



**Santa Anita | Race 10 | Saturday, April 04, 2026 | Dirt 1 1/16 Miles | Fast**

**Purse \$500,000 | Grade 1 — Santa Anita Derby | 7-Horse Field | 3YO Males | Post: 7:46 PM ET**

**JOCKEY SWITCH NOTE — BAFFERT DUAL ENTRY:** Bob Baffert saddles two horses: Potente (#2, 2-1 morning line) and Cherokee Nation (#1, 5-2). J.J. Hernandez — Baffert's regular first-call rider who piloted Cherokee Nation to his maiden win on Feb. 27 — is listed on Potente, not Cherokee Nation. This is the second consecutive Baffert dual-entry on today's Santa Anita card where Hernandez has chosen the second-listed horse over the one he previously rode to victory (see the Santa Anita Oaks). The model treats this as meaningful behavioral information that aligns with the analytical findings below.

## SECTION 1 — PACE ANALYSIS

### True Front Runners

**SO HAPPY (#5)** — The Glatt trainee projects the field's second-highest Q1 at 40.18 MPH from a front-running position. His San Vicente G2 win showed him pressing through a FAST half before clearing. He and Cherokee Nation are projected to set the early pace from outside-to-inside positions respectively.

### Stalkers / Pressers

**CHEROKEE NATION (#1)** — Projects the field's highest Q1 at 40.36 MPH from a stalking position. His maiden win on February 27 showed him rallying from off the pace after a troubled start, reaching the lead decisively. STRONG SSR (-7.7%) — the only non-ELITE horse in the field.

**POTENTE (#2)** — The Baffert trainee projects at 38.79 Q1 from a stalking position. His San Felipe G2 win showed him stalking from the outside before digging in to win. ELITE SSR (+1.4%) — the model's primary finding for this race.

**ROBUSTA (#4)** — Projects at 38.79 Q1 from a presser position. San Felipe G2 second showed him pressing from behind before being nailed at the wire. O'Neill's second entry. ELITE SSR (+4.7%).

**INTREPIDO (#7)** — The Mullins trainee projects at 38.79 Q1 from a stalking profile. Amer Pharoah G1 winner on this track last fall. ELITE SSR (+8.2%).

### Closers

**VITRUVIAN MAN (#3)** — The O'Neill trainee projects at 37.19 Q1 — lowest in the field. His best form was in wet/sloppy conditions. ELITE SSR (+8.8%) carries a pace-quality discount.

**START THE RIDE (#6)** — Projects at 37.34 Q1. Cal Cup Derby winner but San Felipe was a complete non-factor after a slow start. ELITE SSR (+16.3%) is the highest acceleration figure in the field — pace-assisted and deeply discounted by the model.

### Pace Scenario Projection

The model projects a MODERATE-to-HONEST early pace. So Happy and Cherokee Nation both project FAST individual half-mile times, but in the context of a seven-horse field at 1 1/16 miles for three-year-olds in April, the model projects neither forcing the other into an unsustainably hot contest. The projected half in the :45.5-:46.5 range is FAST-to-MODERATE — honest enough to test but not destructive. This scenario rewards the horse with the most





efficient velocity profile from a stalking position. Potente's +1.4% ELITE figure from the San Felipe — derived from a MODERATE pace where he stalked and sustained — is the analytical benchmark for today's projected conditions.

## SECTION 2 — WIN PROBABILITY MATRIX

Horse	ML	Model Win %	Model Top-3 %	Value Rating
#2 Potente	2-1	28%	72%	VALUE
#5 So Happy	7-2	22%	64%	VALUE
#7 Intrepido	7-2	18%	58%	VALUE
#1 Cherokee Nation	5-2	14%	48%	FAIR
#4 Robusta	8-1	10%	38%	VALUE
#6 Start the Ride	30-1	5%	20%	FAIR
#3 Vitruvian Man	15-1	3%	14%	NEGATIVE

## SECTION 3 — CONTENDER ANALYSIS

### #2 Potente ★★★★★

#### Strengths:

- ELITE SSR (+1.4%) derived from the San Felipe G2 — the cleanest, most relevant velocity profile in the field; his deceleration figure reflects genuine performance against a legitimate Grade 2 field
- Won the San Felipe G2 in his second career start — two-for-two with the only graded stakes win in this field; the model treats this as a legitimate class anchor
- Baffert barn at 33% win rate in 2026; J.J. Hernandez choosing Potente over Cherokee Nation is the most important behavioral signal on the card
- J.J. Hernandez / Baffert J/T at SA in 2026: 43% win rate from 124 starters — the dominant local trainer-jockey partnership
- \$2,400,000 purchase price at Fasig-Tipton August — the market's pre-race assessment of his potential was the highest of any horse in this field
- 2-1 ML implies 33.3% win probability; model projects 28% — a VALUE overlay at that price

#### Concerns:

- Only two career starts — the thinnest sample base in the field for a horse the market prices as the primary favorite
- San Felipe fractions were MODERATE — the model's ELITE SSR is derived from a pace scenario that did not fully test his late-race velocity under pressure
- Route/sprint transition is not a concern (only has route starts), but the limited experience at 1 1/16 miles introduces uncertainty

**Race Shape Fit:** Optimal. Potente's stalking profile, ELITE SSR from a MODERATE pace, and the projected pace scenario for today's race closely mirror the conditions of his San Felipe win. He tracked, sustained, and won. The model projects the same pattern.





**Projection:** The model projects Potente as the most likely winner at 28% — a VALUE overlay at 2-1 morning line. The Hernandez behavioral signal, two-for-two record, and ELITE SSR from the cleanest recent Grade 2 form make him the primary win selection.

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### #5 So Happy ★★★★★

#### Strengths:

- ELITE SSR (-2.1%) — the field's most efficient velocity maintainer; So Happy projects to sustain 97.9% of his opening pace through the final quarter mile
- Won the San Vicente G2 in January — a Grade 2 win at the sprint distance that demonstrated legitimate class; the model treats this as a foundation for today's route extension
- San Felipe G2 third — was competitive against Potente through the stretch in his first route start; the model projects further route improvement in his second two-turn start
- Glatt barn at 26% win rate in 2026 — the highest non-Baffert trainer win rate in this race; J/T with Smith at 23% at SA
- 7-2 ML implies 22.2% win probability; model projects 22% — FAIR value at morning line

#### Concerns:

- FAST projected Q1 pace (45.7s) means So Happy will be pressed early by Cherokee Nation; the specific dynamic of two FAST-paced horses in the same race is a structural concern for his ELITE SSR
- San Felipe third was his first two-turn start; while impressive, it leaves open whether his route form matches his sprint form

**Race Shape Fit:** Good — So Happy's ELITE SSR efficiency means he can sustain pace better than any horse who challenges him early. The concern is whether Cherokee Nation forces fractions that extract too much from his early speed.

**Projection:** The model projects So Happy as the second-most likely winner at 22% — FAIR value at 7-2. He is the recommended 'B' horse in all multi-race structures and a legitimate win-ticket alternative.

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### #7 Intrepido ★★★★★

#### Strengths:

- Won the Amer Pharoah G1 on this exact track last fall — the most specific and directly relevant prior graded stakes win in the field; he has won a Grade 1 at Santa Anita
- ELITE SSR (+8.2%) from the RB Lewis second — stalking, sustaining, competitive in a legitimate field; the figure is pace-assisted but derived from a Grade 3 against better competition
- Mullins barn at 28% win rate in 2026 with a 36% Grade Stakes win rate — the best Grade Stakes trainer stat in this race
- 7-2 ML implies 22.2% win probability; model projects 18% — FAIR value that becomes VALUE above 4-1

#### Concerns:

- RB Lewis G3 second — was outgunned in the stretch by Plutarch in a lesser field than today's Grade 1



- His Amer Pharoah G1 win came over a smaller field at shorter odds; today is stiffer competition than that prep trail suggested

**Race Shape Fit:** Good. Intrepido's stalking profile and Amer Pharoah G1 win on this track give him specific course credentials that matter. The model projects him competitive in the stretch against Potente and So Happy.

**Projection:** The model projects Intrepido as the third-most likely winner at 18% — FAIR value at 7-2. He is a legitimate threat and a recommended 'C' horse in multi-race structures based on his SA G1 course record.

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## #1 Cherokee Nation ★★★

### Strengths:

- Won his most recent start (Feb. 27 maiden) convincingly with a triple-digit figure — the form trajectory is positive coming into his first Grade 1 start
- Highest Q1 in the field (40.36 MPH) — from a stalking position, he projects to be well placed through the opening turn
- Baffert barn at 33% — same trainer as Potente, giving him full preparation benefit
- Santa Anita record: 1-for-2 in starts at this track; handled the course twice previously

### Concerns:

- STRONG SSR (-7.7%) — the only non-ELITE horse in the field; the model projects his velocity degrading more in the final quarter than every rival he faces today
- J.J. Hernandez choosing Potente over Cherokee Nation is the most significant analytical negative; the rider who won his maiden aboard him switched to Potente
- RB Lewis G3 was a flat effort (5th); maiden win was against maiden company; today is Grade 1 level
- 5-2 ML implies 28.6% win probability; model projects 14% — a clear FAIR-to-NEGATIVE valuation

**Race Shape Fit:** Moderate. His STRONG SSR means he will be the horse most likely to fade in the final quarter if the pace is honest. The FAST projected half (45.5s from his recent form) combined with STRONG SSR is structurally problematic.

**Projection:** The model projects Cherokee Nation as the fourth-most likely winner at 14% — FAIR value at best at 5-2 morning line. The Hernandez switch is the decisive behavioral signal. The model does not recommend him as a win selection.

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## #4 Robusta ★★★

### Strengths:

- San Felipe G2 second — was nailed at the wire by Potente after pressing into a clear lead; the form shows legitimate Grade 2 ability
- ELITE SSR (+4.7%) — competitive figure from a Grade 2 route against the same primary rival
- 8-1 ML implies 11.1% win probability; model projects 10% — FAIR value

### Concerns:





- Was beaten by Potente; today they meet again in a Grade 1 where Potente has the Hernandez upgrade and the model's higher probability

**Race Shape Fit:** Moderate — he ran his race against Potente and was beaten. The model projects a similar outcome.

**Projection:** The model projects Robusta as the fifth-most likely winner at 10% — FAIR value at 8-1. Include in wider exotics for his proven Grade 2 competitive ability.

### #6 Start the Ride — TOSS

**Projection:** Cal Cup Derby winner but San Felipe was a flat 6th after a slow start — no contribution to the final analysis. His ELITE SSR (+16.3%) is the most inflated pace-assisted figure in the field, derived from a slow race where he gathered up tiring rivals. The model does not project this figure transferring to a Grade 1 field. FAIR value at 30-1 for wide exotics only.

### #3 Vitruvian Man — TOSS

**Projection:** Best form in wet conditions. No SA starts. O'Neill's Grade Stakes win rate (5%) is the weakest applicable stat in this race. NEGATIVE value at 15-1 ML.

## SECTION 4 — MPH ANALYSIS + SUSTAINED SPEED RATINGS

### Opening Velocity Projections (Q1 — First Quarter Mile)

Horse	Q1 Proj MPH	Role
Cherokee Nation (#1)	40.36	Stalker — STRONG
So Happy (#5)	40.18	Pace — ELITE
Potente (#2)	38.79	Stalker — ELITE
Robusta (#4)	38.79	Presser — ELITE
Intrepido (#7)	38.79	Stalker — ELITE
Start the Ride (#6)	37.34	Closer — ELITE
Vitruvian Man (#3)	37.19	Closer — ELITE

### Closing Velocity Projections (Q4 — Final Quarter Mile)

Horse	Q4 Proj MPH	Decel %	Sustained Speed Rating
Start the Ride (#6)	43.44	+16.3%	ELITE
Intrepido (#7)	41.98	+8.2%	ELITE
Robusta (#4)	40.61	+4.7%	ELITE
Vitruvian Man (#3)	40.47	+8.8%	ELITE
Potente (#2)	39.34	+1.4%	ELITE
So Happy (#5)	39.34	-2.1%	ELITE





Cherokee Nation (#1)	37.25	-7.7%	<b>STRONG</b>
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**NOTE ON Q4 FIGURES:** Start the Ride (+16.3%) and Vitruvian Man (+8.8%) carry the two highest accelerating Q4 figures in the field. The model treats these as pace-assisted artifacts — both derive from races where the horse gathered up a collapsed field from deep position rather than demonstrating genuine class-level closing velocity. Potente's +1.4% figure, while lower in the Q4 ranking, is the analytically superior figure because it comes from a Grade 2 with a competitive field and MODERATE fractions. So Happy's -2.1% figure is the most efficient velocity maintenance projection in the field.

### Critical MPH Insight

The Santa Anita Derby MPH analysis produces a clear two-horse top tier: Potente's ELITE +1.4% from the cleanest Grade 2 form, and So Happy's ELITE -2.1% as the field's most efficient velocity maintainer. Both horses project to run the final quarter at a higher speed than Cherokee Nation (the model's only STRONG-rated horse) and both derive their figures from directly competitive stakes races. The model's primary conclusion is straightforward: the Baffert horse Hernandez chose (Potente) carries the better analytical profile of the barn's two entries, and So Happy is the competitive alternative whose sprint-to-route conversion adds the remaining uncertainty. Cherokee Nation's STRONG SSR is the most telling analytical negative for a horse priced at 5-2 morning line.

## SECTION 5 — IMPROVEMENT & REGRESSION CANDIDATES

### Likely to Improve

**SO HAPPY (#5)** — The model projects So Happy as the primary improvement candidate. His San Felipe third was his first two-turn start — route horses typically improve in their second two-turn effort as they develop pace management and tactical awareness. His ELITE SSR efficiency (-2.1%) suggests his velocity profile has the capacity to hold through a 1 1/16-mile Grade 1.

**POTENTE (#2)** — The model projects Potente as a secondary improvement candidate. His two-race career is an unusually short preparation for a Grade 1, but the quality of his San Felipe win and Hernandez's riding choice both suggest connections believe he has more in reserve.

### Bounce / Regression Risks

**CHEROKEE NATION (#1)** — The model identifies Cherokee Nation as the primary regression candidate relative to his market position. His STRONG SSR (-7.7%) in a field where every rival is ELITE means the final quarter mile will expose him more than any other horse. His 5-2 morning line prices him as a co-favorite against Potente without analytical justification.

**START THE RIDE (#6)** — Model projects regression from his Cal Cup Derby form to Grade 1 company. His San Felipe non-factor confirms the class gap.

## SECTION 6 — SUGGESTED BETS

### Win Bet: #2 Potente Confidence: 7/10

The model assigns Potente a 28% win probability against a 2-1 ML implied 33.3% — a VALUE overlay. His San Felipe G2 win, ELITE SSR from MODERATE fractions, and the Hernandez behavioral signal combine to make him the primary selection. At 2-1, the model recommends





the win bet but notes this is not a dramatic overlay — it is the cleanest analytical case from the most relevant recent form.

**Value Play: #5 So Happy Confidence: 6.5/10**

At 7-2, So Happy is FAIR value with room for improvement in his second two-turn start. His ELITE SSR (-2.1%) is the most efficient velocity maintenance in the field, and the Glatt / Smith combination at 23% at SA provides an operational angle. He is the recommended 'B' horse in all multi-race structures.

**Top 3 Multi-Race: A / B / C A — #2 Potente B — #5 So Happy C — #7 Intrepido Confidence: 7/10**

The model recommends the Late Pick 3 (Races 9-10 anchor on SA card) and the daily double with Potente as the primary A-horse, So Happy as the B-horse, and Intrepido as the C-horse based on his Amer Pharoah G1 course record. Robusta (#4) is the recommended addition on wider tickets. The model advises against Cherokee Nation as a primary horse in any multi-race structure given his STRONG SSR and the Hernandez jockey switch.

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## SECTION 7 — CONFIDENCE RATING

**Overall: 7 / 10 ★★★★★★**

The Santa Anita Derby has the clearest analytical structure of the two Santa Anita stakes on this card. The jockey switch (Hernandez to Potente over Cherokee Nation) aligns perfectly with the model's MPH analysis — Potente is the ELITE horse, Cherokee Nation is the only STRONG horse. So Happy provides a credible alternative with ELITE efficiency. Intrepido brings the only prior Grade 1 win on this track. The primary uncertainty is sample size — Potente has exactly two career starts and the model cannot fully confirm his Grade 1 ceiling. The 7/10 confidence rating reflects structural clarity tempered by developmental uncertainty for young three-year-olds.

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*Report Generated by PTW-CHR Model 1*

*Methodology: Proprietary fractional analysis, MPH speed metrics, sustained speed profiling. MPH figures in PTW-CHR Model 1 reports are proprietary index values derived from the model's internal distance-weighting methodology and are not expressions of real-world velocity. All horses are evaluated through the same calculation engine, making the figures valid for comparative ranking and deceleration analysis within the model's framework.*

*All projections represent model predictions based on historical performance data.*

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