

# MEET THE CONTENDERS

## 2025

### RISEN STAR STAKES

1



#### AMERICAN PROMISE

**PRO:** Perhaps bounced a little in Southwest (G3) off quick maiden score.  
**CON:** Class-wise, might not be quite ready to win a race of this caliber.

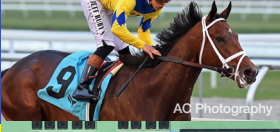
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#### JONATHAN'S WAY

**PRO:** Owns some of the best stakes form via runs in Iroquois (G3) and KJC (G2).  
**CON:** Probably gets nine furlongs against these but might wind up liking shorter trips.

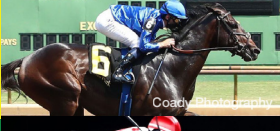
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#### VASSIMO

**PRO:** Enters stakes debut undefeated for barn that has won this three times.  
**CON:** Lack of prior stakes experience the primary drawback.

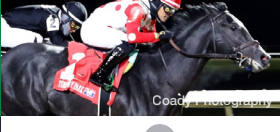
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#### EAST AVENUE

**PRO:** Despite BC Juvenile (G1) flop, was one of last year's best two-year-olds.  
**CON:** Good start is crucial and still wonder if he's a need-the-lead type.

5



#### CHUNK OF GOLD

**PRO:** Owns a win and a second in two starts, including stakes-placing.  
**CON:** Tested for class and has yet to run over the dirt.

6



#### SEATTLE ROAD

**PRO:** Closed to within a few lengths in Lecomte after remaining far back.  
**CON:** One of several here that appear a touch too slow on paper.

7



#### SEPTARIAN

**PRO:** Barn won this last year with Sierra Leone, and this one can improve w/blinkers.  
**CON:** Form of Mucho Macho Man S. has not been flattered in the interim.

8



#### GIICOSO

**PRO:** Barn won this race with 135-1 outsider Ive Struck a Nerve in 2013.  
**CON:** From all indications has a stronger affinity for turf.

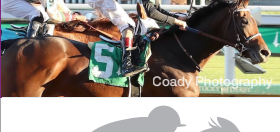
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#### BUILT

**PRO:** Gun Runner winner just missed in Lecomte despite not handling surface.  
**CON:** Might not fare as well if not on the lead or very close to it.

10



#### RENDER JUDGMENT

**PRO:** Last year's Derby-winning connections keep faith despite modest finishes last two.  
**CON:** Likely needs lifetime best to beat them all.

11



#### JOLLY SAMURAI

**PRO:** Multiple stakes winner was left with too much to do in Lecomte after troubled start.  
**CON:** Simply hasn't measured up in two previous Derby prep attempts.

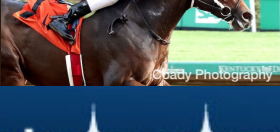
12



#### VAMOS CARLITOS

**PRO:** Solid second first off the claim facing optional claiming rivals.  
**CON:** Enters with too many class and speed figure concerns.

13



#### MAGNITUDE

**PRO:** Might not have handled slop in Lecomte following second in Gun Runner.  
**CON:** Wide draw could hurt chances of getting preferred stalking position.