

# WOODWARD PLAYERS' GUIDE



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**\$600,000 Woodward Stakes (Grade 1)  
Saturday, August 30, 2014  
Saratoga Racecourse – Saratoga Springs, NY  
NBC Sports Network, 6-7 pm ET live!**

- 6 of last 11 Woodward winners went on to win Horse of the Year.
- Only one horse has won the Woodward gate-to-wire in the last 10 years (Alpha, 2013), but only one horse has won from farther than 2 ½ lengths off the pace after a half-mile (Curlin, 2008)
- Favorites have won the Woodward in 7 of the last 10 years, and short-priced favorites have ruled. Five of those winners paid \$2.80 or less, and when adding in Lawyer Ron's \$3.50 win in 2007, odds-on favorites are 6-for-7 in that timeframe, with Mucho Macho Man's 2012 defeat at 4/5 the only blemish.
- Premium Tap's \$64.00 upset in 2006 is a major outlier. In the last 10 years, 73 horses have run in the Woodward, and only eight have been sent off at a longer price. Alpha's \$17.40 win in 2013 was captured as the longest shot in the five-horse field.
- After producing the Breeders' Cup Classic winner in back-to-back years in 2004 (Ghostzapper) and 2005 (Saint Liam), the Woodward has not produced a BC Classic winner since.
- Betting closers in the Woodward has been a losing game, and still only occasionally useful underneath in the exotics. Seven of the last 30 runners to finish in the Woodward trifecta have been closers.
- Rachel Alexandra in 2009 was the last Woodward winner to enter the race off a victory.
- 4-year-olds have won 7 of the last 8 Woodward editions.



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## WOODWARD SUPERLATIVES

**Track Record** – 1:46.64 (Lawyer Ron, 2007)

**Woodward Stakes Record** – 1:48.29 \*\* (Rachel Alexandra, 2009)  
\*\* in editions run at Saratoga since 2006.

**Most jockey wins** – Angel Cordero, Jr. and Jerry Bailey (6)

**Most trainer wins** – Elliott Burch and Bobby Frankel (4)

**Most horse wins** – Forego (4)

**Oldest winner** – River Keen, Forego (7)

## UPCOMING BREEDERS' CUP CHALLENGE PLAYERS' GUIDES

**Sept. 27** – Jockey Club Gold Cup / Awesome Again double issue.

**Oct. 3** – Keeneland FallStars Weekend double issue.

*The Breeders' Cup Challenge Players' Guides are researched, written and designed by Jeremy Plonk along with Brian W. Spencer and the Horse Player NOW team. Photographs by Eclipse Sportswire.*



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## #1 LONG RIVER

Record: 13 starts – 4 wins, 3 seconds (\$325,347)

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- McLaughlin-Godolphin team look for back-to-back Woodward scores after Alpha's front-running upset in 2013.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- 2-time listed stakes winner with G1 pedigree, but 0-6 in graded stakes.
- Off-the-board in 3 straight (Monmouth Cup, Stephen Foster, Charles Town Classic) in an eclectic mix of races.
- Ran 2<sup>nd</sup> in March's G3 Excelsior at Aqueduct to barnmate Romansh.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Impeccably bred son of Breeders' Cup champions AP Indy (Classic) and Round Pond (Distaff). And a maternal grandson of Breeders' Cup Classic champ Awesome Again.
- Paternal grandson of legendary '77 Triple Crown champ Seattle Slew.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Last trainer to win back-to-back – Steve Asmussen, '08-'09, with Curlin and Rachel Alexandra.
- 7 trainers have won back-to-back, only Asmussen w/ different horses.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Irad Ortiz Jr.:** 22yo from Trujillo Alto, PR. 2<sup>nd</sup> in Spa standings breakout meet. 2 G1 wins (Acorn/Test this year Sweet Reason).
- **Trainer Kieran McLaughlin:** 53-year-old Lexington, KY native.
- **Owner Godolphin:** UAE ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid at Maktoum founded Big Blue in '92; more than 100 worldwide G1 wins.



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## #1A ROMANSH

Record: 12 starts – 4 wins, 2 thirds (\$548,580)

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Godolphin aims for back-to-back longshot Woodward wins after Alpha turned the trick in 2013 – adds depth to mutuel entry with Lone River.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Winless in last 3 starts since taking G3 Excelsior at Aqueduct in March.
- Troubled trip when 7<sup>th</sup> by 13 lengths in G1 Whitney as 18/1 longshot.
- 2-time G3 stakes winner both at Aqueduct – Discovery / Excelsior.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son of 2006 champion 3-year-old Bernardini, hero of the Preakness.
- Grandson of Belmont/BC Classic winner AP Indy, as well as Kentucky Derby Derby winner Go For Gin.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Last owner to win back-to-back – Stonestreet Stable, '08-'09 with Curlin and Rachel Alexandra.
- 6 owners have won the Woodward in consecutive years, only 1 with different horses (Asmussen).

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Jose Ortiz:** 20, Trujillo Alto, P.R. native; Aqueduct's leading jockey in this year's winter-spring meet by earnings.
- **Trainer Tom Albertrani:** 56-year-old old Brooklyn native best known for conditioning 2006 champion 3-year-old Bernardini.
- **Owner Godolphin:** UAE ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid at Maktoum founded Big Blue in '92; more than 100 worldwide G1 wins.



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## #2 ITSMYLUCKYDAY

**Record: 18 starts – 8 wins, 4 seconds, 1 third (\$1,302,600)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Whitney runner-up gets chance to turn tables & notch 1<sup>st</sup> Grade 1 win.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Had 3-race win streak snapped in Whitney when clearly 2<sup>nd</sup>-best.
- His Salvator Mile pursuers came back to run 1-2 in G2 Monmouth Cup.
- Won Gulfstream Derby and G3 Holy Bull en route to '13 Triple Crown.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son '07 Champion Older Male Lawyer Ron, who dazzled at Saratoga going 2-for-2 in winning the Woodward and Whitney that season.
- Lawyer Ron set a Spa track record 1:46.64 in '07 Whitney win at 9F.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Last Whitney runner-up to return & win Woodward – Quality Road '10.
- Sire Lawyer Ron was an 8-1/4 length Woodward winner in his final career victory and cemented '07 champion older male with the score.
- Last NJ-based Woodward winner was Skip Away in 1998.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Paco Lopez:** 28yo native of Veracruz, MEX on way to 2<sup>nd</sup> straight Mth title; Seeks 1<sup>st</sup> career G1 score; '08 Eclipse top apprentice.
- **Trainer Eddie Plesa Jr.:** 64yo Seattle, WA native based at Calder, where a member of Crc Hall of Fame; 2000+ wins, trained Three Ring.
- **Owner Trilogy Stable:** Friends Marion Montanari & husband-wife duo David/Olga Melin from Florida; major arts supporters & philanthropists.



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## #3 MICROMANAGE

**Record: 18 starts – 5 wins, 4 seconds, 3 thirds (\$608,881)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Trainer Todd Pletcher, mired in a rare, second-half Saratoga slump, looks to add a third Woodward title to his trophy case.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Dropped in class to win listed Birdstone Stakes by 8-1/2 lengths and advance to 2-for-2 lifetime at Saratoga.
- Wide and no match 7<sup>th</sup> vs. many of these in July 6 G2 Suburban.
- Biggest win to date was G3 Skip Away at Gulfstream in March.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Sire Medglia d'Oro was unbeaten at Saratoga, winning the Jim Dandy, Travers and Whitney in a big-race sweep.
- Dam, Catnip, is half-sister to Belmont Stakes winner Editor's Note.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Medaglia d'Oro sired 2009 winner Rachel Alexandra.
- Pletcher won this race with Quality Road and Lawyer Ron.
- Maragh seeks first Woodward tally – last aboard Mine That Bird in '10.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Rajiv Maragh:** 29-year-old native of Kingston, Jamaica. 4-time Breeders' Cup winner, including BC scores in 2011, '12 and '13.
- **Trainer Todd Pletcher:** 47-year-old Dallas, TX native rates #1 all-time in trainer earnings \$275M and is a 6-time Eclipse Award winner.
- **Owner Mike Repole:** 45-year-old Queens native best known in biz for founding/selling Vitamin Water. Saratoga leading owner '10, '11, '12.



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## #4 MORENO

**Record: 20 starts – 3 wins, 6 seconds, 3 thirds (\$1,709,940)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Attempts rare Whitney-Woodward sweep – done only once since 2006 when the 2 races were first held at the same Saratoga meet.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Snapped 8-race losing streak with his front-end domination in Whitney.
- Winner of G2 Dwyer during 3YO season that included placings in the Jim Dandy, Travers and Pennsylvania Derby.
- Went 0-for-9 in Cali maiden ranks before coming east & breakout out.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son of '04 Horse of Year Ghostzapper, whose final career defeat was 3<sup>rd</sup> in Saratoga's G1 King's Bishop before winning 6 in a row to close.
- Dam, Danceinthesunlight, closely related to historic Canadian mares Dance Smartly and Dancethruthedawn.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Lawyer Ron in '07 is only to win Woodward-Whitney at Spa meet.
- Since '89, 5 have swept Woodward-Whitney: Lawyer Ron '07, Lido Palace '01, '00 Lemon Drop Kid, In Excess '91, Easy Goer '89.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Junior Alvarado:** 28-year-old from Barquisimeto, Venezuela; 4 career G1 wins, including '13 Forego at the Spa (Strapping Groom).
- **Trainer Eric Guillot:** 52, New Iberia, LA native – same town as Eddie Delahoussaye; trained G1 winners Champagne d'Oro / Santa Teresita.
- **Owner Southern Equine Stables:** Louisiana native Mike Moreno, now of Houston. Acquired an interest in Bodemeister prior to Ky Derby 2nd.



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## #5 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

**Record: 32 starts – 8 wins, 6 seconds, 6 thirds (\$1,847,938)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- John Velazquez aims for 3<sup>rd</sup> straight Woodward win – something only done by his mentor Angel Cordero (5 in a row) and Eddie Aracard (3).

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Carries 7-race losing streak into Woodward, checking in 4<sup>th</sup> in Whitney.
- Runner-up in this year's G3 Pimlico Special, 3<sup>rd</sup> in G2 Suburban.
- Last graded win – 6/29/13 G3 Cornhusker at Prairie Meadows.
- Won 3 Derbies in succession in 2011 – Iowa, West Virginia, Super.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son of 2001 Saratoga Special winner Jump Start.
- Sire Jump Start best known at stud for millionaire sons Rail Trip & Prayer For Relief, as well as Pants on Fire.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Velazquez's 4 wins: Alpha, To Honor And Serve, Quality Road, Lawyer Ron. Only Cordero (6), Bailey (6) & Shoemaker (5) have more scores.
- Age 6, would be oldest Woodward winner since River Keen (7) in '99.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey John Velazquez:** 42-year-old native of Carolina, PR; 2011 Hall of Fame inductee, only US jockey to top \$300M mount earnings
- **Trainer Dale Romans:** 47-year-old Louisville, Ky native. Earned '12 Eclipse Award as top US trainer; won '11 Preakness (Shackleford).
- **Owner Zayat Stables:** Ahmed Zayat, Egyptian native and NJ-based businessman made mark in beverage industry; raced stars like Bodemeister, Pioneer of The Nile and Paynter.



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## #6 ZIVO

**Record: 15 starts – 9 wins, 2 seconds, 4 thirds (\$782,300)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- New York-bred is Woodward's hottest horse with 6-race winning streak.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- 13/1 upset winner of Belmont's G2 Suburban on July 5 over Moreno.
- 5-for-5 this year, including 4 stakes victories (3 vs. state-bred rivals).
- Runner-up in Saratoga's Albany Stakes vs. NY-bred 3YOs in 2012 before missing nearly an entire calendar year and returning at Spa '13.

### PEDIGREE: NEW YORK-BRED

- Son of sprinter True Direction, who won the 2002 G3 Fall Highweight.
- \$200K-earning dam was a 2-time allowance winner going 1-1/8 miles.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Last winner of Suburban & Woodward in same year was Mineshaft '03.
- Saint Liam ('05) is only 5YO to win Woodward in the past decade.
- Would be 1<sup>st</sup> Woodward win for Lezcano and Brown.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Jose Lezcano:** 29-year-old native of Panama. Piloted BC champs Wise Dan and Royal Delta among others.
- **Trainer Chad Brown:** 35-year-old born in Saratoga, raised in nearby Mechanicville, NY. Ex-Frankel asst. w/ Ghostzapper, Empire Maker.
- **Owner Thomas Coleman:** 48-year-old hedge fund manager from Westchester County, NY. Has owned horses for about 10 years.



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## #7 NORUMBEGA

**Record: 14 starts – 4 wins, 3 seconds, 1 third (\$503,945)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Saratoga's leading jockey Javier Castellano knows no longshot limits, winning last week's Travers with 19/1 shot V.E. Day.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Winner of the G2 Brooklyn in June at Belmont at 1-1/2 miles on dirt.
- Wide, well-beaten 8<sup>th</sup> last time out in the G2 Suburban at Belmont.
- Twice runner-up in G3 company in the Skip Away and Discovery.
- Struggles with consistency, soundly beaten 4 times in last 9 starts.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son of 2-time BC Classic winner Tiznow, sire of stars like Travers winner Colonel John and Dubai World Cup champ Well Armed.
- Dam Meghans Joy has been a blue-hen mare producing 5 major stakes performers in her second career.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- '12 Woodward winner To Honor And Serve also came directly out of an off-the-board finish in the Suburban.
- McGaughey last won the Woodward in '89 with star 3YO Easy Goer.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Javier Castellano:** 36-year-old native of Maracaibo, Ven. Reigning Eclipse Award-winning rider after record-\$26M season in '13.
- **Trainer Shug McGaughey:** '04 Hall of Fame inductee is 64-year-old native of Lexington, KY. 9-time Breeders' Cup race winner.
- **Owner Stuart Janney:** Lawyer & chairman of Bessemer Trust, heir to family's vast racing operation in Glydon, Md. Co-owned Orb.



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## #8 LAST GUNFIGHTER

**Record: 18 starts – 9 wins, 3 seconds, 2 thirds (\$2,631,135)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Hometown boy Chad Brown seeks to get this millionaire back on track after a disappointing follow-up to his outstanding 2013 season.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Wide trip & never fired when 5<sup>th</sup> by 10 length in G1 Whitney at 23/1.
- Listless 9<sup>th</sup> in G2 Suburban at Belmont vs. several Woodward foes.
- 5-time winner in '13, led by G3 Pimlico Special & Hawthorne Gold Cup.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Son of First Samurai, 2-for-2 at the Spa in 2005, including G1 Hopeful.
- His mama is Saratoga Cat, but ironically she never ran at the Spa – nor did his grand dam (maternal grandmother) Saratoga Sparkle.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Only 3 horses have won Pimlico Special/Woodward in career: Cigar, Mineshaft and Skip Away.
- Last year's Woodward winner, Alpha, rebounded from 6<sup>th</sup> in Whitney.
- Bravo 5<sup>th</sup> in '97 on Editor's Note behind Formal Gold, a horse he rode earlier in his career.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Joe Bravo:** Long Branch, NJ native turns 43 on 9/10. More than 2 dozen riding titles in his native state, hence "Jersey Joe."
- **Trainer Chad Brown:** 35-year-old born in Saratoga, raised in nearby Mechanicville, NY. Ex-Frankel asst. w/ Ghostzapper, Empire Maker.
- **Owner John Gunther:** Vancouver investor owns Glennwood Farm in Ky. Bred stars Stevie Wonderboy, Stay Thirsty & First Samurai.



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## #9 STEPHANOATSEE

**Record: 17 starts – 3 wins, 4 seconds, 1 thirds (\$286,600)**

### WHY HE'S IMPORTANT:

- Hall of Fame trainer Nick Zito looks to end a G1 drought dating back to April 2012 Carter Handicap at Belmont.

### PAST PERFORMANCES:

- Off-the-board in last 4 stakes bids dating back to 2<sup>nd</sup> '13 G2 Strub.
- Has lost 10 races in a row dating back to 2012 Barbaro Stakes win at Delaware Park, his only career stakes score to date.

### PEDIGREE: KENTUCKY-BRED

- Half-brother to 2010 Preakness victor Shackleford, a Met Mile winner at age 4 – but a horse who ran poorly in both career Saratoga bids.
- Regally bred son of '92 Breeders' Cup Classic/Belmont hero AP Indy.

### WOODWARD POINTS:

- Both Zito and Rosario seek their 1<sup>st</sup> Woodward wins.
- Zito's Derby winner Strike the Gold was 4<sup>th</sup> in the '92 & '93 Woodward.
- Rosario 3<sup>rd</sup> aboard Cease in 2012 in only prior Woodward mount, and then he was 4<sup>th</sup> again in '94 with Derby champ Go For Gin.
- Saint Liam ('05) is only 5YO to win Woodward in the past decade.

### THE CONNECTIONS:

- **Jockey Joel Rosario:** 29-year-old native of Santo Domingo, DR. Won '13 Derby aboard Orb and '14 Belmont with upsetter Tonalist.
- **Trainer Nick Zito:** '05 Hall of Fame inductee has won Ky Derby twice, Preakness once, and Belmont twice. 66-year-old Brooklyn native.
- **Owner My Meadowview Farm:** Leonard Riggio of Water Mill, NY, Barnes & Noble chairman and owner of Game Stop.



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