# 2016 El Camino Real Derby Contenders

**1 Kelly With a Twist** (7: 2-1-0) 30-1

*Jockey*: Abel Cedillo (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Not very impressive. Broke his maiden by half a length on his 6th try in a 5.5 furlong race (pp. 3/11), also at Golden Gate. Won an allowance race again at Golden Gate a few weeks ago that was 6 furlongs (pp. 8/8). Previously came in 2nd in a different 5.5 furlong race. Really seems unlikely that he could handle a mile and an eighth.

*Pedigree*: High Cotton x Maddies’ Reward, by Drewman. Most of the big names in this pedigree come from sire High Cotton, who himself is by Dixie Union and out of Happy Tune (sired by AP Indy). From High Cotton, Kelly gets 2x Seattle Slew and 2x Mr. Prospector. Overall, he has 3x Mr. Prospector and 2x Fappiano (one on each side). Caro in 5th generation through Cozzene. Seems like a generic, heavy shouldered speed pedigree, although the 2x Seattle Slew on the sire’s side is interesting.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**2 Kasseopia (GB)** (4: 1-2-0) 7-2

*Jockey*: Drayden Van Dyke (different from last start)

*Race Record*: This one is tough because the only record available is from his last start, a 2nd place finish at Woodbine in the 1 1/16th mile Grey Stakes (pp. 5/5) in early October. Race notes show that he was game, but just couldn’t match frontrunner Riker. Previously, he had just broken his maiden at Kempton Park. Worth noting: this will be his first race on Lasix. Watching the Grey Stakes, it seems like he had more in his tank, but Riker just got in his way as he was trying to make his move. Seemed comfortable stalking the pace, and perhaps this would be easier for him to do if he were closer to the rail, as he will be in this race.

*Pedigree*: Showcasting x Dream Again, by Medicean. Unlike some horses that are just born out of the US but with mostly US-based ancestors, Kasseopia’s dam, sire, and entire second generation are all from England. However, in his third generation, all except for two (Showcasting’s Irish bred granddams) are US horses. Most notably are Machiavellian and Sadlers Wells as Dream Again’s grandsires. Showcasting additionally has a direct sire line to Danzig through a horse called Green Desert. Showcasting’s dam Arabesque also has a direct sire line herself to Gone West, the son of Mr. Prospector and Secretariat daughter Secrettame. As far as inbreeding goes, all of it is relegated to the 4th and 5th generations, where we have Mr. Prospector once on either side, 3x Northern Dancer (twice on dam’s side), Raise a Native twice on dam’s side (although this is just in the 5 generations visible- Raise a Native would also appear in the 6th generation as well due to Mr. P in the 5th generation), and Lyphard twice on his sire’s side in the 5th generation (Lyphard is a son of Northern Dancer who, although US bred, did all of his racing in France and went on to be a leading sire there).

*Conformation*: Cute face with splashy blaze stands out. Big shoulder, but similarly large hindquarter- seems like he’s got a decent amount of power back there. Fairly deep girth for such a young horse. Great hind end conformation, although kind of straight in the gaskin? Front legs have good bone, but looks a little tied in beneath the knee. Big joints, great cannon:forearm ratio. Pasterns somewhat long and slopey, but good running form. Wants it.

**3 Touched By Autism** (5: 1-3-1) 30-1

*Jockey*: Frank T. Alvarado (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Just broke his maiden at Santa Anita a little over a month ago in a miler on the dirt (pp. 1/7), winning by a length and a half. Previously, he had been running in maidens at Golden Gate, with his last race there being in mid-December, another miler (pp. 5/10) that Giopress won by just half a length. Touched By Autism beat San Dimas in this race. All his other attempts at breaking his maiden were at 6 furlongs. Seems highly unlikely that he would be able to handle the distance today.

*Pedigree*: Sierra Sunset x Beau’s Gem, by Beau Genius. Lots of relative unknowns here. Sierra Sunset’s direct sire line leads us to his grandsire, Skywalker, who I’d never heard of before but amassed over 2 million in race earnings from the early 80s, when he won the Breeders’ Cup Classic and the Santa Anita Derby, among other pretty well-known graded stakes races. Beau Genius has a direct sire line to Boldnesian, a son of Bold Ruler, who also sired Secretariat. Boldnesian is also present on Touched By Autism’s sire’s side in the 5th generation. Otherwise 2x Northern Dancer on his dam’s side. Also on dam’s side, way back in the 5th generation is Princequillo, an influential Irish bred sire from the 40s who raced successfully through his 4 year old season in the US.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**4 Mr. Coker** (2: 1-1-0) 9-2

*Jockey*: Santiago Gonzalez (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Only two starts, both at Santa Anita and both MSWs. His first attempt at breaking his maiden came at 7 furlongs (pp. 4/12) and he placed, coming in second by over 10 lengths over the 3rd place finisher, but about 3 lengths behind the winner. About three weeks later, he ran again, this time at 6.5 furlongs (pp. 5/10), and won by a length and a half after stalking the pace for the first half of the race.

*Pedigree*: Candy Ride x Our Khrysty, by Newfoundland. I was wondering why his odds are so good for a horse that has never even come close to attempting this distance before, and I think it must be the pedigree. This is a good, balanced pedigree with some indicator for success at this type of distance. Candy Ride is, of course, a prolific sire (with a direct sire line to Mr. Prospector through Cryptoclearance and then Fappiano) who dominated in mile races in Argentina. Newfoundland is a slightly lesser known son of Storm Cat and out of a daughter of Deputy Minister. So we have our speed horses on the sire’s side and our distance/stamina horses more on the dam’s side. Our Khrysty is actually pretty proven on the track in her own right, having amassed over $300k in earnings into her 4 year old season, including a win at 8.5 furlongs.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**5 Oscar Dominguez (IRE)** (4: 1-0-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: Julien Couton

*Race Record*: This is a tough one. Not only was Oscar Dominguez born and bred in Ireland, that’s also where he had his first four starts, all of which were in 2015 at a track called Dundalk. Because of this, there are no race records on Equibase. The obscure IrishRacing.com provides somewhat more helpful information: Oscar’s last start and win was in late December at 1 mile, where he was racing in a field of 10 horses and won by 3 lengths. It’s unclear whether this was turf or dirt, but I’m guessing since it was Ireland that it was probably turf. His two previous races were one mile and 7 furlongs, respectively, and he came in 5th in both of those. In his first race, another miler, he came 6th out of 11 horses. Ultimately, I’m still not sure he’d be able to handle the additional 1/8th mile here, especially up against such a big field. More information would have been helpful though. Worth noting: today will be the first time he runs on Lasix.

*Pedigree*: Zoffany x American Queen, by Fairy King. As far as international diversity, this is another pedigree that’s good for it. Zoffany is another Irish bred, son to two English horses. However, his sire Dansili is a son of Danehill, who himself was sired by Danzig. Zoffany’s dam, Tyranny, is a daughter of Machiavellian. Ironically, American Queen is a French bred mare, although she was sired by Fairy King, a son of Northern Dancer and influential Bold Reason daughter, Fairy Bridge. Oscar Dominguez has a lot of influential dams in his pedigree, especially on his dam’s side which is important. Aside from Fairy Bridge, he also has Special, Somethingroyal (Secretariat’s dam), Natalma (Northern Dancer’s dam), and Hasili. If there’s any hope for distance in this horse, I would base it more on the strength of the dam’s side of his pedigree more than his race record as it currently stands.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**6 San Dimas** (5: 1-0-2) 20-1

*Jockey*: Ricardo Gonzalez (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Just broke his maiden at Golden Gate a little under a month ago by half a length (pp. 7/7) in a miler. His win was described in the race notes as being “stubbornly” taken. Worth noting that he is not now, nor does it appear that he ever has been, on Lasix. With the exception of his first start, all his races have been a mile, and two of them (at Arlington) were on the track.

*Pedigree*: Hard Spun x Pamona Ball, by Pleasantly Perfect. One of the first pedigrees I’ve seen in a while with no inbreeding in the first 5 generations. Hard Spun is a highly successful son of Danzig, having won several 6 and 7 furlong races, come 2nd in the Derby and the Breeders’ Cup, and 3rd in the Preakness. Pleasantly Perfect is by Pleasant Colony and out of an Affirmed daughter. Pamona Ball’s dam is by Hennessy, who is a son of Storm Cat. This is a pretty good lineup for a win at this distance, but based on his race record, I’m not really seeing how he’ll be up to speed today.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**7 Marqula** (6: 1-2-1) 8-1

*Jockey*: Kyle Frey (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Recently came second to Frank Conversation by 2.5 lengths in the mile and a sixteenth California Derby (pp. 6/6), which was also at Golden Gate. Except for his first start at a track I’ve never heard of called Oak Tree at Pleasanton, all of his other starts have been at Golden Gate. Has steadily worked up to the mile and sixteenth: first two starts were 5.5 furlongs (the second one he won), then 6 furlongs (4th place), then two milers (3rd and 2nd place, respectively). Has beaten and been beaten by Algenon. This race record is just moderately more impressive than some of the ones I’ve already seen.

*Pedigree*: Coast Guard x Marquet Formula, by Marquetry. This pedigree has the most Northern Dancer I’ve ever seen- FOUR times in the 5th generation. Coast Guard’s grandsire via direct sire line is Storm Cat. Surprisingly, Mr. Prospector only appears once in this pedigree, on the dam’s side via Conquistador Cielo. Other instances of inbreeding: 2x The Minstrel (once on either side), 2x Raise a Native (once on either side), and 2x Crimson Saint on sire’s side.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**8 Tusk** (6: 1-1-3) 15-1

*Jockey*: Juan Hernandez (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Might be one of the few in this field who have never previously raced at Golden Gate. However, last start was at Santa Anita a few weeks ago in a one mile allowance race on turf, which he came third in (pp. 2/8). Previously came 7th in the Cecil B. DeMille Stakes at Del Mar (pp. 3/12), which was also one mile on the turf (worth noting that Frank Conversation came 3rd in this race). Broke his maiden in early November at Del Mar in yet another turf miler (pp. 3/9), winning by just a nose. Interestingly, Tusk has actually run a mile and a sixteenth on the turf twice previously and placed both. The first time was due to breaking awkwardly out of the gate, and the second time seemingly because his jockey was trying to hold something back, but seems to have waited too long (these were his first and second starts, at Saratoga in August, pp. 4/8, and Belmont in September, pp. 6/6, respectively).

*Pedigree*: Tapit x It’s Midnight, by Shamardal. Tapit needs no explanation at this point; It’s Midnight is by Shamardal and Witching Hour, who are by Giants Causeway and Fairy King, respectively. As a refresher, Giants Causeway is a Storm Cat son. Additionally, Shamardal’s dam is by Machiavellian (whose distant progeny appear well represented in today’s race). 3x Mr. Prospector (twice on sire’s side) and 2x Northern Dancer (one on either side).

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**9 Algenon** (8: 2-3-3) 15-1

*Jockey*: Catalino Martinez (different from last start)

*Race Record*: For what it’s worth, in all of his starts Algenon has never come in worse than 3rd. His last start was the California Derby (pp. 3/6), where he came third to Marqula in second and Frank Conversation in first. Race notes indicate that he “weakened” in the final furlong, which does not bode well for a good performance today, in my opinion. Seems to do better in shorter races: he beat Marqula in the one mile Gold Rush Stakes, and his two wins were at 5 and 5.5 furlongs. The 1 1/16th mile California Derby is his longest distance so far, and he only came in third then by half a length.

*Pedigree*: Aragorn x Alpine Yodel, by Swiss Yodeler. Certainly one of the funnier combinations of sire x dam, grandsire that I’ve ever seen. Otherwise, what we have here is pretty much an accomplished sire ($1.5 million in race earnings) with a pedigree full of well-known names and a dam whose lineage is pretty much the opposite of that. Aragorn is an Irish bred son of Giants Causeway and a Mr. Prospector dam who raced in Canada and the US successfully, winning mostly in milers. Alpine Yodel, while managing 46(!) starts and 8 wins in her career, has a fairly unremarkable pedigree in terms of star power. Swiss Yodeler was also heavily raced and racked up over $700k in earnings, and his damsire was a son of Bold Ruler (who, along with Native Dancer, were the only names I immediately recognized in this pedigree). Has the potential to be kind of a sneaky success pedigree. The fact that Algenon’s dam and damsire had so many starts under their belt speaks to their hardiness, in my opinion. Northern Dancer 3x, 2x on sire’s side.

*Conformation*: Only in the background of one picture from the CA Derby, and all I can really tell is that he seemed to get really lathered up over the course of that race.

**10 Diplodocus** (4: 1-0-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: Russell Baze (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Last raced in the same late January one mile turf allowance race at Santa Anita as Tusk (pp. 7/8) and came in 5th after weakening in the final furlongs. Not very impressive right? Well, wait for it… Previously broke his maiden in early January, also at Santa Anita, going a mile and an eighth on the turf by coming from the outside and closing, ultimately winning by one and ¾ lengths. His two prior races were one mile and six furlongs, and he got better as the length increased. Today looks really good for Diplo, as far as I’m concerned. Definitely a place/show bet, possibly win depending on the remaining three horses.

*Pedigree*: Sky Mesa x Speciality, by Carson City. Sky Mesa is by Pulpit, an AP Indy son, and out of Caress, a daughter of Storm Cat. Additionally, Caress’s dam is an Affirmed daughter. Speciality’s pedigree is similarly star-studded: sire Carson City is a Mr. Prospector son and dam Special feeling has a direct sire line to Danzig. Mr. P is twice on either side, with Raise a Native 3x (twice on dam’s), Northern Dancer on either side, and Secretariat 2x on sire’s side.

*Conformation*: No pictures available, but apparently “Diplodocus” is a dinosaur.

**11 Go Long** (9: 2-0-0) 20-1

*Jockey*: Kent Desormeaux (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Raced a little under a month ago in a dirt miler at Santa Anita, which he won by ¾ of a length (pp. 1/9) after seemingly stalking just off the pace. Raced in the mile and a sixteenth FrontRunner Stakes (pp. 1/8) at Santa Anita in late September and came in 7th after weakening. If he couldn’t handle that, which appears to be his longest challenge, I’m not really convinced from his more current assortment of milers and 6/6.5 furlong races that he could handle this distance.

*Pedigree*: Congrats x Miss Fortunate, by Deputy Minister. This is a fantastic pedigree, and I imagine that even if his racing career isn’t fantastic, Go Long could probably go on to have a decent career at stud because of it. Not only is his dam a direct daughter of Deputy Minister, *her* dam Fantastic Ways is a Secretariat daughter. And Fantastic Ways’s dam is a daughter of Riva Ridge, Secretariat stablemate and fellow winner of both the Kentucky Derby and the Belmont. Congrats is a son of AP Indy, and his dam Praise is a Mr. Prospector daughter. Praise’s dam, Wild Applause, is a Northern Dancer daughter. For such an amazing pedigree, the only two instances of inbreeding are Secretariat and Northern Dancer, one on either side.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.

**12 Frank Conversation** (5: 2-0-1) 2-1

*Jockey*: Mario Gutierrez (same as last start)

*Race Record*: As previously mentioned, won the 1 1/16th mile California Derby at Golden Gate by 2.5 lengths (pp. 4/6) by staying just off the pace. According to race notes, he was asked the question and moved forward some urging from 3 wide, but then was just hand ridden for the final 1/16th mile. His previous challenge at a mile and a sixteenth was in the Los Alamitos Futurity (pp. 2/7), which he came 5th in. Worth noting though is that he was up against Mor Spirit and Toews on Ice, and also tried a different running style where he was more of a frontrunner/pacesetter. His style in the California Derby seems to be more indicative of potential success today.

*Pedigree*: Quality Road x Rushen Heat, by Unusual Heat. Quality Road is a son of Elusive Quality, a son of Gone West. Unusual Heat is a son of Nureyev, who himself is by Northern Dancer. Lots of New Zealand and other foreign horses on Rushen Heat’s side. 2x Northern Dancer (once on either side) and Raise a Native 2x on sire’s side.

*Conformation*: Only race photos available, but looks strong and determined. Appears to have short cannons and long forearms in relation. Good pasterns, although front heels look a bit collapsed.

**13 Mana Strike** (4: 2-0-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: Leslie Manwing (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Another California Derby alum (pp. 1/6), Mana Strike’s not really getting any points in my book for his participation, considering he came in last place, beaten in total by about 7.5 lengths. He did much better in the one mile Gold Rush Stakes at Golden Gate in late December, coming first (pp. 5/6) over Algenon and Marqula by 2.5 lengths. However, it seems like he is ultimately much better suited based on his race record for milers.

*Pedigree*: Papa Clem x Kirkela, by Giants Causeway. Very classic pedigree for graded stakes, with Storm Cat on the dam’s side and Mr. Prospector on the sire’s side in the 3rd generation via Smart Strike, as well as Danzig on the sire’s side via his dam’s sire. Only one instance of inbreeding: Northern Dancer once on either side in the 5th generation.

*Conformation*: No clear picture’s available.

**14 Giopress** (5: 1-0-2) 20-1

*Jockey*: Alejandro Gomez (different from last start)

*Race Record*: While Giopress beat both Touched By Autism and San Dimas when he broke his maiden at Golden Gate, his last start in the Eddie Logan Stakes, one mile on the turf, was unimpressive and he finished second to last. There’s nothing here to indicate he can handle the distance.

*Pedigree*: Gio Ponti x Empiress, by Empire Maker. Direct sire line to Storm Cat in 3rd generation. Dam is by a son of Unbridled. A fair bit of Mr. P, Raise a Native, and Northern Dancer here.

*Conformation*: No pictures available.