Handicapping Analysis
Sat July 22nd, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Monmouth Park Race 12

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 ARABIAN KNIGHT stamped himself as the horse of the crop with his smashing (B+ OptixGRADE and A- GRADE on debut) win in the Southwest (G3) back in January at Oaklawn Park. His ability at the time of year to pair up 101 OptixFIG made him a major player on the scene, though a physical setback had him off the Derby trail and the connections patiently waiting recovery and a late season return. This horse is back not only to the races but to himself as he has been blazing in the morning and off those appearances is as race ready as a horse can be. His brilliant speed should be on display right from the start and a Quad I/III Square (keeping in mind that position is just his juvenile form) should have a pace advantage in today's field.

Tough to find value with #4 MAGE and #5 TAPIT TRICE to either "upset" or fill up the exotics with similar said for #1 GEAUX ROCKET RIDE as one that has run well in each start though also has benefit from favorable trips. #7 EXTRA ANEJO will be class tested though is another that has shown progress and holds a favorable RunStyle in this race and could be in the "chase" mode behind Arabian Knight and have enough class to hold place.

#6 HOWGREATISNATE has buried graded stakes form going back to the riderless Gotham (G3) and holds stakes form as he makes his third start of the form cycle. Some regression could have set in coming off a GRIT win returning from a layoff in the Long Branch and facing a solid, progressive type in #3 SALUTE THE STARS.

#2 AWESOME STRONG is a bit of a "wild card" in this race as he must step up with the quality in this field, though as he makes his second start back off the layoff should be sitting on a top effort. He is one that on his Gulfstream numbers is not far off many in this field and should be the longest shot in the group.