Handicapping Analysis
Thu November 23rd, 2023

Emily's Analysis

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 2:16 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a solid allowance race with horses to follow heading into 2024. This event could present some value with a lot of attention and likely wagering support on #2 DUCALE. He is capable though does not hold any edge in this field and has yet to run back to his maiden breaking figure from his second start. #9 STRAVA also has some concerns in the second choice role returning from the layoff as a gelding and racing for the tag to be eligible.

#4 CYCLONE MISCHIEF will make his return, last seen in the KY Derby (G1) where he was vulnerable for the distance and race shape. His visuals despite running well at GP, suggest a ONE_TURN horse and has that positive distance change on his side. #3 BOURBON HEIST has yet to win at CD, though the track surface was not the reason. He has run competitively over this course and at the N2 level and should return today with an expected top effort. #1 EMBRACE requires pace to close into and trip is required, though he has some competitive back numbers and seemed to need the race coming off the layoff last month at KEE.

Del Mar Race 1

Post Time 1:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Experience could go a long way and upside presenting on second time starter #6 SKETCHY looking to build off his debut and debut figure in line with the other two #2 EIGHT CLAP and #7 E J WON THE CUP.

#8 NED is preferred of the first time starters. He comes into this race fit and can take to the surface/distance and in a good draw outside horses. #1 DADDY JUSTIFY should have no issues with fitness given the lone steady work tab and landing in this 5f turf sprint. Watching him train he does not physically present as a 5f turf sprinter. Class wise tough to see where the Glatt debuting pair of #3 PRACTICALLY BROKE and #4 MONEY MAKES MONEY fit at this level though both look fine for turf and have shown some sprint speed in their works. Similar class concerns for this level on #5 SHARP LORENZO.

Del Mar Race 2

Post Time 1:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 I HAD THAT ONE TOO recorded back-to-back BTL efforts under similar conditions here at DMR over the summer. His 5th place result and overall effort was stronger than the running line and finishing position may suggest on paper and given the "trip" IMPROVE can be projected. As far as the surface switch, his two dirt OptixFIG from the KY races stack up with his current form and form that fits today's race par/OFR.

Del Mar Race 3

Post Time 2:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Miller has already pulled a "bait and switch" here this meet and noted as he returns with a pair in #1 AMERICAN HEIGHTS and #4 HOUSE OF MAGIC with a case to be made for both. #6 NOKIE wheels right back for this race and remains at the level and protected with the cutback in distance as the main change.

Del Mar Race 4

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The effort from #8 RADICAL RIGHT over this course and distance back on 8/4 makes him a player right back. As far as his current form he was in tough and did not have the right ride and trips in the three following races and the class/rider change today suggests intent. #3 ZOFFARELLI comes into this race on a string of BTL efforts though the main challenge with his is his off the pace runstyle and working a trip with the shorter 5f distance.

Del Mar Race 5

Post Time 3:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 ROSIE ANN RULES has been most competitive at this level and while that makes her logical she also has come up short at the same time and needs some insurance coverage. #3 JUST IS holds some buried form over this course (B OptixGRADE on 9/3) and returns fresh off the 34-day break a change from the prior pattern of running back on short rest.

Del Mar Race 6

Post Time 3:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 NEIGE BLANCHE won this race last year and her form coming into the event this year is similar though there could be some others in this field on her level right now and requires that top effort again to win. #7 LOVED REIKO is a player given she holds her form coming out of the recent series out in KY - her form and effort in the Dowager (G3) is on par with the graded stakes efforts from #4 SISTER OTOOLE, a logical type for Motion a trainer that ships back with intent.

#3 MUSICAL RHAPSODY has yet to prove herself on the same class level though she has plenty of stamina for this distance. She had a legit excuse over this course and distance back in July and turned in a decent effort with notable GALLOP+ following in August.

Del Mar Race 7

Post Time 4:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Sophomore #5 CLIQUISH really has not run a "bad" race when isolating her route efforts. Even her effort in the SA Oaks (G2) back in April was a legit EX - EXCUSE. Fellow 3yo, #8 LIBERAL LADY has run competitively and consistent at this level though might need a touch more to win. She has natural early speed though from the outside she will be used to clear and unsure how much pace pressure she could receive from the others in this field.

Del Mar Race 8

Post Time 4:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As far as the more established maidens, #1 KITZKATY turned in a B/BTL effort on 10/20 though this race has a higher OFR and noted with the slight rise. Her stablemate #8 LAMPORGHINI looked to be given her debut last month and there was some turf intent as she was entered and unable to draw into a 5f turf sprint on 11/17. #7 LADY MONCLAIRE makes her debut here for Paparodromou, a barn that has been sending out live and she could pop in this spot first out.

Fair Grounds Race 1

Post Time 12:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 BLACKTECA can often tout himself on appearance as was the case then he dominated a group back in April at Hawthorne. His appearance is something to keep and eye on, though as an individual he fits here and with natural early speed could hold a pace advantage in this group as well.

Fair Grounds Race 2

Post Time 12:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 VIM AND VIGOR looks pointed to this spot in a second off the layoff pattern that has been successful for him in the past. That included last meet making the transition here to FG and stretching out sprint-to-route. #8 TURN ON THE MAGIC is following a similar pattern and intent with the move and drop for Broberg though likely to be shorter of the two.

Fair Grounds Race 3

Post Time 1:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The early pace should be honest (field stays intact) though still requires some positional speed to work a trip. That scenario should benefit #7 ALTERANA one that could get dismissed for his local record, though there is more to the story and handles this track just has not had the right trip, timing and placement in the past. #2 BINDING AGREEMENT should also have pace to target and has in the past raced competitively at this level, though come up short on the win end.

Fair Grounds Race 4

Post Time 1:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Falcone has been sending out live runners to start off the meet and upgrades #1 DREAM LINER in this spot and with buried form that fits for this claiming level. The drop for #7 SOLID COUNTRY GOLD could be seen as a negative returning from the layoff, though as far as the class change this is a more reasonable spot for his abilities as he has been overmatched at the allowance level and prior circuits. The drop is a little more concerning on #11 BIZZEE CHANNEL as he dropped in class coming back from the layoff and did not show much progress with the change and something to take note of especially with a shorter expected number.

Fair Grounds Race 5

Post Time 2:06 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 NEXT LEVEL was on an improving pattern (OptixFIG) prior to the American Pharoah (G1) and lost all chance (EX) stumbling right to his nose and knees out of the gate. He has been given time to recover and some changes here with the circuit, returning to maiden company and picking up Lasix and blinkers. Stidham is another barn that has started the meet with live runners on opening week to upgrade the pair, #2 NIGHT OUT and #4 NIGHT MOVER.

Fair Grounds Race 6

Post Time 2:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SAKE comes into this race with buried form given recent trips. That series of "trips" extends back to Pimlico in a competitive allowance on the Preakness undercard and with hidden and progressive form in this current form cycle that began with a PREP in August here at Hawthorne.

Fair Grounds Race 7

Post Time 3:06 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 MAYCOKS BAY was favored on debut (stalked by winner/BOS) and validated that backing returning to break his maiden in the second start at Parx. The connections wheeled right back for a $200k stakes at KEE where he did not have a clean run starting with a poor start, making contact with the gate. There is some concern that he has not posted a published work since that race and will stretch out for the first time. As far as distance experience, #2 SNEAD has the foundation on his side and progressive numbers to present an edge over #3 BLOWN COVER.

Fair Grounds Race 8

Post Time 3:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 DESERT DUKE will give up some recency though trades that for local turf experience and a slight class edge exiting stakes race and is still N2 eligible. #7 PROTONIC POWER returns to the turf while in current and progressive form in this third start of the cycle. #9 ALTAZOR also in form and finds some subtle class relief from the recent starts, though at the same time has come up short under similar conditions of that winning (B) effort.

Fair Grounds Race 10

Post Time 4:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 HE'S A GOOD CHAP was given a follow off his debut - an EX - EXCUSE as he reared up at the start and distanced from the others by default. From off the pace he ran in hand and put in a sneaky CLOSE and GALLOP+ after the wire. There appeared some intent on debut taking some support on the board and from the 6-1 ML as well as wheeling back here in three weeks and put in an additional work on 11/15 as well.

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Stakes Spotlight

Churchill Downs Race 11

Post Time 3:14 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 XIGERA projects to be a heavy favorite and logical in that role. She picked up her first graded stakes win last month and paired triple digit figures with the return to the dirt in this form cycle. She will be required to hold her form off those new tops. The race shape could assist as some of the early "speed" could come out with #1 HIDDEN CONNECTION opting for the Chilukki (G3) last Saturday.

#7 MUSIC STREET should be under the radar coming into this race. This will be her first graded stakes try, though there has been some intent for this level, noting three scratches from graded stakes events in the past. #9 BELLAMORE reunites with M. Garcia and back in this stakes event where she finished second last year.

Fair Grounds Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As individuals a case can be made for many in the field, though in terms of this race as a whole, it has a "pace makes the race" feel. #7 SUPER OCHO has enough early speed to make himself the "speed of the speed" in this race and dangerous if left alone. Others could press and try to keep the pace honest, a scenario that should assist #1 CHASING TIME from the rail. Intent looks in play by the connections in the second start of the cycle and following a favorable/improving second off, a repeating form cycle pattern.