

Breeders' Cup Rankings

By MIKE WATCHMAKER

September 30, 2006

Classic contenders

3-year-olds & up, 1 1/4 miles. Purse: \$5 million

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Bernardini	T. Albertrani	2-1
Let's see if older horses can make him run in Oct. 7 J. C. Gold Cup			
2	Invasor	K. McLaughlin	7-2
His Whitney proved a key race; main threat to top one in the Gold Cup			
3	Sun King	N. Zito	8-1
Ran against speed bias in Woodward; nose behind Invasor in Whitney			
4	Lava Man	D. O'Neill	5-1
Having a terrific year; question is if he can do as well outside California			
5	Shirocco	A. Fabre	8-1
Last year's BC Turf winner hasn't lost since; might try the dirt this time			
6	Dylan Thomas	A. O'Brien	10-1
Classy European will try dirt early against the top two in the Gold Cup			
7	David Junior	B. Meehan	10-1
Considered a 1 1/4 mile specialist, that's why this Euro is eyeing this			
8	Strong Contender	J. Ward Jr.	20-1
Liked his Super Derby win; can still improve; then again, he'll have to			
9	Park Avenue Ball	J. Ryerson	30-1
Much improved; might be the best older horse you haven't heard of			
10	Premium Tap	J. Kimmel	30-1
Rode speed bias in Woodward; like Invasor, must be supplemented			

Juvenile contenders

2-year-old colts & geldings, 1 1/16 miles. Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Circular Quay	T. Pletcher	2-1
Undefeated, a two-time stakes winner, and will love added distance			
2	Principle Secret	C. Paasch	4-1
Untested in first two starts, including a win over Dmr Futurity winner			
3	Horse Greeley	R. Mandella	6-1
Winner of the Del Mar Futurity has gotten better with every start			
4	Nobiz Like Shobiz	B. Tagg	12-1
Impressive, double-digit margin romp going a mile in his career debut			
5	Black Seventeen	B. Koriner	10-1
We will find out in the Norfolk if his fast maiden score was for real			
6	King of the Roxy	T. Pletcher	8-1
His win in the Belmont Futurity was workmanlike, at the very best			
7	Great Hunter	D. O'Neill	12-1
Second best in three straight stakes, so he needs a breakthrough			
8	C P West	N. Zito	12-1
Eligible to improve off second in Bel. Futurity, but is iffy for this race			
9	Scat Daddy	T. Pletcher	15-1
No match for top one in Hopeful, but feeling is he's capable of better			
10	Got the Last Laugh	W. Mott	15-1
Like the step forward he took at Arlington; must continue that trend			

Mile contenders

3-year-olds & up, 1 mile (turf). Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Aragorn	N. Drysdale	3-1
This will be the biggest challenge yet for the best American turf miler			
2	George Washington	A. O'Brien	2-1
Reportedly a nut case, but that 132 Timeform for his QE II is huge			
3	Araafa	J. Nosedá	5-1
Second in QE II, but upset George Washington in Irish 2000 Guineas			
4	Court Masterpiece	E. Dunlop	12-1
In and out ran one of his better ones when third in the strong QE II			
5	Gorella	P. Biancone	8-1
Signalled how good she is when an unlucky third in this last year			
6	Librettist	S. bin Suroor	8-1
He's surely better than his distant sixth in the QE II would suggest			
7	Miesque's Approval	M. Wolfson	15-1
Will be stepping way up, but he is having a career-year at age 7			
8	Showing Up	B. Tagg	15-1
As tough as this race is, distance makes it a better goal than the Turf			
9	Becrux	N. Drysdale	20-1
Despite Woodbine Mile win, connections say he's no cinch to run			
10	Silent Name	G. Mandella	30-1
Not that far off Aragorn in California; not that close to him, either			

Distaff contenders

3-year-olds & up, fillies & mares, 1 1/8 miles. Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Fleet Indian	T. Pletcher	2-1
Easy leads or not, the quality of her brilliant recent form is undeniable			
2	Spun Sugar	T. Pletcher	4-1
Only loss this year was only start at one turn; that's no concern here			
3	Pine Island	C. McGaughey	5-1
Now the best 3yo filly; barn won this last year with a lesser performer			
4	Balletto	T. Albertrani	8-1
Has potential to upset if she gets contested pace to set up her late run			
5	Happy Ticket	A. Leggio Jr.	8-1
Only bad race of her distinguished career came in this race last year			
6	Healthy Addiction	J. Sadler	10-1
Will have supporters off her decisive win over Happy Ticket at Del Mar			
7	Pool Land	T. Pletcher	10-1
As if Pletcher isn't strong enough in this; she just won the Ruffian			
8	Take D' Tour	D. Fawkes	15-1
Ruffian second was better, fueling belief she is at her best at one turn			
9	Bushfire	E. Kenneally	20-1
Despite having three Gr. 1 wins, she has yet to run reasonably fast			
10	Hollywood Story	J. Shirreffs	30-1
Doesn't win often enough to be considered a serious contender			

Juvenile Fillies contenders

2-year-old fillies, 1 1/16 miles. Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Point Ashley	B. Baffert	2-1
She's already very good, and should be more effective going longer			
2	Dreaming of Anna	W. Catalano	4-1
The question here is if she can transfer her fine turf stakes form to dirt			
3	Untouched Talent	J. Bonde	8-1
Interesting how she is morphing into a closer; second to top one in last			
4	Appealing Zophie	S. Blasi	5-1
Won Spinaway in common gallop, but that wasn't a vintage Spinaway			
5	She's Included	C. Paasch	10-1
Her third to Point Ashley in the Dmr Debutante makes her a contender			
6	Cotton Blossom	T. Pletcher	8-1
Second in Spinaway in her first loss; yet to crack an 80 Beyer Figure			
7	Meadow Breeze	C. Deville	20-1
Was a complete surprise, but dead game, when she took the Matron			
8	Featherbed	T. Pletcher	15-1
Set a fast pace under pressure when beaten a head in the Matron			
9	Octave	T. Pletcher	12-1
Was part of that three-way photo in Matron, her fastest race so far			
10	Awesome Ashley	T. Pletcher	20-1
Last out maiden winner is one of several intriguing fringe players here			

Sprint contenders

3-year-olds & up, 6 furlongs. Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Silver Train	R. Dutrow Jr.	7-2
Passing this because it's not at his beloved Belmont would be wrong			
2	Bordonaro	W. Spawr	5-1
Despite a deliberate campaign, he does have the necessary ability			
3	Henny Hughes	K. McLaughlin	9-2
Could not have been more impressive winning both his starts this year			
4	Siren Lure	A. Sherman	6-1
Has won six of his last seven starts; wonder if he prefers 7 furlongs			
5	Pomeroy	M. Wolfson	8-1
If this were at Saratoga, he'd be as tough as Silver Train at Belmont			
6	War Front	H. A. Jerkens	10-1
Has held excellent form all year; versatile style makes him a factor			
7	Too Much Bling	B. Baffert	8-1
Like Henny Hughes, he's a talented 3-year-old who certainly belongs			
8	Dubai Escapade	E. Harty	10-1
Connections should consider this given how she won the Ballerina			
9	Pure as Gold	J. Carava	15-1
Claimed in June, he has since kept step with some of the west's best			
10	Behaving Badly	B. Baffert	15-1
West's version of Dubai Escapade has done enough to merit a shot			

Turf contenders

3-year-olds & up, 1 1/2 miles (turf). Purse: \$3 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Hurricane Run	A. Fabre	5-2
Hasn't been infallible this year, but top-class European is still tough			
2	Shirocco	A. Fabre	3-1
Since he, Hurricane Run share the same barn, he might go in Classic			
3	The Tin Man	R. Mandella	8-1
Arl. Million win got a boost when runner up Cacique came back to win			
4	Cacique	R. Frankel	6-1
Showed a particularly powerful late kick when he won the Man o'War			
5	Dylan Thomas	A. O'Brien	6-1
Classic is his preference; has this if dirt experiment doesn't work out			
6	English Channel	T. Pletcher	8-1
Formidable on his best, but two of his last three efforts were below par			
7	Better Talk Now	H. G. Motion	15-1
Now that the Melbourne Cup is out; this race is back on old pro's radar			
8	Showing Up	B. Tagg	15-1
Has lots of talent, but right now, distance a question; fits better in Mile			
9	Go Deputy	T. Pletcher	20-1
In career form at age 6, but must improve more to contend at this level			
10	Silver Whistle	W. Mott	30-1
Marginal player would be in real trouble on off turf, which he hates			

Filly & Mare Turf contenders

3-year-olds & up, Fillies & Mares, 1 3/8 miles (turf). Purse: \$2 million.

RANK	HORSE	TRAINER	ODDS
1	Ouija Board	E. Dunlop	9-5
The 2004 winner is in better form than when second in this last year			
2	Gorella	P. Biancone	4-1
Terrific filly might opt for Mile as she is more familiar with that distance			
3	Germance	J. Rouget	10-1
Once-beaten French Gr. 1 winner would be a contender if she comes			
4	Film Maker	H. G. Motion	10-1
One of these days, she'll get a good set up, and win a really big race			
5	Wait a While	T. Pletcher	6-1
Been sensational since switching to turf; would not put a win past her			
6	Alexandrova	A. O'Brien	6-1
Winner of three Gr. 1 Oaks this year helps make this race super tough			
7	Honey Ryder	T. Pletcher	12-1
She's a nice, consistent mare, but seems a notch below the best here			
8	Angara	W. Mott	15-1
No stranger to Grade 1 wins, but has never won a race over this kind			
9	Magnificent Song	T. Pletcher	20-1
Much improved 3-year-old is still a second stringer to Wait a While			
10	Noble Stella	R. Attfield	20-1
Doubt she is quite good enough, but the distance is not an obstacle			

The top 10 contenders for each of the eight Breeders' Cup races are ranked by Mike Watchmaker, who set the odds and wrote the comments. Actual Breeders' Cup fields will have up to 14 starters.