



History not on Brother Derek's side in quest for Derby triumph

by Rommy Faversham

Brother Derek's recently completed Southern California campaign was much like a hot knife through butter, establishing the locally bred three-year-old colt as the likely favorite for this year's Kentucky Derby (G1) on May 6.

This fleet bay Benchmark colt will arrive at Churchill Downs with an imposing four-race win streak, which began last December in the Hollywood Futurity (G1), culminating with a dominant 3/4-length victory in the Santa Anita Derby (G1) on April 8.

If there is, indeed, a vulnerability about Brother Derek, it might be related to the relatively large number of top Derby contenders this year who likewise have shown tactical speed to be one of their main weapons.

Brother Derek is from the fourth crop of the multiple Grade 2-winning Alydar stallion Benchmark, who stands for \$10,000 at River Edge Farm in Buellton, California. Benchmark has sired five graded stakes winners, including 2004 Santa Anita Oaks (G1) winner Silent Sighs.

One of the statistical obstacles Brother Derek will have to overcome is a drought of 43 years since the last California-bred won the Kentucky Derby.

From 131 previous runnings, only three



BROTHER DEREK

Benoit & Associates photo

Benchmark, b. c., 2003

Benchmark 91 265 fls, 10 SWs SI 1.91 DI=2.84	Alydar 75 14 wins, \$957,195, SW 689 fls, 77 SWs SI 5.54 DI=3.94	Raise a Native 61 838 fls, 78 SWs SI 3.14 DI=1.57	Native Dancer 50
	Winters' Love 82 1 win, \$48,911, Spl 13 fls, 2 SWs DI=3.42	Sweet Tooth 65 13 fls, 3 SWs DI=2.58	Raise You 46
		Danzig 77 1040 fls, 189 SWs SI 5.34 DI=4.71	On-and-On 56
	Miss Soft Sell 93 6 fls, 2 SWs DI=2.76	Siyah Kalem 82 3 wins, \$99,502, Spl 287 fls, 9 SWs SI 0.66 DI=2.41	Cold Hearted 74 13 fls, 3 SWs DI=2.27
Northern Dancer 61			
Solamente Un Vez 83 6 wins, \$126,470, SW 10 fls, 0 SWs DI=5.00		Mr. Prospector 70 1178 fls, 180 SWs SI 5.08 DI=3.95	Raise a Native 61
		Lady Graustark 69 14 fls, 4 SWs DI=1.09	Gold Digger 62
		Relaunch 76 725 fls, 89 SWs SI 3.05 DI=3.00	Graustark 63
		Gavel Gertie 71 10 fls, 2 SWs DI=7.00	Inyala 63
			In Reality 64
			Foggy Note 65
			Flit-to 63
			Marisa 56

Derby champions have been foaled in the Golden State [Morvich in 1922, Swaps in '55, and Decidedly in '62]. Since 1962, ten California-breds have hit the board (see chart), but, alas, no more than a whiff of roses.

Brother Derek is out of the unraced Siyah Kalem mare Miss Soft Sell. His older full brother, Dontsellmeshort, won \$402,365 along with a trio of rich listed stakes as a juvenile.

Even though seven of the last 11 Derby winners have been representatives of the dominant male line of Mr. Prospector, there has

not been a single winner out of a Mr. Prospector-line mare.

Several of this year's top contenders, including Brother Derek share this, so far, inauspicious distinction.

Of course, Brother Derek should be way too occupied come May to be worrying about where he came from. And if that is the case, he could do just dandy.

Rommy Faversham is a pedigree specialist and author living in Los Angeles. More of his work is available at <http://www.equicross.com>

California-breds that have finished second or third in the Kentucky Derby since 1962

Year	Horse	Kentucky Derby finish
1963	Candy Spots*	third behind Chateaugay
1964	Hill Rise	second behind Northern Dancer
	The Scoundrel	third behind Northern Dancer
1979	Golden Act	third behind Spectacular Bid
1980	Rumbo	second behind Genuine Risk
	Jacklin Klugman	third behind Genuine Risk
1991	Best Pal	second behind Strike the Gold
1996	Cavonnier	second behind Grindstone
1997	Free House	third behind Silver Charm
1998	Indian Charlie*	third behind Real Quiet

* favorite

Upcoming events

Today—Veterinary Science Seminar "Articular Cartilage Maturation and Repair," Gluck Equine Research Center, Lexington. Call: (859) 257-4757. Website: www.ca.uky.edu/gluck/

April 20-21—Horse Behavior course, University of Pennsylvania, School of Veterinary Medicine, New Bolton Center, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Call (610) 925-6203 or e-mail: cherylo@vet.upenn.edu. Website: www.vet.upenn.edu/labs/equinebehavior

April 20—Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission meeting, Harrah's Council Bluffs, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Call: (515) 242-6560. Website: www.state.ia.us/irgc

April 21-23—Midwest Horse Fair, Madison. Call: Ann Paape (920) 623-4322 or e-mail: Manager@midwesthorsefair.com