

Sunday

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HOLLYWOOD

Dozen lined up to try Big Brown in Preakness

Although only one of the horses who lost to Big Brown in the Kentucky Derby will take him on again in the Preakness, the prospective field grew to 13 on Friday. Page 3



Readers share their feelings about the death of Eight Belles. Page 6

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Science puts odds in breeder's favor



By GLENYE CAIN OAKFORD

LEXINGTON, Ky. — In the statistics-oriented world of Gary Knapp, Ph.D., Kentucky Derby winner Big Brown is an outlier, a horse so unusual when compared with his peers that he appears out of place.

In the field of statistics, an outlier often suggests that someone somewhere has made a mistake in calculations. But in Knapp's other world, the Thoroughbred breeding business, this particular outlier is a sign that his breeding calculations went exactly right.

Knapp is a statistician, an economist, a former professor of marketing, and a businessman. He used a combination of biomechanical analysis and pedigree study to breed Big Brown. The colt was the first Grade 1 winner bred by Monticule Farm, the 650-acre farm Knapp owns with his wife, Emily. Big Brown's 4 3/4-length Derby win has fans dreaming of the first Triple Crown in 30 years.

"This is good enough," Knapp, 64, said. "If he doesn't do well in either of the other two races, he's already done more than we ever could expect to come from a horse. If you look at a normal distribution of data, he's not an average horse. He's out here on the end someplace. You don't expect that of a horse."

Knapp's connection to Big Brown goes back to 1998, when he bought a 6-year-old Lear Fan mare named Miasma for \$350,000 at Keeneland's November mixed sale. Miasma was carrying a Nureyev filly, now named Mien, that would foal Knapp's Derby winner seven years later.

Mien had only two starts and one win before Knapp retired her to his broodmare band, which now numbers 21. Despite her brief

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Photos by Z

Above: Big Brown as a weanling in 2005. Right: Biomechanics convinced Gary Knapp that Mien would be a good broodmare.

