Handicapping Analysis
Thu August 17th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This race starts with #2 SPICY ITALIAN as she projects to be a heavy favorite in this race coming back for Catalano and place finish on July 16th. That effort was a much improved race from her prior two starts in Kentucky and projects to use a similar tactic here with Felix taking over. She is likely to have pace pressure with the two runners on either side #1 BORDER STAR stretching out for Manley as well as #3 PACIFIC VIEW, where Giles lands for this race.

#6 VOSTRA has started to find her top form again as of late and could benefit from the pace contention with her late run. The races where she has had pace to run into have been her most competitive from the debut to the recent start over the turf.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 2:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Rednour will send out a pair in this race with the more established #2 J J'S SOLUTION projected to be the shorter of the two. He has the more consistent form, higher speed figures and even competitive races in limited turf sprints, however he is still looking for that first win and overall race record is tougher to support with confidence. As far as #7 JAKES CHANNEL he carries more upside overall and even a case for positive intent. This will be his first career start in against statebred company and second on the turf while first at a sprint. He was scratched from a turf sprint back on July 26th when the races came off the turf to suggest the connections have been patiently waiting for this type of race.

#4 EL MUCHO was upgraded coming back off the layoff on August 6th as one that carried juvenile form and making his first start in against statebred company – a similar angle to the Catalano open length winner, Sawyer Fox. It was encouraging to see the effort and progression in that race and should be able to hold his form here wheeling back and even with the surface switch.

#1 SMOOTH ATTACK projects to be forwardly placed especially with the rail draw. The shift to the turf is less of a concern as class as he has been unable to carry his speed as effectively in the Special Weight conditions.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MERLOTTI was upgraded on July 6th returning to Hawthorne from his efforts here earlier this season. The TACTIC- from the rail and TRAFFIC TROUBLE trip impacted his ability to compete on the day for a top spot noting the CLOSE and solid GALLOP+ after the wire. He returned to validate that form on July 27th with the WIDE trip place finish and projects to contend once again, just need the right trip.

Perez will return with a pair in this race, and both given a look today. #4 ICE AXE has the benefit of route experience and coming back from a series of competitive races where he was against the dynamic closing into Slow/Very Slow (S/VS) early paces. #6 BLACK RAVEN is unproven at the route/two-turn distance though there was intent for the stretch out noting a vet scratch from July 6th. Ability wise his first two starts both solid efforts recorded some of the higher OptixFIG in this field and makes himself competitive pairing those races today.

#5 ARCHIE THE GIZA is the new face in this field and his two Churchill numbers back in May standout as the highest figures in this field. The surface switch is new though there has been intent to run on the main track keying off a trainer scratch at Ellis Park (8f dirt) on June 25th and entered on August 11th as MTO unable to race as the races stayed on the turf.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 3:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Both #1 CHERRY ORCHARD and #4 JACKPOT BOY are proven at this lower MCL level and where they have recorded their most competitive races to date. The challenge there is that they have still come up short on the win end or with a winning “B” effort to open the door for some other “new” faces to jump up this afternoon.

#3 HANDSOFFTHEGOODS should be the more obvious alternative for Block. The class DROP looks required for this individual and the reason for the change in surface to just find the right level for him to compete. His numbers for those two turf races stack right up with CHERRY ORCHARD and JACKPOT BOY which could suggest he might come up short on the win end to require some value – value that might not be there.

Quinonez will send out a pair and with #2 ONE ACE returning to the sprint distance here at Hawthorne where he recorded his two more competitive races earlier this season with numbers in those events in line with the other three previously mentioned and should be longer of the two today. Stablemate #5 XPRESSIR could improve in just a second start and likely to show early speed, something those others lack sprinting to potentially have a pace advantage.

#6 HOT CUPPA COFFEE is the new face here he will find the circuit switch and significant class drop today for Roussel. Those changes are a tough read as it comes with the layoff and the connections seemingly “giving up” on this horse after just one race.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Speed has been strong on the turf course as of late and that profile would only upgrade #5 BUCK MOON further with his natural early speed. He projects to be on the lead early and will take the fight to any that want to run with him on the lead. That makes him a threat in this race on the lead and a factor for the other horses and riders to try and work a trip around. As far as the turf, this will be the first start on the turf for BUCK MOON though he has handled different main tracks, as well as the synthetic both at Turfway and Woodbine, holding his form and numbers to suggest he can do the same here on the grass.

#7 ANOTHER MYSTERY is the most proven on the turf and has been waiting in the wings for this grass race since the Black Tie Affair stakes was moved to the main track. He has run well off a layoff and in terms of pace should benefit from the 58 SpeedRate any level of Contention. #4 SONNY SMACK has a strong late close both shown on the Plot as a Large Quad IV Square and visually in this race such as the June stakes at Canterbury Park making a middle MOVE and CLOSE to finish in a BLANKET at the wire.

Class is the biggest test for #6 GREY STREAK as he will step back up to stakes company. Going back through his races and the 2021 season (sophomore) when he participated in three stakes races; he finished on the board with a place finish in the Hawthorne and off the turf in the Tropical Park Derby (GP) and Dueling Grounds Derby (KD) though number wise was consistently recording OptixFIG in those races that stack up with his current form and in today’s OFR.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 SALLY’S SURPRISE caught the eye with the effort on June 29th when stepped up in class giving an honest account of herself on the day. Class wise she looked to need just slightly softer and those “DROP” visuals continued when she returned in allowance company on July 13th. She should move up coming back in this spot for Rodriguez with intent as this is where Felix lands. Her stablemate #4 VISIONISTA will make just her second start against winners though drops in for a tag which should assist her today though preference lands with SALLY’S SURPRISE of the pair.

#3 CRYSTAL SNOW returning to the one turn distance where she nearly carried her speed around two turns on the turf just two weeks ago. She will be required to hold her form coming back on short rest, though her early speed can be effective and can be effective in this group with a top effort.

#1 HEAVENLY SCENT is a touch light on speed figures for this race, though in terms of form and class is moving forward with each start into this third off the layoff while remaining in claiming company.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:12 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Class wise #1 MY LIPS ARE SEALED stacks up at this level as she has held her form and has been competitive under similar conditions all season. The challenge to get the win is still the prime hurdle and trip comes into play as she draws the rail and shortens up to the 5f distance for this race.

#6 GOLDEN BELL was scheduled to race here in the Jean Elizabeth stakes on July 26th and as a trainer scratch did not participate that day. She has run on the turf and for the shorter sprint distance which could be the reason they decided to wait for this event rather than try 6.5f last month. Santiago was named for Cox that day and retains the call here.

#4 LIPLINER turned in a BTL place effort on June 18th though that N2X allowance race had a much lower OFR than the allowance that followed on July 27th and looked “outclassed” that day and comes back in this spot with a higher OFR than the turf sprint last month. The same class concerns are in play for her stablemate #7 CHROME ATTACK as well as #8 RACEDAY ATTIRE though the two as Quad IV Square could come running late for minors. #3 MISS MELODY is softer on numbers and class, though her early speed could keep her in the mix especially with the transition to the TURF, a surface she should handle as she makes her grass debut here.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 5:39 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 OFF RAMP was dominant (B+ OptixGRADE) at this level back on June 6th making her a player right back at a proven level. She turned in an honest effort recording an 85 OptixGRADE/C+ OptixGRADE with the WIDE trip last month in the Jean Elizabeth stakes, a higher level $75k purse and much higher 94-86 OFR compared to today’s 88-80. Her stablemate **#7 SOMEONE SAID SO** has some buried form, class and speed figures that make her competitive on her best day. Rosin has struggled getting her to the races since the November race last year. She has been entered three times at this OC $40k condition and each time a vet scratch including a late scratch nearing post time here on June 18th. Given those hurdles coming along, the likeliness of this being a “prep” is lessened and projects especially with the meet winding down to be race ready should she run.

The ability to hold form would be a greater concern with the barn change if there was also an ownership change on #6 ALBERTA SUN. Looking at OptixPLOT she is quickest to the first and second call though as a Circle lacks finishing ability and will require that early pace advantage to compete.

Looking at the Plot #5 WHITE LIES and #8 SAY CHEESE have the edge over #3 BERAVINA based on the shape and position though have a greater challenge in this event from class and speed as main win contenders. Trip will also be key for #1 RONAN (Quad IV Square) from off the pace though projects to make her run and has been competitive under similar conditions keying off the June 7th B- OptixGRADE.