

## OVERVIEW:

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Kentucky Derby winner Nyquist is unbeaten in nine starts and will be the heavy favorite in the Preakness. Only two other horses from the Derby, second place Exaggerator and ninth place Lani, are in the Preakness. The eleven horse field is not deep and a win by seven or eight of them would be shocking. Derby winners in recent years have run strong coming right back in the Preakness in part because Preakness fields have been much softer than those in the Derby. There are two keys to this year's race. Rain is expected and the track is likely to be wet. And, there is an abundance of early speed which may compromise the chances of frontrunners. I'll assess each horse in post-position order.

## THE FIELD:

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**#1 CHERRY WINE:** This horse has no early speed and will likely come from way off the pace. He is very unlikely to win but could get up for third or fourth as the speed horses tire.

**#2 UNCLE LINO:** This California-based horse won against much softer competition three weeks ago but ran a decent third behind Nyquist and Exaggerator in the Santa Anita Derby. But he's not really bred to run races of this distance and may get caught up in torrid speed duel.

**#3 NYQUIST:** Could there be two Triple Crown winners in a row? I can't imagine this horse winning the marathon Belmont Stakes in three weeks but he has a huge shot in the Preakness. Derby winners who wheel back in the Preakness are usually so sharp they run identically well. This horse's Derby win was very impressive as he sat just off a very hot pace and took clear command at the top of the stretch. I was skeptical about whether his breeding would let him get the distance but this horse appears to be a pure winner who overachieves. Mario Gutierrez is hardly the best known jockey in the world but he has ridden this horse impeccably and now has two Derby and one Preakness wins. The trainer is shady and has a history of suspensions for improper use of medications. The wet track is an unknown and the horse will have to overcome a fast pace again.

**#4 AWESOME SPEED:** He has an excellent trainer but despite his name has never run fast enough to win a race like this.

**#5 EXAGGERATOR:** I picked him to win the Derby and he ran an outstanding race to finish second but couldn't reel in Nyquist. There are a lot of reasons to like him in the Preakness. His best race came on a wet track and he's likely to get one here. The fast early pace should be ideal for his closing style. He is ultra-consistent and his trainer says he recovers very quickly from his races. The trainer's brother is the jockey and he can drive you nuts (like the way he quit trying the last 20 yards in the Derby) but he has won a lot of big races and was a young phenom at this track (Pimlico) at the beginning of his career. I liked Exaggerator two weeks ago and I still like him.

**#6 LANI:** It's not likely but he might win. This Japanese based horse has remarkable stamina and is trained differently than American horses. We think coming back on two weeks rest is tough but this horse last year raced twice in six days and won both. His Derby ninth place effort wasn't awful and he should improve off of it. He does have negatives: he just isn't that fast and his two races in Japan on muddy tracks were subpar.

**#7 COLLECTED:** This one is trained by Bob Baffert who won the Triple Crown last year with American Pharoah and is ridden by America's best jockey Javier Castellano. He won the Lexington Stakes at Keeneland convincingly last month but his front running style isn't ideal in this race. Not impossible, but not likely.

**#8 LAOBAN:** This is another one with early speed but he isn't bred to get the distance and still hasn't won a single race.

**#9 ABIDING STAR:** Here's yet another with early speed but he is making an enormous jump up in competition and would be a stunner.

**#10 FELLOWSHIP:** He was only beaten by four lengths by Nyquist in the Florida Derby last month but he just doesn't seem fast enough to win. He comes from well off the pace and is a threat to land at the bottom of the trifecta and superfecta.

**#11 STRADIVARI:** He's making only his fourth career start but he's won his last two races by a combined 25 lengths! He steps way up in class but this is clearly a very talented horse. Trainer Todd Pletcher rarely enters horses above their level and obviously thinks this one has a chance. The outside post position isn't ideal and jockey John Velazquez will have to get the horse to avoid dueling with the others who have early speed. There are only two horses in this field that have done much of anything (Nyquist and Exaggerator) and this horse appears to be the only one of the others with the potential for major upside improvement.

### PREDICTION:

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HORSE #	HORSE	PROGRAM ODDS
5	EXAGGERATOR	3-1
3	NYQUIST	3-5
11	STRADIVARI	8-1
6	LANI	30-1
7	COLLECTED	10-1

### ANALYSIS:

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Nyquist or Exaggerator? I'm not hopping off the Exaggerator bandwagon now because the likely wet track and hot pace should both help him. Nyquist will probably run big again. The other three horses above are the only others I can fathom winning and I listed them in order of preference.

### WAGERS

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A win and place bet on #5

\$1 trifecta 5 with 3-6-11 with 1-3-6-7-10-11 (\$15)

\$1 trifecta box 3-5-6-11 (\$24)

\$5 exacta 5 with 3-6-7-11 (\$20)

\$3 exacta 3-6-7-11 with 5 (\$12)

\$15 exacta box 3-5 (\$30)

50-cent superfecta 3-5 with 3-5-6-7-11 with 3-5-6-7-11 with 1-3-5-6-7-10-11 (\$48)