



Iron Maidens Thoroughbreds
Winning Moves in the Belmont Stakes
May 31, 2010



Every year race fans debate the running styles of the Belmont Stakes contestants. Which manner - front runner, pace presser, mid-pack runner or come from behind stalker - is the most favorable for winning the grueling 1 ½ mile Test of Champions? We researched that question and reviewed the last twenty editions of the Belmont Stakes. We discovered that stalkers won eight of the races, with mid-pack runners taking five editions. Pace pressers presided over four races and only two were victorious on the front end. The 1997 running of the Belmont Stakes was not counted, due to the unusual running style of the winner, Touch Gold, who led in the early stages, dropped back to fourth then came on again in the stretch.



Victory Gallop ruins Real Quiet's Triple Crown bid 1998

Additionally, much has been made about jockeys unfamiliar with the Belmont track making their moves prematurely. Fourteen of the last twenty winners made their move at the mile pole while the rest made their runs at the 1 ¼ mile pole. Below are brief comments and running styles on the winners of the last twenty Belmont Stakes.

1990 Go and Go – sat mid-pack, made his move at the mile pole, won by eight lengths. Thirty Six Red lead to the 1 ¼ pole, finished second. Unbridled was fourth after a mile and didn't improve his position. Mid-pack runner.

1991 Hansel was third at the ½ mile pole, took the lead shortly thereafter and won by a head over Strike the Gold, who was eleventh at the ½ pole, seventh after a mile and fifth at the 1 ¼ pole. Pace setter.

1992 A.P. Indy was fourth up to the 1 mile pole then made his move, winning by ¾ a length over My Memoirs who was sixth at the 1 mile pole and made his move thereafter. The pace setter and presser finished fifth and seventh. Mid-pack runner.

1993 Colonial Affair was ninth at the ¼ pole, fifth after a mile and won by 2 ¼ lengths. Kissin Kris was last at the ½ pole, ninth at the mile and got up for second. Pace setter Antrim Road finished ninth. Stalker

1994 Tabasco Cat sat in second, a couple of lengths off of Go For Gin then beat that one by two lengths. Pace presser.

1995 Thunder Gulch sat in fourth, moved up to second by the mile pole, then won going away by two lengths over Star Standard who set the pace. Mid-pack runner.

1996 Editor's Note was twelfth at the ½ mile pole, fifth after a mile and won by a length over Skip Away who was sixth at the ½, second after a mile and first at the 1 ¼ pole. Three horses took turns on the lead up to the 1 ¼ pole, they finished out of the money. Mid-pack runner.



1997 – Touch Gold

1997 In one of the most oddly run but exciting Belmont Stakes, Touch Gold let in the early stages, relinquished the lead and dropped back to fourth at the mile pole, then came on again in the stretch to win by $\frac{3}{4}$ a length over Silver Charm and Free House who were up near the pace during most of the race.

1998 Victory Gallop was tenth in the early stages, Made his move to fifth by the $1\frac{1}{4}$ pole and ruined Real Quiet's chance to be the next Triple Crown winner by a desperate nose. Real Quiet was sixth in the early going, moved to take the lead at the $1\frac{1}{4}$ pole, and had a four length advantage in the stretch until being nipped at the wire. Stalker.

1999 Lemon Drop Kid was eighth to the mile pole, made his move in the stretch and won by a head over Vision and Verse, who was mid-pack most of the way. Charismatic led into the stretch and finished an injured third. Stalker.

2000 Commendable sat second behind the pace setter until the $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile pole then won by $1\frac{1}{2}$ lengths. Aptitude was tenth to the mile pole then made his move to finish second. The rabbit, Hugh Hefner, was prematurely done after a mile and staggered home eighth. Pace presser.

2001 Point Given sat behind the pace, grabbed the lead after a mile and won by $12\frac{1}{2}$ lengths. A.P. Valentine sat right behind him and finished second, Monarchos was third. The pace setters wound up seventh and eighth. Pace presser.



2001 – Point Given

2002 Sarava was fifth in the early going, moved up at the mile pole and won by $\frac{1}{2}$ a length. Medaglia D'Oro stalked most of the way, dueled with Sarava and wound up second. Mid-pack runner.

2003 Empire Maker pressed Funny Cide to the mile pole then took the lead winning by $\frac{1}{2}$ a length over Ten Most Wanted who stalked in fourth, making his move at the $1\frac{1}{4}$ pole. Funny Cide wound up third. Pace presser.

2004 Birdstone sat in the back of the pack to the mile pole, moved up to fourth and commenced his run to win by a length over Smarty Jones who was up near the lead, took command at the mile pole and finished second, 8 lengths ahead of the third place horse. Stalker.

2005 The three top finishers were stalkers. Afleet Alex came from ninth to win by seven lengths, Andromeda's Hero was tenth early and moved up to second and Nolan's Cat came from eleventh for third. Stalker.

2006 Jazil was last early, moved to seventh by the mile and won by $1\frac{1}{4}$ lengths. Blue Grass Cat sat mid-pack and made his move to grab the place spot. Pace setter Bob and John tired after a mile and wound up eighth. Stalker.



2007 - *Its a filly in the Belmont!*

held on to second while Mine That Bird charged from the back of the pack to get up for third. Mid-pack runner.

2007 Rags to Riches sat at the back of the pack, made her move at the mile pole and gave Curlin all he could handle. Curlin sat mid pack, made his move but was out-gamed. Pace setter CP West wound up fifth. Stalker.

2008 D'Tara grabbed the early lead, nobody bothered to challenge him and he won by 5 ¼ lengths. Dennis of Cork came from mid-pack to get second. Pace setter.

2009 Summer Bird was mid-pack early, dropped to ninth at the mile pole then made a big run to win by 2 ¾ lengths. Pace setter Dunkirk