Preakness Stakes CLOSE CALLS

Down to the wire–25 times (from 136 runnings) in the Preakness has the winner gotten the job done by a neck, or less.

Among those who hit the wire in the nick of time were such racing greats as Triple Crown winners War Admiral, Assault and Affirmed; Kentucky Derby winners Burgoo King, Bold Venture, Majestic Prince, Sunday Silence and Silver Charm; and the gray ghost, Native Dancer.

Witnesses to dramatic finishes are left exhausted and exhilarated–who can forget the battle between Sunday Silence and Easy Goer. . . the three-horse finish with Silver Charm, Free House and fast-closing Captain Bodgit. . . the mighty Curlin fighting to catch Kentucky Derby winner Street Sense in the final strides?

One of the most exciting, and controversial, finishes came 50 years ago, between Greek Money and Ridan (see story on page 20). Here are 15 additional Preakness finishes to savor, with the photo-finish camera needed to determine the outcome.

Kentucky Derby winner Bold Venture (left) raced stride-for-stride with Belair Stud's Granville in the final furlong to win by the slimmest of margins in 1936.

Hasty Road (center) set the pace in 1954, and refused to let Correlation get by late, winning by a neck.

LYDIA A. WILLIAMS

Kentucky Derby winner Street Sense looked home-free in midstretch, but was overtaken by the massive chestnut Curlin in the shadow of the wire in 2007.

NEENA EWING

In what was described as the "race of the decade," winner Sunday Silence (left) and Easy Goer battled the length of the stretch in 1989.

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The Triple Crown winner of 1946, Assault (right), saw his lead evaporate in the stretch as the King Ranch colorbearer held off Lord Boswell by a neck.

SKIP BALL

Another round in the heavyweight battle between Affirmed (right) and Alydar–the 1978 Triple Crown winner was joined by his nemesis at the top of the stretch and wouldn't give way, winning by a neck.

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Kentucky Derby-winning golden boy Majestic Prince (right) remained undefeated as he held off unlucky Virginia-bred Arts and Letters in 1969.

LYDIA A. WILLIAMS

The California-based duo, Kentucky Derby winner Silver Charm (center) and Free House (rail), were joined late by Marylander Captain Bodgit in 1997.

PIMLICO PHOTO

Native Dancer, the 1-5 Preakness favorite, avenged his legendary Derby defeat in 1953 with a neck score over Jamie K. Derby winner Dark Star finished fifth.

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E.R. Bradley's Burgoo King (left), Kentucky Derby winner of 1932, overcame a bad start to win by a head over fast-closing Tick On (far right) and early leader Boatswain.

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Hot-blooded War Admiral (left) quickly shot away from his rivals in 1937, but was all out to hold off Pompoon through the final sixteenth and win by a head.

Brookmeade Stable's entry hit the wire together in 1934, with front-running second-stringer High Quest (inside) holding off Kentucky Derby winner and future Hall of Famer Cavalcade to win by a nose.

PIMLICO PHOTO

*Trainer Frank Whiteley sent out Raymond Guest's gritty Tom Rolfe, ridden by Ron Turcotte, to victory in 1965–the son of *Ribot scored by a neck over another *Ribot son, Dapper Dan, despite losing a shoe.*

DOUBLE J PHOTO

The first of rider Pat Day's five Preakness wins, Tank's Prospect (left) got the better of champion 2-year-old Chief's Crown in 1985 with a sustained drive that carried him to victory in track record time.

WINANTS BROS. INC.

Ethel D. Jacobs' Personality, who romped the fields of Stymie Manor in Maryland as a youngster, drifted out late but held rail-running My Dad George safe in 1970, with Silent Screen back in third.