

IF I were a betting girl (and on occasion I am), my money for this year's 2013 Kentucky Derby will be on Goldencents, the thoroughbred owned in part by University of Louisville's head coach, Rick Pitino. After wrapping up his second NCAA men's basketball national championship, I'd wager he'll carry his winning streak on through to the Run for the Roses at Churchill Down on May 4th.



So with my pick for a horse to bet on set, the more important question is what to wear?

According to the official Kentucky Derby website, there's few hard and fast rules regarding fashion other than the 139 year tradition of showing off style from classic to outrageous. The more refined attire is generally found in the paddock and clubhouse while out in the infield, anything goes! In either arena, the one given is big hats for women and bright colors for men. <http://www.kentuckyderby.com/party/fashion>

The Derby has always been about the European fashion influence from it's first race back in 1875 to now. When it comes to trendsetting, who could forget the hottest hat buzz created by HRH Princess Beatrice's Royal Wedding big pink bow hat that sold for \$130,000+ on Ebay?



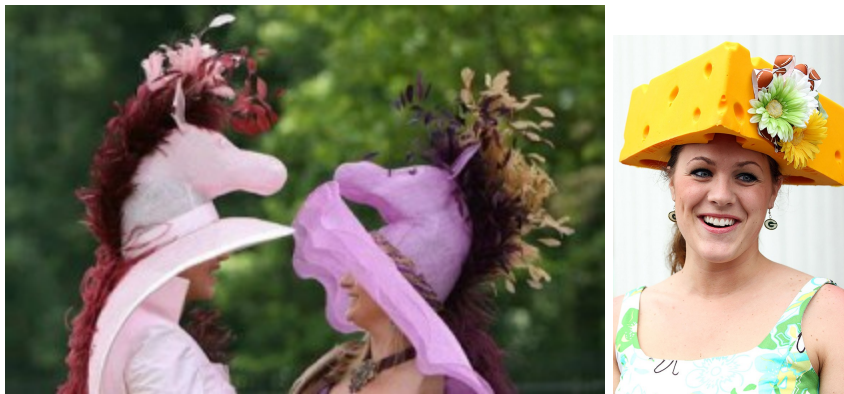
For the event famously known as "The Greatest Two Minutes in Sports", hats dare to be equally outlandish, so in determining your Derby day headwear, here's the low down for topping off your 2013 party attire.

SIZE: Since wearing a hat to the Derby is believed to bring good luck, perhaps the mindset followed that the bigger the hat, the better the luck. At Churchill Down, large brim hats serve a practical function of sun protection as well as embodying the Southern Belle influence. With Wisconsinites still waiting for Spring to arrive (and sadly no worries of sun overexposure), going

grandiose with a hat might brighten up spirits, if not the weather. A wide floppy brim is best for being dramatic without looking or feeling too heavy.



SHAPE: Is up for grabs. Anything really does go here from hats in the shape of Churchill Downs to horseheads, to pillbox, to the most whimsical of creations. Even a Cheesehead adorns well for Derby festivities.



COLOR: Red for the Roses, the official Kentucky Derby flower, is always a perfect color choice, as is the classic look of black & whites. Bright colors and bold or pastel shades of the rainbow stand out and evoke the excitement of the potential pot of gold to be won if your luck pays off on your horse.

EMBELLISHMENTS: Flowers, feathers, ribbons, bows and anything equestrian all find their way as adornments on Derby hats, often times all on the same hat! Usually a theme of your overall Derby day appearance ties your hat, outfit, and colors together, but in the craziness that

carries the day, abandonment is encouraged. If you've ever wanted to free yourself to mix things up, a Kentucky Derby Day party is your excuse.



If you're highbrow or fortunate to shop Chicago, among several exceptional boutiques is the Gold Coast Couture, with notable designers, among them Philip Treacy who created the celebrated Beatrice hat. <http://www.goldcoastcouture.com/>

For the Third Coast locals here in Milwaukee, Lisa Hatch Millinery, featured last year at The Iron Horse Hotel's "Talk Derby to Me" event --THE place to be for the best Derby party and mint juleps in town --has beautiful original designs. <http://lisahatchmillinery.com/>



The Brass Rooster, a men's custom hat shop, http://brassrooster.com/The_Brass_Rooster/HOME.html will be at the Iron Horse this year for their 3rd annual party on race day, Sat., May 4th, starting at : 3-6 p.m. --the race begins promptly at 5:25pm. The Iron Horse will award the "Best Hat" with a \$50 bar tab prize. www.theironhorsehotel.com/food-drink/our-events.html.

Men are not left out of the Kentucky Derby costuming. In addition to hats, men can swagger with style in seer sucker or linen suits (think polo tourneys or Gatsby), gingham shirts or a preppy navy blazer and khakis. Even tuxedos from classic to flaming colors make for festive and special occasion wear at the track or Derby party. Since neckwear is customary for gentlemen,

a flamboyant traditional or bow tie add pizzazz to their overall Derby party appearance. Finishing off with footwear, this year, there's no better choice than Gucci's famous horsebit loafer, which celebrated its 60th anniversary last month.



With the Kentucky Derby making its way onto many people's bucket list, if you can't be there to experience it first hand, there's no reason not to join in the tradition of the Triple Crown by hosting a Derby party of your own or attending a Derby event out.

What's your Derby style?