Handicapping Analysis
Thu September 28th, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Churchill Downs Race 1

Post Time 4:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The pace/race shape is interesting here with this group lacking early speed and many showing gate/SLOG. #5 MALIBU SMART could look to take advantage as she has shown some tactical speed and makes her first start for Rivelli, a trainer that is known for getting early speed out of horses. In addition, she fits as an individual and with form over this course - her 5/29 effort recording an 82 OptixFIG, the highest in this field.

#2 MIKITA is upgraded on the class drop and also capable of showing early speed. She showed that sprinting on debut and was unable to show that in her second start with the TROUBLES+ early on. She will return to the main track with the two turn fitness and overall conditioning with this second start of the cycle.

#1 BIG DIG is one that has shown those SLOG habits though the connections are making two key changes as she stretches back out and drops in for the claiming tag. The blinkers also added today to further intent. Intent also looks in play for #7 SALSALITA VERDE as she makes her second start off the claim and returning to the MCL level she was picked up at back in June. The effort for the level earned a B OptixGRADE through significant adversity. She fits here and in the right spot for her abilities though still must show up with a top effort as number wise she has not shown much improvement in that department this season and does not hold a figure edge.

#6 CATHERINE BLAZE is tough to endorse on the win end given her overall record though with that big sample size she has run her most competitive races to date at the maiden claiming level and back in the right spot to get a share.

Churchill Downs Race 2

Post Time 4:29 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The only time Duvall made the turf-to-dirt move with #3 FLORIS resulted in the maiden win. There could be some intent with that move as well as the timing coming back in this second start of the cycle and a sneaky effort last out at BTP. This is the type of race that does not really have a standout and FLORIS fits as well as any in here and should retain the double digit odds as the ML suggests.

Churchill Downs Race 7

Post Time 6:54 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This allowance could be a starting point for #1 KING FURY and #6 TWILIGHT BLUE returning from longer layoffs in this allowance race. While their ability alone could still get the job done here, they are both short given the morning line. The same lack of value on #5 DASH ATTACK as he does bring recency, however overall does not hold an edge in this group.

#4 KITTANSETT returns from a three month break and also return to the main track. The surface switch is neutral as he is a versatile type that can transfer his form either way. Often his biggest hurdle is himself with the excessive and extended layoff lines going all the way back to his juvenile debut in 2019. While overall those layoff lines bring reservations, the connections cannot always count on a "prep" (like some others in this field) and often must come "race ready" and his consistency fits this race as a contender - and with some projected value as well.