Handicapping Analysis
Sat September 16th, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Churchill Downs Race 4

Post Time 1:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 4: LOUISVILLE THOROUGHBRED SOCIETY STAKES

#4 BANGO projects to get a lot of attention and attention paid to his local record. As an individual he fits today's race especially if Gaffalione can be assertive here and in a race that outside of #2 AWESOME AARON does not hold much early pacesetting types. That trip is key as ***#3 STROBE***, one that has been lighter on class has been at his best when LONE on the lead and could look to take advantage of that trip if BANGO does not claim his space on the lead.

#6 NECKER ISLAND reestablished himself as a one-turn horse has holds buried form coming into this race despite returning from a win. He recorded a solid B OptixGRADE in this race last year, with a WIDE trip finishing in a BLANKET at the wire.

Number wise #1 BAYTOWN BEAR and #5 GULFSTREAM WAY have recorded figures that fit on their best day, however on class have come up short under similar conditions on the win end. *#1 BAYTOWN BEAR* comes back for this race with a weaker rider, though will be plenty of price compensation to keep in the minor mix. #5 GULFSTREAM WAY could get the "wiseguy" look in this race and underlay as a result. He will be given a stiff class test here, one that could be a tall task. He did pick up the win in his most recent start at a lower class/OFR and the race strength much softer than today's group.

Churchill Downs Race 6

Post Time 2:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 6: OPEN MIND STAKES

#2 WICKED HALO is the class of the field and the connections picking this spot looking to keep her on a faster race track noting a recent scratch out of the Ballerina (G1) – a race won by her stablemate Echo Zulu. The placement here also fits on class noting a similar higher purse listed stakes race at Oaklawn Park back in March. The 6f distance is one she has won at though despite the overall recorded she might be event better at 7f and this race a jumping off point for the BC F&M Sprint.

#1 YUUGIRI was unprepared at the start and off a step slow last month at Presque Isle taking her out of her natural front running ways – a trip she projects to get back to in this spot especially with the rail draw once again. YUUGIRI won her prior start, a common race with rival **#3 FIRE ON TIME** – a filly that projects to improve off that subtle trip and especially back here at Churchill Downs.

Churchill Downs Race 7

Post Time 2:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 7: POCAHONTAS STAKES (G3)

#1 EMPIRE ISLAND broke her maiden on debut though benefit from a smart ride after breaking a step slow (potential challenge here from the rail again) saving ground. The filly she finished alongside with Lady Moscato return in the Spinaway (G1) faltering (7th place/C OptixGRADE) with a pocket trip. That is noted as the August 6th race has yet to show a winner from the runners that have returned.

Both #2 PEIGNOIR and #5 REGAL RUMOR return from maiden wins on the August 26th Ellis Park card. Both runners appeared well-intended bet down from their assigned morning lines. PEIGNOIR was smartly handled from the jump getting position and maintaining her lead with enough to keep her rivals off a duel asked for separation and clear late with a space back to place and another to the others with the field spaced out at the wire. REGAL RUMOR showed natural (POP) gate speed, then professionally rated as the eventual place runner, moved up to her inside, rating off that rival before given her cue and showed class improving in her second start all around.

Looking at the August 13th Debutante stakes a common race for three in this field. #9 HOT BEACH the winner of that event, validated herself after coming up short as the race favorite in her debut. She was kept into the race early stalking wide taking over in the lane though never changed to her right lead. Both #3 RIPERTON and #7 YOUALMOSTHADME had subtle trips; YOUALMOSTHADME stumbled at the start, pulled wide flattened out late doing her best to hold in a blanket for the minors and RIPERTON also off a step slow took dirt racing covered up behind horses, she changed leads late and finished with a good closing kick making up ground on HOT BEACH.

#4 RAINING SUGAR showed a lot of class on debut. She made a positive physical appearance, lunged slightly out of the gate, rated inside behind pacesetters, showed another gear moving outside and taking over from the pacesetting place. That race was scheduled for the turf and clearly she can handle the main track and also off her visuals could see her handle grass as well – a versatile type. She will be tested here and from the questionable race strength as seven of the August 4th runners have come back and without much improvement in the group and remain maiden eligible.

#6 V V'S DREAM broke her maiden dominantly here at CD on debut and was not disgraced finishing alongside Brightwork, as she returned to win the Spinaway (G1) last month at Saratoga. She will give up some recency returning from the 76-day layoff into this race. She has been up at Saratoga training coming into this race and watching her works she appears fit and should be able to hold her form into this race.

Bejarano rode ***#8 COURBE*** very confidently to break her maiden on debut. They had some mild contact at the start moving up to rate in the pocket and take over (very late lead change) from the pacesetting rivals. The race strength is yet to be determined as most of the field were first time starters and at the time of this analysis, have yet to run back though could be some quality with runners to follow from that race.

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 3:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 9 – IROQUOIS STAKES (G3)

#8 RISK IT caught the eye breaking his maiden dominantly (B+) and earning a solid figure (91 OptixFIG, the highest in the field) first out at Saratoga. He did appear to have the right trip with the track profile though his visuals suggested talent and appears confidence the connections return in this spot and kept up training going right back to work with a strong breeze on August 28th.

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Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Casey Leonard is a solid fit with #3 SKYWAY GYMMASTER especially as this one returns with the driver change, to this circuit and class relief. In terms of current form, he was very overmatched on August 11th stepping up off the August 4th win and in his most recent August 18th start, showed run and stopped with trouble when he started to advance and showed interest when getting clear too late.

#4 PONDA HAWK returns from a solid effort with a less than ideal ride making an early move – there are others in this race that should be prominent early to allow him to stalk and time the move. He should come back fit into this race and also finds some class relief from that 9/9 race and to a level where he fits on par.

The 14-yo #9 LUCKY CRUSADER comes back for his first race on the year though going back to last season recorded some of the faster times and figures.

Hawthorne Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 FOX VALLEY PARKER turned in a strong effort against a higher class running for $28.5k purse (preferred over #6 SHATTERED DREAMS from the other division) last Sunday. He raced from well off the pace and set down for a strong close and competitive effort behind, Lous Mandalorian that fell into the winning trip.

Hawthorne Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 LOU SANGREAL was heavily washed out on 9/10 and overall was quite game for the level (faces softer today) and showed early controlling speed. Casey Leonard sticks with stablemate #2 ZENA COURT ran in the split division last Sunday and a competitive race for the level with a wide trip. She projects to hold her form though has shown a pattern of breaking stride.

Casey Leonard was also the driver on #5 FOX VALLEY CORSO on 9/10 (R9) and given a follow off that trip where she saved ground and lacked room though no match for the open length front running, 1-9 winner, Goomster.

Hawthorne Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 MAXIMUS might have been 8-1 on 9/6 though was the second choice and 3-1 going into the gate with the late odds drop to 1-9 on Topville Alexander the eventual front running winner. Lily Grace chased that winner throughout and from just off the pace and wide MAXIMUS made up ground as really the only horse to do closing on the top two.

#5 FARMERS ONLY looked to lack some grit late and just one paced last Saturday night. The recency and slight class drop could be on his side, though noted as a shorter number is expected. Improvement could be projected on #6 ROCK JAGGER as the tactics from Knox played against this horse with timing and extreme ground loss finishing well off the back.

#3 DASH AROUND was sent to the lead and controlled gate-to-wire with just enough to hold late as place rival Ernie The Mooss closed late with those two together at the wire. This will be a step up in class and has struggled for the top spot under similar conditions.

Hawthorne Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 ENRICO PALLAZZO will look to rebound after breaking stride on the first turn last Sunday. He will return in this race where he fits finding class relief from the recent two starts. Franco takes back over today and familiar with this horse turning in some solid races and against some tougher foes and does not appear to have a Guitar Man or You Never Can Tell to take on today. #4 LOVE IS BLUE had a favorable pocket trip and doing his best to hold place – a blanket for the minors.

ENRICO PALLAZZO also comes out of a common race with #6 FOX VALLEY DURHAM back on August 29th at DuQ with ENRICO turning in the better outcome and closing the gap on a solid pacer, Gorgeous Big Guy – a dominant winner coming back from that race here on 9/10 in the IL State Fair Colt Stakes.

#5 MAZIN BLAZIN is an improving type and not quite to his main rivals on 9/9 should find himself competitive in today's field. #7 HEZARENGADE also from that common race was quite green and must be more professional.

Hawthorne Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Not surprised to see Wyatt Avenatti (looked to have some options) stick with #3 MARIAH LOU after the sneaky good effort making a strong close and continued to move out well past the wire. #5 WHATTA YEAR also deserving of a follow from her late move against winning heavy favorite, Goomster. He was quite warm/washy on the track last week and worth noting.

Hawthorne Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 DANDY'S SHIP earned a follow from the 9/9 race where the draw did him no favors paired with Rath parked wide unable to overcome ground loss and despite the trip showed enough run in spots to suggest he can move up here.

#8 HOLY LUCIFER appear to be moving forward and will find a change based on some of the tougher rivals including some stakes winners in his running lines going back to early June.

#6 FOX VALLEY LANSING might also move up with a driver change and less than ideal tactics still making a move and showing run in a less than ideal trip.

#5 ASHLEECOLDMUFFLER was taken back to save ground right from the start and with minimal ask throughout to suggest he can move forward and will find some class relief for today's betting race. #1 WHO'ZZZ THIS SKY has been heavily overmatched, and today's placement should help assess where he fits and should move up naturally with today's field.

Hawthorne Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 CHANGE THE TUNE turned in a BTL effort and a good competitive race though no one was going to contend with the much the best, Whiskey Lou.

#8 TRU CASH was caught widest of the field early as he made his way to the lead and played a role in the outcome. There are others in this field, such as #7 LOUS GAMBLER to his inside that also have shown early tactical speed. #3 LOUS ENCHANTRESS needed and finds the class drop today where she projects to move up all around though is another trotter that brings naturally early speed.

Hawthorne Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 SOMESTARSANDI will look to redeem herself today after coming up short as the favorite last Sunday, 9/10. She appears as a filly that wants the lead and when asked to rate (without cover) was not as effective and also compromised from a dynamic standpoint. Common rival #6 KARATOP MOOSS has a more favorable pocket trip assisting in the show finish. KARATOP MOOSS also shares a common run line with pacesetter, #8 DANDY'S MS SWIFTY.

#5 AMY MOOSS made a wide move on 9/9 showing interest though was not quite to the stakes level that day and finds herself in the right group here. She shares some common running lines with #1 STEVIE MAE coming off a fourth place finish on 9/10 slightly flattered with the race shape slowing late and the top five all together.

Hawthorne Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 FIRST OF HER NAME will require better handling this week especially with the outside post. She showed run and projects to improve off that effort and the connections land here with some class relief as well – she is also returning from the common race with some of the rivals in tonight's Race 9 and worth following.

There is a group returning from the opening day opening race to assess: #6 MY EYES ADORED YOU has trouble in running and showed run in spots and out past the wire. #3 JIMMYLAI was not quite to the level of her main rivals on 9/9 and with the slight change today moves up in this spot. #7 REVENGE ROSIE also earned a follow off a sneaky trip with less than ideal timing when making her move and has more to show than the last week running line and finishing position suggests. #9 MATTIE SHARK opened with early money in the 9/9 common race and one that backed up that interest with a decent effort all things considered.

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Jim's Picks

Hawthorne Race 1
Analysis by Jim Miller

4 Ponda Hawk | 3 Skyway Gymmaster | 7 Fox Valley B Gump

Hawthorne Race 2
Analysis by Jim Miller

1 Lous Amazon | 5 Fox Valley Parker | 6 Shattered Dreams

Hawthorne Race 3
Analysis by Jim Miller

5 Fox Valley Corso | 2 Xena Lou | 1 Lou Sangreal

Hawthorne Race 4
Analysis by Jim Miller

4 Maximus | 5 Farmers Only | 1 Not Me Gram

Hawthorne Race 5
Analysis by Jim Miller

6 Fox Valley Durham | 3 Enrico Pallazzo | 4 Love Is Blue

Hawthorne Race 6
Analysis by Jim Miller

4 Lous Andiamo | 1 Bell Boots | 5 Whatta Year

Hawthorne Race 7
Analysis by Jim Miller

2 Dandy's Ship | 5 Ashleecoldmuffler | 10 Fox Valley Carlos

Hawthorne Race 8
Analysis by Jim Miller

2 Illini Isabella | 8 Tru Cash | 7 Lous Gambler

Hawthorne Race 9

Analysis by Jim Miller

1 Stevie Mae 3 Somestarsandi 5 Amy Mooss

Hawthorne Race 10

Analysis by Jim Miller

8 CW Wise Lady 3 Jimmylai 5 Illini Belle

Handicapping Analysis
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Ron's Picks

Hawthorne Race 1

Analysis by Ron Uchman

4 -PONDA HAWK 7 -FOX VALLEY B GUMP 5 -E T BRUTE

4-PONDA HAWK-probably drops to score

7-FOX VALLEY B GUMP-Good form; hot driver

5-E T BRUTE-Needs one but always liked him

Hawthorne Race 2

Analysis by Ron Uchman

1 -LOUS AMAZON 5 -FOX VALLEY PARKER 4 -HONOLOULOU

1-LOUS AMAZON-Maybe three in a row

5-FOX VALLEY PARKER-Just 3rd in tough race

4-HONOLOULOU-Sharp connections; don't ignore

Hawthorne Race 3

Analysis by Ron Uchman

2 -ZENO LOU 1 -LOU SANGREAL 5 -FOX VALLEY CORSO

2-ZENO LOU-Maybe with a better trip

1-LOU SANGREAL-inside speed might do it

5-FOX VALLEY CORSO-Distant 3rd to monster winner

Hawthorne Race 4

Analysis by Ron Uchman

1 -NOT ME GRAM 5 -FARMERS ONLY 3 -DASH AROUND

1-NOT ME GRAM-look who he just faced

5-FARMERS ONLY-Been in against tougher company

3-DASH AROUND-Chance off recent confidence builder

Hawthorne Race 5

Analysis by Ron Uchman

6 -FOX VALLEY DURHAM 3 -ENRICO PALLAZZO 5 -MAZIN BLAZIN

6-FOX VALLEY DURHAM-Been strong all year

3-ENRICO PALLAZZO-Beaten fav broke; can make amends

5-MAZIN BLAZIN-Ready in career third race

Hawthorne Race 6

Analysis by Ron Uchman

4 -LOUS ADIAMO 5 -WHATA YEAR 1 -BELL BOOTHS

4-LOUS ADIAMO-Been knocking at the door

5-WHATA YEAR-just 2nd to very tough winner

1-BELL BOOTHS-Sneaks to the lead; catch me

Hawthorne Race 7

Analysis by Ron Uchman

10 -FOX VALLEY CARLOS 5 -ASHLEECOLDMUFFLER 2 -DANDY'S SHIP

10-FOX VALLEY CARLOS-Can overcome outside post
5-ASHLEECOLDMUFFLER-Speed evident this level

2-DANDY'S SHIP-Post position and class relief

Hawthorne Race 8

Analysis by Ron Uchman

3 -LOUS ENCHANTRESS 8 -TRU CASH 7 -LOUS GAMBLER

3-LOUS ENCHANTRESS-maybe upset speed with 2nd Lasix

8-TRU CASH-Good from career start

7-LOUS GAMBLER-Had impressive qualifier

Hawthorne Race 9

Analysis by Ron Uchman

6 -KARATOP MOOSS 5 -AMY MOOSS 1 -STEVIE MAE

6-KARATOP MOOSS-Might fly by all the speed

5-AMY MOOSS-Likely in the money late

1-STEVIE MAE-Big chance on or off lead

Hawthorne Race 10

Analysis by Ron Uchman

10 -FIRST OF HER NAME 7 -REVENGE ROSIE 5 -ILLINI BELLE-

10-FIRST OF HER NAME-Gets needed class relief

7-REVENGE ROSIE-May lead throughout

5-ILLINI BELLE-Ready at first asking