



**"NICK'S  
PICKS"**

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**BELMONT STAKES WEEKEND SELECTIONS**

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**BELMONT STAKES ON THE BIG STAGE, AGAIN**

On the biggest racetrack in the biggest city lies the eyes of the horseracing world early Saturday evening when the biggest of thoroughbreds, Justify, goes for horseracing's biggest accolade. After a thirty-seven year drought of Triple Crown coronations, here comes another bid only four Junes after American Pharoah attained the pinnacle over all other living thoroughbreds. American Pharoah proved to a new generation that Triple Crown greatness is attainable after thirteen turned back attempts back to 1978.

And Justify may have the best chance of any of the others, even Pharoah subject to how horseplayers and fans go to the window. He comes into the Belmont with an aura of distributing fear instead of absorbing it to those wanting to make him earn it. The Belmont Stakes field of ten will make it difficult to narrow the wagering enough to set the odds record but here are some others led by Count Fleet who was 1-20 when he won the Triple Crown. Other absolute locks include Secretariat at 1-10, Nashua 3-20, Citation and Spectacular Bid at 1-5, Big Brown 3-10, and three that were 2-5 consisting of Alsab (1942), Seattle Slew and Smarty Jones.

Seattle Slew was undefeated when he won the Triple Crown in 1977 after winning nine races. He would race eight more times after the Belmont Stakes beginning with the Swaps Stakes at Hollywood Park three weeks afterwards where he lost for the first time. Secretariat raced six more times before being retired, never racing as a 4-year old. Citation's Triple Crown was part of a 16-race winning streak that included a win in the Jersey Derby run in between the Preakness and Belmont Stakes. After not running in 1949 due to an injury he would finally lose a race in 1950, one of his 25 races after the Triple Crown. Don't expect the same for Justify with a win.

Virginia-breds have performed well in the Belmont Stakes. After Kentucky, Virginia ranks second in states where Belmont Stakes winners are bred. Starting with Algerine in 1876, the list moves forward with Pasteurized (1938), Bounding Home (1944), Phalanx (1947), Sword Dancer (1959), Sherluck (1961), Quadrangle (1964), Arts and Letters (1969), Triple Crown winning Secretariat (1973), Hansel (1991) and Colonial Affair (1993).

Justify's bid for the Triple Crown may appear casual coming off three years of American Pharoah's triumph, similar to the undefeated appearance of Seattle Slew four years after mighty Secretariat. In the current golden era in which racing appears to be, an era of California Chrome, Arrogate, Gun Runner, and American Pharoah, this sudden strong opportunity for another Triple Crown out of an exceptional three-year old crop may seem casual. Perhaps the way to view it is that it would also be the second sweep in forty years, far from frequent.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 8TH BELMONT PARK**

**RACE 1**

6	TICONDEROGA	Brown sends one with back talent off a layoff & another rising into form.
5	AQUAPHOBIA	
8	ALMANAAR	

**RACE 2**

11	CARRERA CAT	Many here getting first '18 start like "Cat" expected to be moving best late.
3	UNPARALLELED	
10	FREDERICA	

**RACE 3 - THE 250,000 BED O'ROSES (G3)**

2	AMERICAN GAL	Some impressive Belmont records here yet none ever started in this stake.
6	LEWIS BAY	
5	DIVINE MISS GREY	

**RACE 4**

1	PHI BETA EXPRESS	Interesting turn to grass for "Phi Beta", one that went well for "Halo" last time.
4	BLESSED HALO	
6	SALMANAZAR	

**RACE 5 - THE \$150,000 TREMONT**

7	MAE NEVER NO	Each two-year old here has a win in last start like Gary Stevens assignment.
3	SOCIAL FAN	
4	OUTSHINE	

**RACE 6**

6	ILLUDERE	Several first-time starter tempting here over those with starts.
10	THROW THE FADE	
3	SUPPORT OUR CAUSE	

**RACE 7**

9	MORRISON	Two colts that beat Morrison had great races last Saturday.
12	HAVE AT IT	
5	THEMANBEHINDTHEMAN	

**RACE 8 - THE \$250,000 TRUE NORTH (G2)**

8	WHITMORE	Joking makes 1st start in 20 months. Bold, but need proven contenders here.
5	LIMOUSINE LIBERAL	
6	WESTWOOD	

**RACE 9 - THE \$600,000 NEW YORK STAKES (G2)**

5	SISTERCHARLIE	For the 3rd time today, Brown saddles two at a time in great spots.
2	HOLY HELENA	
8	FOURSTAR CROOK	

**RACE 10 - THE \$400,000 BELMONT GOLD CUP (G2)**

4	FUNNY KID	Weights a bigger factor than typical, some have lugged 130 lbs for 2 miles.
6	NESSY	
8	POSTULATION	

**RACE 11**

6	MY DREAM	Shug dreaming of a better start for Orb-colt going long again on the turf.
8	STEELES RUN	
9	PROMPT	

TWO-DAY BELMONT DOUBLE PLAYS (Starts Friday)

Belmont Race 9 - New York/Metropolitan Double  
\$2 Double 2,5 with 1,4,11 Cost \$12

Belmont Race 10 - Belmont Gold Cup/Stakes Double  
\$2 Double 4,6,8 with 1,8 Cost \$12

**BELMONT STAKES DAY - SATURDAY JUNE 9TH**

**RACE 1**

1	LA MONEDA	Morley and Contessa looking forward to some firmer going.
6	WAR CANOE	
7	BONITA SPRINGS	

**RACE 2 - THE \$150,000 EASY GOER**

3	RUGBYMAN	Two top Tapits-the one favored lost by 15 while next choice won by 14.
7	DARK VADER	
2	MASK	

**RACE 3 - THE \$750,000 OGDEN PHIPPS (G1)**

4	PACIFIC WIND	Pacific Wind has found fast and winning stride. Picks have Belmont win.
5	AMERICAN GAL	
6	ABEL TASMAN	

**RACE 4 - THE \$700,000 ACORN (G1)**

5	CALEDONIA ROAD	Only "Road" has Belmont & a BC win, yet 3-1 vs. favored KY Oaks winner.
3	MONOMOY GIRL	
7	TALK VEUVE TO ME	

**RACE 5 - THE \$400,000 BROOKLYN (G2)**

9	WAR STORY	War Story won this race last year then faced Gun Runner 4 times. Tough.
3	HARD STUDY	
4	TAKE YOUR GUNS	

**RACE 6 - THE \$400,000 JAIPUR (G2)**

2	PURE SENSATION	The 2 last Jaipur winners face 2 Miller performers back from Dubai.
1	STORMY LIBERAL	
7	BLIND AMBITION	

**RACE 7 - THE \$400,000 WOODY STEPHENS (G2)**

7	BEAUTIFUL SHOT	Big ML odds gap between top two close finishers of Barrera. Taking longer.
4	GIVEMEAMINIT	
9	PROMISES FULFILLED	

**RACE 8 - THE \$700,000 JUST A GAME (G1)**

7	A RAVING BEAUTY	Big Brown here is trainer Chad, saddling top two choices.
5	PROCTOR'S LEDGE	
3	OFF LIMITS	

**RACE 9 - THE \$1.2 MILLION MET MILE (G1)**

1	MIND YOUR BISCUITS	Repeat Shaheen winner won back at Belmont last year in US return.
11	AWESOME SLEW	
4	MCCRACKEN	

**RACE 10 - THE \$1 MILLION MANHATTAN (G1)**

8	SADLER'S JOY	VA-interests "Saddler" & "One Go" find the wire together thru different paths.
3	HI HAPPY	
2	ONE GO ALL GO	

**RACE 11 - THE \$1.5 MILLION BELMONT STAKES (G1)**

8	VINO ROSSO	Passing over him twice, I don't deserve to pick Justify now, seek value.
1	JUSTIFY	
7	TENFOLD	

**RACE 12**

6	COMPASS ZONE	Cox just missed at this level last time, back to 9 furlongs.
9	BATTLE OF BLENHEIM	
10	SOLUBLE	

**RACE 13**

3	JUST WHISTLE	Long race resumes discouraged at the level, short one suspect too.
8	HYNDFORD	
1	PROVEN RESERVES	