



Handicapping Analysis

Sat January 28th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Gulfstream Park Race 13

Post Time 4:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 PROXY expects to be bet off of his races to date and solid form that makes him logical on those fronts. Trip is a factor that will not be considered as much as it should be for this horse in particular with this race, his running style and especially post position. He drew the rail winning the Clark (G1) in his most recent start, though that scenario was a smaller field with a softer pace which allowed him to easily move off the inside early into a clear stalking trip and follow the race flow to win. They are likely going to be forced for position which puts Proxy into a tougher spot as the pace projects to be more contentious. Should they try and rate that becomes the gamble to weigh for this horse's chances in this race and for players in terms of odds. Rating inside and taking kickback is not the ideal run and should then be forced off the pace, a similar type of trip in the Foster (G2) they could be left with too much to do late in order to win.

#2 SIMPLIFICATION has the benefit of local experience though again will be class tested at the G1 level and 9f distance. These have been challenges in the past as far as securing the win. As far as his return race in the Harlans Holiday (G3) he was able to stalk in a favorable trip, then idled in the stretch on his left lead giving up place – not necessarily positives as a pattern he has held going back to his sophomore season. At the longer expected odds, underneath use could be the ceiling.

#3 RIDEN WITH BIDEN he appears heavily overmatched in this race. He is softer on numbers, class and lacks any pace advantage. His current form, despite pairing wins, has him coming into this race off the pair of taxing efforts to win at Parx and steps up in class for this race and with the quicker, 24-day timing between starts.

#4 WHITE ABARRIO is another that has the benefit of experience over this course with form that stacks up for this race along with a favorable running style – and should offer fair odds. He tends to prefer more time between starts and noted with the 56-days coming back for this race and two-turn distance. As far as trip he has a favorable running style for this race shape and course profile that fits with similar 9f winners on this main track. Gaffalione has had success aboard in the past as he takes over today excusing the ride that created an excuse in the Ky Derby (G1) last year.

#5 DEFUNDED could wind up being the second choice in this race, a shift from the assigned morning line. As far as his form, his races on paper could jump out to the public with back-to-back wins and with Baffert as the trainer. As far as his route wins, a case can be made those efforts are “dressed” up catching weaker fields, softer pace, and favorable trips; and without those factors today, he will be tested here.

#6 ART COLLECTOR should be sitting on a peak effort and appears live, well-intended for this race. He has tactical speed that is effective and on his best day makes him tough on the front end. As far as distance, 9f is a touch beyond his ideal though today's main track and the way Gulfstream tends to play that could wind up suiting Art Collector, a horse that will be making his Gulfstream debut here today. As far as making his first local start, that could be considered a knock, however in this case, Art Collector is a horse that has never run a January to May racing season, the dates of this Championship meet.

#7 SKIPPYLONGSTALKING lacks value around the morning line and is on the weaker side as a prime contender for this race. He has been effective in the right such as the G3 placement with the “perfect” trip wins in both the WV Derby (G3) and Harlans Holiday (G3) last month. As far as his prior G1 (even G2) races, he has been over matched on the race track, something that is tougher to see especially when looking at the speed figures that appear to stack up on par. Class is a different animal and the hurdle he has today paired with the projected morning odds to lack any playable value.

#8 GET HER NUMBER the distance and class is a test here as it is for others in this field. Since coming back as an older horse, the connections have been reluctant to run him long (two turns) with his sophomore route race efforts sitting well below par.

#9 LAST SAMURAI is tough to knock on his current form and consistency though in terms of race placement he is again in deeper waters today to assess as a contender. The foundation, progression coming into this race along with distance experience is on his side and that alone could carry to an honest effort. Dettori picking up the mount should assist on trip and just overall honest effort from the rider, a true professional jockey.

#10 CYBERKNIFE is listed as the morning line favorite and projects to fall into that role as he appears “logical” on the basic handicapping factors. As far as value, that is the main knock as he does not hold much of an edge overall and will give up recency making his first start back in 84-days as well as local experience with this being his first start at Gulfstream Park. As far as the draw, that is not enough of a knock on its own, though trip still much be considered not only with the post but how the race projects to play out and for Cyberknife as a horse that has shown quirks throughout his career often require the right trip and ride – major factors to weigh with the race favorite.

#11 STILLETTO BOY he figures to take up the “wiseguy” horse to “finish underneath” in this race and to be fair, that is tough to argue. Outside of the Californian (G2) when asserting himself to a “lone” lead against just three others, he has struggled to run that “winning” type race at the graded stakes level; however, can find ways to

get himself a share of the purse. Morey has kept him training up at Golden Gate Fields and that has been a favorable home for him to keep his conditioning and is encouraging for Smith picking up the mount last month in the San Antonio (G2) to make this trip and land here seemingly with intent for this second start back off the layoff.

#12 O'CONNOR keying off the return effort in the Harlans Holiday (G3) last month and subtle trip with encouraging effort to project a move forward he was an interesting horse to follow; that is until the morning line was released. The odds could be on the shorter side, even as this appears well-meant, perhaps hype and even with projecting a move forward. As far as a move forward he requires a big step up as his two races here at Gulfstream Park sit well below par to win from both speed figures and class requiring price compensation.

AE: #13 HOIST THE GOLD and **#14 ENDORSED** given their running style, they should not impact the race shape assessing the others drawn as the main body of the field and as individuals lack any pace advantage with their own class and stamina tests should they participate.

Gulfstream Park Race 13 - PLAY OF THE DAY

Post Time 4:40 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

7 Skippylongstocking - 5/1 **2** Simplification - 15/1 **1** Proxy - 9/2 **10** Cyberknife - 5/2

This is a truly excellent field for the \$3 million Pegasus World Cup Invitational. While Cyberknife is a deserving favorite there are many in here with a big chance. The cool thing about this year's event is that so many in this field have had their successes at Gulfstream. I started with Skippylongstocking off what was a solid victory last out as he came off the layoff. One of the later bloomers in the three-year-old campaign last year, he was a good third in the Belmont and followed that race with an impressive effort that was overlooked by many in the West Virginia Derby. He rated much closer in his most recent start and had more than enough left in the tank at the wire while not getting the best of trips. Simplification could be a horse for the course and he will likely be every bit of the 15-1 morning line. He has never missed the board in seven Gulfstream starts and posted a career best figure last out while running third to Skippylongstocking. The distance suits as he could get a perfect trip. Proxy has been a different horse in his last couple of starts, running big races at Churchill. He does not have a race over this track though and I'll be curious to see what the gate tactics are as he potentially could get squeezed back at the start if he gets away a step slowly. Cyberknife makes his final career start and is the morning line choice in here. After a disappointing Derby he has been very good, finishing no worse than third in his last five races. The distance suits and Geroux has won this race in the past.

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.

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.