Handicapping Analysis
Fri March 10th, 2023

Happy Hour Hot Takes

Fair Grounds Race 7

Post Time 4:15 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

2 Postnup - 3/1

Benefits from inside draw

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:54 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

6 Thorn Crown - 2/1

Looks to be a perfect fit

Santa Anita Race 7

Post Time 5:30 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

2 Finneus

When your friend's kid is named Finn...

Handicapping Analysis
Fri March 10th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 CRYSTAL CRESCENT validated the off track 1/29 figure when she returned on 3/2 with a solid place finish and 77 OptixFIG. For that race she was running against males and for McKnight/Saez, a team that has had success as of late. While that effort stacks up here, the form cycle should be taken into account as she wheels back on shorter rest after pairing those top effort and could be a shorter price with those races attracting the public.

The 1/29 race was mentioned with both **#4 AIN'TNOSWEETIE** and **#5 BAD OUTLOOK** returning from that common race and could see them compete right back at this level. Class is a lateral move for **#6 JERI DAWN** taking on open company here. She has shown some run this season, though has been her own worst enemy with the pattern of gate issues and some trips going all the way back to 1/6. The rider change to Jordan could be taken as positive intent with that change alone looking to mix things up.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 DUTCHESS BUBBLES fits today's starter conditions which stipulates horses that have run for the $12.5k tag or less in their three most recent starts. Her lone start this season for the tag resulting in the win on 1/14 and could rebound in today's event and race shape. As far as that 1/14 race, **#2 MUMBLEBEE** returned to win in her following start with a dominant run (B+ OptixGRADE) on 2/17 and will be tested stepping up in class.

McKnight also returns with **#6 IPSUM GRATUS**, one that appears the strong of the two barnmates on current form and figures. Ipsum Gratus is part of the group (**#5 UNDECODED** and **#7 XYLOPHONE**) that ran on 2/11 finishing in a BLANKET at the wire with all three earning the same B OptixGRADE and 80 OptixFIG.

#3 MIDNIGHT'S GIRL will race protected here wheeling right back for Broberg first off the claim. She will require a top effort to win this race and ride where they are likely to return to the more effective stalking trip and tactic from 2/5.

A top effort and stamina will be required for **#4 EVERYOTHERWON** as she will stretch out in distance. The plan of attack looks clear as they project to send for the lead (Standard Q1 Square - no Surface/Distance data to Plot) in an attempt to steal this race on the front end by going as far as they can as fast as they can.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 VICTORY MARCH has some overall upside returning in this spot. He will drop back into the claiming condition and upgraded in terms of class and trip from 2/11 after a rough start and premature WIDE MOVE into the fast (X_FLOW) portion of the race.

#7 MASTER OF ARMS might find himself better suited to today's draw moving outside horses where he can take up a stalking trip rather than DUEL inside, the trip he took up last month in the layoff return.

#6 TOUCH CODE has races on his best day that not only make him a contender but position him as the controlling speed. He showed that ability as the BOS (91 OptixFIG) under similar claiming conditions back on 1/14. Some regression with the step up in class (along with being fractious in the GATE and racing WIDE) on 2/4 and returning on shorter rest just 13 days later to run on 2/17 could create some subtle excuses since that peak effort.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 BIG NICK could have a hidden pace advantage in this race and the timing on his side wheeling right back in two weeks off the claim by Litfin. Big Nick projected to move up back at the claiming level on 2/24 though the WEATHER conditions racing in the rain and running against (RUSH, DUEL, X_FLOW) the dynamic with the race slowing late played against him.

Trip will be key for **#6 WINDCRACKER** cutting back to a sprint for this race though otherwise has form to fit as a contender. He was declared a non starter (10-1) on 2/17 and projected some upside that day with the class drop from 1/27. Going back to the 12/30 race, he turned in a solid B- OptixGRADE/90 OptixFIG for the level and par he returns to here.

#5 SLAM DUNK SERMON appears "obvious" off his races and figures this season. He had sneaky form coming in for Diodoro off the California races showing up live on this circuit. He was claimed back on 1/14 and has been off 55-days since giving up recency to others here and could be the lowest odds in this race than he has been this season creating some value on others.

Diodoro will show up with **#7 GOZILLA** and that barn change alone could attract support. As an individual Gozilla has form to compete and numbers on the dirt going back to the beginning of his career (breaking his maiden on debut at Saratoga followed up by minor awards in both the G1 Hopeful and G1 Champagne as a juvenile) that fit on par and consistent with the synthetic figures.

#3 MOJO MAN should benefit from the cut back in distance with some buried form this season. His 1/7 BTL effort can be upgraded with a rough start (TROUBLE_S) and WIDE CLOSE in that fourth place finish. DiVito was able to give the route race three weeks ago as a confidence builder and allow Mojo Man some conditioning showing early speed at his less than ideal two-turn (SHORTER) distance.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

In a highly competitive event, a case can be made for horses with form that might not jump off the page. **#1 ALL IN GOOD TIME** being one of those runners. He recorded a solid B- OptixGRADE/69 OptixFIG at this level in January of last year and returns from the 2/17 race against open to stretch out for the first time back in against statebred company.

#3 BLACK APPLE also finds class relief from his races this season as both held a much higher OFR than today's race. Going back to the 12/31 debut, he presented both as a runner that could require class relief/DROP and added ground/STRECH and will find that here following a sneaky good B- OptixGRADE run and GALLOP+ back on 1/21.

Second time starters **#5 BOLIVER** and **#6 SEEKING CHROME** drop in for the claiming tag today and carry upside from their debut into this event off their respective debut efforts.

#10 STORM STRATEGY will step up in class in this first start for Asmussen and while he did record a BTL effort on 2/3 and has the route experience, the connections had the intention to run on 2/24 in a statebred $20k MCL event though unable to draw in, land here by default.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 PLEDGEOFALLEGIANCE has struggled for the win at this starter $50k level, though has come close and perhaps the closest compared to the others in this field. he recorded a solid B OptixGRADE at Churchill Downs last June and hacked up that race with a BTL show finish in September. This will be his second start this meet for Asmussen and the barn has picked up as of late compared to earlier this season.

#2 SPEND BENJAMINS also ran a solid race at level last summer at Churchill Downs and has buried form that fits with this field showing up with a top effort. The price compensation is required though could be there off the recent run lines and finishing positions.

#4 PIONEERING PAPA caught a weaker starter allowance ground back in December at Los Alamitos and requires a step up on this circuit and first out for Diodoro where public money is expected to land on connections alone. Stablemate **#6 SHADY EMPIRE** could present the edge of the two as not only does he have recency and local experience but also early speed that could move him up in today's race shape.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 SECRET FIX was dominant (B+ OptixGRADE) with the starter allowance win back in November at Del Mar. Her form this meet has not been able to translate though one could suggest the off tracks and higher level allowance conditions have had her over her head and the class change today is reasonable to place her where she can compete.

#8 BERRY GOOD returns from the 384-day layoff in for the tag for the first time and picking up a live rider in Bejarano could signal positive intent here by Robertson. **#9 KNOWING GLANCE** also finds some class relief coming back off the layoff though overall form and figures lack any strong edge over others in this group.

In terms of the early pace, **#6 DREAM STREAK** and **#5 SASSY SAGEY** are very close in figures form and class sharing a similar run style and projected trip battling on the lead where the board could assist as the separator. **#4 LADY ASTRID** has a solid closing kick to run on late though would require a lot in her favor to win where a minor is a more reasonable expectation.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 PATTERN BET was compromised with the ride and TROUBLE in the trip from start-to-finish on 2/20. She can improve off that race and holds established form, figures and class that stacks up on par. **#6 ONE WAY OR ANOTHER** will also return from the 2/20 race stayed on well as the BOS "best of the speed" taking a tough beat getting caught at the wire.

Ortiz scratched **#2 GRAMERCY PARK** from the Downthedustyroad stakes last weekend to run here in this allowance. This spot is "easier" and will reunite with Santana, a rider that was not available for her on 3/4, the date of that scratch.

#10 MOZINGO still must show she can improve and step up to compete for the top spot and in against the older runners in this race. To her credit, she is lightly raced and showing improvement coming back from the layoff this year. **#3 MS CARROLL COUNTY** also will be tested in against older and in her first start against winners; though respected off her races this season and progress with each start.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Number wise **#2 SINGING EMMA** and **#6 THORN CROWN** have recorded some of the higher figures in this field that would make them logical should everyone run back to their most recent races. There are many in this field that are close to that pair on figures and still lightly raced to suggest a move forward is not a reach.

We might not have seen the "best" **#1 NELLY LARKIN** yet as she raced WIDE on debut recorded a decent Special Weight figure as a juvenile. She returned from the 134-day layoff on 2/5 and might have lost her race before it started as she was very fractious in the GATE rearing up multiple times. She has been given some added works and the blinkers since that start and will return with a rider change as well. **#9 SAWYER'S SWEETIE** also had a rough (TROUBLE_S) in her return last month and showed some run (MOVE) in her Remington Park debut. In addition to conditioning, the return race on 2/19 sat a slightly higher race par than today.

#8 I'M BETH DUTTON recorded that figure not far off the others mentioned above in her debut back at Emerald Downs. She could have required the start here on 2/10 returning from a 230-day layoff. **#10 TIZ SWEET CANDY** showed some run in spots at a higher race par on 2/12, though like I'm Beth Dutton here last month, did drift/NO_LINE while unable to change leads/NO_LEAD. **#7 HER NAME IS LOLA** has shown some run in spots for this level and distance though must somewhere to improve off those races for the top spot today.