



DERBY

THE TIMEFORM VERDICT

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Timeform's Verdict

With six left in at the time of writing, Ballydoyle will clearly have a major say over how matters unfold, with potential lack of stamina the one chink in Dawn Approach's armour after his top-class effort in the Guineas. Such a mob-handed approach, which now seems likely to include last weekend's Irish Guineas winner Magician, suggests they don't have a standout contender, however, especially with Kingsbarns absent, and **Dawn Approach** is a confident selection to brush them aside and become the third 2000 Guineas winner in the last five years to follow up at Epsom, with doubts over his stamina possibly being overplayed in some quarters. German challenger Chopin may surprise a few and make a place.



ASK THE JURY

Three of Timeform's team give you their take on the Blue Riband.

	Jamie Lynch Chief Correspondent	David Johnson Flat Editor	Adam Brookes Deputy Print Editor
Dawn Approach's Stamina	It's a longer trip than he's ever been before, not guaranteed to stay it on pedigree, but he has improved with each increase in distance so far, and now the Holy Grail is in his sights. For me, such a statement could easily be applicable after Saturday, when the Holy Grail is not the Derby but the Triple Crown. Fanciful stuff, and guilty as charged for getting ahead of myself, but it's a measure of the confidence I have in Dawn Approach stretching out his brilliance to a mile and a half at Epsom. There's literally Derby winner after Derby winner in his stallion line, and the dam's side of his pedigree offers rather more hope of him staying than a cursory look might suggest. Two words: will stay.	The more racecourse evidence we have, the less we need to rely on other factors like pedigree. All the pundits queuing up to point out that Dawn Approach isn't bred to stay a mile and a half are correct, but I'd point out that he isn't bred to run to 132 either. He showed the latter when running away with the 2000 Guineas, again proving relaxed and far more amenable to restraint than his sire ever was. This is Dawn Approach's Derby to lose, and his class edge can see him home.	A few months ago I'd have said he couldn't possibly stay – he'd shown so much speed when winning over sprint trips at two. After a demolition job in the Guineas it now looks far more likely, but I'm still not convinced – being a grandson of Galileo is no guarantee and it should not be forgotten that Dawn Approach's sire New Approach was very much bred to stay the Derby trip, whereas Dawn Approach's female side is generally much speedier. The only Derby winners to have run over six furlongs since Dr Devious in 1992 are Oath and Sir Percy, and no Derby winner since Generous in 1991 has run over the minimum trip.
Ballydoyle Contingent	Resisting temptation to labour the 'rabbit out of a hat' metaphor, in the shape of Magician , Aidan O'Brien has found a proper one, late in the day. In fact, he already had a proper one, but with Kingsbarns sidelined the Ballydoyle battalion was looking a second-rate squad, Battle of Marengo included, until Magician powered home at the Curragh last Saturday. He's further down the middle-distance road than Dawn Approach is, remembering what he did at Chester, and Magician is definitely now the biggest Ballydoyle gun, which gives him a serious shot at winning....winning the 'best of the rest' race, behind Dawn Approach.	Since his first contenders in 1998, O'Brien has saddled fifty Derby runners and could have as many as six this time around. The betting suggests Magician could be his first string after his Irish Guineas win, but for me he's simply a poor man's Dawn Approach. Battle Of Marengo has won the right races, but in just workmanlike fashion, so I'll take Ruler Of The World to come out best of his team. He's already achieved plenty in only two races in less than two months and can step forward again.	The fact that 'The Lads' look like going in mob-handed suggests they don't have a Galileo or High Chaparral, or a Camelot for that matter – the absent Kingsbarns was surely their number one. The presence of Magician is a spanner in the works in terms of how the race might be run – for me, he is no more guaranteed to stay than Dawn Approach – and it could be that Battle of Marengo does his own donkey work, which could pay off. If Ryan Moore, who made the running on Astrology in last year's race, is booked to ride Battle of Marengo I'll be pretty confident that he'll lead home the Ballydoyle runners.
Best Of The Rest	The French and Fabre is one thing, but it has come to something when Germany has a better chance than Britain of winning the Epsom Derby. Still, neither France (Ocovango) nor Germany (Chopin) are on the same page as Ireland in the form book for this year's Derby, regards O'Brien's band of brothers let alone the 'Daddy' himself. The contenders have come via different routes, but, in terms of form, all roads lead back to one horse. Whatever the approach, the answer is Dawn Approach.	A short-priced favourite, and quarter the odds the place make the Derby a good race to look for an each-way bet in, and I can't resist a small go on Galileo Rock at 50/1. He has something to find, but it's encouraging he's already achieved as much as he has given his stamina-laden pedigree, and few will relish the step up to a mile and a half like he will. He'd have won the Classic Trial at Sandown in a few more strides, and a line through Sugar Boy suggests he's not so far behind Battle Of Marengo as their respective odds imply.	While you have to take notice of the fact that Sheikh Fahad has stumped up £75,000 to supplement Chopin, I'd be more respectful of Andre Fabre and Ocovango . While his trainer had reportedly wanted Ocovango to win the Prix Greffulhe – a race Fabre's Pour Moi won en route to Epsom – a bit more easily, he was always in control and I can see him improving enough to go close on Saturday, with the trip unlikely to pose a problem. Of the rest, look out for Galileo Rock running a good trial for the St Leger.