Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 21st, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Fair Grounds Race 14

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 ECHO AGAIN broke his maiden dominantly on debut, though was able to sneak away with a very slow early pace before separation. According to OptixNOTES he potentially bled in the Iroquois (G3) and followed up that race faltering as the favorite by a layoff. His return in the Springboard Mile last month did not give him any real excuse on that day making the lead and unable to hold on the front end losing ground in the final 1/4.

#2 DENINGTON will pick up the blinkers today and wheeling right back from the Smarty Jones show finish 20-days ago. His form and consistency are noted and perhaps to a fault pairing up an 86 OptixFIG in all three of his most recent starts and must show he can improve to establish himself as a player in this division.

#3 BROMLEY the added distance will be the primary talking point here as he stretches out for the first time off the pair of sprint wins working his way through the conditions. From a physical/visual standpoint he does not give off any strong indications that the distance alone will be his undoing. With that said, class is the big test as he will be required to step up today and improve overall. His allowance win on 12/28 at Turfway Park showed him breaking a step slow, changing leads early on the turn and finishing in a drive while drifting out late.

#4 CONFIDENCE GAME has been in "confidence game" when racing on the lead breaking his maiden forwardly placed in August and on the front end picking up the 11/26 N1X allowance at Churchill Downs. They have not been as effective when rating and that is noted today in terms of tactics and winning strategy with Echo Again in the race and drawn to their inside.

#5 TAPIT'S CONQUEST is cross entered in an allowance race earlier on the card and also noted with a main track only scratch from back on 10/29 at Keeneland returning off the layoff today. Similar to rival, Denington, Tapit's Conquest paired up 88 OptixFIG in both of his races to date; and outside of Denington coming back on 10/30 to break his maiden the 10/1 Special Weight event has not been a productive race. Improvement is required and could be present on this lightly raced type making just his third start and first of the sophomore year, though all factors must be considered in terms of value.

#6 ITZOS will also represent Lobo in this event making his route debut in the third career start pattern. As an individual he has shown progression race-to-race and class to break his maiden on 12/29 taking over from the betting favorite, for the win at Turfway Park. The return for this race in just 23-days is a quick turnaround, though could be a positive sign landing here and seemingly coming out of the maiden win well recording a half mile breeze on 1/14.

#7 INSTANT COFFEE picking holes and area of mention, Instant Coffee has the tendency to break slow something that has been present in his races to date and with that habit, trip comes into play.

#8 TWO PHIL'S found himself in a tough spot stretching out to two turns for the first time in the BC Juvenile (G1) and the added challenge with an outside post and wide trip. His trip did not start well in the Street Sense (G3) taking contact and checking off heels into the first turn, before expertly handled by Loveberry allowing him to relax covered up behind pacesetters in position to make the first and winning move. The physical nature of that race could have played a role in the time off (83-days) since and working back around picking this spot for his sophomore debut.