

OSCAR'S 2007 SUPER DERBY GREEN SHEET

"THIS DOG CAN HUNT!"



By Saturday evening I will be able to say that I have three things in common with some people who tried to win a race worth \$500,000:

- I own a 3 year-old
- Who was bred to race, and
- Who has not been able to catch a Grasshopper!

Well, ok, Flo (Florence of Arabia) is not a racehorse, she's Siberian husky. (No, she wasn't sired by Siberian Express!). Her sire Alex (unfortunately not Afleet Alex), raced in the 2000 Iditarod and she was supposed to follow in his paw prints, but she propped and wheeled every time she was tacked up, and was a poor eater. With a bleak outlook for a career as a racing sled dog, she was dropped into the claiming ranks and we picked her up as a weanling.

She has actually turned out to be more like a hunter / jumper than a flat runner, although she has excellent sprint speed. Honestly! You should see her jump straight up in the air when hunting moles, field mice, chipmunks and various other wildlife in our backyard. She has even caught a few Proud Birdies!

Her problem, however, is the same one that nine horses are going to have in Saturday's Super Derby...try as she might (and believe me she has tried); she has not been able to catch a Grasshopper! They are just too quick for her.

If it took all Street Sense had to catch and beat him, is there hope for any of the other horses to catch Grasshopper on Saturday, or will he jump upon them like a swarm of locusts and devour them quickly and completely?

Before we discuss the others let's first take a look at...

GRASSHOPPER.

I was so impressed with this guy's potential that I made him my Bud Longshot in the Travers, and he very nearly pulled it off! He came into that race never even having run in a stakes race, much less a graded stakes, and came out of it as the "new kid in town".



That was a huge effort on his part, and the question I have is not whether or not Grasshopper will bounce, but how

high? Against this field, however, he would have to double dribble and get called for non-traveling for him to lose. He breaks toward the outside and Albarado will simply ration his tactical speed to establish a stalking position behind the likely pacesetter, Forty Acres. When the time is right he will simply cruise to the lead and continue straight to the Winner's Circle, earning a spot in the gate for the BC Classic.

The only fly in the ointment for Grasshopper (please note the insect pun), is the possibility of an off track. By Dixie Union, out of a Mr. Prospector mare, he should have absolutely no problems, but you never really know until they go out and do it. (If you were to predict performances based on breeding alone, Lure should have been an outstanding dirt horse, and Cigar should have been a grass champion!)

Grasshopper is the only horse in this race that will actually carry less weight than he did in his last race and will offer absolutely no value at the windows, so if you want to make money you need to play a trifecta. Who can be used underneath Grasshopper?

LEONNATUS ANTEAS – Oscar's Bud Longshot could have the last laugh!

Never heard of him? I bet a few of those Iditarod mushers did! This guy won the Sovereign Award as the Canadian 2 year-old champion last year. What was so remarkable about him was that he won races over three different surfaces. He won the Vandal Stakes on dirt, the Cup and Saucer on turf, and the Coronation Futurity on Polytrack!

His three races in 2007 have all been against older horses, and he has won one, and finished second by a nose in another. In his 3rd and most recent 2007 race, the G2 Play the King, he finished 5th to the solid Le Cinqieme after getting bumped racing over a soft turf course that he may not have cared for.

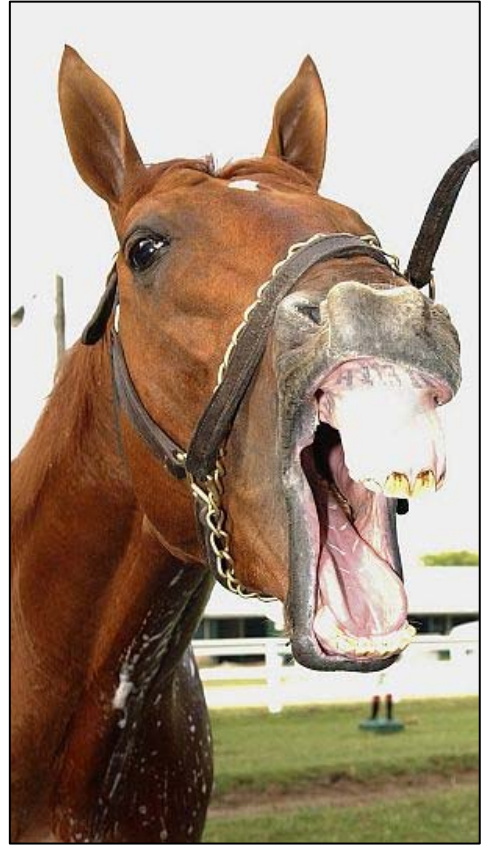
His brilliant work in 1:11 and change over the Woodbine training track last Sunday indicates that he may be sitting on a big one. Although there are many things to like about him, there are some big question marks as well.

First, although he has raced on three different surfaces, they were all at Woodbine. He is shipping out of his cool, dry Canadian surroundings to the heat and humidity of Louisiana.

Second, although he has a win at today's distance, that was against other Canadian-breds last fall, and it was accomplished in pedestrian time.

Third, he is by Stormy Atlantic out of a Cure the Blues mare, and he needs a perfect trip to win at this distance. If this race was a half furlong shorter and on the turf, I'd have a bit more confidence in him.

Breaking from the middle of the pack, he should sit a stalking trip, probably just inside of Grasshopper. Whether he is good enough to out duel the Green Monster is questionable, especially at equal weights, but to me he is the great unknown and may be the second best horse in this race.





GOING BALLISTIC

This son of Lite the Fuse has competed in 5 graded stakes, which matches the combined total of the other runners, including Grasshopper. His best finish was a 2nd in the American Derby, and a 3rd in the Secretariat, both on the turf at Arlington. It was certainly no disgrace finishing 3rd behind Shamdinan and Red Giant in the Secretariat, and 2nd behind Lattice in the American Derby, and if this race was on turf, he might be my pick.

However, he has only one win and one 3rd in 8 dirt races, whereas he has been on the board in all 7 of his turf races. He has never raced on an off track, so there is the potential that he could be better with a little moisture under him, but beating Grasshopper would be a big jump for him.

One caveat, however, is that although he has not been a monster on a fast dirt track, he has faced a few monsters, finishing behind Curlin and Teuflesberg twice and Any Given Saturday, and Tiz Wonderful once. Can you just imagine their odds if they were running Saturday?

FORTY ACRES

I learned a long time ago the hard way, NEVER THROW OUT THE LOCAL HORSE! Not only does Forty Acres have 4 wins on a fast dirt track, all 4 were over this very track. He is the home team. This includes his wire-to-wire win in the ungraded Super Derby prep the Prelude, where he defeated 4 of the opponents that he faces on Saturday. He may defeat them again, but it is very unlikely that he can beat Grasshopper. His one chance to do that will be to go to the lead and slow the pace way down, but you can bet that Albarado will not let that happen.

Still, he could hang on for a piece although he has never raced this far. As the local horse, even though he will not be favored, his odds will probably be lower than they should be, and he may even go off as the second choice.

PASS THE POINT

A repeat of Pass the Point's last race might be good enough to get him into the exotics, but not into the Winner's Circle. He finished a good 2nd to Loose Leaf in the Lemon Drop Kid stakes on August 5 at Saratoga. After a stumbling start, he advanced steadily to take the lead in the stretch of that 1 1/8 mile race, before being passed by Loose Leaf who drew away to win convincingly. This well-bred Darley owned colt cost \$400,000 as a 2 year-old so someone must have seen something in this son of Indian Charlie....or were they just being brave?

He reminds me of a junior edition of **Casey Kaufman stopped by to go over the ride. OTR was stepped on by another horse. He was sandwiched at the break, but not a real issue. Casey got him in position mid pack. If you saw the race, OTR suddenly dropped back. That was due to a collision during which a horse stepped on him. He had the nicks and cuts to prove it.** what I liked about Grasshopper going into the Travers – a lightly raced, steadily improving horse who is bred to get the distance. The difference here is that Grasshopper was exiting a monster race in which he won by 6 lengths at the same track.

HOW TO BET

Even given the potential for an off track and the potential for a bounce, I can't see Grasshopper losing. So you have to key him in the win position.

After that, this race is fairly wide open. I think you have to use Leonnatus Anteus. He is the only horse who has run a number even approaching the same area code as Grasshopper, albeit it on the turf.

You also have to use Going Ballistic just because of the company that he has been keeping this year. With the exception of the favorite, this field is at best a grade 3, and is closer to a solid allowance field. This guy has run in 5 graded stakes against some of the best 3 year-olds.

Finally, don't ignore my warning about the local horse – you have to use Forty Acres.

Play a trifecta of:

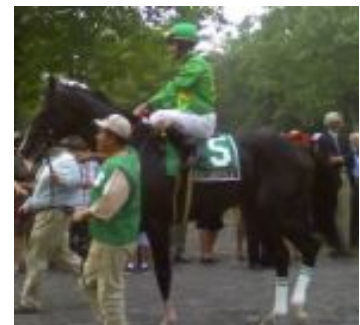
GRASSHOPPER over

LEONNATUS ANTEAS, GOING BALLISTIC, FORTY ACRES and PASS THE POINT over,

LEONNATUS ANTEAS, GOING BALLISTIC, FORTY ACRES and PASS THE POINT

Note: If the track is muddy, you should consider throwing in Beta Capo. Far and away, his best 2 races have been on muddy, sealed tracks

I'm going to take Flo for a walk now. I know she is going to be looking for a Grasshopper to try to catch. It's a good bet she won't catch one. The same phrase can apply to the other 9 horses running in the 58th Super Derby!



Waiting for the Hunt!