



## Handicapping Analysis Sat March 4th, 2023

### Stakes Spotlight

#### Gulfstream Park Race 14

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Analysis by Emily Gullikson

**#4 FORTE** will show up here for the connections to start off his sophomore campaign. He projects to be favored and while he will give up recency off the layoff, he stacks up as a legitimate favorite. His class (B+ OptixGRADE) in graded stakes company makes him a player with strong numbers (OptixFIG in OFR) for today's event and field. His class allows him to race with a versatile running style, with solid finishing (Square) ability. As far as the time off, he is training very well and coming into this race grown up, fit and race ready for Pletcher.

Keying off the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (G1) **FORTE** was just on a different level, though **#6 BLAZING SEVENS** gave an honest account of himself that day. The slower start and some early traffic did not help his cause though tough to argue it cost him much overall in the end. As an individual, he has the true potential to improve as a three-year-old and with racing. That extends to distance as a runner that has plenty of stamina and should excel with more ground as one to keep on the radar for those later season stakes races.

As far as the race shape, the pace does not look to be overly "fast" early with the 20 SpeedRate though should hold some Contention (Sun) with dominant recent debut winner **#7 MAGE** (E RunStyle/REGRESS? possible) looking to get out on top with **#5 IL MIRACOLO** and **#10 DANGEROUS RIDE** (both below all around) also contesting the pace given the post and the distance change for this individual. **#2 LEGACY ISLE** also projects to be on the lead, or at the least close up to it with his most competitive races run on the front end.

The draw and coming off a weaker effort behind horses, **#9 CYCLONE MISCHIEF** is also likely to take part in the early pace and ideally sit right behind that pair. **#8 ROCKET CAN**, the Holy Bull (G3) winner should also look to fall into a similar outside stalking trip.

**#1 GENERAL JIM** will be out here today looking for his test and where he belongs going forward this season. He has some challenges back around two turns as well as the rail draw. He can often break a step slow and found his stride after moving off the inside and out from behind horses in the Swale (G3) win taking over in the stretch.

After recording a solid speed figure on debut back in September, some upside was projected for **#3 SHADOW DRAGON** coming back off the layoff in the Holy Bull (G3) as a three-year-old. He jumped up in a big way and the effort could be upgraded further as he made up ground late into a Very Slow (VS 04&6S) early and middle race shape. In this case, a "regression" could come into play, though he appears to have come out of the race well recording two works since (work times and dates identical for stablemate **ROCKET CAN**) and back for this race in less than 30-days retaining Jose Ortiz.