

# Betting Belmont at the Big A: Key Trends to Know for the Upcoming Fall Meet

BY Noel Michaels



Certain running styles and post positions have been more effective than others at Aqueduct, but route races like the 2024 Woodward Stakes above have played fair. (Eclipse Sportswire)

The 2025 **Belmont at the Big A** fall meet, filled with important races and big purses, is set to open at [Aqueduct](#) on Sept. 11. Top horses, jockeys, and trainers will converge on Belmont at the Big A for the season's best turf racing, top-notch 2-year-old racing, and tons of prime wagering opportunities for handicappers all around.

Belmont at the Big A racing fans can expect nearly two months (32 racing days) of high-class racing and wagering Thursdays through Sundays. The physical racetrack is Aqueduct, but the meet is Belmont's. Therefore, the season will have plenty of offer horseplayers, including a stakes program stacked with a total of 45 stakes with purses of \$9.45 million, including five [Breeders' Cup Challenge Series](#) "Win and You're In" races.



For a sneak peek at who you can expect this season at Belmont at the Big A, you can look for clues from last year's Belmont at the Big A fall meet, as well as the results from the recently concluded [Saratoga Race Course](#) summer racing season. Let's dive in.

## Fall Trainer Trends at Belmont at the Big A

[Chad Brown](#) and [Todd Pletcher](#) are coming off excellent showings at the 2025 Saratoga summer meet, which bodes well for their prospects this fall at Belmont at the Big A. Brown and Pletcher tied for the Saratoga training title with 32 wins apiece. The Saratoga title was the 15<sup>th</sup> in Pletcher's career and the eighth Spa title for Brown.

[Linda Rice](#) was next in New York's summer trainer standings at Saratoga with 24 wins, followed by [Miguel Clement](#) (18 wins, 23%), [Bill Mott](#) (16 wins, 15%), [Steve Asmussen](#) (15 wins, 30%), and [Mike Maker](#) (14 wins, 18%).

You can also find clues to who will be the top trainers in this season's Belmont at the Big A standings from the results at last year's corresponding Belmont at the Big A fall meet. Brown and Rice finished one-two on the 2024 fall meet leaderboard with Brown winning the title with 31 wins from 118 starters for 26%. Rice was in second with 18 wins (18%). Note that Pletcher was very quiet at this meet last fall with six wins from 63 starters (10%).

In addition to the trainers mentioned above, other potential top 10 trainers this fall at Belmont at the Big A include several barns that did well last fall at this same corresponding meet such as [Brad Cox](#) (13-for-36, 36%), [George Weaver](#) (10 wins, 25%), [Rob Atras](#) (9-for-35, 26%), [Danny Gargan](#) (7-for-29, 24%), and [Edward Barker](#) (6-for-13, 46%). [Rudy Rodriguez](#) also rarely makes a dent at Saratoga but often gears up for the fall.

## Belmont at the Big A Top Jockeys

The Belmont at the Big A fall meet jockey colony will be led by many of the same top jockeys who did well at last year's corresponding fall season in New York and at the recently concluded Saratoga summer meet. [Irad Ortiz Jr.](#) and [Jose Ortiz](#) ruled the Saratoga standings with Irad coming out on top to win his fourth Spa riding title in a row and his seventh overall. Jose Ortiz was clearly second in the standings at Saratoga, but unfortunately, he will not be an everyday rider back downstate at Belmont at the Big A. Jose is again slated to ride mostly in Kentucky through the fall. As for Irad, he narrowly escaped what could have been a life-endangering situation in the Jockey Club Gold Cup with only minor injuries and will be ready to roll this fall in New York. The fall jockey standings at Belmont at the Big A are very likely to wind up looking a lot closer to the final standings from last year's Belmont at the Big A fall meet. The champion rider from that Belmont at the Big A meet was [Dylan Davis](#), who won 44 races from 211 mounts for 21%. [Kendrick Carmouche](#) was second-leading rider with 34 wins (17%), and [Manny Franco](#) also did well with 27 wins (14%). [Flavien Prat](#) finished fourth last fall with 24 wins (21%), but he has been riding even more often this year for leading trainer Chad Brown and should see his win stats go up. [Irad Ortiz Jr.](#) had only 102 mounts at last year's fall meet and finished fifth in the standings with 18 wins (18%).

Other jockeys vying for spots in the top 10 in the standings will include [Junior Alvarado](#), who rides first call for Mott; [Jose Lezcano](#), who rides first call for Rice; [Joel Rosario](#), and [Ricardo Santana Jr.](#) [John Velazquez](#) takes fewer mounts but can be expected to win at a high percentage and often thrives aboard Pletcher-trained 2-year-olds.

## **Belmont at the Big A Main Track Trends**

Let's take a look at how the track and turf course have played at Aqueduct during the last two Belmont at the Big A meets dating back to last fall. There have been 188 dirt sprints run at the last two Belmont at the Big A meets, including this spring and last fall, and those races have been exceptionally speed favoring. Speed horses racing on or close to the pace within a length of the lead won 116 of the 188 dirt sprints to account for 62% of the races. The other running styles had considerably less success with stalkers, defined for this article as coming from 1-4 lengths off the pace, winning 51 times (27% of the dirt sprints). Closers, defined for this analysis as horses coming from four or more lengths behind, won just 21 times to account for only 11% of the wins in dirt sprints. Post positions played fairly in sprints with horses from inside, middle, and outside posts all having near equal chances.

Dirt miles and dirt route races are very different on the Aqueduct track because mile races are run around one turn and the routes go two turns. There have been 109 dirt miles run since last year and the advantage in those Belmont at the Big A races went to speed horses and horses breaking from the three inside posts (1-3). Horses on or close to the pace won 52 of the 109 dirt miles to account for 48%. Closers, meanwhile, did the worst with just 16 wins for just 15% of the races. In terms of post positions, horses from the three inside posts enjoyed the advantage, winning 57 of the 109 dirt miles to account for 52%. Almost all two-turn dirt routes at Belmont at the Big A are run at 1 1/8 miles. There have been 26 of those at Belmont at the A races since last fall. Post positions were mainly fair, as were running styles with exception of a slight advantage going to speed horses that accounted for wins in 11 of the 26 races.

## **Belmont at the Big A Turf Tips**

Aqueduct features both outer and inner turf courses. Turf sprints are run at six furlongs on the outer course, which also runs races at one mile, 1 1/16 miles, 1 1/8 miles, and the occasional 1 3/16 miles. Inner turf races are run at one mile, 1 1/16 miles, 1 1/8 miles, 1 3/8 miles, and 1 1/2 miles. There's about three times as many routes run on the inner turf than on the outer.

At the last two Belmont at the Big A meets going back to last fall, the inner turf route preferential running style has gone to closers coming from more than four lengths off the pace, who won 40 of the 101 inner turf routes. Speed horses, by comparison, won 28 of the 101 races. In terms of post positions, horses from the inside posts (1-3) did best with wins in 43 of the 101 races. Not surprisingly, the outside posts (7+) did the worst with 25 wins in the 101 races. There have been only 32 turf routes run on the outer course dating to last fall at Belmont at the Big A meets, which is a small sample size. Those races were mainly fair with the slight advantages going to stalkers in terms of running style, and middle posts 4-6 in terms of post positions. Most of the action on the outer turf course happens in sprints at six furlongs. Belmont at the Big A has hosted 80 turf sprints dating back to last fall and with an average field size of nine runners per race. Post positions played exceptionally fair with horses having good chances from inside, middle, and outside posts. The main bias in Belmont at the Big A turf sprints has been in terms of running styles with the course favoring speed horses. Runners on or close to the pace won 42 of the last 80 turf sprints since last fall for 52.5%. Closers are at a disadvantage with wins in just 11 of the 80 races to account for just 14% of the turf sprints.

**The Belmont at the Big A fall racing season is here. Have a great meet!**