Handicapping Analysis
Fri January 5th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 1

Post Time 12:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 VORTEX finds a lot of changes coming back today and on short rest. He was dominant breaking his maiden for $12.5k, though projected to REGRESS off the effort. He was unable to get into the race (TACTIC-, X_FLOW) last week on the turf and might not have had intent for that spot all things considered.

Fair Grounds Race 4

Post Time 2:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 DREWMAZING is solid in this spot with class and speed on par along with his RunStyle to work a trip. He has progressive form as well; this third start off the layoff shows up with improving OptixGRADE to suggest a top effort here.

Fair Grounds Race 5

Post Time 2:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 REASON TO DREAM caught the eye in his debut at WO. He was compromised early (SLOG, TROUBLE_S) and made a late CLOSE and continued to GALLOP+ after the wire. They will show up on this circuit and class wise is more of a lateral move and with the IMPROVE can compete here.

Fair Grounds Race 6

Post Time 3:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A value case can be made for #8 KENTUCKY PEERLESS one that will give up local experience making his first start on this circuit. His form coming into this race fits on par and a lateral move from the recent Remington Park races. Holding his form, his early speed could also hold an advantage more than what appears on paper.

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SISTERSOUTTACHROME missed the break and put in a BTL effort to get into the race making a MOVE and late CLOSE on the pacesetting winner on debut - catching her on the GALLOP+ out. Outside of the slow start, physically she does not present as the 5f type and should appreciate the added ground here. In terms of early pace, #6 PINK CHIMES could hold that edge in this group. Her early speed is tough to see on paper, though in relation to others in this field, could present that edge.

Potential upside on #5 MISS DOUBLE as she makes a return off the layoff here. She was rushed for the end of the meet last year debuting in statebred MSW company where she had trouble at the start and chased WIDE before getting rush right back in against open company briefly chasing a fast early pace before losing ground - the April 14th event producing two next out winners. Prior to the debut, there was intent to race at this statebred MCL level keying off a scratch back in January. The barn has a winner this meet, Count It All Joy, a statebred MSW winner on 12/30 coming off the layoff last raced on 4/15.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 IMMORAL returns under similar N2 conditions from the race three weeks ago to compete here. He looked a little overmatched against the $16k group though with form and a RunStyle that could factor with a top effort. He was unable to get that trip as part of a chain reaction of horses taking considerable contact at the start and from there behind horses taking kickback. It is encouraging they worked on 12/30 and wheel back in three weeks for this spot. The change in class, a lower race par should have him overall competitive and a clear break showing more tactical speed.

#5 UNBOWED also returns from the 12/15 common race and upgraded with the class relief and fitness for his second start off the layoff. He has early speed and potential upside as a lightly race type making his 4yo debut here. That present overall upside and value given the preference over #7 FORSAKEN, one that wheels right back in a week for this race shifting to open company and should be shorter of the two.

#10 HEIR TO GREATNESS returns to Oaklawn Park where he broke his maiden last year and his local figures stack up strongly on par for this claiming event. Both of those races where at the route, two turn distance and does make the change to a sprint for the first time here. That creates some reservations along with the layoff lines in the projected favorite roll.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Diodoro will send out a pair in this race and overall there is not much between the two both capable under today's conditions. In terms of race shape, #1 GOOD HEART should be sent given the trip where he has had success at 6f and not many other options from the rail. On his best day, he should be prominent up front though not alone with #6 RECKLESS RED in the field keeping him honest and if the two engage finishing ability has lacked on the pair in the past. #3 RAYMOND has tactical speed and the type that can fall into that "PERFECT" trip something he could find today.

#4 SPOTTED BULL does not hold any overall edge as individual though moves up on intent and recency as he makes his second start of the meet and back at the claiming level after racing protected three weeks ago.

#5 DRIFTER requires some price compensation as he projects to return to a closer role in today's race shape. With that said, he can close into a moderate pace with contention, a dynamic that could present itself here and in his favor.

As far as #7 CREME DE LA CHROME he does not have any edge in this field overall though a fit on his best day. Gibson/Arrieta have had success this meet with four starters two winners both getting the job done as the ML and betting favorite for Flurry Racing.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 JUNIOR BUG is still looking for his first win since the claim for Van Berg though has run "winning" races for the level and intent as they return protected here. He could be overlooked off the recent running line, a race at the FG run over very poor track conditions and the SLOG playing a role in the race outcome making a move for show. Their race over this course, distance and condition last March could be overlooked though a race with an excuse attached given the poor start and making a WIDE MOVE EX_FLOW and projecting to IMPROVE they did just that in the races that followed.

#2 BORN FLAWLESS was downgraded heading into the 12/15 event coming off a taxing, HARD fought effort to win as the BOS in November at CD. He could rebound in this spot with that start out of the way and the start over this course under his belt. #7 BURNINHUNKOFLOVE was upgraded on that day getting the job done as he has buried form and given the right timing returning that day for Broberg. Coming back on three weeks rest and new top figure and at the much shorter price, while capable, the value is not there today.

The lack of value at 7-2 is the primary knock on #3 BLOW TORCH as he returns off the layoff and giving up recency to others in this field and lacking any overall edge. There does appear a positive with F. Torres back aboard, however, those two wins were recorded at a lower level, in at the claiming condition.

#8 BEST OF GREELEY also requires some price compensation as he makes a return to Oaklawn. This gelding does not hold the strongest local record, though to be fair, his races here were all contested at higher conditioned events with numbers consistently on par for this event. In prior seasons he had not been eligible for this starter condition, a condition he makes his way into a could be a clever claim with that intent from the new connections.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 BALL GOWN is upgraded from the 11/23 starter allowance given the track profile playing against her on the day. A few of the horses that ran against that profile moved up in their following starts including, Sister Kisses a $30k N3L winner here Monday, 1/1. Intent could also be in play for these connections for this meet as he was protected first off the claim and returns to the claiming level here.

#7 TAKING CHARGE DESI could also present intent and upside in this second start of the meet. The return race on opening day was the first off a two month break and seemed to need the race with the poor start rushing WIDE and should return fit and subtle class drop to compete here. Her best effort sits right in line with rivals, #3 TENACIOUS LADY and #4 CHAPARRITA and figures the higher of that trio on the board.

#8 FUNTIMEGIRL is a bit of a stab in here. She has just the one race that makes her competitive, her debut from 2022. There could be intent coming back to Oaklawn with subtle trips last spring and the connections scratching from an open $7500k claiming race on 12/29 to run here and retaining Landeros, the rider assigned that day.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 ALL CHOKED UP is the biggest "wild card" though also one of the bigger numbers in this field. He is unproven on the dirt though going back to 2021 when starting off his career as a juvenile, he was placed on the dirt sprinting and will be back to those conditions for the first time since. His MSW win figure fits on par and backed up that effort at KYD setting a Fast early pace for the distance. The race he returns from at KEE was a productive race and finds relief here in this spot and first time for the claiming tag. While there are some question marks, he is one to get creative with and too big of a number to dismiss.

#6 PASS LINE is a lightly raced type that is not far out of contender status in this race. His second start going back to July at ELP earned a figure on par for this level. He returns for this second start of the meet with upside given the trip and less than ideal rider TACTIC- that finds a rider change back to Esquivel, the win rider from November.

#7 A LA CARTE also returns from the 12/17 starter allowance to race here back in at the claiming level. He has a tendency to break SLOG, something that should be expected and to some extent benefit him with the race flow and show finish on the day. His stablemate #9 TIM TAL has things to like in this race though does not hold any edge as the second choice as projected on the morning line. Morning line favorite, #5 FAVORITE OUTLAW also has some knocks with the shorter number though overall logical on their form coming into this race and finding a slight drop racing for the higher claiming tag (not a suspicious drop) for the first time.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 FLASHY FAST will make a belated return as one of two in the race for McPeek. Going back to his debut at SAR he showed some run in spots with a WIDE trip and should note the winner, Noted (G1 winner) won by open lengths as the pacesetting 3-5 favorite and there was another gap back to clear place, Drum Roll Please (G3 placed) and a break to the others for minors. He has trained since including a work at KEE holding his own against older stablemate, Sun Thunder and following that move the ship to Oaklawn where he has been training steadily since. Leparoux has the call and appears preference as he was named on #11 SPECIAL DISPATCH when this one was entered and unable to draw in off the AE in a the 12/31 MSW 6f sprint.

#1 GOLDBRICK was game in defeat on 12/9 and will look to hold his form here. there could be some concerns with the timing though he has quality (GRIT) that is tough to dismiss. #6 CRUSHED IT also returns off a place finish here sprinting on 12/8. His effort was fine making a WIDE MOVE though the four horses that ran back from that 12/8 event including the show finisher, Chun Money did not do much in their next start that group exiting races on the 12/31 card.

The winner of one of those 12/31 races was a well-intended first time starter for Moquett called Time For Truth. The barn shows up here #2 SARPEDON for his belated debut. Physically he is a bigger type that has taken awhile to get fit and makes sense he will debut with the route of ground. He has been working locally and with some upbeat moves, something of a positive and change for this one compared to Churchill Downs. #9 RIYADH MOON has been working locally for this debut and have not seen this one since April to see how he is progressing since, giving the edge to others with experience.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 AUNT BECCA has an edge in recency as she lands here in this third start off the layoff and with improving form. She ran her career best race and figure in a third off pattern scoring by open lengths last April at KEE. She can be upgraded from the 11/22 allowance when rushing up into the lead, stayed on as the BOS with the winner, Napa Candy from off the pace and the other two forwardly placed runners early finished off the board.

#1 VERYLITTLECENTS fits this condition with form over this course and back class. She makes a belated return, unable to get on track after the 2022 December return for a second start last meet. She returns in this spot with the steady local works, a live rider and given the layoff history, for this now 5yo mare, a positive she returns protected and can come out race ready.

#11 EFFORTLESSLYELGANT will look to get back on track today and change things up returning to the sprint distance. She was upgraded heading into the Mistletoe Stakes with the conditioning from the November allowance and did improve, however was a little concerning the front wraps were kept on for that race - and something to monitor today. Her stablemate #8 MEGAN'S CLARA is solid racemare in her own right, however some class concerns in this spot and must (and is the only) run for the $50k tag here.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

If this field stays together, the projected early pace should be both fast and contentious with many legit early speed types in the field including #4 TEE BURNS and his former Watkins stablemate #9 FAITHFUL RULER. #10 ABSOLUTE CHAOS also with tactical speed with races on his best day that can win. The concern today is giving up recency returning from the 328-day layoff.

Speed throughout this field could assist #11 GUNFLASH in terms of pace to target and working a trip from the outside. He returns to this level though a competitive show finish from a similar post closing into an honest pace. #8 EXXEL also made late progress from a WIDE trip and despite the change in finishing positions from the pair, the two visually both were right there with each other.

#3 COLD AS HELL can even mix it up early returning as a FLOW upgrade returning from the 12/8 allowance. The change in class makes him tougher to take back as a top contender though has found a minor share under similar conditions in the past.

In terms of morning line favorite, #6 ZAMBEZI he might find the right trip, though otherwise he does not have any strong edge in this field to justify the shorter number in the board.

Santa Anita Race 5

Post Time 4:06 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 KIMMER is a live longshot. He wheels right back for this event and remains protected upgraded from the 1/5 WIDE trip as well as the BTL effort on 11/18 at DMR both at shorter and STRETCH is projected.

Santa Anita Race 7

Post Time 5:10 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Trip will be key for #6 SAI CON one that otherwise looks live returning from the two month break and back to the TURF. Baltas with a return to training is still looking for that first "1" with 3 of the 4 picking up checks finishing in the money.

Turfway Park Race 7

Post Time 7:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 CODE RUNNER turned in a B OptixGRADE, a winning effort for the level in his place finish back in November at CD. He returns to the right level to compete and returning from a sneaky effort on 12/9 with SLOG, TROUBLE_S and finished with a CLOSE and IMPROVE visuals.

Turfway Park Race 8

Post Time 8:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Longshot #3 JUNGLE WARFARE is not out of this race and could get overlooked back on the ML. He will give up recency returning from the 260-day layoff, though will trade for intent returning to Turfway. He has recorded some of his competitive races over this course and as a nine year old gelding keeps him protected and returning in this spot noting a scratch under similar conditions back on 11/30.