Handicapping Analysis
Sat February 4th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Gulfstream Park Race 12 - PLAY OF THE DAY

Post Time 4:43 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

4 Cyclone Mischief - 2/1 **6** Legacy Isle - 7/2 **8** Rocket Can - 7/2

20 Kentucky Derby qualifying points are on the line in the Holy Bull as this is part of a sequence at Gulfstream Park that will lead to the Fountain of Youth and Florida Derby. Running at 1 1/16 miles on the main track, the track configuration at Gulfstream does not allow for a full stretch run at this distance. Typically that makes things a bit tougher for horses coming from well off the pace as they often times have to make their move on the turn and risk having to cover added ground as they pass horses. The standout in this race is 4-CYCLONE MISCHIEF as he comes off an impressive win at the one turn mile at Gulfstream in his last. He has run this distance twice, posting a maiden win at Keeneland before finishing 7th (beaten less than 3 lengths) in the Kentucky Jockey Club. His big figure came in his last while racing w/ Lasix and he does not have the benefit of running with the diuretic today which leaves a few questions. He has speed though and should get a dream pressing trip. 6-LEGACY ISLE is interesting as he has crossed the wire on top in all three starts. He was disqualified from his last though for drifting out in the lane. Despite the DQ, he was the best horse in that race. He'll look to try to wire the field here. 8-ROCKET CAN is another that won't be too far back early as he showed great signs of improvement in his last two starts. He's another that will have little issue with the distance but it is interesting that Alvarado rides instead of Saez, who rode last out and chooses Legacy Isle instead.

Gulfstream Park Race 12

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Analysis by Emily Gullikson

One general angle to start the handicapping process is using a "common race" and can be applied here with half of the field returning from the Mucho Macho Man Stakes back on January 1st at Gulfstream Park. The assessment starts from an overall stance of whether those runners are the group to look for a contender today or look for one of the "new faces" from the other four horses.

Starting the assessment from the Mucho Macho Man stakes begins with the unofficial winner, **#6 LEGACY ISLE** returning in this spot. He was ultimately disqualified after failing to change leads (NO_LEAD) and lugging out (NO_LINE) into the unofficial place finisher herding him inside the final furlong for the judges to make their decision. Regardless of the call, the question today is whether LEGACY ISLE can improve overall and on his antics that ultimately "cost" him the race. Not only is improvement required, but also the effort from start to finish could be considered a taxing (HARD) effort and should be another handicapping factor to assess in regards to improving or even holding his form today.

Show finisher, **#1 LORD MILES**, turned in an honest effort recording a B OptixGRADE with an outside trip (WIDE) and making up ground to finish as part of the top three together at he wire. He is a lightly raced type that has been able to move forward race-to-race and unlike rival, Legacy Isle, this will be the second start of the form cycle (Mucho Macho Man off a 42-day freshening) for Lord Miles, a time where improvement could be shown. In terms of improvement, that has been lacking for **#5 MR BOB** one that did have some issues out of the gate (TROUBLE_S) losing his footing and getting shuffled back from off the pace - to keep in mind as to not consider him a "closer" necessarily. His figures have not shown improvement race to race and sits currently just below today's OptixFIGRANGE (OFR). **#7 IL MIRACOLO** did not have an ideal trip, though some of that could be his own doing as improvement has also not been shown with both class (OptixGRADE) and speed (OptixFIG) below par.

Following that analysis, it appears an opening to look outside the Mucho Macho Man group as each horse carries some "knocks" stepping up to today's graded stakes event. Working inside out: **#2 WEST COAST COWBOY** sits well below today's OFR and the intention was to run in a N1X allowance at Tampa Bay Downs on 1/13, however a vet scratch that day and did not make the race landing here where additionally intention is called into question.

#3 SHADOW DRAGON also comes into this race light on current handicapping factors, though a case for forward projection could be made as he makes his third start and first start of the season off a three month break. He recorded a solid 83 OptixFIG on debut against NY-statebred company back in September, though was unable to show up to compete in his second start, the Sleepy Hollow Stakes - a race that saw the winner, Artic Arrogance return with a game effort in the Remsen (G2) posting a 103 OptixFIG. In addition to the required improvement, Shadow Dragon will show up here doing a lot of new things; first start against open company, first start around two turns, and first in graded stakes company; all factors that require price compensation.

His Bill Mott trained stablemate, **#8 ROCKET CAN** will also make his graded stakes debut here though has the benefit of foundation with the four races and two turn experience. Figure wise, he has also shown progression race-to-race and his OptixFIG (92,95) recorded at Churchill Downs stack up on the higher end of today's 95-89 OFR and by comparison to make in this field. Trip will be key as they are drawn outside with the short run into the first turn, though his class and speed edge could be enough to overcome the draw/trip.

#4 CYCLONE MISCHIEF recorded his career high 95 OptixFIG winning the January 8th allowance race. He presented upside for that event, exiting the productive KY JC (G2) back in November at Churchill Downs. While he has the win at Keeneland breaking his maiden around two-turns (75 OptixFIG) in October, the distance overall and especially going forward as they get longer on the Derby trail is something he must continue to step up and prove on stamina.