Handicapping Analysis
Mon January 1st, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As far as runstyle, #6 ONE MORE KELLY ha shown more tactical speed that stablemate #5 DEAR LADY splitting the pair in this spot. KELLY returns from the layoff and encouraging she remains protects. While she can up shorter as the favorite back in October at PARX, she took contact at the start and seemed to take something out of her in running. Early speed is key if they are not assertive, R. Zimmerman aboard #1 ENCHANTED NILE, will glad look for the easy lead.

Class relief is key for #3 SHEZZ KOLDAZICE in this third start of the cycle. She appears the type that improved with age and racing as her form improved as a four-year-old. The connections of #2 STOIC LUNA sent out a live runner at long odds on Friday and could have similar in this spot. She exits the stakes three weeks ago where she was very washed out, and took contact at the start before making a CLOSE. That is noted with the recent running lines to show she comes into this race with current form and figures on par. She is a versatile type in terms of surface as she shifts back to the dirt today.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MAHOMEY fits this condition and holds form over this course and 6f distance. He has tactical speed without "needing" the lead. #6 LOCHMOOR also fits at this level and has fired fresh at this meet. While, he is giving up recency though could be taken as a positive sign with Torres back aboard, a live rider on this one in the past. His form is in line with #8 TWISTED DIXIE, one that can often take a couple starts to get into top form.

#4 CLASSY SOCKS should be sitting on a peak effort in this second start off the layoff. He will find both class relief and the cutback in distance from setting a fast/X_FLOW pace at the route distance off the bench two weeks ago.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 ERUMPENT could be given an upgrade off the debut catching a drying out race track and contact at the start. They wheel right back for this event, similar conditions and keeping N. Juarez.

#6 CATTY CRUISE finds class relief for this second start and has recency and local experience on her side. The race should benefit and noting a SLOG where she returns today with a work since as well as Lasix and rider upgrade.

#10 BIG BOLT also has recency as she returns here in the second start of the cycle. She should benefit from the start, fitness and will pick up first time Lasix sticking with the MCL level where she has been more effective.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 MAHONEY ROAD was claimed back in October and again returns from a layoff. The excessive layoff lines create overall reservations on this individual, though could be seen as a positive as the return in a spot without a suspicious drop. #8 STUD LOVIN will make his first start for the claiming tag. Like his rival, there are the layoff lines throughout his career. While he could be considered the "fastest" horse he projects to be favored as a result and with those mild reservations. #10 MASTER OF ARMS has the edge in recency as he wheels right back first off the claim for Ortiz. This slight step up in claiming price allows then to race here and overall a similar par where he should hold his form today.

As far as the Asmussen pair, both fit at this level, however lack any strong edge in today's group. #6 VALE has a stronger rider and more tactical speed, though #12 KENTUCKY BOURBON has recency and local form and one of the strongest closing kick in the field, should the rider get this horse a trip.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 DREWPOWER can often peak in his third start of the cycle and comes into this race with that exact pattern. His recent running line and the connections should allow for further value as well. #8 TURN ON THE MAGIC can be upgraded making his third start off the layoff and WIDE MOVE last month at the FG. Broberg runners have been firing this meet and tough to dismiss that current trend. #7 MULBERRY STREET had a look before the vet scratch keeping him out of the 12/18 $7.5k claiming event. They return here and going back to last season was competitive under similar restricted claiming conditions surface/distance. #5 WHAT A COUNTRY also had a look in his first local start though with reservation with the rider and that is still a concern here though his class could overcome and present value in this field and off the recent running lines.

#3 ROYAL ACT returns from the layoff and less than ideal visuals along with the wraps added back in November. As an individual, his back class and figures stand out though one that takes a big drop today and the Diodoro barn has been a bit cold starting the meet as factors to consider as the likely favorite.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 HARTLEY scratched from a N1x allowance on Saturday to run in this claiming event, a more reasonable place for her abilities. She has been overmatched with that class test and with her two wins at a lower condition and also first off/out a pattern returning today.

#4 SISTER KISSES has the benefit of recency and potential intent wheeling back for this event and making the trip for G. Garcia. She was compromised with the TRAFFIC trip last month at TP, and that race less than 30-days ago already has one next out winner.

#12 VOW will also return from that 12/6 event, though prefer stablemate #8 SHELL SHOCK finds subtle class relief to run at this N3 condition and some upside returning from the 11/23 event where she stumbled at the start, showed run behind a pacesetting winner in a four horse field without change in running order.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 PET SOUNDS could be live for the connections as he makes his local debut off progressive numbers from the WO season. They were entered to run in a MSW event here on 12/9 though a vet scratch reroutes here where he will race for the claiming tag for the first time. He is given slight preference to stablemate #10 MAXIMUS MAGIC with today's route distance and PET could be higher of the two.

#7 HIGGINSVILLE visually appeared outclassed when he debuted back in October at KEE. Prior to that event, he was entered a couple times earlier that month at the MCL level and unable to draw in. This one also shows a vet scratch from 11/25 at CD (MSW) and given the history, likely the type that will come out race ready.

McPeek will return with the pair from the 12/9 MSW events. Both horses have not shown much progression and the drop makes sense. #8 RIVETAGE was fractious in the gate, a creating some excuse, albeit self inflicted, whereas #5 GOLDEN PLATE just race even without excuse.

Steve Asmussen also sends out a pair and while #1 CRUSADING figures of the two, he did not improve much on the drop last month and overall where he fits with this group as one of the "logical" though no real strong edge.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 3:46 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 HAPPY IS A CHOICE makes a belated debut and there are overall concerns though the 20-1 gives him a longshot look. His maiden win at KEE fits on figures and RunStyle for today's race shape and that effort was recorded as a juvenile. He must run back to that effort, though a lightly raced type returns with a live rider, steady works and the placement today could be the confidence from trainer, J. Ortiz.

#1 UNDERHILL'S TAB wheels back from a BTL effort at this level last month finishing with a strong CLOSE and GALLOP+ as one of the four finishing together at the wire. He again had trouble out of the gate, something of a pattern for this horse and the prime knock especially with the rail.

#9 PLAUSIBLE DENILE was also part of that finish and with a subtle trip giving up key position. He returns with some subtle changes moving off the rail and a rider change along with the recency which could signal intent today.

#2 W W SCOUT'S HONOR returns from a different allowance event on the same 12/9 card and had a subtle trip as one that needs to be ridden more assertively and likely to show speed from the inside post and often the lack of speed from UNDERHILL'S TAB at the rail.

Lukas runners have been cold to start the meet and the knock on #3 BOURBON BASH in this spot off the layoff. He has form, class and figures that fit as a concern otherwise. The 6f distance is where he broke his maiden and did so showing speed gate-to-wire winning by open lengths at SAR as a juvenile.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:14 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 CATCHING FREEDOM has been rerouted to the Smarty Jones, a change from the Gun Runner Stakes where he was entered and passed on 12/23 at the FG. He is an improving type and one that has had to overcome adversity. He showed that on debut breaking his maiden first out and lacked room at a crucial point in the 11/9 allowance, still turning in a "winning" type effort despite the fourth place result. A finish behind though in my opinion stronger than #3 LAGYNOS - one that is proven around two turns with higher figures. Class wise he still must show where he is on this stakes level.

#4 MYSTIK DAN had less than ideal timing wheeling back off a strong effort and figure in the 11/25 allowance. That race should assist in terms of conditioning especially heading into this season with the longer two turn distances.

Number wise #8 CHAPERONE is lighter than others bit this is a horse that will move up with more ground. His recent two turn race back on 11/12 was sneaky good racing in TRAFFIC and finished with a strong CLOSE. The higher number is projected with his current figures and this one has more upside.

As noted earlier on the card the trend with Lukas this meet sending out #7 JUST STEEL coming off a strong effort to win the competitive Ed Brown Stakes. This one has some foundation though still out to prove himself around two turns.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 4:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Going back to December 2022, #2 TIME ANDBEYOND turned in a winning effort at this level taking finishing together and clear at the wire. He had some subtle excuses, some self-inflicted breaking SLOG the two starts last meet and coming back this year has been facing open company.

#5 TASK showed run in his debut back in September at LAD. He broke in making a lot of contact with the stall and his rival before getting caught wide. He finished with a strong close and continued to run on after the wire. Since that race he has steady and local works and picks up a major rider upgrade as well.

#10 GOD'S COUNTRY is tough to knock off the debut effort three weeks ago and has that recency/experience on his side. As far as the trip, he stalked wide outside the pacesetters, the eventual exacta finishers.

#14 MACHO STRIKER likely will have to wait another day to make a belated return - the debut last spring showed run and was one to follow.