Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 28th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Gulfstream Park Race 6

Post Time 12:19 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 ADVENTURING figures obvious as the favorite to start off today's series of graded stakes races. She is proven at the distance and has been consistently competitive in graded stakes races holding that edge over her competition. **#2 PERSONAL BEST** is the logical alternative. She will show up in this spot for her graded stakes debut, though in the right time for that test with current form and proven at the distance as she shifts back to the turf, her preferred surface.

Gulfstream Park Race 8

Post Time 1:27 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Tough to argue **#4 OBLIGATORY** as a legitimate individual though as far as today's race shape, she could have a challenge with pace as a hurdle given her expected shorter odds. Her class alone has allowed for her to stalk closer to the pace at times and might be able to do so in today's race shape even with the lack of "pace" up front with a softer pace allowing Obligatory to rate closer than when she is forced to run behind faster fractions.

#1 FAMED returns to graded stakes company this afternoon with her only other prior race at the level, the Golden Rod (G2) back in her juvenile campaign. That is noted with that race contested at 8.5f around two-turns and Famed has shown to be more effective at one-turn, the configuration she returns to in this third start of the form cycle.

#3 COLORFUL MISCHIEF also has graded stakes experience though from the Kentucky graded stakes races last fall. She might have been exposed on class running below par (C/C+ OptixGRADES) presenting that class test again for her today while form and OptixFIG fit with the majority of today's field.

Romans will send out a pair of "longshot" runners worthy of consideration at the longer odds: **#6 JAG WARRIOR** has been most effective and prefers the ONE_TURN distance, a change as she makes her seasonal debut returning from the route allowance with an ground loss (X_WIDE) back in November. **#5 FIRE ON TIME** also wheeling back from the X_WIDE trip last month at Turfway to project improvement especially on the return to the dirt. Number wise she looks to standout of the two stablemates though had been running against softer and in for the claiming tag to consider with this step up in class.

Gulfstream Park Race 9

Post Time 2:01 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a competitive event that lacks a strong standout and horse to beat while the expected shorter priced runners; **#7 CHANNEL MAKER** and Maker (barn sending out four in this race) runner **#11 RED KNIGHT** would be no surprise they lack any real strong edge.

#9 VALUE ENGINEERING is another Maker runner that could offer value of the group he is proven at the distance, wheeling back from a strong (B+ OptixGRADE) stakes win over the dirt and has back numbers and hidden class (races at today's OFR) that stack on par for this race.

#10 REIGNING SPIRIT could also slide under the radar freshened from the Red Smith (G2) a race won gate-to-wire and the race shape did not have much change in running order to consider when looking at his running line and finishing position. Digging deeper, Reigning Spirit recorded a B OptixGRADE in the Louisville (G3) back in May at Churchill Downs and since that race was competitive number wise in higher conditioned allowance races.

#3 PAO ALTO comes into this race with progressive and buried form off his races this season and could be sitting on a top effort in today's race. As far as distance, this will be his stamina test though with the buried form and class on his side in position to compensate here.

Gulfstream Park Race 10

Post Time 2:34 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As the morning line favorite, **#1 MILES D** could be considered the "best" horse in the race upgrading him in that role for this race. With that said, he has some hurdles returning from the 343-day layoff and the connections making a change to run him back around one-turn, a change from the longer route events prior to the layoff.

#12 PREVALENCE has back numbers and class over today's course and distance that make him a strong contender in this race and on repeat of those top efforts. In addition, he recorded a strong 100 OptixFIG and B+ OptixGRADE with his Commonwealth (G3) win last spring at Keeneland. Even though that race was over an off-track the effort and figure does not appear an outlier recording a 102 OptixFIG with his allowance win over this course and distance on March 5th. That form cycle is noting a similar "second off" pattern to today's race that could have Prevalence sitting on that peak race. Following that pattern last year, he returns in this second start of the season exiting the Mr Prospector (G3) only 28-days ago with a subtle trip taking KICKBACK and showing interest late despite the running line and finishing position.

Others to consider: **#3 MISH** will be class tested here, though can be upgraded off his recent races cutting back to his preferred ONE_TURN distance. Similar class test is in play for **#2 NOBLE DRAMA**, though a runner that could find today's race dynamic to suit his running style. Trip could be similar though with an added hurdle with the outside post for **#13 TWELVE VOLT MAN** also finding himself a class test at the same time. **#9 ENDORSED** should land a lot of public support coming off a win and career top speed figure last month. He has in the past struggled to repeat triple-digit speed figures (recording a new top 105 OptixFIG on 12/22) and while he might not need that number to compete in this race, he still requires his top effort especially at this graded stakes level with this now 7yo still looking for his first graded stakes win.

Gulfstream Park Race 11

Post Time 3:06 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 SHANTISARA holds a strong class edge as a G1 quality runner returning in this spot for her seasonal debut. The layoff going into the Fall Harvest back on November 5th, the Breeders' Cup finale, made her a softer favorite that day and upgraded the winner, **#3 WAKANAKA** holding current form and with value and going out for a live Bill Mott barn that Keeneland weekend. As far as today's race, Shantisara will look to turn the tables here getting back to top form and appear to hold the right running style for today's race shape.

By contrast, the race shape does not appear to present an advantage for **#2 DALIKA** (Quad I Circle) one that lacks value according to the morning line odds without that advantage given the presence of **#1 ARTIE'S PRINCESS**, **#4 SWEET ENOUGH** and **#6 QUEEN GODDESS** (also all Circles - lack of finish) in this field.

#7 LADY ROCKSTAR can also be upgraded/value returning from a B OptixGRADE effort in the Suwannee River (G3) on 12/31 earning that place finish with significant ground loss (X_WIDE) trip. **#8 JUSTIFY MY LOVE** is tougher to make the case for as a contender off her stateside form and figures, though her running style along with today's dynamic could have her falling into a trip from off the pace with minor share possibilities.

Gulfstream Park Race 12

Post Time 3:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A full field is assembled for the PWC Turf Invitational (G1) and a competitive group of runners. As far as **#10 IVAR**, listed as the morning line favorite, his class and consistent figures place him logically in that role. With that said, 9f is not his ideal distance and trip is still key for him not only at this distance but in a full field and today's race dynamic. **#12 CITY MAN** (no value) coming off a solid win in the Fort Lauderdale (G2) though was able to save ground on the day and wheels back in less than 30-days with the step up in class and from a top effort. Some value concerns could also present on **#6 LADY SPEIGHTSPEARE** coming back from recording a new top in her own right with the show finish in the BC FM Turf (G1) back in November. This will be her first start back in 84-days, a slight change in her form cycle, as well as her first start outside of fillies and mares.

#4 HURRICANE DREAM is the "new face" making his first start for Motion and stateside debut. His class and form from overseas stack up for today's par and this placement along with the return of Dettori to the saddle could suggest positive intent for this race.

Horses shifting from California turf to the east coast is not always the easiest transition (#5 ONE MORE BID and #7 SPEAKING SCOUT) though it can be argued neither **#1 WIT** or **#11 MASTER PIECE** are those "typical" west coast shippers. **#11 MASTER PIECE** will shorten up in distance for this race and often that can be taken as a negative sign, though in this case the 9f distance could be his preferred and upgraded today. He has a pair of 9f wins and as far as the longer distance races he returns from his class and ability was able to keep him competitive despite the added ground. **#1 WIT** will be tested against older today, though has been consistent with his form transferring surface and circuit. He can be upgraded from the Hollywood Derby (G1) given the rider TACTIC- and ground loss (WIDE) both factors playing a role in the outcome.

#3 ATONE is lighter on class (OptixGRADE) though the draw assists his trip forwardly placed and should be able to run his race today, even if that does wind up just holding for underneath.

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 BENNYKAYANDSUZYTOO recorded the highest speed figure (78 OptixFIG) of any of the runners with experience in this field making them the starting point of analysis as well as the horse to beat. Should the horses in this field repeat their current form and the first time starters require a race, they remain as the horse to beat.

That scenario gives the first time starters some consideration and appears attention will side with the Morse trained, **#4 NEXT THURSDAY** of the set as. The barn at the time of this analysis still looking for their first win of the meet.

Longshot **#10 CALYPSO STREET** could be sitting on a top effort returning in this second start of the cycle and from a WIDE trip in her 185-day layoff return three weeks ago. She is one of the four-year-old fillies in this field primarily against sophomores, and was encouraging even with the distant 5th place finish on 1/7 to see progression number wise for the first start back and from her first two starts.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 MUCHO fits as well as any in this race and should offer value over rivals **#1 ONE FOR RICHIE** (NO_FINISH on 1/1) and **#2 KAVOD** lacking finish and upside off his races this year. **MUCHO** picked up his most "recent" win over this course last December and can almost take credit for a win in the 5th Season stakes finishing in a "blanket" at the wire last January. The connections have kept him at the one-turn distance this year and can be upgraded as the lone Square in Quad I on Surface/Distance in today's race. In addition, he appears in progressive form making this third start of the cycle and exiting a productive Turfway Park event from 12/16.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Overall this does not appear to be a stronger group for the level and opens up the race to get creative. McPeek will return with a pair and the route experience siding with **#1 ESCAPOLOGIST**. They wheel right back in two weeks for the second start of the meet and can be upgraded as they were forced to take back early to avoid ground loss from the outside post and as a result were compromised (X_FLOW) by the dynamic from off the pace. Stablemate **#5 INTERLOCK EMPIRE** will return for a second start and could project improvement with that race under his belt and with the added ground - from a physical standpoint he does appear on the "turfy" side.

With the race projected on the weaker side and trying to get creative; **#8 FURTHER EVIDENCE** one that is less "exposed" coming into this race off the layoff and in his first start around two turns while picking up first time Lasix and blinkers.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The "Snowflake" OptixPLOT Contention suggests the race could assist horses forwardly placed and upgrading **#6 ENCHANTING NILE** and **#9 TAKE CHARGE LORIN** positioned in Quad I. Those two could sneak away up front and look for enough to hold in the lane and off stalking rivals **#3 LET'S DUET** and the Broberg pair of **#4 SQUILLIONS** and **#7 PRETTI XTREME**.

#5 PYRAMID PRINCESS is given a mention as she return from the 12/18 race when making her return off the layoff and to the main track. As far as trip she was compromised out of the gate and unable to recover to establish position and suffered (X_WIDE) ground loss. In terms of class, **#1 DUPLICITOUS** has struggled at this allowance condition, though to her credit has some buried form over this main track with a top effort that stacks with her main rivals.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 DEFINING PURPOSE is legitimate in the role as the favorite coming off a dominant (B+ OptixGRADE) win in the Years End Stakes and has shown progression with improving OptixFIG with each start. That is a testament to class and has shown similar in terms of running style to put herself in contention to work a trip. She looks to find a similar stalking trip today tracking right off rivals, **#5 OLIVIA TWIST** and **#6 TAXED**.

#4 TAKE CHARGE BRIANA also returns (and upgraded) from the Years End Stakes picking up a rider change noting TACTIC- played a role in her race along with trip as she was forced to show a MOVE while racing in TRAFFIC and still running on (CLOSE) late against (X_FLOW) the race shape.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 NINJA WARRIOR is projected to be favored and likely to hold that role for Diodoro while lacking an edge (weak/vulnerable favorite) in this race. He was able to benefit from a "lone" trip to win the starter allowance (class rise here) last month and projects to find a different pace scenario today. As Quad I Squares, both **#4 ABSOLUTE CHAOS** and even **#6 MYSTERY MAN** should he return to a top effort have the edge on early speed to the first and second call over NINJA WARRIOR, Quad III Square - a change from his Quad I position on 12/18.

The Contention of that group (along with added pace from others) could set up a trip for **#11 TORONTOTORO** returning for McEntee and fresh off a dominant (B+ OptixGRADE) win last month at Mountaineer. **#12 JACKMAN** could also find the right trip for his running style, however has a different set of challenges as a contender with class weakness for this allowance level.

#3 AMERICAN PURE could also be assisted in today's race shape and could require that edge as well as another top effort as he makes his second start of the meet and looking to keep up the momentum for the hot Schultz barn. **#1 VULCAN** ran a "winning" (B OptixGRADE) race in his 12/18 place finish and could be cycling back to that top effort in his third start of this cycle. In addition, class has been a hurdle for **#7 DON'T FORGET** this season though should have pace to target late.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 COMMERCE COMET projects to be a much shorter number coming back for this second start than he was on debut. He recorded a solid effort in the place finish to warrant the attention today, though that race back on 11/24 at Churchill Downs has lacked productive nature, still seeking a winner. As far morning line favorite, **#8 EASY ACTION** he lacked "grit" when needed to pass the eventual winner, Eyeing Clover, and was doing just enough to hold place. He recorded B- OptixGRADES in all three starts, a Grade just below a "winning" race for the level and with those two projecting to take the bulk of support that could open up the race here to an alternative.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 GUNITE returns to his preferred distance around one-turn as he shows up in this stakes event for his seasonal debut. His tactical speed paired with class (Large Quad I Square) suggests a pace advantage in this race. That pace scenario is noted for the in-form, **#1 TEJANO TWIST**, one that requires pace and a trip for his late run.

#2 MILES AHEAD found his peak form over the summer for McGee especially with a race under his belt. He will look to follow that same progressive pattern shipping in for this race and in his second start off the layoff getting the stakes race at the Fair Grounds last month as a tightener.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As far as class, **#7 CALL ME FAST** checks that box keying off his BTL effort back on November 4th at Keeneland. The time off could be in his favor to recover from the full second half of the 2022 race season. With that said, he is still going to be tested off that two month break and yet to prove himself at the route/two-turn distance.

As far as distance both **#5 BARBER ROAD** and **#11 BEN DIESEL** have the local foundation over this course. They also bring current form into this race at the level, though as far as class have that test once again to produce a winning win.

#12 TONKA WARRIOR turned in an honest effort and arguably a career best on 1/8 without an ideal trip. He has some class concerns (though the edge in that department over stablemate **#9 MAGOO**) as well and has shown the tendency to idle when appearing to be in the right tactical position to find a way to come up short. **#10 TWO BY TWO** is shown as a Quad I Standard Square, a position that brings him into the conversation especially with the double digit morning line.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 4:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 ARABIAN KNIGHT was dominant breaking his maiden on the big stage, the undercard during Breeders' Cup. He has been pointed to this race, working forwardly for this spot for Baffert, a barn that has had plenty of success in the Oaklawn Derby prep series over the years.

#1 SUN THUNDER caught the eye on debut and as an individual with upside stretching out in distance. He showed that breaking his maiden dominantly (B+ OptixGRADE) here on 12/31 with a less than ideal trip dealing with TROUBLE at multiple points of call showing class and tenacity to not only win, but still CLOSE and clear late.

#7 RED ROUTE ONE has the benefit of stakes experience on his side and over some others. With that said, he has not shown much in terms of progression number wise at this point and would require a new top effort to compete at this level. As far as that projection, he returns from the KY JC (G2) a race that has been productive over the years and Red Route Road had a legitimate TRAFFIC trip lacking room in the lane and showed grit battling between horses to finish in a four horse blanket for place.

Those two present as strong individuals in this event and with the edge in their respective running style over others in this field. Brad Cox will sent out a trio in this race and with both **#2 CORONA BOLT** (first route) and **#3 JACE'S ROAD** required to step up on this circuit exiting stakes wins at the Fair Grounds last month. Their presence could see stablemate, **#8 HIT SHOW** overlooked of the group, offering value and still holding upside as a lightly raced progressive runner. He brings local experience with the allowance win here on 12/17 and has shown OptixFIG progression race-to-race.

Oaklawn Park Race 11

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 LASSIE MY GIRL turned in a strong effort on debut, the type of effort that stands out above and beyond with a repeat of that effort over the others in this field. With that said, the effort/visuals could be taxing (REGRESS) as the primary concern, especially with **#7 KOKOMO STARLET** expecting to keep the pace honest. **#13 INDIAN IRISH** could also join that first flight should she draw in off the AE, though is worth mentioning that she has regressed number wise with each start.

Those two second time starters return from common races with: **#11 TIZ A STRATEGY** saved ground to put in a late move and solid gallop out on 1/7. Some upside could also be projected for **#12 MS CARROLL COUNTY** one that could move up off the experience alone.

#8 MAY DISCO could be a "wild card" as she debuted on this circuit breaking slow (SLOG) and not asked (NO_PUSH) by the rider here last spring. She will return from the 220-layoff as one of the four year old runners in this field back in with statebred company. The 6/22 race at Canterbury is also worth a mention, where the public expected a little more from her as she was bet down from the assigned 8-1 morning line with some excuses making a MOVE against (X_FLOW) the race flow and the long layoff that followed.

#9 MO WANNA GO is the lone mare in this field and could project improvement in this third start off the layoff back in with statebred company taking on open on 12/30. That improvement is necessary as she sits on the softer side number wise for this race and in comparison to others. Similar can also be said for **#10 DELTA MOON** though to her credit she has shown progress race-to-race.

#6 BE BO will make her debut here and projects to be the "fancied" of the first time starters in this race, potentially even shorter than the morning line suggests given the early season form and success for the pairing of Bejarano/Moquett.

Santa Anita Race 2

Post Time 3:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A lot of the discourse around **#6 JUSTIQUE** has questioned her route (two-turn) ability. On face value that seems valid with her two dominant wins at the sprint distance and what could appear "no excuse" in the Chandelier (G2) her lone route start. The "no excuse" is up for debate as she was WARM that day, a change from the other two races on physical appearance; and as far as the ride (TACTIC-) she was taken well off the pace with the strategy to ride her as she has been effective making the one-run at one-turn. That tactic does not often translate with the change in distance and if they are able to keep her more engaged, something she is capable of (Quad II - not Quad IV today) she has the ability to show she has the route versatility.

#1 FAIZA and **#4 PRIDE OF THE NILE** return from the Starlet (G1) and literally not much between the pair on the day (both earning B OptixGRADE) as they finished together at the wire. O'Neill also sending out **#3 BROADWAY GIRLS** with Maldonado should look for her to keep the pace up front honest; with stretch out sprinter **#2 SWEET TROUBLE** (maiden) also likely to be forwardly placed should they remain in this race and give her the best chance today to compete.

#5 UNCONTROLLABLE has shown gate (SLOG) issues and played a role in her trips and running style from off the pace. As a Cal-bred she has quality and has been competitive against open, though still must show a move forward required to keep her as a player at the graded stakes level.