Handicapping Analysis
Sat August 5th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Saratoga Race 7

Post Time 2:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

LURE STAKES

#1 PORTFOLIO COMPANY: he has some class weaknesses, step up in class and higher OFR, in addition to pace from the rail given the dynamic and distance. His races in graded stakes company have been fine but not quite to that level and makes sense they land here in the restricted stakes. He has the experience and solid record over this inner turf course on his side. He has that local form as an edge over #2 SMOKIN T and could be shorter of the two despite the similar morning line on the pair. Looking at the overall form there is not much between the two and a case where an overlay can be the separator.

#3 DAKOTA GOLD is a solid race horse though when it has come to the stakes test against open company he has struggled. Those factors make him softer as the projected favorite alone. He also could regress coming off the Hudson Valley Stakes win, a race he looked peaked for in the second start of the cycle.

#4 OCEAN ATLANTIQUE will find some class relief in this spot whereas others will be stepping up and the Maker trainee should benefit from that change. He was dominant under similar listed stakes, B+ OptixGRADE at Turfway Park back in February and turned in a sneaky good race (B- OptixGRADE) in the Turf Classic (G1) with a TRAFFIC TROUBLE trip. In addition, he has form over today's inner turf course going back to the August N2X allowance last year earning a 102 OptixFIG in that place finish after racing on a Very Fast contested pace both early and late with Saez in the saddle.

#5 SPEAKING SCOUT will also find some class relief and a distance change that could be in his favor. He is a competitive race horses and excusing the dirt races, linger distance events he has been competitive in each start. He is another that has local experience over this course running an 80 OptixFIG here as a juvenile in his second start in MSW company.

If there is a time and place for #7 TIZ THE BOMB to get back to winning ways, this is it. The connections did this horse no favors running him in the longer distance events where he was exposed and to his credit still showed class to show run. That includes the June Ellis stakes race when heavily washed out, caught wide and X_FLOW lacking room late making an inside and between horses run to finish in a blanket at the wire. The freshening, cut back in distance should be in his favor. He has local experience from the Hall of Fame stakes last year a race he probably was not the valid favorite he was sent of as, though still turned in a solid effort (B- OptixGRADE, 93 OptixFIG) that fits today's conditions.

Both #8 DOCTOR DAVIS and #9 MID DAY IMAGE are softer o class for today's event. Both have had success when LONE and today's race shape does not look to flatter that type of trip. Class also looks to be a test for #6 CHAZZESMEE shipping in to make his local debut, this is a step up or at the least a lateral move from the races overseas.

Saratoga Race 9

Post Time 4:01 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

SARATOGA DERBY INVITATIONAL (G1)

This is a competitive event with the prime players returning from the Belmont Derby (G1) in #1 MONDEGO, #5 FAR BRIDGE and #6 WEBSLINGER all earning the same B OptixGRADE on the day – those horses given the edge over the shippers including the filly, #3 ASPEN GROVE.

#7 BATTLE OF NORMANDY was rerouted to this event following a scratch from a N1X allowance race here on July 14th when that race was taken off the turf with Gaffalione named. This is a step up from that event, though BATTLE OF NORMANDY has back class and competitive races in graded stakes company as well as over this course. He ran in the BC Juv Turf (G1) along with WEBSLINGER, those two both had “trips” that day and the pair earning B- OptixGRADE. BATTLE OF NORMANDY has a strong late kick, Largest Square on the Plot and tough to ignore on that alone. He returned in April to make his three-year-old debut at Keeneland and followed that up with a strong effort with the outside draw at Pimlico making a CLOSE into a SLOW early pace. Shug has him working steadily into this race and working heads up in solid company from his stakes caliber stablemates, Fort Washington and Celestial City.