Handicapping Analysis
Sat February 11th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Golden Gate Fields Race 8

Post Time 6:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A lot of attention expects to land on the Baffert pair in this stakes race with some question marks on that duo. There are some factors to consider on these individuals that might not appear as clear "on paper" especially with the projected shorter price given the connections. **#1 GILMORE** does not have the most efficient action and has not been seen in two months, since his maiden win at Los Alamitos. While there could have been some intent to run in the G2 San Vicente (trainer scratch) they picked this spot to return to instead. While Gilmore did win in his second start and around two turns, he did so with a favorable trip (TACTIC+) at a time the barn was live (HOT) and finished all out in a drive recording a declining number 81 OptixFIG from the 90 earned on debut - a pattern that can be a negative for this barn. As far as **#8 NULLARBOR** he also has a pattern of layoff lines, though will return here in a second start off the layoff. While he recorded a new top (90 OptixFIG) with his maiden win on 1/6 sprinting, though also appeared all out (HARD) for the live (HOT) barn and visually gave off some signs that could see a REGRESS.

#5 HARCYN is deserving of a look in this race as a progressive, developing type with local experience. He will make his route debut and will look to continue his progress and winning ways in today's stakes field. Going back to his debut win (B+ OptixGRADE) in October, he visually presented as a runner that could be a progressive type and handle more ground. Reading between the lines, some intent could be in play for this stakes race bring him back off the layoff on 1/16 looking for a solid returning effort (B+ OptixGRADE) and getting what they need for him to peak in this event.

#4 PASSARANDO has the edge of the group from the Gold Rush Stakes back in December. While he has that on his side and in his own right a very honest, willing race horse, he number wise he has yet to show much in terms of a step forward.

Tampa Bay Downs Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Handicapping can be a complex and intricate art, though sometimes it just happens to be neat and "clean" with a pair of runners that "scour" their way to the top.

#4 LAVER showed ability going back to his debut and the connections suggesting some confidence in his abilities running in a $500k stakes race as a maiden in just his second start. Since that time LAVER has made the transition to the dirt and shown progression in running and in terms of speed (improving OptixFIG) race-to-race. This will be his second start off the layoff and exiting the Mucho Macho Man stakes last month, a race he looked to need and off the visuals projects to benefit from that race to produce another move forward. Visually LAVER is preferred (upside potential) over the eventual winner of the Mucho Macho Man, **#10 DREAMING OF KONA**, promoted via DQ.

#6 CLASSIC CAR WASH keeps up the theme in both the pun and for progressive, improving type younger horses. Even though he will find a class test today, he is valid in this race and has passed each test where his visuals match the running lines. He has shown dominance (B+ OptixGRADES) over his rivals this season at Gulfstream Park to suggest he is ready for the class test and has versatility in terms of surface, running style and is proven around two turns.

#7 DUBYUHNELL projects to be favored today with the strong speed figure earned in the Remsen (G2) win back in December. While a repeat of that effort is tough to deny that makes him the horse to beat, that race has not shown the strength in the numbers for the horses that have run back. In addition, they will be returning today from another layoff and first start on this circuit in arguably a tougher all around class test.

#2 PRAIRIE HAWK and **#5 GROVELAND** return from the exacta finish in the January 13th allowance race; a blanket three horse finish (in a four horse field at the wire where a case can be made the show finisher, Classic Catch, might have been "best" on the day. GROVELAND deserves another mention as he did break outward in that race and has shown similar though not as extreme in his prior starts - that can be concerning to horses on his outside as far as them potentially taking contact at the break.

Leading off the pair of recent maiden winners: **#3 CLASSIC LEGACY** debuted back at Saratoga in a race that appeared at the time to have quality though perhaps has not been as strong as that early projection. As far as CLASSIC LEGACY, he has shown progression in his own right and the connections will ship in and see where he fits going forward as this will be a test in stakes company, first start against winners, around two turns and also giving up recency from the 70-days since his win. **#8 NOTAH** ran well to break his maiden though off the visuals, it is tougher to see a move forward and especially the progression he would require to compete in this race.

#2 LITIGATE could wagering support given the connections and "new face" that is lightly raced. While he has shown subtle speed figure improvement, his overall visuals leave something to be desired.

#1 WORTHINGTON has similar concerns for this level based on his visuals stepping up in class today while making his dirt debut. Both **#9 CHAMPIONS DREAM** and **#12 ZYDECEAUX** exit the Pasco, the "prep" for this race and while the two finished 1-2 the race appeared WEAK for the level and both runners will be tested for stamina making their two-turn debut.