</sup>	1 <sup>5</sup>	1 <sup>12</sup>	RosadoRJ <sup>122</sup>	L *2.40 CtrnSp <sup>12</sup> AWnndSn <sup>5</sup> Wrlbrsfl <sup>2</sup>	Sharp; handy fashion 9

23Apr Kee 5f ft :59<sup>3</sup> B 1/36 03Apr Kee 4f ft :48<sup>1</sup> B 5/37 26Mar Pmm 6f ft 1:13 B 1/1 13Mar Pmm 4f ft :48<sup>2</sup> B 2/42 ●20Feb Pmm 4f ft :48 B 1/66 24Jan Pmm 4f ft :50<sup>2</sup> B 89/103  
 16Jan Pmm 5f ft :59<sup>3</sup> B 1/13 08Jan Pmm 5f ft 1:00<sup>3</sup> B 2/23 ●31Dec15 Pmm 4f ft :48 B 1/76 ●20Dec15 Pmm 4f ft :48<sup>1</sup> B 1/37 ●25Nov15 Prx 5f ft 1:00<sup>3</sup> B 1/14 ●16Nov15 Prx 5f ft :59<sup>3</sup> B 1/13

**13** **Land Over Sea (S 1)**  
**5/1** Own: Reddam Racing Lic  
 White, Purple Belt, White Band On Purple Sleeves, Purple  
 GUTIERREZ MARIO (0 0-0-0 0%)

Ch. f. 3 OBSAPR 2015 \$130k  
 Sire: Bellamy Road (Concerto) \$7,500  
 Dam: Belle Watling (Pulpit)  
 Brdr: Jack Swain III (KY)  
 Trnr: O'Neill Doug F (0 0-0-0 0%)

2016 214 14% 45% -0.40  
 +Shipper 114 11% 44% -0.20  
 +Shipper 114 11% 44% -0.20

2016 228 19% 45% -0.13  
 +Shipper 135 20% 38% 0.25  
 +Shipper 135 20% 38% 0.25

Prime Power: 139.7 (4th)  
 Life: 8 2- 4- 1 \$472,000 97 Fst (107) 7 1- 4- 1 \$430,000 97  
 2016 3 1- 2- 0 \$324,000 93 Off (106) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0  
 2015 5 1- 2- 1 \$148,000 97 Dis (107) 0 0- 0- 0 \$0  
 CD 0 0- 0- 0 \$0 0 Trf (108) 1 1- 0- 0 \$42,000 82  
 AW 0 0- 0- 0 \$0

Sire Stats: AWD 7.2 20%Mud 492MudSts 1.22spi  
 Dam's Sire: AWD 7.6 17%Mud 142MudSts 2.26spi  
 Dam's Stats: Unraced 100%2yo 1str 1w 1sw 18.02dpi  
 SoldAt: FTMSEP 2014 \$30.0k (27/47) SireAvg: \$53.3k StudFee: \$15,000

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# AT A GLANCE

A look at the previous full Oaklawn meet: January 13, 2017 through April 15, 2017

**AVG. WINNING ODDS:** 6.11 - 1

**FAVORITE WIN%:** 34% **FAVORITE ITM%:** 64%

## TRACK BIAS MEET (01/13 - 04/15)

EXOTICS	AVG \$2 PAYOFF
Exacta	110.82
Daily Double	106.68
Trifecta	834.01
Pick 3	801.96
Superfecta	6,443.54
Pick 4	8,392.28
Pick 5	26,627.22

Distance	# Race	% Wire	Best Style	Best Posts
6.0fDirt	303	24%	E/P	Rail
1 MileDirt	63	24%	E/P	Middle
1 1/16mDirt	132	17%	E/P	Inside



# OAKLAWN STAKES SCHEDULE

Date	Race	Grade	Purse	Restrictions	Surface	Distance
Friday, Jan 12	Fifth Season		\$125,000	4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Jan 13	Pippin		\$125,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Monday, Jan 15	Smarty Jones		\$150,000	3YO	Dirt	1 Mile
Saturday, Jan 20	Dixie Belle		\$125,000	F 3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Jan 27	American Beauty		\$125,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Feb 03	King Cotton		\$125,000	4&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Feb 10	Martha Washington		\$125,000	F 3YO	Dirt	1 Mile
Saturday, Feb 17	Bayakoa	III	\$150,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Monday, Feb 19	Razorback Handicap	III	\$500,000	4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Monday, Feb 19	Southwest	III	\$500,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Feb 24	DowndustyrOAD Breeders'		\$100,000	F&M 3&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Feb 24	Gazebo		\$125,000	3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Mar 3	Nodouble Breeders'		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Mar 3	Spring Fever		\$125,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	5 1/2 Furlongs
Saturday, Mar 10	Hot Springs		\$125,000	4&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Mar 10	Honeybee	III	\$200,000	F 3&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Mar 17	Essex Handicap		\$300,000	4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Mar 17	Azeri	II	\$350,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Mar 17	Rebel	II	\$900,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, Mar 24	Purple Martin		\$150,000	F 3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Friday, Mar 30	Rainbow		\$100,000	3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, Mar 31	Rainbow Miss		\$100,000	F 3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, April 07	Arkansas Breeders'-Open		\$100,000	3&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, April 07	Carousel		\$150,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Thursday, April 12	Bachelor		\$150,000	3YO	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Friday, April 13	Fantasy	III	\$400,000	F 3YO	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Friday, April 13	Apple Blossom Handicap	I	\$700,000	F&M 4&UP	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, April 14	Northern Spur		\$150,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/16 Miles
Saturday, April 14	Count Fleet Sprint Handicap	III	\$400,000	4&UP	Dirt	6 Furlongs
Saturday, April 14	Oaklawn Handicap	II	\$750,000	4&UP	Dirt	1 1/8 Miles
Saturday, April 14	Arkansas Derby	I	\$1,000,000	3YO	Dirt	1 1/8 Miles



# GUIDE TO THE GRADED STAKES SCHEDULE

by Alastair Bull

Top-class older horses, along with numerous Kentucky Derby and Oaks hopefuls, will produce plenty of high-quality racing and betting opportunities this year at Oaklawn Park.

Thirty-one races, eleven of them graded, with total value of \$8.525-million make up the stakes schedule at the Hot Springs, Arkansas, track.

The Oaklawn Park meeting Jan. 12-April 14 is best-known as an important step on the Road to the Kentucky Derby, with four races carrying qualifying points. They begin with the \$150,000 Smarty Jones Stakes Jan. 15, and then move to the \$500,000 Southwest Stakes (G3) on Presidents Day, Feb. 19.

The 3-year-olds then move on to the \$900,000 Rebel Stakes (G2), run over 1 1/16 miles March 17, and the series climaxes with the \$1-million Arkansas Derby (G1) April 14.

All races, especially the Rebel and the Arkansas Derby, have been important stepping stones onto the Classics. American Pharoah won both on his way to the Triple Crown, while other Classic winners who were victorious in one of these races include Sunny's Halo, Pine Bluff, Smarty Jones, Afleet Alex, Curlin, Lookin At Lucky, and Creator.

Not to be overlooked are the trio of Oaklawn Park races that make up part of the Road to the Kentucky Oaks: the \$125,000 Martha Washington Stakes Feb. 10, the \$200,000 Honeybee Stakes (G3) March 10, and the \$400,000 Fantasy Stakes (G3) April 13. Winners of these races that later won the Kentucky Oaks include Davona Dale, Bold 'n Determined, and Rachel Alexandra.

With all the focus on the 3-year-old races it's easy to forget the contests for older horses, but they are always high-quality affairs.

The most notable is the Apple Blossom Handicap (G1) for fillies and mares April 13. The winner's list is like a who's who of great American mares, including Havre de Grace, Zenyatta (twice), Azeri (three times), Escena, Paseana, and Bayakoa.

Two of those Apple Blossom winners have graded distaff races at Oaklawn Park named after them: the \$150,000 Bayakoa Stakes (G3) Feb, 17, and the \$350,000 Azeri Stakes (G2) March 17.

In a notable change, the \$500,000 Razorback Handicap (G3) for older horses was moved last year from March to February to help attract horses on their way to the Dubai World Cup, and it duly attracted Gun Runner, who won easily ahead. It remains in its February slot this year.

Arkansas Derby day, April 14, also features two graded races for older horses: the \$750,000 Oaklawn Handicap (G2), which has been won by outstanding horses such as Cigar, Turkoman, and Will Take Charge, and the \$400,000 Count Fleet Handicap (G3) for six-furlong sprinters.

With the large prizemoney, the Oaklawn Stakes usually attracts big fields, making the excitement – and the betting odds – that much more appealing.



# LOOK FOR KENTUCKY DERBY CONTENDERS AT OAKLAWN PARK

by James Scully

American Pharoah used a pair of Oaklawn Park preps to set up his 2015 Triple Crown run, and a top trainers including Bob Baffert, Todd Pletcher and Steve Asmussen, will prepare their Kentucky Derby contenders over the Hot Springs, Arkansas, oval.

Oaklawn features a quartet of qualifiers in the 2018 Road to the Kentucky Derby series. The first two, the January 15 Smarty Jones and February 19 Southwest (G3), are each worth 17 points (10-4-2-1). In the March 17 Rebel (G2), the point total increases to 85 (50-20-10-5). The track's signature event, the \$1 million Arkansas Derby (G1) on April 14, awards 170 points (100-40-20-10).

The \$150,000 Smarty Jones is named for the 2004 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner who was based at Oaklawn and takes place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The one-mile event has not featured a Triple Crown race winner, but Will Take Charge was eventually named champion 3-year-old males after capturing the 2013 editions of the Smarty Jones and Rebel for Hall of Famer D. Wayne Lukas, who holds the record with 14 Triple Crown race wins and is stabled at Oaklawn.

Next comes the \$500,000 Southwest, which is carded at 1 1/16 miles on President's Day, and Baffert has posted four wins since 2010. Smarty Jones is the only Southwest runner to win a Triple Crown race this century.

The \$900,000 Rebel at 1 1/16 miles has served an important stepping stone and topping the honor roll of past winners is American Pharoah, who rolled to a 6 1/4-length decision over a sloppy track in his first start back at age 3. He was trained by Hall of Famer Baffert, who holds the record with six Rebel victories and is tied for second all-time with four Kentucky Derby triumphs.

Other distinguished Rebel alumni of the last 20 years include two-time Horse of the Year and Preakness winner Curlin; Smarty Jones; Preakness and Belmont winner Afleet Alex; Preakness victors Lookin at Lucky and Oxbow; and Belmont Stakes winners Creator and Victory Gallop.

One of the final major prep races, the 1 1/8-mile Arkansas Derby has produced six Kentucky Derby heroes (American Pharoah, Super Saver, Smarty Jones, Grindstone, Lil E. Tee and Sunny's Halo) and numerous winners of the Preakness and Belmont Stakes. In 2014, Bayern finished third in the Arkansas Derby before winning the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) that fall.

Pletcher leads all trainers with four wins and his first Kentucky Derby scorer, Super Saver, finished second in the 2010 edition. Asmussen has sent out a trio of Arkansas Derby winners.

So who could be pointing toward the 2018 Oaklawn preps?

Baffert enters the year with a pair of well-respected contenders in Los Alamitos Futurity (G1) winner McKinzie and Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1) runner-up Solomini, and they likely won't run against each other in preps. Expect to see one of them to head to Oaklawn and Baffert has several other well-respected maiden winners in his arsenal.

In 2017, Pletcher shipped in One Liner to win the Southwest and Malagacy to take Rebel. The leading conditioner often has an embarrassment of riches in South Florida and he'll probably employ the Arkansas route with multiple runners.

Asmussen has won the Preakness and Belmont Stakes but is still seeking an elusive Kentucky Derby victory. After being inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2016 and orchestrating Gun Runner's Horse of the Year season in 2017, Asmussen is focused upon the first Saturday in May and will likely have multiple horses for the Oaklawn preps. Copper Bullet, New York Central and Principe Guilherme are among his top prospects currently. Oaklawn Park's four-race series for sophomore fillies is a gold mine in regards to the Kentucky Oaks (G1).



# KENTUCKY OAKS GOLD CAN BE FOUND AT OAKLAWN PARK

by Jennifer Caldwell

Oaklawn Park's four-race series for sophomore fillies is a gold mine in regards to the Kentucky Oaks (G1).

Comprised of the Dixie Belle, Martha Washington, Honeybee (G3) and Fantasy (G3) stakes, the series has produced multiple winners of the "Run for the Lilies," several top three finishers and numerous starters.

The Dixie Belle and Martha Washington both kicked off in 1979, with the former run at 5 1/2 furlongs until 1999 and the latter taking place at six furlongs from the inaugural edition through 2003. Now scheduled for three-quarters of a mile and eight furlongs, respectively, the pair are not as vital to the Kentucky Oaks as they are for the last two races of the series.

They have had some bearing on the Churchill Downs affair, though, most notably in 2009.

That year a highly regarded filly named Rachel Alexandra kicked off her sophomore campaign with a romping win in the Martha Washington in stakes-record time. She followed up with a dominating score in the Fantasy and would go on to establish a record-setting 20 1/4-length victory in the Kentucky Oaks. Transferred to perennial Oaklawn leading trainer Steve Asmussen, a win over Kentucky Derby (G1) victor Mine That Bird in the Preakness Stakes (G1) and Horse of the Year honors awaited the talented lass by year's end.

The Honeybee, run at 1 1/16 miles, immediately provided a Kentucky Oaks competitor when Lost Kitty captured the first

edition in 1988 and went on to finish fifth in the filly classic. One year later, Imaginary Lady produced a runner-up effort in the 1989 Kentucky Oaks two races after taking the Honeybee.

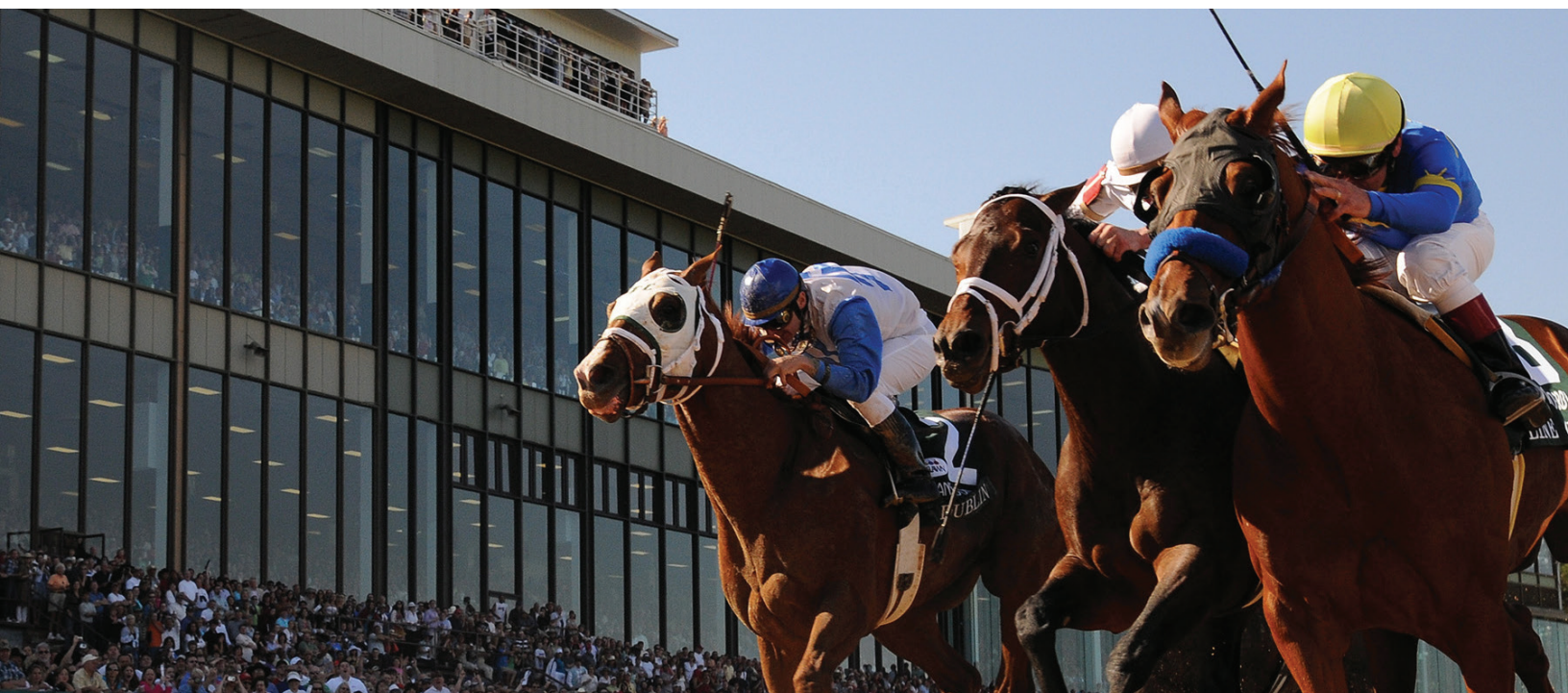
The Fantasy is the jewel in Oaklawn's three-year-old filly crown. The 8 1/2-furlong race reads like a who's who list of champion fillies and boasts nine winners of the Kentucky Oaks.

The Fantasy first took place in 1973, but those first four runnings didn't see any of the top three finishers show up under the Twin Spires for the Oaks. However, in 1977 Sweet Alliance just missed by a neck to eventual champion three-year-old filly Our Mims in the Fantasy before going on to defeat that rival by 2 1/2 lengths on the first Friday in May.

Among its roster of scorers are Davona Dale, Bold 'n Determined and Heavenly Cause, who delivered a hat trick of carrying Fantasy triumphs into the Kentucky Oaks winner's circle from 1979-81. Other notable scorers of both contests include champions Tiffany Lass and Blind Luck as well as aforementioned Hall of Famer Rachel Alexandra.

Since its inaugural edition, the Fantasy's top three has produced 28 top three finishers of the Kentucky Oaks. In addition, 70 of the top three runners in the Fantasy have gone on to compete in the Kentucky Oaks.

This all adds up to Oaklawn Park's three-year-old filly series leaving its mark on the "Run for the Lilies."





# HOW TO BET OAKLAWN PARK USING BRISNET.COM PAST PERFORMANCES

by Ed DeRosa

Oaklawn Park is one of the few tracks whose average exacta and trifecta payouts are higher than the corresponding two- and three-horse multi-race wagers (i.e. doubles and Pick 3s), which in turn makes it one of the few tracks I'll actively look to get involved in the vertical wagers.

The \$2 Pick 4 (\$0.50 minimum) does pay more than the average \$2 superfecta (\$0.10) probably because of those said minimums, and it (the Pick 4) is one of the best bets at the track considering the Pick 3 pays an average of \$801.96, which is an 11.5% overlay versus the average win parlay (based on \$14.22 average win price) but the Pick 4 pays \$8,392.28, a 64% premium!

Connecting the dots on those double-digit field sizes can be tough, but there are some clues in the Brisnet.com Past Performances that can give bettors confidence in either A) finding a valuable single, or B) adding horses at big prices that lead to these inflated payouts.

Using my ALWAYS database that includes entries and results at Oaklawn since January 13, 2012 (i.e. the past six seasons), I have identified data points in the past performances that are helpful identifying winners.

Not surprisingly, Brisnet Prime Power does well. From 2,652 races, the impact value of the top-ranked horses by Prime Power is 2.47, which means they win a greater percentage of the time than field size would indicate, BUT the ROI on said horses is a putrid -19.5%, which is worse than the win takeout.

I.e., Prime Power gets overbet.

However, there is hope. While the impact value for the second- and third-ranked Prime Power horses goes down, the ROI actually goes up to -11.5% for the second rank and -7% (beating takeout) for the third rank. It then tanks for the fourth-ranked horse to -22.5%.

The takeaway, then, is that being ranked on top isn't what's necessarily important but being within a point or two of the top-ranked horse can be the better bet—especially at higher odds.

So the stats support using Prime Power to identify logical contenders, but what about bigger prices? Since 2012, only 20% of all winners paid at least \$18 (8-to-1), and the best handicapping approach to finding those winners was to look for high-priced speed sprinting.

Some clues in the PPs to find a horse who might be a threat on the front-end are:

## Quirin Speed Points

- An 8 at a big price would be a must use
- Sometimes it's not about the raw number but the relationship to the competition. I.e. a bunch of E8s is not as intriguing as a E/P 6 when no one else is an "E" or "E/P" and/or has no more than 3 Quirin Speed Points

## E1 and E2 pace ratings

- Again, this is very price dependent, but consistently having the fastest E1 pace ratings and being a big price is a must use.
- Same goes for E2—especially if those numbers are higher than E1. I'm willing to ignore poor LP and final Speed Ratings if a horse can show an ability to quicken in the 2nd call when alone on the lead

So to summarize, Prime Power is my go-to when it comes to identifying base contenders, but early speed is more likely to lead me to a price.



# THE INFLUENCE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TRAINERS AND JOCKEYS

by Scott Shapiro

Those who have started playing Oaklawn this meeting might have noticed a California vibe to a few of the newer names in the trainer and jockey colonies.

Trainer Peter Miller won two Breeders' Cup races at Del Mar in 2017 and has been a dominant force at both Santa Anita and Del Mar over the past few years. I expect him to be highly successful in Arkansas as well.

The fifty-one year old conditioner is capable of winning races over all surfaces and distances, but most of his best work has come around one turn evidenced by his 1-2 effort in last year's Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint, as well as Roy H's one length victory in the Breeders' Cup Twin Spires Sprint.

When Miller's horses are live they tend to take meaningful action on the tote board, especially from his leading ownership group Rockingham Ranch. Horseplayers can often determine whether a horse off a lengthy layoff or a first-time starter is in with a significant chance based on how they are bet in the horizontal pools, as well as whether they open up above or below their morning line price.

Miller is quite capable of winning first time and second time out and spots his runners to win, so class droppers must be taken seriously.

He is not one to use just one or two jockeys. Instead, he rewards riders that work hard for him in the morning with mounts in the afternoon, so do not make any assumptions about a horse's chances based on the rider he is using.

Trainer Doug O'Neill will also have a string at Oaklawn Park in 2018. O'Neill is best known for winning the Kentucky Derby with I'll Have Another in 2012 and with two-year-old champion Nyquist in 2016, but like Miller he must be respected with horses entered at all class levels.

The Michigan native generally connects with 12 to 18% winners, but runs very hot and cold. I was present when he won five races at Del Mar on July 30th of 2015 and I have also witnessed several extended slumps from the O'Neill barn. I advise tracking his success and riding him when he is hot, but excluding his runners when things are not going his way.

Over the last five years in races run over conventional dirt, O'Neill has been more successful with first-time starters than with maidens making their second lifetime try, so unlike most conditioners it is not fair to assume his horses will move forward after getting a race under their belt.

In Southern California, O'Neill and his leading owner J.Paul Reddam have turned to Mario Gutierrez as their first call rider, but like Miller he is willing to use a number of riders with live horses.

Hall of Famer Gary Stevens will also be giving it a go in Hot Springs in 2018. The three-time Kentucky Derby winning jockey and 1997 Eclipse Award winner is a shadow of his old self, but in California still finds himself on a number of live mounts each week, so he still wins his share of races.

While his physical skills have diminished over the years, Stevens still has the mental part of the game down. Some of his best rides in recent memory have come due to the clock in his head that has allowed him to relax a horse in the back of the pack and execute a well timed late run into a hot early pace.

Stevens is still capable of winning races, but he often gets pulled around the racetrack by horses that he struggles to control. I would take a wait and see approach with Gary at Oaklawn.

Jockey Edwin Maldonado is also expected to ride in Arkansas over the coming months. The 35-year-old rider was once a rising star in the Southern California colony, but his career has been marked by inconsistency.

Maldonado struggles with horses that come from off the pace, but has always been a strong front-end rider. Therefore, I would advise including him on your tickets if he is on a horse that is likely to be prominently placed, but if his mount lacks early zip he is likely to struggle to navigate an ideal voyage from well out of it.

Santa Anita will miss out on the horses and riders at Oaklawn Park this winter, but I look forward to following their success on a new circuit.



# SIRES TO WATCH AT OAKLAWN PARK

by Ed DeRosa

One of the fun things about gambling on Oaklawn Park is the chance to dive into some pedigrees that you rarely see elsewhere, and more importantly—make some money off of them.

Of course, Oaklawn is the only track to offer races for Arkansas-bred horses, and those races are replete with Arkansas-based stallions. Some names are more recognizable than others, and recognition can lead to underlays (and lack thereof to overlays).

The best examples of this are Primary Suspect, who in 2017 led all Arkansas-based stallions by runners, wins, repeat winners, and earnings, and Storm and a Half, who was sixth in runners, third in winners, third in repeat winners, and sixth in earnings.

Based on those rankings, you might assume Primary Suspect is a slightly better stallion than Storm and a Half (and maybe even on par considering Primary Suspect had more runners). From a wagering, standpoint, however, Primary Suspect has proven to be a much better bet the past five seasons with a -0.1% ROI (practically break even) from 395 starts and 44 wins (11.1%) paying an average of \$17.94.

Storm and a Half, however, is 31/438 (7.1%) with a -58.2% on a \$11.82 average win price. He has more horses but fewer winners who pay less when they do win. That's not good.

Other Arkansas sires to watch (with at least 50 starts past five seasons) are Explosive Truth (9/60, +53%) and Cinnamon Creek (15/88, +18.2%).

On the negative side, some known commodities are clearly overbet: Brahms—second on the Arkansas sire list by earnings for 2017—is just 3/53 with his Oaklawn progeny and an ROI of -70.8%. Jonesboro—third on the aforementioned list—has gone 18/183 with a -59.8% ROI.

Some sires have not had a winner in the past five seasons with Pollard's Vision leading the charge on a 0/55 skid. Others not doing well include Dove Hunt (38), Wilburn (37), Mi Cielo (35), and Spotsgone (34).

Of the known names, Tapit has thrown plenty of winners at Oaklawn—leading in both that category and earnings the past 5 years—but he's no secret given his -24.7% ROI.

Of the big-name stallions, Malibu Moon's progeny seems to enjoy Hot Springs most, as they are 29/203 (14.3%) but sport

a +14.9% ROI. Of the 32 stallions with at least 130 starts, he's the only one with a positive ROI (though Primary Suspect is very close).

Other positive ROI stallions with at least 100 starts are Scat Daddy (+0.5%), Officer (+3.9%), Indian Charlie (+3.4%), Unbridled's Song (+4.1%), Zensational (+8.5%), Elusive Quality (+3.7%), and Langfuhr (+10.5%) with an honorable mention to Summer Bird, who is break even.



# APPLE BLOSSOM TRENDS AT OAKLAWN PARK

by Kellie Reilley

Oaklawn Park's signature race for older fillies and mares, the Apple Blossom, has held Grade 1 status for all but two years (1990-91) since it was first elevated to the top level in 1982. The trends over the past two decades reflect that status, for Apple Blossom winners have tended to be already proven Grade 1 competitors.

Indeed, 18 of the last 20 winners had at least participated in a Grade 1 contest prior to the Apple Blossom. The two exceptions are Zenyatta, whose first Apple Blossom came in her Grade 1 debut in 2008, and Seventh Street (2009), exiting a second in the Barbara Fritchie (G2) in her stakes premiere. Seventh Street is the biggest outlier of all, since she's the only Apple Blossom winner of the past 20 years who hadn't already scored a graded victory.

Of the 18 with Grade 1 experience, 11 were Grade 1 winners going in and five were Grade 1-placed. The two who'd been unplaced in previous Grade 1s, On Fire Baby (2013) and Forever Unbridled (2016), had both competed in the Kentucky Oaks (G1).

As that stat implies, Kentucky Oaks alumnae are well represented on the Apple Blossom honor roll, with no fewer than nine winners in the last 20 years, including the past six in a row. While Plum Pretty (2012) and Untapable (2015) turned the Oaks/Apple Blossom double, Escena (1998), Banshee Breeze (1999), and Ermine (2007) had placed second in the Oaks, Stellar Wind (2017) had been fourth, and Close Hatches (2014) was an Oaks also-ran along with On Fire Baby and Forever Unbridled.

Another strong indicator is participation in the preceding fall's Breeders' Cup, a profile fitting 10 of the last 20 Apple Blossom winners. Zenyatta stands alone on this list by landing the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) on the way to her second Apple Blossom in 2010. The other nine are logically associated with the Breeders' Cup Distaff (G1).

Azeri followed this pattern once in her Apple Blossom threepeat (2002-04), taking the 2003 edition in her first start since

conquering the 2002 Distaff. Untapable also won both races, while Escena, Banshee Breeze, Heritage of Gold (2000), Havre de Grace (2011), and Close Hatches previously placed in the Distaff. Stellar Wind, a troubled second in the 2015 Distaff, was fourth in the renewal at Santa Anita in her last start prior to the Apple Blossom. Plum Pretty was likewise off the board in 2011 before her Apple Blossom comeback.

Given its correlation with the Breeders' Cup, the Apple Blossom has a relationship to the Eclipse Awards as well. Twelve of the last 20 winners either had been voted champions already or went on to year-end honors following their Apple Blossom heroics. (Azeri and Zenyatta boost the number as multiple winners.) That total rises to 13 if you include presumptive 2017 champion older female Forever Unbridled. And three became Horses of the Year – Azeri, Zenyatta, and Havre de Grace.

Azeri was already a Grade 1 heroine going into her first Apple Blossom as the Santa Margarita (G1) winner. The remaining three Apple Blossom winners without a Breeders' Cup or Kentucky Oaks angle, but with Grade 1 credits, are Gourmet Girl (2001), the 1999 Milady (G1) heroine; Dream of Summer (2005), a Grade 2 vixen who was coming off a near-miss in the Santa Margarita; and Spun Sugar (2006), likewise a Grade 2 winner but placed in a trio of Grade 1s as a sophomore.

Aside from the essential Grade 1 background, Apple Blossom winners also tend to enter in top form. Five were making their seasonal reappearances here, but of the 15 with at least one prep under their belt, 14 had won or placed in their prior outing. Only Gourmet Girl, fifth in the Santa Margarita, was unplaced.

In light of the quality of the Apple Blossom winners, it's not surprising that 17 of them went off at odds of 3-1 or less, and eight were odds-on favorites. But value players can take note that both double-digit upsetters fit the Grade 1 background angle – Gourmet Girl (10-1) as a top-level winner and On Fire Baby (12-1) through her Kentucky Oaks experience.



# OAKLAWN RACING'S HISTORICAL RELEVANCE

by Vance Hanson

Opened for the first time in 1905, Oaklawn Park is one of the oldest tracks in the U.S., but it wasn't until the Great Depression years of the mid-1930s that the track began conducting continuously-run winter meetings.

Its growth into a major winter venue, slowed in part by its location in lightly-populated central Arkansas, finally took off in the mid-1970s when track president Charles Cella, whose family has owned Oaklawn since its founding, inaugurated the "Racing Festival of the South." Elevating some overnight events into stakes and infusing races like the Arkansas Derby and Oaklawn Handicap with six-figure purses, Oaklawn was transformed into a regular stop for many of the best horses in the country.

Once contested over a span of a week, the major highlights of the Racing Festival of the South have now been condensed into the final two days of the meeting. The centerpiece is the Arkansas Derby, Oaklawn's richest race and one that's showcased future classic winners Temperence Hill, Sunny's Halo, Tank's Prospect, Victory Gallop, Smarty Jones, Afleet Alex, Curlin, and American Pharoah.

Oaklawn's other Grade 1 event is the Apple Blossom Handicap, a key early-season test for fillies and mares. Hall of Fame members Susan's Girl, Bold 'n Determined, Bayakoa, Paseana, Azeri, and Zenyatta have all tasted victory in the race, as have champions Track Robbery, North Sider, Heavenly Prize, Escena, Banshee Breeze, Gourmet Girl, Havre de Grace, Close Hatches,

Untapable, and Forever Unbridled.

Star older horses such as Wild Again, Turkoman, Snow Chief, Lost Code, Best Pal, The Wicked North, and Cigar prevailed in the Oaklawn Handicap, but like other races for older horses its popularity has waned a bit since the introduction of the Dubai World Cup. Medaglia d'Oro, Lawyer Ron, and Will Take Charge count among its leading winners over the past 15 years.

The Fantasy Stakes for three-year-old fillies evolved into a Grade 1 event with early winners like Our Mims, Davona Dale, Tiffany Lass, Very Subtle, and Lite Light. Although downgraded since, the race enjoyed a renaissance in the late aughts when Eight Belles, Rachel Alexandra, and Blind Luck won in consecutive years.

With the benefit of record purses fueled by alternative gaming, the appeal of Oaklawn's overnight and stakes schedule now encompasses the entire meet rather than a couple of days here or a week there. The lead-up to the Arkansas Derby, especially, has been significantly enhanced to where the Rebel Stakes and Southwest Stakes are now among the most lucrative Kentucky Derby preps in the country.

The Razorback Handicap might also begin to enjoy a resurgence with its new pre-Dubai World Cup position on the calendar. It was won in 2017 by presumptive Horse of the Year Gun Runner.



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