

Pletcher Should Rule Florida Derby

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One of the most important prep races on the road to the Kentucky Derby is the Florida Derby at Gulfstream Park. The Florida Derby has a couple of interesting twists that the novice handicapper should take notice of. For one, the 2006 champion **Barbaro**'s little brother **Lentenor** will be in the gate for trainer Michael Matz and he will probably take quite a bit of money at the windows, thus offering little betting value for the handicapper. Being his first race on real dirt after three straight turf races and his debut on the polytrack at Keeneland, he is a definite toss in my book. His morning line odds of 6-1 will most likely be bet down to much lower odds just on sheer emotion alone. Betting on emotion rarely puts out winners. The novice handicapper should stay away from using Lentenor in any win betting.

So who will provide value outside of the morning line favorite **Rule** (5-2), who most likely will attempt to wire the field. In looking at his [past performances](#), he likes to be out on the lead early and had wired the last two Grade 3 stakes back to back. Here's a look at his last win in the Sam F. Davis at Tampa:

http://www.youtube.com/v/jkWXvgjA_bQ&hl=en_US&fs=1&

I really think he should handle the other colts in this one, so a value bet would be to key him over several horses (also known as having Rule on top). So we'll search for two to three horses we think will finish second or third and key Rule on top of them in a trifecta bet. In searching through the PP's, one horse I would definitely use is **Radiohead** (3-1). Trainer Rick Dutrow is 25% second off the layoff and in the money (ITM) 57% of the time, so we'll definitely use Radiohead (the 11 horse) underneath Rule. He's won over the Gulfstream track and he has a decent pedigree (sire and dam's sire both average win distance is over 7 furlongs).

The other two horses I will use are **First Dude** (the 6 horse, 6-1) and **Best Actor** (the 10 horse, 20-1). I like First Dude, with hot jockey Ramon Dominguez aboard for Dale Romans, and he shows an affinity for the track with a win and a placing. Best Actor, a longer shot, ran a good race his last out against highly regarded Derby prospect Drosselmeyer and if you take a look at the trainer stats in the PP's you'll see that he has a great chance to hit the board.

So here's the play novices: \$1 Trifecta 7 over 6, 10, 11 (cost = \$6).

Good luck from the Space Man!