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

Post Time 4:43 PM CST

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.

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Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 WHISKEY DOUBLE presents upside with subtle class relief in this second start of the meet. Santana was not as effective (TACTIC-) with the handling back on 1/15 playing a role in the trip, ground loss and overall outcome.

#4 UPSTRIKER has tactical speed to present a pace advantage in this race and from the group returning from the 1/7 common race. Upstriker has been running under similar conditions returning from the layoff in November and requires a top effort along with the favorable trip to win. **#6 BURNINHUNKOFLOVE** should offer value from that common race and 5th place finishing position earning the same B- OptixGRADE as Upstriker. **#5 MEAN JAKEY** recorded the B OptixGRADE finishing in a photo for the win, though comes back today "obvious" rather than last month when overlooked at 9-1 odds.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 ORDER OF MERIT has recorded some of the higher more consistent speed figures and those efforts should translate as the connections bring him back to the maiden claiming level.

#3 KRUSIN ROCKET could hold an excuse on 1/21 where he was fractious in the GATE, nearly flipping in the stall and was not checked out prior to the break. He will return to face open company, a similar condition from back on 1/6, though now has the racing foundation on his side in this third start off the layoff.

#5 FAMILY TRADITION will drop to the maiden claiming level returning from the lengthy 513-day layoff. As far as class, this could be seen as a lateral move with the purse and race par from HS Indy and place finish returning where they think he can compete. With that said, the barn (trainer Brad Cox) alone should have him taking the bulk of attention and likely to be a short priced favorite.

#10 SHOTGUN UP is tough to project a move forward at this point as he has established who he is as a race horse. With that said, he comes into this race with current form, recency and should expect another honest effort today.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 GOIN TO THE SHOW will look to pick up where he left off returning to Oaklawn Park course and route distance. He was competitive and consistent in his races here last season with those efforts on par and projects to return for this barn in similar form today.

#1 MOUNT CRAIG seems an "obvious" type in this race with form and figures on par as he shows up on this circuit for Bill Mott. With that said, this will be his first start around two-turns and also has had some gate issues (SLOG) in his races to date to consider with trip and today's rail draw.

Overall there was not much between **#7 ATLANTIC DANCER** and **#9 PATROLMAN** the two returning from B- OptixGRADE efforts on 1/7. The speed figure (82 OptixFIG) earned on 1/14 by **#8 TAHOE RUN** was not far off those rivals, though overall C+ OptixGRADE effort requires a step up for this Special Weight level.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 STRIKINGLY SPUN has the look of an improving type horse and with the connections remaining on this circuit (entered MTO under similar conditions at FG on 1/22) to take on winners.

#2 STELLAR LADY had some stakes experience from last year, though was not on the level of her competition. That experience could present a class edge as her figures stack up with today's rivals, though overall still must show a move forward, especially if the connections want to pursue stakes races.

#8 MIDNIGHT HEIRESS could project a move forward in her second start off the layoff and from the trip where she lost her footing (TROUBLE_S) out of the gate and had to RUSH WIDE for position to recover and before losing ground. There was not as much of an excuse for **#3 NEED SOME MONEY** and **#6 FABULOUS CANDY** also returning from the Years End Stakes and still must show where they belong on class. The same class concerns in play for **#5 JUNIORS JOANIE** making a lateral class move from the 1/13 allowance and route debut here today.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Keying off the first two races and speed figures, a case can be made for **#8 SERGEANT COUNTZLER** in today's race. This will be his second start off the layoff and first off the claim for Hiles as they make their sophomore debut coming back from a competitive 11/3 maiden claiming race at Churchill Downs.

#5 ONCE UPON A DREAM paired up 73 OptixFIG in his first two starts, numbers that sat below Special Weight par on 12/16 though sit on par returning today to maiden claiming company.

#1 TEXAS TED did himself no favors breaking slow (SLOG) on debut though showed run making a late MOVE and GALLOP+ out past the wire. A move forward can be projected as he makes just a second start though will require a better break to compete today especially with the rail, another inside draw. **#10 MOON CONNECTION** will return from that same 1/6 common race though shift from one extreme to the other moving off the rail to the outside and has shown to lose ground late.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morning line favorite, **#10 INCORRIGIBLE** has legit early speed to overcome the outside draw and even hold a pace advantage for today's race. **#4 EGO** has the tendency to break slow (pattern of SLOG) and can create his own "trips" though as an individual has races that are competitive for this level. **#6 PRIMER DIMER** can also be his own worst enemy as far as trip. With that said, intent looks to be in play as he returns to the claiming level, Torres aboard and a move forward can be projected coming off the WIDE trip racing protected first off the Asmussen claim last month.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 GUN PILOT fits in the role of the favorite for this race. He showed class to break his maiden on debut and improved in his seasonal debut over today's course and distance. His form off those races make him a contender on that alone and with the others in this field that have shown class or stamina weakness should create less hurdles for Gun Pilot today.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The outside draw is no bargain for **#12 CONCEPT** (morning line favorite) though his early speed and the lack of early pace contention could assist to establish forward position today without much pressure or ground loss. **#10 SUMMER IN MALIBU** has some buried form and tactical speed that could be overlooked off his recent running lines. He had a legit EX - EXCUSE returning from the layoff in December and need the racing off the layoff, a pattern he has shown improvement with in the past.

#2 CARBONITE must improve off his races here this season and return to his Kentucky form from the fall to compete. There is some possible upside from his races here as he was not asked (NO_PUSH) for run with a WIDE trip and returning in sprint last month with a slow start (SLOG) and less than ideal (TACTIC-) ride.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 LOVELY RIDE projects to be a heavy favorite today returning from back-to-back wins this season and solid speed figures in both efforts. She fits on par with those numbers, though will find a class test returning to graded stakes company. She has not fared as well in her graded stakes races so far, off the board without much excuse and noted as she expects to be that heavy favorite here. Also looking to "pick holes" she could have peaked in her form cycle running back to a top in the Pippin. In addition, she finds a subtle post position shift from the other races this season drawing outside her rivals (including other pacesetting types) here.

#3 ICE ORCHID has been competitive at the graded stakes level recording B- OptixGRADES in both the 2022 Honeybee (G3) and Chilukki (G3) back in November at Churchill Downs to show she has the class to compete on this level, though still must step up to win.

#1 A MO REAY also has some buried graded stakes form from the Frizette (G1) show finish as a juvenile to the B- OptixGRADE in the Pebbles (G3) over the turf back in September. She has shown to be versatile as far as surface and could suggest intent here by trainer Brad Cox. He shipped in Wet Paint from the synthetic at Turfway to win the Martha Washington stakes last weekend, could be looking for a similar stakes winning move here.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 WILLOW CREEK ROAD will debut here and could be the right "new" face to jump up in this field. The four-year-old colt comes into this race with a steady local worktab for Robertson, capable of winning with runners on debut and could be well-meant as the barn is still (at the time of this write up) looking for their first win of the meet.

#2 STUCK N SNOW has been competitive in each start this season and recording consistent speed figures along the way. He will require that form to transfer here and even a step up as he will race today against older (similar test for **#9 PEARCY ROAD**) for the first time.

#10 SKYPED is one of the older horses in this field and going back to his 2022 season (as well as the 80 OptixFIG on 12/16) has recorded some of the higher numbers in the group. With that said, he is one of the more experienced and that can make him tougher to trust even though he just might catch the right group today. **#11 CLASSY SOCKS** has not quite run the same numbers, though could be sitting on a peak effort in this third start off the layoff looking to improve off the WIDE trip on 12/16 and upgraded making a MOVE against (X_FLOW) the race shape in the place finish last month.