Handicapping Analysis
Sat July 1st, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Ellis Park Race 3

Post Time 12:43 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As far as morning line favorite, **#2 WADSWORTH** he is solid in that role. He checks the boxes on class, speed and has shown a versatile running style. He comes into this race off a BTL effort in the Caesar Stakes finishing in a photo for the win with the pacesetting winner, #4 GIGANTE and WADSWORTH stronger with the GALLOP+ of the two after the wire.

#6 SHARAR seemed to need his local start with Pletcher picking the Audubon over the Pennine Ridge (G2) on the same day (tougher group and lower purse) at Belmont Park. His trip was less than ideal breaking a step slow, taking a stumble a few strides after getting out of the gate and checking TROUBLE early on before moving to a WIDE stalking trip behind a moderate pace. There should be plenty of pace for him to target (Fire/67 SpeedRate) in here, including his stablemate #5 HIDDEN PATH and present that move forward in the second start of the cycle.

Ellis Park Race 6

Post Time 2:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Tough to see **#5 MARSALIS** stick at the assigned 6-1 morning line given his race record, consistent figures and live Asmussen barn with those factors making him a prime contender in this race. He has the right running style with the ability to show tactical speed, something often key here over the Ellis Park main track and positional edge on some of his main rivals.

Ellis Park Race 8

Post Time 3:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a tricky race from a pace perspective lacking a true E/EP type runner and over a course that often plays favorable to those RunStyle horses. **#2 MOON SWAG** is not on that run on for near the lead in her career though could see her more assertively ridden today second time Saez and off the Shawnee (G3) WIDE trip last month. The timing of this race in the second start of the form cycle along with added ground should see her sitting on a peak effort today.

#6 A MO REAY was a front runner early on in her career though moved up since entering the Brad Cox barn and shifting her RunStyle into a pressure/stalker. Trip will be key with the tactic utilized by Prat. Rider tactics will be key for #5 PAULINE'S PEARL given her preferred RunStyle similar to A MO REAY.

As a projected *longshot, **#8 MUSIC STREET*** is deserving of a mention in this race. She was nearly co-favored with #3 ROYAL TAKE CHARGE in the May 27th allowance turning in an honest (B- OptixGRADE) effort against the race flow. MUSIC STREET can often "peak" in the third start off the layoff and has that form cycle coming into today's race. ***#1 BELLAMORE*** also brings a favorable form cycle pattern and reuniting with Garcia, a rider that has been aboard with success, the pair never finishing out of the money in each of their four starts.

Ellis Park Race 9

Post Time 3:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SET PIECE stands out as the horse to beat in this race. He fits with today's race as a whole with the dynamic/pace, and current form/class. The higher SpeedRate and Sun Contention should allow for him to sit his trip.

#1 HARLAN ESTATE finished behind SET PIECE in the Arlington (G3) last month and while he might not be to the level to turn the tables, he has held his form and appears to have found his top form this year for Beckman.

#5 PLAY ACTION PASS does not hold the same credentials though has some class in his own right keying off competitive races at the graded stakes level and comes into this race with intent in his second start off the layoff. Number wise #6 KITTENSETT will look to transfer those figures to graded stakes company, a class rise he will be tested against today.

#7 COWBOY JUSTICE has not shown off his two starts this season he is on the level of his top competition in this race. With that said and off the visuals in those events, he could be a horse that is coming around and acclimating to stateside racing with a case to be made he has yet to show his best this year.

Ellis Park Race 10

Post Time 4:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The Stephen Foster (G1) is a tricky race and one that is not short on quality with many of the top older handicap horses in this field. If looking at credentials #1 PROXY has shown consistency in G1 events giving him that edge over many in this field. Trip is the key factor here as he draws the rail and must work position early and requires a different trip than if this race was run at Churchill Downs based on Proxy's RunStyle and the Ellis Park main track profile.

In terms of trip, #6 WEST WILL POWER should be flattered by the race shape, course profile and in his best chance to pick up that G1 win. He has enough tactical speed to run early with #3 SPEED BIAS (and #2 STILLETO BOY) and the edge on finishing ability of that pair.

The McPeek pair are quality runners: #4 RATTLE N ROLL has moved up as an older horse. He has also benefit from the perfect combination of training, timing and placement in his races and finds a tougher group today, something of a test today outside of the speed figures that clearly keep him in the mix. #5 SMILE HAPPY arguably might be the "better" horse, though at 9f, he must be. He is capable at this distance though requires the ideal trip, pace ride and bringing a top effort.

#7 LAST SAMURAI has come up short when tested at this graded stakes level, though coming into this race should be sitting on a peak effort. The return to Torres should have Last Samurai closer to the pace and there is a scenario where he can "trip out" to win. #8 HAPPY AMERICAN has a tough task with today's race shape, class, course profile and his off-the-pace (Quad IV Circle) running style.

Ellis Park Race 11

Post Time 4:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morning line favorite #5 XIGERA has built up the fan club that will keep her odds short in this race, a competitive race where her edge over the others is minimal or non-existent.

#7 GIRL NAMED CHARLIE has buried form coming into this race and could even suggest a hidden class edge. She turned in a BTL effort in the Edgewood (G2) and ran against a quality field in the Regret (G3) last month. She has shown turf as her preferred surface and after struggling to get to the grass she showed her true ability breaking her maiden in a dominant manner at the Fair Grounds. Value should be present and could even drift from the 6-1 morning line with the recent running lines and finishing positions sitting on top of her past performances.