Handicapping Analysis
Thu March 9th, 2023

Jim's Picks

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

1 It's Greek to Me - 9/5 **6** Mud Hut - 3/1 **2** Sweet Fraulein - 9/2

As we get ready to kick off another live racing week we should look back at opening day and make note that the track played very evenly to kick off the racing season. The temps are forecasted to be similar for this card with winds out of the East, which means a tailwind in the lane. While I was hopeful to try to beat the favorite in the opener, I don't expect that to happen as 1-IT'S GREEK TO ME looks quite tough to kick off the day. A horse that came to Hawthorne last fall from Southern California, she took well to the track, running a pair of good races against similar company. Her last looks ugly on paper but take into regard that was with an outside draw, going longer and over a synthetic surface. A pair of works since that start has her well positioned to win in here. 6-MUD HUT poses a pace threat from the outside as she picks up Emigh in the saddle. The like race with It's Greek to Me on December 4 had Mud Hut six lengths back at the wire but her final two starts of the meet were competitive and she has a couple of works for the comeback. 2-SWEET FRAULEIN was who I initially was hoping could pull off the upset but it appears she may need a start to be in fit to ready form. After a January 12 start in Kentucky she also took some time off. With only one workout toward the return it looks like she may need a race.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 2:57 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

5 Tap N Twine - 6/1 **1** Niff - 7/5 **4** Field Daisey - 2/1

I was able to catch 5-TAP N TWINE at the right time last December as she turned things around in that December 9 race and pulled off the upset score. I also liked that she came back off that effort and posted another good race on closing day of the meet. Since that start she has gotten a couple of works toward the return and looks to be one of only a couple in here with speed. The hope is that she rates just off the pace of 1-NIFF who looks to be the horse to beat from the inside. Niff closed out the spring meet last year on a high note, winning on the turf, but has been away since that start. She has some spaced out workouts toward the return and the speed figures are well ahead of most in this spot. There won't be any value though and although she will be tough to beat, there's enough questions that need to be answered to take a look elsewhere. 4-FIELD DAISEY was a bit disappointing last fall at times as she looked to get perfect setups in multiple races. While putting together four runner-up efforts, it appeared she was running on just a bit too late. I do expect to see her picking off horses in the lane, but at five furlongs she may run out of real estate to get up in time.

Hawthorne Race 3 - PLAY OF THE DAY

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

1 Silver Moon Road - 8-5 | 2 Try Try Again - 5-1 | 5 Perfect Wager - 9-2

While trainer Randy Klopp comes in with a few horses from Indiana for this card, surely this one was the focus as 1-SILVER MOON ROAD comes in off a fine season in 2022. To flatter things even more, Sammy Bermudez comes along to ride as he was aboard for the six race win streak last year. This one has speed, looks to make the top while unchallenged early and should never look back if he clears. 2-TRY TRY AGAIN is a horse that has really panned out to be a solid claim for only $3,200 last August. Getting some time off after the claim, he won at Hawthorne for $5,000 in November before trying this level in his final start of the meet. Understandably being sent off at huge odds in that spot, he got a very good trip and was game to the wire. A pair of works leading toward the return are beneficial and make note that trainer Zawitz got a big effort out of Tea After Ballet at 47-1 on opening day. His barn may be worth a look with price horses early in the racing season. 5-PERFECT WAGER is a very versatile horse as it appears he can run at any distance over any surface. While sprinting her tends to sit back early and make one run in the lane. Fitness should be no issue for him as he has worked consistently toward the return. He just needs a quick and contested pace upfront to chase and I'm not sure if he finds that today.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 3:51 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

5 Fever Nation - 7-5 | 1 Irish Brute - 9-2 | 4 Dash to the Cash - 2-1

Much like the opener on the card, there are times when the likely winner is the favorite and checks all the proper boxes. That appears to be the case here as 5-FEVER NATION should be very tough to kick off the meet. After a good effort in the Jim Edgar Illinois Futurity last fall, he ran a solid race against open maiden company to close out the meet. He faces state-breds here, has worked well and consistently toward the return, and looks to show speed in a race lacking of pace. There won't be much value but I think he's a single in all multi-race wagers. 1-IRISH BRUTE debuts for a barn that is very good about having horses ready to win early. While I'm never a fan of the inside draw for first timers, I am a fan of the consistent workouts in Arkansas leading to this spot. With Baird aboard the intent should be to get away quickly from the inside. The main question we have to find out is if he is quick enough to try to go with Fever Nation early or if he looks to find position and rate and try to run on late. 4-DASH TO THE CASH has really been a hard luck horse as he has ability but just hasn't been able to get that first victory. Defeated while odds on in his final three starts of the fall, he has excuses in all of those races. He has only one drill toward the return but it was a good workout. I just worry that his late move could come too late at this short sprint distance.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:18 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

3 Foggy Kitten - 9-5 | 1 Superstar Diva - 5-2 | 6 Friend - 5-1

This race kicks off what could be a fun late Pick 4 sequence (15% takeout) as I would likely look to single in here and spread over the final three races. Everything looks to line up for a victory for 3-FOGGY KITTEN as she makes her first start off the year. She has a good summer in 2022 and although she was defeated in her last three starts at Hawthorne, two of those races came against tougher company and the final race was a pace battle where she never caught a breather. Today she has the speed to clear while unchallenged early. She has three drills leading toward the return and she gets Centeno in the saddle, who won three races in a row on opening day. Expect a good performance today. 1-SUPERSTAR DIVA is another from the Zawitz barn, who I made note of in my race 3 analysis. She likely isn't fast enough to challenge early for the lead but she also shouldn't be too far back. It was good to see jock Olaf Hernandez in the winners circle in the finale on Sunday as he gets the call in this spot. 6-FRIEND is another possible price play from the Javier Hernandez barn who may be worth a look underneath in the gimmicks. Just like Sweet Fraulein in the opener, this one had a winter race at Turfway before getting a little time off and coming back with just one work. She is likely to sit back off the pace and could pick off some runners late.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

7 War Room - 9-2 **4** J J's Solution - 10-1 **5** Onasa - 9-5

From the start of this meet we have seen horses already returning from New Orleans fit and ready to race. That is the case here for 7-WAR ROOM as he has run some respectable races against solid competition. While I think there are a couple others who may be quicker to the front today, he may find himself in a perfect stalking spot as he looks to run on late. In a interesting move, he was taken off Lasix prior to his last race and improved as he appeared to have more left in the tank nearing the wire. With an honest pace ahead of him, 4-J J'S SOLUTION could potentially pick off horses through the lane. He closed well in multiple starts last fall and although winless from 17 races may be able to sneak into the gimmicks at a good price. 5-ONASA ran a pair of solid races to open his career before tossing a clunker in his most recent race. Give him another look though as Rivelli got a very good performance out of Act a Fool on opening day, a horse that won following a terrible effort in the race prior. The only question is what the price will be as he could take a ton of action in here.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:12 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

2 C F V Red Nova - 5-1 **6** East of India - 6-1 **5** Shanghai Silver - 7-2

This is the race on the card where any horse can win. There appears to be three with speed as I am expecting a contested pace upfront. If that turns out to be the case, 2-C F V RED NOVA may be sitting on a big race as he comes in fit off three drills toward the return. He raced well off long layoff last fall and looked to have no issues with the shorter sprint distance. Jock Colon rode a winner on opening day and I am always a fan of a rider keeping a mount off a claim, something that occurs here. 6-EAST OF INDIA merits a look as the move to the Hawthorne dirt could be beneficial. He ran a pair of solid races last summer in Kentucky and comes off two good synthetic performances where he stalked and ran on late. Look for him to tuck in just behind the early pace and look to get the jump on the closers in the lane. 5-SHANGHAI SILVER has a running style very similar to East of India as he likely won't be on the lead but won't be too far back either. Gerald Butler liked him enough to claim him back last winter as the only concern may be just one workout leading toward the return.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 5:39 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

8 Soviet Standard - 12-1 **2** Chief Mystique - 6-1 **5** C F V Nobodycares - 9-2

Bottom level maidens could lead to chaos to close out the card as there's not a ton in regards to form in here. There's a few with the potential to show early speed but I tend to wonder if 8-SOVIET STANDARD could be in a position to clear and steal this race. He made two starts against tougher here last fall but showed improved speed in his last start of the meet. He was a factor well into the lane in that spot as the class drop, combined with shorter distance today could add up to a big effort. The only concern is only one workout toward the return. 2-CHIEF MYSTIQUE also poses a price threat as he has shown signs of some ability in recent races. His final start of the fall meet was an improvement and he followed that with a respectable effort at Mahoning Valley in his most recent start. He has posted a good workout off that race and may come running late in the lane in here. 5-C F V NOBODYCARES is another of the Gonzalez trained horses returning off a long layoff. That didn't stop Racarino from winning on opening day off a similar layoff as he was game to the wire. Consistent works leading toward the return make him worth the look.