

## OVERVIEW:

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Unlike the Kentucky Derby, a destination race that attracts virtually every eligible horse to run in a massive 20-horse field, the less prestigious Preakness tends to draw only horses whose owners and trainers feel they have a legitimate shot. The race is much more predictable and for that reason, the payouts tend to be lower. This is historically not a longshot's race.

Kentucky Derby winners usually come back to run very well on short rest in the Preakness as they are obviously sharp and in form. Derby winner Always Dreaming had a dream trip in a race in which many top contenders had legitimate excuses. But Dreaming may simply be the best horse. Five horses who couldn't crack the Derby field join five who ran in the Derby. Rain is possible this weekend in Baltimore but it is unlikely the track will be anything like the quagmire they ran the Derby on. I'll assess each horse in post-position order.

## THE FIELD:

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**#1 MULTIPLIER**---He looked very good winning the Illinois Derby at Hawthorne near Chicago last month and his young trainer is very hot right now. The raw time of that Hawthorne race was very fast although the guys who make the speed figures aren't in agreement if that was simply because the track was playing fast. This is a major step up in class. My bottom line: he has an outside chance at a big upset.

**#2 CLOUD COMPUTING**---This horse is making only his fourth career start but his trainer, Chad Brown, won the award for best trainer in the country last year and knows what he's doing. CC is one of the few in this race with a lot of early speed and I expect him to be running first or second in the early stages. There is very little way of knowing if he is good enough at this stage to hold off the more experienced contenders but Brown and jockey Javier Castellano make a dangerous combination. Another one with at least some shot at an upset.

**#3 HENCE**---He comes from way out of it and that running style may not be the best for this race. He was a distant eleventh in the Derby but that might have been because of the wet track. He was very wide in the stretch and seemed to give up. His win in the Sunland Derby was very impressive and he has to run back to that race to have a chance.

**#4 ALWAYS DREAMING**---The Derby winner has now won all four of his races this year and none have been close. While he had a dream Derby trip on a Churchill Downs track that favored horses on the inside, part of the reason for that is that he is simply fast enough to get to the right spot before anybody else. The combination of trainer Todd Pletcher and jockey John Velazquez is top notch. Skeptics point out that Pletcher prefers to run horses with more rest than the two weeks between the Derby and Preakness but that is not a reason to dislike this horse here. The short turnaround may take its toll in the race after this one but right now you have a sharp horse in very strong form.

**#5 CLASSIC EMPIRE**---There are only two really proven horses in this race and this is the other one. He was the champion two-year old last year and his fourth place finish in the Derby was, in its own way, as impressive as Always Dreaming's win. He was slammed at the break, stuck in traffic, splashed with a mud storm and forced to race on the worst part of the track. But he never quit and finished ahead of 16 horses. With a better trip, he has a major chance to turn the tables and win the Preakness. He comes from farther off the pace than Dreaming but he has tactical speed and will not have to come from the clouds. The jockey is less aggressive than I prefer but this is a tough, fast horse with a world of ability and will offer better betting value than Always Dreaming.

**#6 GUNNEVERA**---This is his fifth race of the year and he may have peaked. His running style is to come from way back and that's not ideal here. Tellingly, his rider in the Derby hopped off to ride Cloud Computing but the replacement, Mike Smith, has been in the Hall of Fame for years.

**#7 TERM OF ART**---He's lost his last four races by a combined 40 lengths.

**#8 SENIOR INVESTMENT**---He's making a major step up in class and would be a surprise.

**#9 LOOKIN AT LEE**---He finished second in the Derby coming from way back but somehow had an absolutely clean trip up the rail the whole way---a testimony to how badly some of the other jockeys rode in that race. This is a consistent horse who always fires and is a contender but it is not likely the pace will be fast enough to set up his late run for a win. A must-use in the second, third and fourth spot of your wagers.

**#10 CONQUEST MO MONEY**---He's the Cinderella story of the race. He was based in New Mexico and has an obscure trainer and jockey. But he ran impressive seconds in both the Sunland and Arkansas Derby's. He has a lot of early speed and might be on the lead. In the end, I don't think he's good enough to win but he is far from the worst horse in the field and the pace scenario gives him at least a little bit of a shot.

### PREDICTION:

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HORSE #	HORSE	PROGRAM ODDS
5	CLASSIC EMPIRE	3-1
4	ALWAYS DREAMING	4-5
9	LOOKIN AT LEE	10-1
2	CLOUD COMPUTING	12-1
3	HENCE	20-1
10	CONQUEST MO MONEY	15-1
1	MULTIPLIER	30-1

### ANALYSIS:

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The top two horses above are the best in the race and I'll give a slight edge to the one who presents more wagering value. I expect Always Dreaming to run in the top three in the early stages and he'll get first jump on Classic Empire. But Empire should be right on his heels. If both fire, it will be an impressive showdown. Lookin at Lee always runs his race and can't be discounted.

### WAGERS

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A win place and show bet on #5  
\$30 exacta 5-4  
\$10 exacta 4-5  
\$2 trifecta 5-with 4-9 with 1-2-3-4-9-10 (\$20)  
\$1 trifecta 5 with 1-2-3-4-9-10 with 1-2-3-4-9-10 (\$30)  
\$1 trifecta 4-5-9 with 4-5-9 with 1-2-3-4-5-9-10 (\$30)  
50-cent superfecta 5 with 4-9 with 1-2-3-4-9-10 with ALL (\$35)

### FRIDAY

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In the Black Eyed Susan, the race for three year old fillies (Race 11 at Pimlico), I like longshot #10 Actress, who is 10-1 on the morning line odds. I will be using her with my main Preakness contenders in the Black Eyed Susan/Preakness daily double.

### TV

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Some of the early races are on NBC Sports Network beginning at 1:30 pm. Coverage of the Preakness itself is on NBC (Channel 4) beginning at 4:00. The Preakness is scheduled to off at about 5:45.