Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 6th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Churchill Downs Race 1

Post Time 9:30 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 EXTRA ANEJO ran a big effort to break his maiden back in October of last year and the hype train will likely follow him back from that race into this return. The field on October 13th was not one of the stronger fields with just two clearing the condition going forward one doing so for the $25k tag at HOU. With that said, he does not catch the strongest group in this allowance return. That could be enough to assist here with many in this field also looking to find where they fit and number wise on the lighter side for even this 89-81 OFR, an OFR that is lighter for this type of allowance condition overall.

That OFR is compared to the April 8th race at Keeneland run at a similar OC$100kN1X level **#8 DEER DISTRICT** returns from with the higher 94-86 OFR. That could present a move forward for that runner as he makes his second start back off the layoff and has recorded higher numbers on the turf, the surface he was racing over during his juvenile season.

Debut maiden winner #3 FEDERAL JUDGE also caught a softer group in his debut score last month at Oaklawn Park where the others in that field are a combined 0/33 still maiden eligible.

Churchill Downs Race 2

Post Time 10:01 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This race is crying out for a "new face" with many in this field that have come up short at the level without excuse (four-year-old #1 CAPE TRAFALGAR one of those and multiple times as the chalk) or have been pointed to races/circuits this season and have shown who they are. **#5 SIR ROCK** could be that new face with upside. His races last season both recorded here at Churchill Downs and potential upside off those juvenile efforts. He returns with additional changes with McCarthy taking over the training adding Lasix and picking up John Velazquez on return. **#7 JUST A PHOTO** made a positive physical appearance on the track (though did run with his head/nose up early not sure what's up with that - possible kickback as he did correct that mechanically and ran on late) for his debut back at Keeneland on April 8th, a should note the top 2-3 horses from that Special Weight event will run later on the card. **#8 REAL NAUGHTY** could be real sneaky as this one had the GATE issues and SLOG on debut and claimed from that race at high $100k number going first off the claim here picking up a live rider in Castellano for Hiles.

Churchill Downs Race 3

Post Time 10:31 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 BRIGHT FUTURE fits logical in this field especially if he is able to pair his Gulfstream Park form and figures. While is has that appearance the shorter price is expected and there are some horses in this field with buried and progressive form that could pop up and surprise.

#4 EMBRACE is one that could be overlooked here as a runner that started to find his form and improvement last year as a sophomore. The intent could have been to use the return race on April 16th as a prep, noting a similar improvement pattern coming off layoffs (and the debut) where a step forward is expected. The race shape is tough to assess here, though is to the benefit of EMBRACE as one that has shown he can close into fast and slow early paced races.

The connections for **#3 TRANSECT** picked this spot after a noted scratch from the Lexington (G3) where he had a look in that spot. As a horse he showed ability breaking his maiden on debut and improved numbers and with the B+ OptixGRADE against allowance company. His run in the Gotham (G3) is one to completely excuse especially coming back with a rider change noted the timing and pairing with Talamo was a complete mismatch on the day and never had this horse in the right spot to run.

#2 COASTAL DEFENSE is one of the older horses in this field and has been class tested and competitive at times in graded stakes company. As of late, he has struggled with the layoff lines with the distance change looking to keep this one at one turn since his 2021 season. His Plot position is in line with #5 KING OTTOMAN (no value), one making the distance change back to one-turn for this race and also taking a step up in class from the race par back in March at Oaklawn Park, standing out over the softer group that day.

#14 PETULANTE is deserving of a mention and tough to knock any of his races to date. He has the challenges here stepping up on this circuit and field as well as arguably taking the worst of the draw with the outside post. His natural early speed could assist to offset and clear and is a fast horse.

Churchill Downs Race 4

Post Time 11:04 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 MATAREYA looked pointed to this race making her return back on March 31st at Oaklawn Park. She ran a solid race off the layoff and game in the place finish (B OptixGRADE) making rival #3 WICKED HALO work for the win. MATAREYA was potentially short off the layoff and distance wise also shorter than her ideal. She has both factors on her side today in the second start back off the layoff and with the added ground returning to Churchill Downds a course she has run well over in the past. As far a s running style her class has allowed for versatility and that again should be in play here with the ability to show early speed. That front end trip could give her the edge in this compact field and looking to use that tactical speed to get the jump on Wicked Halo today and her main rival, the race favorite and horse to beat in #2 GOODNIGHT OLIVE.

Churchill Downs Race 5

Post Time 11:36 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The "Fire" Contention and higher 63 SpeedRate can set up runners from off the pace and this course profile also flatters Quad IV runners. Brown has the pair of Quad IV runners with #7 FLUFFY SOCKS and #2 SPEAK OF THE DEVIL in this race. Some intention could be given to the pair landing this spot especially with **SPEAK OF THE DEVIL** picking this spot rather than run against (scr 4/15) her stablemate In Italian in the Jenny Wiley (G1) at Keeneland. SPEAK ran an A- OptixGRADE with her win over this course and distance in this very race last lead. She followed up that race with the layoff following the June 11th, Just a Game and returned with a WIDE trip over the Gulfstream Park course in the Honey Fox (G3), a trip and effort that can be upgraded as a tougher trip to overcome and win.

In terms of #5 SPENDARELLA she is a quality type and clearly intent bringing her back off the 259-day layoff in this event with the premier racing day and stage. She is part of the Quad I "Fire" group and while "best" of that set she still must overcome that pace and profile in this spot with the layoff and likely in the role of the race favorite. She has been able to transfer her form all over the work though this will be her first race at Churchill Downs.

Churchill Downs Race 6

Post Time 12:14 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morning line favorite #6 ZOZOS has been flattered by trips and competition and still must prove himself against other graded stakes types. That is the test here he has as an individual and creates opportunity as the "hype" on this horse projects to have him at a shorter price in this competitive race.

Rival #3 BABY YODA is another still looking for his first stakes win and something to consider as he projects to be another shorter price in this race though has the benefit of early speed, one turn form and has recorded some of the higher consistent figures in this race.

Looking at OptixPLOT, Baby Yoda fits this race shape though does not hold any edge over others in this field. His Quad I/III Square is overlapped by **#2 MASQUEPARADE** one that should offer value in this spot returning off the layoff. He has form over Churchill Downs recording some of his higher OptixFIG over this course. He will find the subtle change in distance for this race, though could be one that is in his favor. In addition, Masqueparade has proven stakes form and company lines giving the necessary edge on both speed and class for this race.

#9 KNEEDEEPINSNOW is another overlapped with Baby Yoda and Masqueparade on OptixPLOT, though a smaller Square of that group - still unproven at the distance. He will trade that shape for recency as this start marks his second start off the layoff and has the benefit of fitness. In addition he has form at Churchill Downs and in stakes company keying off the Kellys Landing effort here back in July 2022 earning a B OptixGRADE and 101 OptixFIG, a Grade/Fig on par and in line with both Baby Yoda and Zozos and projects longer on the board and in play over those two.

Also returning from the layoff, **#8 PROMISE KEEPER** reuniting with Saez (hot rider, picking up live mounts starting starting the CD meet) as he makes his first start in the Dallas Stewart barn. Promise Keeper has buried form and figures with those races at the graded stakes condition and even holding a graded stakes win, the Peter Pan (G3) back in 2021. He will make not only the barn change but also returning as a gelding for Woodford/Winstar to suggest they have made the decision for this older horse to become a race horse rather than a stallion prospect and could be intent.

A win is a bit of a reach for **#5 SURLY FURIOUS** though this one has some buried form that suggest he can get a share and overlooked in this spot. Some of his more competitive race has been recorded over this course and distance, including the B- OptixGRADE effort in the Ack Ack (G3) last fall. The morning line would be a surprise to stick on #7 THREE TECHNIQUES, the upset 36.8-1 winner of this race last year and did have the setup on the day though given mention here as one that is capable though does still require the compensation as a legit longshot again.

Churchill Downs Race 7

Post Time 12:56 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 GO BEARS GO is an interesting presence in this race and now in the care of Wesley Ward. The previous connections showed confidence and intent all 2022 pointing to the Breeders' Cup Turf Sprint where GO BEARS GO lost his race before it started. He was visually anxious, and worked up before the race his demeanor was tough to support and carried to the race breaking slow and not showing his natural RunStyle or run his race. This horse has ability and can suggest that he remains stateside, landing in this event and picking up a very live rider in Velazquez.

This 5.5f course can play fair and even set up for closers. The "Sun" Contention and honest 43 SpeedRate is supported by half the field sharing an E/EP RunStyle with those runners all shown on the Plot as Circles with the exception, **#10 ARREST ME RED** as a Large Square above the ParLine in Quad II. #11 MOTORIOUS is given the PC RunStyle designation though positioned on the Plot in the center as a Large Square - likely due to the translation of the horses from out west and coming out of the unique downhill 6.5f turf course.

#4 BIG INVASION is capable in this spot off his individual resume and positioned on the Plot sharing Quad IV as a Square. Value should be assessed as this is a step up in class based on his prior events and figures a more logical type to the public and in the role as the morning line favorite. **#3 EVAN SING**, a Large Square has a deeper Quad IV closer position, though odds compensation should be in play. That carries to **#9 OCEANIC** one that is tough to dismiss based on the Plot as a Quad II Square and could fall into the right time and place to get the trip.

Churchill Downs Race 8

Post Time 1:46 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Looking at OptixPLOT (and "Red" in the Past 3 Runlines), #5 ECHO AGAIN presents as a vulnerable favorite. He is a Large Circle in Quad III Standard (current form) and Circle in Quad I Surface/Distance with the "Sun" Contention, 50 SpeedRate and lacking an edge over others in the vicinity. **#9 GENERAL JIM** given the edge and upgrade as a Standard Square with a similar RunStyle.

#11 GILMORE could be overlooked of the two (#7 FORT BRAGG) SF Racing entrants with progressive form and a flow upgrade from the Bay Shore (G3) last month at AQU. GILMORE is positioned as a Quad III Square, a shape and position as a P RunStyle that could find the right trip as one that is not an E/EP RunStyle horse. **#10 CURLY JACK** is positioned as a Quad IV Square and another horse that could find today's race shape and return to the one turn distance just what he needs to run a top this season.

#13 DAMON'S MOUNT is one of those Quad I Circles though could be willing to take the Plot shape/position lightly in this case. The Iroquois 8.5f route is paired with the SHORTER? OptixNOTE and the turf return in the Palisades was given the NO_HANDLE/DIRT OptixNOTE projection to suggest both races come with excuses beyond trip.

Both #6 FROSTED DEPARTURE and #8 BOURBON BASH require a big step forward from their races this season and still must prove themselves on the graded stakes level, though should appreciate the distance change exiting the longer distance events this season at Oaklawn Park.

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This race is insane - in the best way possible. There is a ton of quality and any number of horses in this group with contender qualities. Of the group shorter on the morning line: **#1 MAJOR DUDE** is logical. He is proven, consistent already a multiple graded stakes winner. He has yet to run a "bad" race even the 9th place in the BC JuvTurf earned a 91 OptixFIG and B- OptixGRADE with a WIDE trip.

#11 CARL SPACKLER has shown versatility in terms of RunStyle (Quad I Square) pairing up strong 96/98 OptixFIG with B+ OptixGRADES in both starts to suggest he can step up in class. He took a tough beat on debut on the wrong side of the photo and held his own after the wire not allowing the winner to pass. He was validated with that winner, #2 FAR BRIDGE coming back to win the 3/11 allowance, though did show a slight decline in his figure from 96 on debut to 91 in March despite still earning a B+ OptixGRADE.

#8 MO STASH was soundly beat in the Columbia by #4 TALK OF THE NATION, one that projects upside though at the same time looks the part of a "wiseguy" horse in this race with Mo Stash returning to win the Transylvania (G3) last month at Keeneland with a front end trip.

The horses to follow/upgrade from the Transylvania (G3) **#13 ANDTHEWINNERIS** with the clear TROUBLE in the stretch and **#14 WEBSLINGER** off a trip that was tough to watch with Castellano wrangling this horse early and then forced X_FLOW into making a big WIDE MOVE and still willing late to the wire.

Churchill Downs Race 10

Post Time 3:31 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Returning BC Sprint (G1) champ **#7 CODY'S WISH** is the clear horse to beat even with the layoff line. His class, RunStyle and consistent figures make him a major contender.

#5 GET HER NUMBER should offer value and could land in the right spot to get back to a top effort. The placement in the Pegasus (G1) as far as class and distance played against this horse and that race has continued to be a key race this year. GET HER NUMBER has since returned to one turn and improved. He had the trip and race X_FLOW (and COLD barn) against him in the San Carlos (G3) and upgraded from the effort again against the flow in the Commonwealth (G3) with other adversity losing his footing out of the gate, racing in traffic and gaining wide behind the top two - #3 HERE MI SONG and #4 HOIST THE GOLD.

Churchill Downs Race 11

Post Time 4:27 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A case was made for **#2 MASTER PIECE** in the Pegasus turf (G1) with the distance change as a horse that could appreciate the change cutting back from the longer distance turf events. He had other challenges that day with the quality of the field and the outside post that did play against him overall, though still the effort honest, racing in TRAFFIC to finish in a BLANKET for the minors earning a B- OptixGRADE. He has held his form since and should return fit with that cutback to today's 9f distance after setting the pace (VF early pace - flow upgrade) in the Pan American (G2) last month.

#8 SANTIN is a legit contender in this race. He is a multiple G1 winner with both of those G1 wins recorded at Churchill Downs and at today's 9f distance.

#5 UP TO THE MARK is an improving up and coming type, though will be given a legit class/distance test in this field, a step up and stretch out from his prior turf races. That must be considered as he is assigned the second choice on the morning line. #7 HONG KONG HARRY also has value concerns in the role of the morning line favorite. He had a series of favorable trips against G3/G2 company out in California and came up short as the favorite in a WEAK running of the Kilroe Mile (G1) and also noted he was fractious in the GATE.

#10 BYE BYE MELVIN is worth keeping on the radar. This race could be a prep for Pimlico/Preakness day with solid form over that turf course going back to 2020-21. Motion has been able to get this horse ready off the bench and on his best day has races and a RunStyle that stacks up with others in this field.

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

See Stakes Spotlight for KY DERBY analysis

Churchill Downs Race 13

Post Time 6:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 EQUIVOQUE showed a lot of talent leading up to his debut and showed as much (B+ OptixGRADE) on the track breaking his maiden first out. The effort suggests he should handle the class rise and from a physical standpoint there are no obvious signs the added ground will be a hurdle for this individual.

Quad I Square, **#9 LET IT RIDE** is tough to ignore off that Plot visual and paired with the double digit morning line, a upgrade value combination. His debut back on March 4th was GRIT earning a 91 OptixFIG and was allowed to get a workout breaking his maiden at AQU in the second start.

#3 BO CRUZ earned a follow off his GREEN debut making a MOVE through TRAFFIC in the place finish. He validated that effort coming back with a strong B+ OptixGRADE/95 OptixFIG breaking his maiden in the second start. There was a change in tactics sending him for the lead after losing his footing out of the gate and despite controlling dominantly on the lead and going on to score by open lengths, the effort appeared taxing. That is noted as he has been provided the recovery time returning from the two month break and freshened here off some strong local works and picking up a live rider in Rosario. #6 PROMISE ME A RIDE earned a similar 94 OptixFIG in his maiden win at the FG, though did so with a favorable trip in an off-the-turf race and with a softer early pace. His Cox trained stablemate finishing second, Tapthedrum was favored and came up short as the heavy favorite once again on May 2nd at HS Indy.

#1 SINGLE RULER looked like a horse that was improving off his maiden win and coming back with a sneaky good B- OptixGRADE effort in the Risen Star (G2). Those efforts could have put him "over the top" when returning the following month in the LA Derby (G2) a race that was tougher to take on face value with Kingsbarns setting a slow pace in the gate to wire win and many not given their trip or better chance to compete with that race dynamic.

Churchill Downs Race 14

Post Time 7:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Equivoque is worth a follow in Race 13, with **#9 MULLIKIN** returning from the April 8th common race and game in his place finish (95 OptixFIG) that day validating his BTL/92 OptixFIG debut in February at Oaklawn Park. #16 LE BAR also returning from that common race though would require a lot more than luck in this field currently sitting deep on the AE.

#10 NORTHERN INVADER could be the most dangerous FTS in this field. He was working forwardly to debut last year as a juvenile and had some setbacks delaying the initial start. Some of those setbacks carried into 2023 working well down in FL before shipping back to Keeneland where he has steadily worked in preparation for this race.

#2 EVERSO MISCHIEVIOUS was given a follow off his debut effort back on February 11th and that effort one that did not go ignored. He will be tested to repeat that effort in this second start with the circuit switch and giving up recency returning from the 84-day layoff. #14 DILLINGER improved number wise as projected from his debut last July returning this year as a sophomore. With that said, his races on the track required more earning B-OptixGRADES, efforts short of "winning" type races for the level.

Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 6th, 2023

Peter's Simulcast Plays

Churchill Downs Race 1
Post Time 9:30 AM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Extra Anejo - 6/5 | 8 Deer District - 6/1 | 5 Stud Lovin - 6/1

Churchill Downs Race 2
Post Time 10:01 AM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Shockwave - 8/1 | 1 Cape Trafalgar - 2/1 | 8 Quality Chic - 3/1

Churchill Downs Race 3
Post Time 10:31 AM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Bright Future - 5/2 | 5 King Ottoman - 3/1 | 14 Petulante - 6/1

Churchill Downs Race 4
Post Time 11:04 AM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

2 Goodnight Olive - 4/5 | 5 Matareya - 7/2 | 3 Wicked Halo - 3/1

Churchill Downs Race 5
Post Time 11:36 AM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

5 Spendarella - 7/5 | 3 Haughty - 4/1 | 2 Speak of the Devil [FR] - 7/2

Churchill Downs Race 6
Post Time 12:14 PM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

12 Caddo River - 4/1 | 6 Zozos - 5/2 | 3 Baby Yoda - 3/1

Churchill Downs Race 7
Post Time 12:56 PM CST
Analysis by Peter Galassi

10 Arrest Me Red - 4/1 | 4 Big Invasion - 7/2 | 13 Artemus Citylimits - 12/1

Churchill Downs Race 8

Post Time 1:46 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

5 Echo Again - 7/2 | 12 Gun Pilot - 5/1 | 9 General Jim - 4/1

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Carl Spackler [IRE] - 3/1 | 2 Far Bridge - 7/2 | 1 Major Dude - 5/2

Churchill Downs Race 10

Post Time 3:31 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

10 Endorsed - 5/1 | 7 Cody's Wish - 4/5 | 1 White Abarrio - 6/1

Churchill Downs Race 11

Post Time 4:27 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

7 Hong Kong Harry [IRE] - 7/2 | 8 Santin - 9/2 | 9 Spooky Channel - 5/1

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

3 Two Phil's - 12/1 | 17 Derma Sotogake [JPN] - 10/1 | 15 Forte - 3/1

Churchill Downs Race 13

Post Time 6:55 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

6 Promise Me a Ride - 5/1 | 2 Equivoque - 3/1 | 3 Bo Cruz - 5/1

Churchill Downs Race 14

Post Time 7:30 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

2 Everso Mischievous - 5/2 | 11 Wicked Again - 8/1 | 10 Northern Invader - 12/1

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Post Time 12:20 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Eternally Grateful - 7/2 | 5 Family Tradition - 9/2 | 7 Abundant - 5/1

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Post Time 12:51 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Full Impact - 7/2 | 6 Lookin High - 6/1 | 9 Mo's Mojo - 3/1

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Post Time 1:25 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

7 Bettys Cash - 3/1 | 2 Midnight Taxes - 7/2 | 6 Data Storm - 5/1

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Post Time 1:57 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Royal Act - 5/2 | 4 Eastside Cool - 4/1 | 8 Presidential - 5/1

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

6 Fridaynightsoldier - 9/2 | 2 Chicago's Gray - 7/2 | 1 Rudiano - 5/1

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Post Time 3:04 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 My Noah - 9/5 | 5 Ottoman Empire - 5/2 | 12 Smooth Scat - 8/1

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Post Time 3:40 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

4 Citrus Bay - 7/2 | 1 Where's Randy - 9/2 | 2 Peace Dog - 9/5

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 4:12 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

3 Shady Empire - 3/1 | 10 Lamutanaatty - 7/2 | 9 American Outlaw - 4/1

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:48 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

2 Joe Frazier - 9/2 | 6 Sir Wellington - 8/1 | 1 Edge to Edge - 6/1

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 5:30 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Night Effect - 2/1 | 4 Tejas - 8/1 | 10 Saline River - 12/1

Oaklawn Park Race 11

Post Time 6:15 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

5 Navy Seal - 5/1 | 8 One Ten Stadium - 9/2 | 11 Gar Hole - 4/1

Oaklawn Park Race 12

Post Time 6:50 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Hellorhighwater - 8/5 | 10 Polterer - 9/2 | 6 Nepal Up - 12/1

Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 6th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As discussed in the Oaks (G1) the assessment of the race favorite and in the Kentucky Derby (G1), the favoritism falling on #15 FORTE. As far as FORTE coming into this race, he is the most accomplished runner from the graded stakes wins as a juvenile (juvenile champion) and pairing graded stakes wins returning this year as a sophomore. While he is the "most accomplished" and has been at the top of the crop this year, one of the concerns for this race is whether or not he has reached his "top" and peaked, which could open the door for the developing types to catch up to him with maturity. As far as trip, FORTE might not be as pace dependent as Wet Paint in terms of RunStyle, with his class/versatility, still he must overcome a trip and timing key with his run. In terms of this course he has been training here and one that has been able to transfer his form around to the varied tracks, he is still lacking race day experience at Churchill Downs. These are all factors to consider with a favorite as the assessment of a legit favorite should check every box in that role.

As far as progression with racing his Todd Pletcher trained stablemate, #5 TAPIT TRICE (underneath) arguably has shown a move forward this year and with each start. Stamina does not appear to be any limitation, though as an individual he does have his habits from a tendency to break slow (a hurdle in a 20 horse field) and can often turn his head and lack focus in the stretch even in races he does wind up winning. His Run Style, stamina and assertive rider in Saez might give him his best chance to hit the board, while a win will take a lot in his favor.

Locally based, **#3 TWO PHIL'S** checks the boxes as far as a horse that is accomplished; he has graded stakes wins, including the Street Sense (G3) over the Churchill Downs main track and two-turn distance; he is fast enough speed figure wise by any figure maker to compete in this field, and has the right RunStyle (a favorable OptixPLOT position above the ParLine - a rare, successful designation and the only runner in this field with that position) and form as he has trained as well and consistent as a racehorse can be.

The conversation on workouts is crucial this time of year and with the individual players in the race, each horse is looking for something different. A horse like TWO PHIL'S that checks all the boxes already, works are a matter of keeping the horse fit, happy and healthy. For a runner like **#17 DERMA SOTOGAKE** it is about acclimation to Churchill Downs bringing in form from overseas. As far as his form, he is contender off those races; he is fast enough by respected (OptixEQ and Timeform) figure makers and the class of the races fit with today's level of competition. Derma Sotogake, has his quirks while training, that appears to be who he is and his overall demeanor is positive in the mornings with the weeks he has been on the grounds for this race.

Workouts are also key with layoff runners and especially for #4 CONFIDENCE GAME making his first start in more than two months (70-days) giving up recency to the others in the field. For him working well, is not enough, he must show that those works have him fit, race ready and sitting on the best race of his career in order to win. Pace is also noted for Confidence Game as he did come from just off the pace to run the Rebel (G2) prior form and success had been from making the lead and would consider that running style for him in this race.

#11 DISARM is another runner that as far as works leading up to this race is tough to knock. Overall he has been a good work horse and shown run/talent in the morning with the main question mark when he will transfer that to the afternoon as his races to date have been good (lacking "red" in the OptixGRID) he must show up on Saturday with an improvement effort from anything he has yet to run on the track to date to win -- and looking to get creative at a price, he could just be that progressive type.

#13 SUN THUNDER is another given a follow with the morning works as he also requires a new top to compete on Sunday and has the equipment change with the blinkers added both in the morning and for the race. Following this horse since his debut, he has shown ability at times and a case can be made he has yet to show his best. His debut over this Churchill Downs course was merely a "prep" for a route race where he exploded B+ OptixGRADE overcoming a lot of adversity in his December 31st Oaklawn Park win. McPeek coming back off that race in the Southwest (G3) was also a "prep" given the recent maiden win, the Derby Trail season just beginning and letting Sun Thunder gather experience. The race he was peaked for was the Risen Star (G2) a race where he recorded a 100 OptixFIG and place finish behind a quality runner and rival in #14 ANGEL OF EMPIRE on the day. SUN THUNDER just needing points in the Louisiana Derby (G2) and again a spot in his form cycle where he was not expected to record a top came up just short of that objective. The approach to keep Sun Thunder closer early on and just eek out points was too conservative and the race shape playing against that tactical decision with #6 KINGSBARNS walking (FLOW) on the lead (the type of trip he is unlikely to ever receive again) to score. He will return after doing just enough to earn the necessary points in the Blue Grass (G1) and returning to the top effort from the Risen Star (G2) has him right back into competitive form here.

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

3 Two Phil's - 12-1 **17** Derma Sotogake (JPN) - 10-1 **15** Forte - 3-1

3 TWO PHIL'S come off his best effort yet with a sparkling late rally to win The Ruby Stakes at Turfway Park. Best last race of all the contenders. Won over the Churchill oval as a 2 year old. He will be an inviting price and here's hoping for the local connections.

17 DERMA SOTOGAKE not easy to win when your last race was in Meydan but he was by the far most impressive performer during that week. Japan horses have been winning a lot of big races across the world this year. Winning rider returns and may prove best with the right journey.

15 FORTE has done nothing wrong in 7 lifetime starts. Won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile and followed that with a sharp win in Fountain Of Youth in his 3 year old debut. I thought the Florida Derby win was most impressive because he won despite adversity. The post time favorite and will be the one to beat.

Churchill Downs Race 12 - PLAY OF THE DAY

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

3 Two Phil's - 12-1 **14** Angel of Empire - 8-1 **10** Practical Move - 10-1 **17** Derma Sotogake (JPN) - 10-1 **5** Tapit Trice - 5-1 **22** Mandarin Hero (JPN) - 20-1

The biggest race in the World and one that has so much intrigue each and every year. After we saw Rich Strike win last year after coming in from the Also Eligible horses I cannot say that there is ever a horse with no chance to win. These are three-year-old horses, many relatively lightly raced, and there is so much that can happen. Let's start with the morning line choice Forte. He is an extremely talented racehorse. He's the Eclipse Award winner at two. He's won six of seven lifetime races and five in a row. With that in mind, I thought he should have dominated the Florida Derby. I didn't feel that was a great bunch and I felt he had to work really hard to win that race. His speed figures have regressed in his last three starts and at somewhere around 3-1 I just don't see the value. For sentimental reasons as well as handicapping reasons I'm picking 3-TWO PHIL'S to win the Derby. Of course I love that he was stabled at Hawthorne but I also really like his races this year. This Risen Star has proven to be a key prep race. His race in the Jeff Ruby Stakes was a monster win and getting to see him train in person, he does it all with such ease that the distance won't be an issue either. The three hole doesn't scare me because there's so much speed surrounding him that they will rush away and he should be perfectly positioned early. The price should be right as well. With liking Two Phil's I have to like 14-ANGEL OF EMPIRE too. He was the winner of the Risen Star and followed that race up with and impressive win in the Arkansas Derby. He may be a bit further back early but I think we get more than the 8-1 morning line he was laid at. #10-PRACTICAL MOVE is a monster of a racehorse. We don't know how good the California crew was this year but he has posted back to back triple digit Beyers and will be in a similar spot to Two Phil's early. Those two could run alongside one another the entire way. #17-DERMA SOTOGAKE (JPN) won so easily in Dubai that he has to be given consideration. Japanese horses continue to impress and this year they dominated the entire Dubai World Cup card. He may be a part of the early pace but he may also be the one who emerges clear when others drop off. #5-TAPIT TRICE is a horse that I like off his Blue Grass win as that was a game victory. I don't like his morning line as 5-1 is too short for me. Not sure how I will use him from a wagering standpoint. Lastly, if he gets into the race, #22-MANDARIN HERO (JPN) is a must use for me. He got horribly unlucky that the Derby Points System this year worked against him as he is probably more talented than half the horses in the race, if not more. Sadly he may not make it into the starting gate.

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

10 Practical Move - 10-1 **15** Forte - 3-1 **6** Kingsbarns - 12-1 **5** Tapit Trice - 5-1 **3** Two Phil's - 12-1 **22** Mandarin Hero (JPN) - 20-1

This is never an easy race to handicap but that's what makes it so fun. And no matter how well you handicap, there is so much luck involved. With a 20-horse field, the trip can be all important.

That being said, let's see what we can figure out.

Forte is a very good horse. But is he a great horse? It's true that he has an almost unblemished record with six wins from seven starts but he wasn't all that highly regarded until this year. He drew the 15 hole but with his swooping style of running, he's probably going to have to go around a lot of horses and with every length he is off the rail, he's going to have to cover far more ground. Will he have enough left for that grueling run down Churchill's stretch?

Kingsbarn is one of the more lightly-raced members of this field and he's the only one coming into the race unbeaten. Is he seasoned enough to tackle this task? Will he become only the 10th unbeaten horse to capture the Run For the Roses?

Tapit Trice, like the above two runners, is trained by Todd Pletcher. He's riding a four-race win streak. Like Forte, he seems to be at his best when coming from off the pace. He's likely to be placed more forwardly than Forte but that could also mean he'll have to weave his way through traffic.

I, like most of Chicagoland, want Two Phil's to win this race. He does own the single highest speed figure of any in here. However, that figure, and the win that got him entry into this race, came on the synthetic track of Turfway. None of his dirt races came close. But, he always shows an outstanding late move and dynamite works since that start show that he's coming into this race as good as can be.

However, I'm going to select Practical Move. I believe his good tactical speed will enable him to get in perfect striking distance of the early leaders and he's not likely to face too much traffic from that forward position. He won his last three races and although he was all out to hold on in last going nine furlongs, I believe he'll have plenty left for the finish.

A side note, the Japanese runner Mandarin Hero impressively lost to Practical Move in the Santa Anita Derby. He could be the real deal.

Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 6th, 2023

Harness Helper

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 1
Analysis by Peter Galassi

T 2 Mischevious Rose 4 Adare Castle 6 Duly Resolved

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 2
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 10 Bar Down Jim 1 Cold Creek Guerero 5 Shanghai James

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 3
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 7 Woodmere Stealdeal 6 Commanding Officer 5 Lets Tie One On

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 4
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 3 Silver Label 4 Speaker Nancy 6 I Love Ongait

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 5
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 1 American History 2 Mappos Lion 3 Frozen Hanover

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 6
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 3 Cold Creek Queso 6 Camara Moment 7 Ron

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 7
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 6 Big Dream Fella 5 Murrays Watching 1 Ikes Dream

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 8
Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 10 Matai Louis 1 Moment Is Here 6 Better Sunset

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 9

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 2 Saulsbrook Victor 5 Nautical Hanover 3 Wheels On Fire

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 10

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 2 Brue Hanover 10 The Golden Jet 8 Gung Ho

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 11

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 1 The Legend Hanover 2 Doc Houston 3 Dragon Energy

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 12

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 3 Armor Seelster 6 Beyond Better 1 Sintra