Handicapping Analysis
Sat March 4th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 COLE SPUR came off the layoff on 12/9 to record a strong effort in defeat with the place finish still earning a solid B OptixGRADE and 86 OptixFIG. That race was a park effort that saw regression and a weaker favorite on 1/1. They will return to the same level as the 2/10 race in the second start of the cycle and should find that fitness key and the right trip with some further intent as Cabrera jumps back aboard.

The pace should assist Cole Spur as it projects to be contentious including **#7 LUMUTANAATTY** returning from another layoff. The layoff lines overall create some reservations and coming back today will run first time in for the claiming tag.

#3 SCHMOOZE could also find the timing on his side for this race in the third start of the cycle and coming back to one-turn with some conditioning from the races this season. Still overall he is a touch lighter than others on their best day requiring a new top to compete on the win end and should be factored into the post time odds.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 WOBBERJOD ran into a well-meant runner in Bank in his layoff return on 2/3. The effort was credible staying on as the best of the speed and in a clear place finish that should have him competitive right back in this spot and first off the claim for Combs.

#5 FIRERY TALE has a tendency to break slow (SLOG) and that playing against him chasing a slower early pace (S O4S) on 1/22. While the gate issues are unlikely to be sorted out today, overall form fits at this claiming level to compete with today's field and the pace should be honest for his stalking run.

Some of that pace should come from at least one of the Diodoro runners, **#9 FULL IMPACT** and **#2 HOME BASE** with some tactical speed in his own right. HOME BASE will land in this spot following a scratch from a similar claiming event on 2/20 where Diodoro only required to send out one runner, the winner, Trumpence.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 FAST LANE looked to require class relief keying off the Special Weight visuals, results and the lack of progress overall. He will return with a freshening from the 1/14 race back in for the claiming tag here and figures to be back at the right level for his abilities. He will be joined here by **#3 LITTLE FRAPPUCINO**, a new stablemate claimed by Asmussen back in January from $12.5k maiden claiming race and will be tested to step up in class here.

#6 EL GEMAR also looked to move up on the class drop this season and could still present a move forward in this third start back off the layoff. He suffered a WIDE trip on 1/14 and was part of the group that had legit TROUBLES+ at the start (**#7 MENDELSSOHN JOY** also part of that group) on 2/17.

The gate issues are well documented for **#2 KENTUCKY BOURBON** and still his biggest hurdle being himself. He comes into this race in form and appears at the right level, though the barn change to Diodoro first off the claim could see him back at a shorter price and has come up short without excuse as the favorite four times in his career.

Morse had **#4 ALPHA WHISKEY** entered in a $10k maiden claiming event on 2/26 though scratched from that race. The poor track conditions could have been a factor though also could suggest some further intent running here for the higher tag for a similar purse. This will be just his second start in for the tag and can be given a "flow upgrade" as part of a fast pace DUEL last September. He also has buried form keying off his second career start going back to last April recording a 78 OptixFIG, a number that could still be improved on and as it sits, stacks up with the others in this field.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The pace scenario should allow **#1 LIL'S TURN** to work a trip and hold her form coming back from the 2/17 race behind her stablemate winner, Mumblebee. Some of that pace is expected from her stablemate today, **#4 CARELESS HEIRESS** stretching out to a route for the first time in a long time, while joined by other front running types in this group.

The distance change here is also in play for **#6 A GIRL LIKE ME**, though in this case could be a positive change keying off prior route/two turn form and some intent as she makes her second start off the Hollendorfer claim and back in at the claiming level. With that said, the drop is significant and could be concerning as she was picked up for $30k, though also could have been a case where they "overpaid" at time.

#2 CLOSE TO ME will also be out to hold her form and another that should appreciate a faster pace to develop early on to make her late run. The trip on the opposite end will likely to be aggressive right from the start for **#10 PRIDDIS** based on her run style, the outside draw and first start back in 407-days.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 HARD TO COME BY has suffered from the rides (TACTIC-) this season though as far as ability is in the right level to compete just requires the right handling from a "cold" rider as Tyler Baze retains the call.

#8 JEWELSTOWN will return to make a second start and tough to take much from the 1/28 debut. The WEATHER conditions that day were poor with the race run in the rain and favoring horses forwardly placed giving Jewelstown minimal chance to get into the running after a SLOG start. They have worked since and return with the class drop, added ground and rider change. **#7 THE BOOKKEEPER** also ran in that same 1/28 common race though will still be tested here for stamina back at a route where they perhaps a little "lucky" to be awarded the place finish through a disqualification.

The distance test will again be in play for **#5 ITWASTHISBIG** though also could just move up on the class drop exiting higher par/OFR races and in contrast to many of the others in this field as he makes his first start for the maiden claiming tag. **#10 THE HEIGHTS** will also run first time for a tag and given a mention for the live connections. With that said, he is actually moving up with the race par/OFR lighter on 12/31 and could be shorter of the two in this race.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 LET'S DUET wheels right back and does so to find class relief looking for the win. Her races with the string of place finishes at the higher N1x allowance condition/purse are tough to knock recording consistent numbers and efforts (B OptixGRADE) just compromised with her off the pace run style on trip.

#4 I FEEL THE NEED another closing type, also shifts to the starter allowance level, though must get back to some of her stronger races to compete as she has not be on the same level as LET'S DUET this year. **#5 LADY COMMANDER** could be upgraded of this pair from the 2/17 race holding some tactical speed, form this season and back numbers in 2022 on par for this level.

#1 SHELL SHOCK will look to continue her progress this year in the third start and return to a route of ground. Her early/tactical speed will try and be to her advantage especially given the run style of her main rival and with the change in distance/rail draw.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SUMMER SHOES is legitimate in this spot. She showed a lot of ability last season from her BTL debut against open company to progression throughout the 2022 season. She returned with a strong (B+ OptixGRADE) in her seasonal return on December 30th and ran well against open company on 1/29 with Swearingen "giving" her that race to keep up conditioning with this race being the goal on the calendar.

#6 CONNIE K will also shift back to statebred company and fits at this level, though could find pace pressure and has lacked finishing (Circle) ability at times. **#2 UNBRIDLED TWISTER** has the ability to show early speed though also can rate and pass horses, she showed that versatility in this race last year with Santana taking off the pace and making a CLOSE for place.

#4 KABOOM BABY is still looking for her first stakes win and for a top effort at this level. To her credit she has held her form in statebred stakes company and comes into this race on a progressive (improving OptixFIG/GRADES) in this third start of the season.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 DECISION MAKER could be in the right time and place for this event. He carries upside in this second start off the layoff and exiting the 1/21 Optional Claiming event, a race with a higher OFR than today providing subtle class relief. Trip also should suit his run style sitting well on the Plot as a Large Quad II Square.

#5 DEVIL VISION has some challenges as he makes his first start back off the layoff giving up recency while also making his local debut. He closed out 2022 improving race to race and with a BTL run back in November here at Hawthorne. Trip could also be on his side given today's race shape, provided he can bring a top effort.

#7 FULL CHARGE could also present a move forward in his second start off the layoff and this meet. Class wise he is lighter and that is noted as he has strong races that fit with faster speed figures though struggles to consistently run those races.

Value could be questionable with **#9 FROSTED GRACE** wheeling back in one week and pairing tops in his most recent starts while stepping up with today's group and likely contested pace with the outside draw.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 GAR HOLE was dominant (B+ OptixGRADE) winning this race last year and his form, along with tactical speed (Quad I Square) coming back this year makes him a player once again.

#6 ONE TEN STADIUM showed ability last season though had his stakes dreams cut short (TROUBLES+) as the rider nearly fell off at the start and was unable (NO_PUSH) to compete. He has shown progress in his races this year and could be sitting on a top effort today.

Class will be a test for **#5 MRS. BEANS** as well as trip (Quad I Circle) with GAR HOLE looking to press them early. That early pace could also enough pace for **#1 BIG SUCCESS** to come closing late and picking up horses at a price.

#2 BANDIT POINT is tougher to make a strong "contender" case for, though he has finished in the money each of the four times he has run in this race.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As far as the runners with experience in this field, all must step up off their races to date and have left something to be desired visually. Perhaps one that could get overlooked and still presents some upside is **#11 RUNNINGFORCASH** one that has had to deal with some layoffs and off tracks this year and showed run in his Keeneland debut back in October and projected to IMPROVE off the December race. That October Keeneland race was slightly stronger than the 10/7 event **#3 MY UNCLE LEON** returns from to make his belated second start as that race has had just one winner ($30k maiden claiming) in many starts from that group

#12 TIVY recorded a solid speed figure on debut, though those early season juvenile numbers are often tougher to assess at the shorter distances. To his credit he did return on 2/3 off the 239-day layoff to a solid number and could step forward with the fitness gained. **#10 BOLD D'ORO** moved up in that 2/3 race though still came up short in the end and class still a question mark given the placement in for a tag on debut, something that carries to **#1 DARIO** and **#2 VIOLENT RIVER** as well.

This is a scenario where one of the first time starters could jump up: **#4 SWIFT CUSTOM** could be the most overlooked (**#7 HUNTSVILLE** for Brad Cox likely the shorter of the group) of the debut group as a LA-bred and for the connections, though has a steady string of works and capable connections where an honest effort can be projected. **#8 SHARP STICK** will also debut here with DiVito also bringing back **#9 BEN DREAMING** to make his seasonal debut off the layoff and must improve all around from the Ellis form last August.