Handicapping Analysis
Fri June 9th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Belmont Park Race 4

Post Time 1:28 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 IN ITALIAN in this race makes things tougher on #3 SPENDARELLA one that could be forced into the role of pressing the pace. If Spendarella does press she could become vulnerable and if she does not, In Italian could once again hold that “LONE” pace advantage that has been the key to her success.

#2 NEW YEAR’S EVE could be overlooked in this race for Walsh with the two mentioned as well as in the face of #4 WAKANAKA and #5 SPEAK OF THE DEVIL given the connections and jockeys. The form of NEW YEAR’S EVEN is progressive this season going back to a BTL effort at the Fair Grounds kicking off 2023. She has a strong late kick and has been able to close into any pace scenario, especially at the mile-ish distance, which could be her ideal.

Belmont Park Race 8

Post Time 3:41 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Even in this competitive field, **#7 WAR LIKE GODDESS** is tough to dismiss and solid in the role as the projected favorite in this race. Her speed figures, class, stamina and run style make her a contender. Those factors will be put to the test on **#3 DIDIA** though she is a tough race mare, she has shown the will to win, the refuse to lose *GRIT* that the connections stepping up in class give her the G1 opportunity she deserves.

#6 MCKULICK appears well meant as she makes her second start off the layoff and returning to Belmont Park and the 10f distance where she scored in the Belmont Oaks (G1) last year. Similar intent could be in play for Appleby sending out #8 WITH THE MOONLIGHT, the place finisher behind McKulick in the Belmont Oaks (G1) last year, though will again be tested for stamina/class under today’s conditions.

#1 FLIRTING BRIDGE could sneak away on the board and has proven herself on class and stamina with buried form. Intent appears in play for this race coming back from the layoff and allowance win in the April return at Keeneland. She has yet to run one of her stronger races off Lasix and that is noted, though at the same time can be overlooked with price compensation.

Belmont Park Race 9

Post Time 4:14 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 OCCULT checks all the boxes, if those boxes are an improving, longshot with a “darkside.” Number wise she has yet to run as fast as many of her rivals in this field, though still has room to improve and fits with the timing of this race. She was public selection projected to win the Gazelle (G3) back in April and came up short with a wide trip in that role and kept out of the KY Oaks (G1) the following month. She has trained consistently since that race and here at Belmont Park suggesting intent for this spot whereas the others in this field, the “logical, faster, more established types” were all pointed to their events last month at Churchill Downs. The extended one-turn distance should suit OCCULT with her RunStyle and complexion of this race especially with the rider change to Jose Ortiz.

Belmont Park Race 10

Post Time 4:47 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SISKANY feels like the “safer” route in this race proven at the longer distance, class, current form, and top connections shipping in for this race. Fellow shipper #11 HIGH DEFINITION has Group 1 form to rely on though has a challenge looking for his first win in a long time as well as lacking race recency coming off a 251-day layoff. The weight allowance usually is not a big handicapping factor though for this horse is worth a mention as he has carried significant weight in comparison in the past.

Looking to get a little more creative and price: **#8 BRITISH ROYALTY** ran in this graded stakes last year and of the horses on that day returning this afternoon is given preference. His effort all around was solid and not without issue from start to finish. Minshall returned in this race bringing in rider, Kazushi Kimura, and intent with that change and for the rider as this is his only mount on the card. #5 STRONG TIDE finished third in this event last year and has a favorable RunStyle which did assist his finishing position in the end, despite lacking the class and stamina for the distance.

#6 L’IMPERATOR has shown stamina in his two longer distance races with some form at the graded stakes level to match. Class is the concern form stablemate #1 BARBADOS one that has plenty of stamina and fitness in his own right where that will not be the issue today.

The lone mare, **#7 AMAZING GRACE** has an edge with current form and fitness as well as stamina on her side. Positive intent could be in play here as connections pick this spot and reunite with Rosario, the win rider from the Orchid (G3) in her local debut and first start for the barn.

Belmont Park Race 11

Post Time 5:19 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 BAY STORM is logical here she has figures on par, a favorable RunStyle for today’s race shape, current form in her second start off the layoff and form over this Belmont inner turf course/distance. While she is looking for her first graded stakes win, she has run competitively at the graded stakes level to suggest she fits here on class. **#4 MESSIDOR** will require the right pace, timing, and trip for today’s 6f distance, though in terms of form and upside she should be sitting on a peak effort in this second start off the layoff.

#3 CLITHEROE is the wild card as she will be class tested stepping up off the allowance win last month and taking on a much tougher, accomplished group here. Some intent could be in play with this race in mind looking to gain fitness and confidence with that run last month and improve here in the second start off the layoff.

Class wise ***#7 BUBBLE ROCK*** fits at this level, a multiple graded stakes winner on the turf, including the Matron (G3) win over this inner course and distance back in 2021. Her class was present cutting back in distance for the License Fee stakes last month and overcoming ground loss, the wide trip out kicking stablemate and today’s rival #8 GOIN’ GOOD to win.

The distance could also be a factor for #6 AMY C returning to New York. The connections had to call an audible after scratching out of the Monrovia (G3) back on April 8th when the race was taken off the turf. They had considered running in the Giants Causeway (5.5f turf sprint) on April 15th at Keeneland though would have been a less than ideal spot/distance and connections pulled from that event as well and rerouted here.