

OVERVIEW:

Justify is a legitimate threat to be trainer Bob Baffert's second Triple Crown winner in three years. This massive horse is now perfect in four starts and showed tremendous professionalism in breaking sharply in the Kentucky Derby, pressing a very fast pace and not allowing any horse to gain on him in the stretch. He had 19 rivals in the Derby but only seven in the Preakness. One of them is second place finisher Good Magic. It's supposed to rain much of the day in Baltimore and the Pimlico track could be a sloppy mess, just like the Derby. So the top two Derby horses are back and again on a sloppy track. It could be a repeat of the race two weeks ago.

Two Derby also-rans are also entered along with four others including Quip, a nice horse bred to move way up on a wet track. Derby form often holds up in the Preakness and the payouts for winning wagers may be modest. I'll assess each horse in post-position order.

THE FIELD:

#1 QUIP - This horse skipped the Derby after finishing second in the Arkansas Derby and winning the Tampa Bay Derby. He is really bred for a wet track and has five weeks rest. If Justify and Good Magic regress after a very tough race in Kentucky, this could be the one to pull off the upset. What rider Florent Geroux must not do is try to match speed with Justify early. If he stays off the pace, he has a shot if the favorites falter.

#2 LONE SAILOR - This horse comes from way back and ran a fair eighth in the Derby. He'll get a cleaner trip here and he has a great rider but seems two cuts below the best horses.

#3 SPORTING CHANCE - You can't keep legendary trainer D. Wayne Lukas away from these races and he has two of the eight Preakness horses, including this one. This horse may be better suited to shorter races.

#4 DIAMOND KING - He won over this Pimlico track four weeks ago but seems overmatched here.

#5 GOOD MAGIC - I gave him a huge shot to win the Derby and he had every chance to run down Justify but was a non-threatening second. His advantage is that he has a lot of seasoning and might bounce back better out of the Derby than the more lightly raced Justify. Jockey Jose Ortiz might be tempted to go after Justify earlier in this race and we could have a duel all the way around the track. At 3-1, he presents decent wagering value. Justify is a better horse but Good Magic has more foundation and can turn the tables.

#6 TENFOLD - This is a very well-bred horse making only his fourth career start. I believe he is a star in the making but this might be too much to ask at this stage in his career. He will likely sit a few lengths off the pace and try to get into the fray on the far turn.

#7 JUSTIFY - He became the first horse to win the Derby without having raced as a two year old since 1882. The question here is whether the torrid pace in the Derby and the tiring sloppy track knocked something out of him. If not, he's the winner. This is a physically huge horse who has now run smashing performances in all four of his career starts. Trainer Baffert's Derby winners usually fire right back in the Preakness. He will be bet very hard and go off at odds of 3-5 or lower. It's hard to Justify a major wager at those odds.

#8 BRAVAZO - This is Wayne Lukas' other horse and I actually think he has a chance. He was an OK sixth in the Derby despite having trouble at the start and having to run through huge clods of sloppy mud. If Good Magic and Justify get into a speed duel, he will be in the right spot to take advantage. Good mud breeding. Interestingly, Lukas actually gave him a "breeze" workout on Sunday despite running eight days earlier in the Derby. Lukas has pulled off shockers in this sport for decades.

PREDICTION:

HORSE #	HORSE	PROGRAM ODDS
7	JUSTIFY	3-5
5	GOOD MAGIC	3-1
1	QUIP	12-1
8	BRAVAZO	20-1
2	LONE SAILOR	15-1
6	TENFOLD	20-1
3	SPORTING CHANCE	30-1
4	DIAMOND KING	30-1

ANALYSIS:

I think Justify and Good Magic are very close and Magic can win if Justify regresses. But this is a small field and Justify is the better horse and deserves to be on top in my prediction. The wild card is the track as it might be a total mess and that can lead to shocking outcomes. Quip is bred to relish a wet track and Bravazo has been trained hard in typical Lukas-style and may be sitting on a race.

SOME WAGERS

\$1 trifecta 5-7-8 with 1-5-7-8 with 1-2-5-6-7-8 (\$36)

\$1 superfecta 5-7 with 5-7 with 1-8 with 1-2-6-7-8 \$(16)

Bet #5 and #8 to win place and show (choose your amount)

***This bet must be placed before Race 11 Friday: \$10 Black-Eyed Susan/Preakness Daily Double: 4 with 5-7-8 and \$3 double 4-1 (\$33 total)

FRIDAY

In the Friday race at Pimlico for three year old fillies, Race 11 The Black-Eyed Susan, I really like #4 Red Ruby (5-1) and will use her with #9 Sara Street (4-1)

Also Friday, in Race 9, the Pimlico Special, I like #2 One Liner (7-2).