Handicapping Analysis
Wed July 26th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 SWEET LITTLE LISA leads off the group with local experience and on class (many coming from previous maiden claiming races – or require the change) as one that squarely fits at the Special Weight level. She turned in strong efforts in both races settling for second – the BTL closing after TROUBLE and ground loss (X_WIDE) on her stablemate, Moment to Shine; and came back to RUSH up to the lead and stayed on as the BOS/Best of the Speed in the July 7th race.

Her stablemate #8 RICHIE'S PRINCESS gives up experience on SWEET LITTLE LISA and also has some gaps in her works coming into this race and could require a start. The same concern #2 WAHIDA OF MARDAN showing a gap in the published works from the beginning of June until July.

First time starter ***#7 RUTH OF JUDAH*** worked 10.3 at the June sale last year and lands here to make a belated debut. Roussel has had success this season with limited starters and capable with debut runners.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 2:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

After the dominant win by ***#7 ICE BLAST*** on June 22nd, a step up in class could have been warranted though comes back today with a drop off that win. It could be a case where another race did not fill and need to get a race while he is in form and fit. He came from off the pace in the win last month (and from the EX – EXCUSE) on June 4th, though the change in class here should not have him as far off the pace.

#1 PISTOL BOX also comes back today off a 42 day freshening and looks to have intent for this race with Esquivel back aboard. They were the win rider here last October and the change with the timing appears positive looking for this one to get back to the winners circle and with the right trip required. Trip is the prime hurdle as he has back class to compete, form at this level from prior seasons as well as the B- OptixGRADE on May 31st.

#4 CHRISMAS PRESENT comes into this race in form and off a BTL race on July 6th. The distance today returning to two-turns is still the prime concern with this horse that does prefer ONE_TURN, but not without a chance, he does require the right trip and handling from Bendezu.

#8 GAGOOTS also might not be at his ideal at today's 8.5f distance, though has been holding his form and has been able to get the win at the distance, albeit FLOW aided on June 14th. His form is in line with #3 NOT VERY GENTLE coming back to this condition and one that is a true route horse, no distance limits with this guy – both come into this race with form to hit the board. #5 CAMPAIGN SPY returns to a route, his preferred distance, however, is softer on numbers and his races on this circuit last year at this level came up short.

The class drop came into play for #6 BIG BLUE on July 9th and upgraded with the change that day. He lost his footing coming out of the gate (TROUBLE_S) and looked a bit off after, however still showed run to compete and record a B- OptixGRADE, current form being the question. Current form also the question for #2 WILDWOOD'S WARRIOR coming back today off the 56-day freshening – he could benefit from that time as he had been running back on shorter rest and claimed from that May 31st race makes his first start for DiZeo.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 THE LAST FACT was peaked in his form cycle when claimed by Irion back on May 11th and that regression in form impacted him the in the following starts at FanDuel. He could be cycling back to top form and appreciate the return to Hawthorne. The price requires compensation not only with his current form but given the connections the barn looking for their first win (at the time of this analysis) and rider Arrieta has struggled as well.

They have some early speed and there are others in here looking to take up the early chase including **#8 WILDWOOD SECRET**. He was a NO_FINISH here on July 5th, though might have been a touch short on the day making his first start in 38 days and now has the fitness and return to Giles for this race. They will also make a change to an outer post for the first time on the dirt in more than a year and that might turn out to be a positive subtle change.

#6 TIME HEIST comes back to Hawthorne with progressive form in his third start of the form cycle. He turned in a decent race off the two month break and step up in class first off the claim for Watkins to run at the starter allowance level and improved again just over a week ago at FanDuel.

#3 PUBLIC SAFETY was a vet scratch following a WARM_UP back on May 11th from a restricted $8k claiming race at odds of 7-1. He has been off since that race and returns here back to the $5k level for Rosin. His form, figures and class fit as a contender with himself as the biggest challenge and often from the gate as a horse that has a tendency not just to SLOG, but to Very (VSLOG) at the start combined with today's 5.5f distance.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 3:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 MEDWAY QUEEN is softer on numbers though is one that has been intended for the turf since her debut – a race taken off the grass at the Fair Grounds back in early 2022. She eventually made her way back to the turf sprinting breaking her maiden at Belterra Park last August. The seasonal change paired with her abilities lacked a spot to run on the grass and since those opportunities opened has been unlucky with races staying on the turf or drawing in – one of those races here unable to get in off the AE back on May 25th. The lack of racing luck might have forced their hand and timing wheeling right back in a week for the July 6th Belterra turf sprint where she showed run after a slow start and solid GALLOP+.

#3 FIRST KITTEN has only had limited starts on the turf and some "excuses" in those races from distance, class and trip playing a greater role than the surface itself. Going all the way back to her early days she recorded an 80 OptixFIG in MSW company sprinting 5.5f finishing second at Colonial. Her form coming into this race and since entering the Meraz barn gives her a look shifting back to the turf. She has early speed, numbers on par and form/confidence with Centeno in the saddle.

The class drop is in play for #9 PRINCESS STELLA and is not necessarily a negative in this case as the connections stepped her up where she pulled up the allowance win back on June 8th and projecting to REGRESS off that race was rushed right back to run on June 18th – all around a less than favorable spot. She returns here with the 38-day freshening and back under conditions she has proven form.

Trip will be key once again for #10 GO STORMIN GIRL one that has been unlucky this season and overdue for the win. She was the unofficial winner here on June 22nd, a day she was "much the best" and was coming back for that race off a BTL (B OptixGRADE) effort on the turf on June 11th.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 BERNIE LOMAX lacked the pace to run at chasing a flow aided winner on July 4th and was game for place. He should have the pace to target here looking at OptixPLOT and the Quad I filled with “Circles” and sits with a solid stalking Square right in the center of the Plot. As far as his form here at Hawthorne he ran a solid race in the first part of the meet – that April 13th place finish behind a runner called Blackteca that was a major standout (PRERACE+) on the day for a live Gary Scherer barn.

#5 BREAKING NEWS has the back class and figures that make him a major contender returning to those efforts and could be intended here off the layoff for Contreras with Esquivel back aboard – those efforts on paper should see him much shorter than the double digits on the line. The longer 297-day layoff is in play and this one is getting up there in age. In terms of prior longer layoffs, he has not won, however has come back with his top effort, and upgraded considering the placement of his races running against much tougher than he faces here today.

In terms of the early pace, added pace could be in play with #6 HURTS SO BAD positioned with some first call speed in Quad III, though lacking the class (to the second call) as he steps up off a taxing (HARD) win just 10-days ago. #10 TEE BURNS should also add some early speed to the race noting he has been downgraded on Standard (current form) from the GATE (fractious) in the May turf race and breaking SLOG with TROUBLE_S soon after on July 9th. They return in this spot and in for the tag today following a vet scratch against allowance company on July 19thand will be joined by another Watkins speedster in #1 CINDY’S G MAN from the rail. ***#4 LAKE MILLS*** has legit early speed and while he is one of the Quad I Circles; he is upgraded out of that group and projects to be the “best of the speed” today.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 PROTONIC POWER comes back from a BTL effort and show finish on June 15th. He was compromised by the race shape (Snowflake) and significant ground loss (X_WIDE) trip. He should find more pace today with the 70 SpeedRate to offset another Snowflake contention. He has enough tactical speed and finishing ability shown on the Plot to get the jump on rival ***#3 FEBRUARY SON*** as he projects to close, run on late as that Quad IV Square.

#5 CAPITVATING MOON also returns from that common event and on that has not quite been to his top for this season. He also has started to develop at negative pattern at the GATE, reluctant to load, something of a concern for a horse that has graded stakes form. His stablemate #8 POWER THROUGH Has current form coming into this race though in terms of class is still lighter for this level as he steps up in class off a PERFECT trip to again take on open company – the tradeoff staying on the turf noting a scratch from the Black Tie Affair stakes when those races were moved to the main track.

#9 GREY STREAK won at this condition coming back to this circuit off the freshening on May 21st. He was under the radar that day despite holding solid turf form and coming off a series of races at Turfway Park where he just did not fit.

#2 LAND MARK DEAL looks to move up with the return to the TURF, his preferred surface. As far as class goes, he must step up as well though to his credit, he has run competitively under similar conditions going back to races and form from the 2022 season. Class as well as pace comes into play for #4 COMMAND CENTRAL coming off a LONE lead and the “upset” allowance win in June. He does not project that “lone” lead today and downgraded as Large Quad III Circle with the higher SpeedRate. His trip becomes tougher with ***#1 SAILING SOLO*** in the field, one that has early speed, the rail draw and should benefit (PREP) from the June 15th return race as he comes back today with that race under his belt.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:12 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Value should also land with **#8 SHARP HERO** a contender in this race that returns to Hawthorne under the radar and for the connections. She was dominant with the allowance win earning a B+ OptixGRADE and 93 OptixFIG back in April. Since that race she has been on the turf and holding her form, just not in the right spot as far as class and compromised by subtle trips.

The “Fire” Contention is paired with a lower 13 SpeedRate, a combination that could assist **#1 GOLDEN BELL** on the front end and with a subtle pace advantage. She has back numbers and class to fit in this stakes race and potential intent for the connections with a solid front end rider in Santiago aboard. The big knock overall is the pattern of layoff lines though there are others in here projected to take money and could see her a fair number.

#2 CHEETARA is no stranger to Hawthorne, she won the Crestwood Stakes here last year, a similar type event as far as class, purse, and distance. She comes into this race with current form, the stakes win at Pimlico during Preakness weekend and off a solid place finish behind a heavily backed (bet down to 7-5 from the 8-1 ML) open length pacesetting winner called Alva Starr. Rival ***#3 CHARLIE’S PENNY*** finishing second in the Crestwood last year comes back as she makes her second start off the layoff. She returned with a win in the Lady Slipper on May 26th at Canterbury Park, though had to work HARD for that win, pushed every step of the way and given the added recovery time possibly part of the reason (along with a scratch looking to draw in as MTO in a 7/18 CBY stakes) she has been off the two months since.

Morning line favorite #4 OEUVRE had the field over a barrel in the Third Chance stakes and her class overcame a stumble at the start (TROUBLE_S) winning as she pleased (NO_PUSH) posting a 92 OptixFIG and B+ OptixGRADE. She has been entered for the turf twice since that race and does appear grass is her preferred surface. This is a solid field, and she requires a top effort on the main track and does not hold many advantages in this event to justify a shorter price. #6 QUEENS UP is another that given the morning line projects to take wagering support though is an easier one to play against as she does not hold any edge in this field and could struggle to even hit the board.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 5:39 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morning line favorite, **#9 CONGRATS ON FIFTY** will make his belated second start and going back to the debut at Oaklawn Park is one that looked to need some class relief. He remains here at the MSW level, though a shift in class with the circuit switch, something that should assist though still must step up giving up recency and experience over the grass for his turf debut.

#12 PIRATE MARMALADE has had some tough luck trying to get a start and could find similar here sitting on the AE. They have been patiently waiting for the turf noting two off scratches back on July 7th and June 14th when those events were moved to the main track. Perez has ***#4 ICE SHARD*** in the main body of the field and one that comes back off a B OptixGRADE on June 29th, a “winning” race for the level. The distance change here throws in another hurdle for this off-the-pace runner (pattern of SLOG) as the come back today at the shorter 5f sprint distance.

#5 DARK SOLUTION is the old man in the sea as a seven-year-old gelding. He is a TURF horse, his numbers on the grass stand out in this field and should benefit from the surface switch and conditioning as he makes his second start back off the layoff. #3 FAST FORWARD also returning from the July 6th event should appreciate the fitness from the WIDE trip and the move back to the grass as well. #7 SMILING STORMY decided to wait for a grass race scratching out of the July 6th event rather than run back on the main track where he has TROUBLE-S and an X_WIDE trip back on June 14th. His 63 OptixFIG from the debut, a tough spot to debut around two-turns back in May suggests he has a move forward and should find himself both competitive in this field and under the radar.

Getting creative, **#8 JAKE’S CHANNEL** could show more in this race and have intent on his side. Esquivel picks up the mount and this race his second off the layoff and should gain fitness as part of a solid early pace before losing ground/NO_KEEP and was not asked/NO_PUSH after.