

# MEET THE CONTENDERS

## 2025

### REBEL STAKES



#### 1 COAL BATTLE



**PRO:** Undefeated over the dirt and two-time Derby prep winner versatile in running style.  
**CON:** Speed figures don't stick out and will have to work out a trip from inside draw.

#### 2 ADMIRAL DENNIS



**PRO:** Has won two of last three, and poor break cost him in formful Gun Runner S.  
**CON:** Although backers will get reprieve from miserly odds, underlaid price is still possible.

#### 3 SANDMAN



**PRO:** Recovered well from awful break to get second money in Southwest (G3).  
**CON:** Slow starts are not uncommon and likely faces more traffic in this.

#### 4 HYPNUS



**PRO:** Dazzled in debut last month at Fair Grounds, posting faster time than Lecomte (G3).  
**CON:** Relative inexperience is a hurdle, and ability over fast surface unknown.

#### 5 MADAKET ROAD



**PRO:** Battle tested against some of SoCal's best so far; barn has won this eight times.  
**CON:** Pedigree suggests elongated sprints might prove more his forte.

#### 6 PUBLISHER



**PRO:** Troubled trip in Southwest and connections remain confident.  
**CON:** Aside from effort two back, maiden doesn't appear quick enough.

#### 7 DREAMINBLUE



**PRO:** Earned belated diploma in fast time and should get pace to chase here.  
**CON:** Jump from maiden ranks to a G2 stakes is a serious hike.

#### 8 INNOVATOR



**PRO:** Gave Barnes a scare last fall and nearly stole the Lecomte in stakes bow.  
**CON:** Unlikely to get an easy lead here as he did at Fair Grounds.

#### 9 SMOKEN WICKED



**PRO:** Speedball has hung tough at graded level, including credible fourth in Hopeful (G1).  
**CON:** Seemingly more of a sprinting type and has been beating far lesser this winter.

#### 10 BULLARD



**PRO:** G3-winning sprinter should appreciate belated stretchout.  
**CON:** Fared a little worse in San Vicente (G2) than expected.

#### 11 SPEED KING



**PRO:** Southwest winner has only lost once, narrowly to Coal Battle.  
**CON:** One dimensional so far and might be forced into stalking role from this post.

#### 12 BRERETON'S BAYTOWN



**PRO:** Has won two of his last three, albeit against far easier competition.  
**CON:** Speed figures are inadequate and is cross entered for Turfway Saturday night.

#### 13 TIZTASTIC



**PRO:** Has placed in all stakes tries on dirt despite not getting much pace help.  
**CON:** Sometimes flattens out inside the final furlong when unable to catch the leader.

#### 14 HOT GUNNER



**PRO:** Overcame very slow pace to win Sam Houston allowance in a photo.  
**CON:** Uncompetitive in Smarty Jones and seemingly not fast enough on paper.