# 2016 Louisiana Derby Contenders

**1 Gun Runner** (4: 3-0-0) 3-1

*Jockey*: Florent Geroux (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Won last start in the mile and a 16th Risen Star Stakes, also at Fair Grounds (pp. 6/13). Won by closing- started in 7th place and moved from second to first heading into the stretch, ultimately winning over Forevamo by half a length. Worth noting, however: he was carrying 116lbs, while Forevamo and third place finisher Mo Tom were both carrying 120lbs. February’s Risen Stakes was Gun Runner’s first 2016 following a 4th place finish in the 1 1/16th mile Kentucky Jockey Club Stakes at Churchill Downs (pp. 4/14) in late November; all contenders were carrying 122lbs. Directly ahead of him in the KY Jockey Club Stakes was Mo Tom. Gun Runner was doing pretty well, but a combination of deep closers (Mo Tom and Airoforce) and pacesetter Mor Spirit were able to wrest his brief lead from him going into the stretch. His other two starts came in a September and October maiden and allowance, respectively. His maiden was one mile on the dirt at Churchill Downs (pp. 4/10), where he started a little off the pace and made his closing drive after the stretch to win by ¾ of a length. A little over a month later, he raced in a Keeneland allowance race that was 1 1/16th miles on the dirt (pp. 1/8), again coming from a little off the pace to close into the stretch to win by 2 lengths. I can definitely understand why his odds are so good, but this is going to be a mile and an eighth and so far his wins have come at a sixteenth of a mile shorter, so I’m not completely sold yet.

*Pedigree*: Candy Ride x Quiet Giant, by Giants Causeway. Candy Ride, the undefeated champion Argentinian miler, can trace his lineage back to Cryptoclearance, a son of Fappiano (son of Mr. Prospector). Giants Causeway is a Storm Cat son, so we have some Storm Bird and Secretariat on Gun Runner’s dam’s side. He also has Fappiano in the 4th generation a second time on his dam’s side through dam’s other grandsire, Quiet American. In addition to 2x Northern Dancer on the dam’s side, Blushing Groom and Lyphard (himself a son of Northern Dancer) appear once each on either side. I like that there’s a good deal of diversity of country of origin here (mostly from Candy Ride) and also the Secretariat on Quiet Giant’s side, but I’m not super keen on the double Fappiano along with 2x Northern Dancer.

*Conformation*: Only racing and off-angle winner’s circle pictures to go off of. Clean front legs with a great cannon to forearm ratio. Deep girth. Hind end looks correct; could have more hindquarter muscling. Definitely looks very determined going down the stretch, and got very sweaty in the Risen Star.

**2 Greenpointcrusader** (5: 2-2-0) 7-2

*Jockey*: John Velazquez (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Most recently came second best to Mohaymen in the mile and a sixteenth Holy Bull at Gulfstream (pp. 5/6). He went from 6th out of the gate to second by the quarter pole and over took brief early frontrunner Perfect Saint by the half pole. However, by the ¾ pole, Mohyamen had sailed into first, and ultimately beat Greenpointcrusader by 3 ½ lengths; Greenpointcrusader held his own in second and finished 2 ½ lengths ahead of 3rd place Fellowship. Came 7th in the mile and a sixteenth Breeders’ Cup Juvenile Stakes (pp. 3/14). Went from 12th place going into the stretch to finishing 7th, but the burst of speed ultimately came too late. Less than a month before the Breeders’ Cup he won the Grade 1, one mile Champagne Stakes at Belmont (pp. 2/9), winning by a sturdy 4 ½ lengths over Sunny Ridge, despite being bumped at the start and having to maneuver to the outside to make his closing run. Previous two races were his first attempt at a maiden (2nd place, 5.5f, pp. 10/10) and the maiden he broke (7f, pp. 3/11), both at Saratoga.

*Pedigree*: Bernardini x Ava Knowsthecode, by Cryptoclearance. Similar to Gun Runner’s pedigree in that there are two instances of Fappiano, once on GPC’s sire’s side through Quiet American, and also on his dam’s side via Cryptoclearance. Bernardini is a son of A.P. Indy, meaning GPC has a direct sire line to Seattle Slew. Only other inbreeding is Dr. Fager, champion sprinter, turf horse, and sire of the early 70s, once on either side in the 5th generation.

*Conformation*: Great forearm:cannon bone ratio, clean legs all around. Nice, solid hooves. Somewhat short yet well-sloped pasterns. Good reach with front legs and elbow space. Balanced hip and shoulder with decently muscled hindquarters. Didn’t seem to mind muddy Champagne Stakes.

**3 Battery** (4: 2-1-0) 10-1

*Jockey*: Javier Castellano (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Three out of four starts have been at Gulfstream, with the first, outlier start being at Woodbine in Canada, where he was bred. Last race was a *one and an eighth mile* dirt allowance race (pp. 5/5) on Feb. 10th, which he won by 2 lengths. About a month previously came 2nd in a 1 1/16th mile dirt allowance race (pp. 8/9) 6 lengths behind the winner. Broke his maiden on his second try, a little over a month after his first attempt at Woodbine, winning by just over 3 lengths. Both races were 1 1/16th, but the first was on all-weather track and the second was on dirt. First race’s post position was 5/6; second race was pp. 8/8. \*\*Worth noting: highest Equibase speed figure is 87; GPC was 106 and Gun Runner before him was 101. This race is clearly going to have horses that can achieve a good deal of speed, so it’s unclear right now how he might keep up even though he has had wins at this distance before.\*\*

*Pedigree*: Bernardini x Flawless Diamond, by Saint Ballado. No inbreeding in 5 generations! Having delved into Bernardini’s strengths in GPC’s pedigree, I’ll just discuss Flawless Diamond. Her sire line is really where any strengths may lie. Saint Ballado is a son of leading sire Halo (one of the few true black TBs and sire to 2 KY Derby winners including Sunday Silence) and is out of Ballade, known as one of the best broodmares of her time for producing champions.

*Conformation*: No pictures readily available.

**4 Conquest Windycity** (4: 2-1-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: Joseph Rocco Jr. (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Won last start (Feb. 19) at Oaklawn, a one mile dirt allowance race (pp. 3/8) by 1 ¾ lengths by starting his closing drive after the ¾ pole, going from 4th to 1st by the time he reached the stretch. Previously raced in early October at Keeneland in a 1 1/16th MSW, which he won by ¾ length (pp. 3/12). Ran in the mid-September 1 1/16th mile Iroquois Stakes at Churchill Downs before he had officially broken his maiden (pp. 1/11), coming in 4th place after his attempt at a closing drive was foiled by other closers and speedier horses. In his first start at Saratoga in early August, a 1 1/16th mile turf race, he came in second place (pp. 1/10), finishing just over 1 length behind the first place finisher. \*\*Highest career speed figure is 89\*\*

*Pedigree*: Tiznow x Lasting Appeal, by A.P. Indy. This is a pretty star-studded pedigree in that there is a lot of Seattle Slew and Secretariat, with both instances of Secretariat on the dam’s side. Tiznow’s strength comes from his dam’s pedigree: Cee’s Song is by Seattle Song, a son of Seattle Slew. In addition to being a daughter of A.P. Indy, Lasting Appeal’s dam, Steady Cat, is a Storm Cat daughter. We get just one instance of Mr. Prospector within the 5 generations from Steady Cat’s dam, Hopespringsforever. 3x Northern Dancer, all in 5th generation, with 2 instances on sire’s side. Also 2x Buckpasser, all on dam’s side.

*Conformation*: Mostly one racing photo to go by. Looks like he has a great hind end with good muscling, although maybe sickle hocked a little. Relatively short back with long bottom line (this isn’t the right term but I can’t think of the correct one right now). Even though hind end is muscular, shoulder looks pretty big still in comparison. Long forearm and seemingly short cannon bones, but very short pasterns and weirdish fetlock. Front heels look a bit collapsed.

**5 Candy My Boy** (7: 2-2-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: Francisco Torres (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Last 3 starts have all been at Fair Grounds and have included two wins. Raced last a little over a month ago in the Risen Star Stakes, one and a sixteenth miles on the dirt, and came in 4th after Gun Runner, Forevamo, and Mo Tom respectively (pp. 13/13) after he couldn’t hold onto the early lead he took. Clearly a frontrunner, he won a one mile dirt allowance race in late January (pp. 4/8) by nearly 3 lengths, holding first place throughout basically the whole race. Didn’t break his maiden until New Year’s Eve at Fair Grounds, after 4 prior starts at a variety of other tracks. The maiden that he broke was a mile 70 yards (pp. 6/10), which he won by 2 ¼ lengths after- you guessed it- staying in the lead the entire time. It seems like he hadn’t really figured out this style in previous races, and seems to prefer distances around 1 mile, as he did poorly at shorter distances in his previous maiden-breaking attempts. Considering that he will once again be up against the 3 horses he finished behind in the Risen Star *and* at a longer distance no less, based on his running style I really don’t think he will be able to hold onto a lead for as long as he would need.

*Pedigree*: Candy Ride x Runaway Rosie, by Include. Like other Candy Ride sired pedigrees, this one also has a good deal of diversity in country of origin. Runaway Rosie’s pedigree also has some Brazilian blood through her dam’s sire, Siphon. Most of the names on Runaway Rosie’s side are unfamiliar. Runaway Rosie herself was decently successful, finishing in the money in a variety of races between 8 and 9 furlongs from ages 2 to 4. Include was also successful, winning 10 of his 20 starts, and getting 13 triple-digit speeding ratings in his final 15 starts, including back-to-back 117s (it should go without saying that this is *very* fast). Include has a direct sire line to a horse called Ack Ack, a champion sprinter who won 19 out of 27 starts. What really strikes me about these horses is how many starts they were able to handle- they are clearly built in a way that allowed them to last, and I like that they are on Candy My Boy’s dam’s side. While I don’t really favor his chances in today’s race, I think he might be one to watch in future one mile races, as he certainly has the pedigree for it on both sides.

*Conformation*: Going by a post parade picture from the Risen Star, the first thing that stands out to me is how small and undermuscled his hindquarters are in comparison to his shoulder. Otherwise, great neck and decent looking legs.

**6 Mo Tom** (6: 3-0-3) 5-2

*Jockey*: Corey Lanerie (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Came 3rd in the Risen Star (pp. 2/11) after Gun Runner and Forevamo, favoring a deep closing style that ultimately didn’t pan out when he had to swerve around another horse when trying to get off the inside rail. Won mid-January’s one mile 70 yard LeComte Stakes, also at Fair Grounds (pp. 4/9) by a little over 2 lengths, deep closing successfully, and beating out fellow contenders Tom’s Ready and Uncle Walter. Came third, finishing before Gun Runner, in the mile and a sixteenth KY Jockey Club Stakes (pp. 9/13). Impressively moved up from 12th place to finish just a head behind second place finisher Mor Spirit. Won the Street Sense Stakes, a dirt miler, at Churchill Downs in early November (pp. 1/9) by 1 length. Broke his maiden in a 6f MSW on the first try, and then came 3rd about a month later in another 6f allowance race, seemingly needing more time to close. Clearly does well at lengths at and a little over one mile, but unclear whether he can translate his third place finishes in 1 1/16th mile races to a finish in the money in a 1 1/8th mile race such as today’s.

*Pedigree*: Uncle Mo x Caroni, by Rubiano. Uncle Mo was a champion 2 year old, who also won some 8f races as a 3 year old before retiring. He can trace his sire line back to Caro, and his dam, Playa Maya, is out of Arch, who won 10f and 9.5f races before a successful career at stud. Caroni also has ties to Caro- he is her dam’s sire. Rubiano is a son of Fappiano. Aside from 2x Caro, 2x Nijinsky (son of Northern Dancer and champion UK racehorse in the early 70s) on dam’s side, and 3x Northern Dancer with 2x on dam’s side due to Nijinsky.

*Conformation*: Great hindquarters in comparison to shoulder size. Maybe a little benchkneed on right side? Nervous neck bulge. Nice non-waspy waist. Good hooves.

**7 Tom’s Ready** (8: 1-3-0) 15-1

*Jockey*: BJ Hernandez Jr. (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Like many of today’s other contenders, Tom’s Ready also raced in the Risen Star (pp. 7/11). However, “ready” is not quite how I would describe his lackluster performance, which resulted in a 7th place finish after a short-lived attempt to stalk the pace. Also raced in the LeComte, coming in 2nd place after Mo Tom but ahead of Uncle Walter (pp. 9/9) in a run that was kind of all over the place. Came second in a third Fair Grounds race, a dirt allowance one mile 70 yard gig (pp. 7/7), where he lost by just a neck after a moderately successful creep run (like a more spread out closing drive). In addition to the Risen Star, Tom’s Ready also experienced a mile and a sixteenth in the KY Jockey Club Stakes (pp. 7/13), but came in 8th place. Really does not seem like he is up to par with the distance and the other contenders today.

*Pedigree*: More Than Ready x Goodbye Stranger, by Broad Brush. More Than Ready’s sire, Southern Halo, is a son of aforementioned Halo (mentioned in Battery’s pedigree). Broad Brush is a son of the aforementioned (in Candy My Boy’s pedigree) Ack Ack. More Than Ready’s damsire, Woodman, is a Mr. Prospector son. And Goodbye Stranger’s damsire is Deputy Minister. 2x Northern Dancer (once on either side) and 3x Turn-To (2x on dam’s side; all in 5th generation).

*Conformation*: Gorgeous looking, but kind of butt high. Also nervous neck bulge, maybe with high neck tie-in. GREAT legs and large hindquarters. Really like the way this guy looks even if he probably can’t handle the distance.

**8 Uncle Walter** (4: 1-1-1) 20-1

*Jockey*: Robby Albarado (different from last start)

*Race Record*: Guess who else raced in the Risen Star? Yes, Uncle Walter. He came in 11th place, aka last place (pp. 10/11) after starting in 6th place and weakening and continuously falling back beyond the quarter pole. He came 3rd in the LeComte (pp. 2/9), ultimately finishing 3 lengths behind winner Mo Tom. He broke his maiden in October at Keenland in a 7f dirt race, but couldn’t replicate those results in a second 7f dirt race at Churchill Downs a month later. Pass.

*Pedigree*: Uncle Mo x Look For Good, by Unbridleds Song. Unbridleds Song combines the strength of Fappiano (sire’s sire) with Caro (dam’s sire). 2x Kris S (mediocre racer; sire of Arch) and 2x Caro, each occurring once on either side.

*Conformation*: Really solid, sturdy looking horse. Good proportions, and very well-muscled hip. Legs look clean and well-built. Beautiful neck and deep girth.

**9 Dazzling Gem** (2: 2-0-0) 12-1

*Jockey*: Shaun Bridgmohan (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Undefeated in only two starts, one of them his maiden and the second an allowance race, both at Oaklawn. The allowance race was a mile and a sixteenth (pp. 9/11), which he won by stalking the pace, ultimately winning by 2 lengths. His maiden was one mile on the dirt (pp. 7/11) in which he started off the pace but quickly took the lead by the half mile marker and held onto it until the end, coming first by 1 length. Race notes describe him as determined. So far his highest speed has been 98.

*Pedigree*: Misremembered x Dazzler, by Vindication. While none of those names may immediately ring a bell, this is a solid pedigree, in my opinion. To begin with, there’s no inbreeding in the 5 generations available on Pedigree Query. Moreover, Vindication is a son of Seattle Slew, and Dazzler’s damsire is Summer Squall, who is the product of a Storm Bird and Weekend Surprise (prolific Secretariat daughter, and AP Indy’s dam) and won 13 out of his 20 starts. Misremembered is by Candy Ride and out of Beyond Perfection, a mildly successful racer with very non-descript yet old school blood.

*Conformation*: Fantastic hindquarters but maybe a little benchkneed on right front. Deep girth but almost looks a bit wasp-waisted in comparison to hind end.

**10 Zapperini** (X: x-x-x) 20-1

*SCRATCHED*

**11 Forevamo** (6: 1-3-0) 10-1

*Jockey*: Colby Hernandez (same as last start)

*Race Record*: Out of all the contenders today who are Risen Star alumni, to me Forevamo seems like he has the best chance today. Even though he came second to Gun Runner by half a length, he was carrying more weight (120lbs, which is just 2lbs less than what all contenders will be carrying today at a longer distance) and seemed like he made his bid off the rail just a little too late (pp. 4/11). Came second to Candy My Boy in a dirt mile allowance race also at Fair Grounds (pp. 6/7) toward the end of January, but it seemed like there wasn’t enough distance for him to truly make his closing bid. Forevamo attempted 1 1/16th miles in late November in the Delta Downs Jackpot Stakes (pp. 1/10), coming in 6th place after a tired and scattered run. However, it seems like he has built up some more endurance since then.

*Pedigree*: Uncle Mo x Candlelightdinner, by Slew Gin Fizz. Uncle Mo strikes again! He certainly has a pretty active crop this season. As one might expect, Slew Gin Fizz has Seattle Slew in his pedigree- specifically he is Slew Gin Fizz’s damsire. Relaunch, Slew Gin Fizz’s sire, came in the money 14 times out of 18 starts, and is out of the fairly successful mare Foggy Note. Candlelightdinner’s damsire Whos For Dinner is by Native Charger, a son of Native Dancer. Only inbreeding is 2x Intentionally in the 5th generation on dam’s side. Intentionally won 18 of 34 starts (finishing in the money a total of 27 times) over the course of a racing career that spanned 5 years.

*Conformation*: Very leggy, a bit butt high. Legs look decent and shoulder not too big, but kind of oblong shaped hip- proportions here seem a little off, but it might just be the angle of the picture I’m working off of.