Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 6th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 8

Post Time 4:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Wilson/Brittlyn will send out a pair in this race including ML favorite, #2 OVA CHARGED. She had recorded some of the higher figures in this field and returns off a win with the near perfect trip last month fresh off the layoff. She could find a different dynamic today and has struggled to win under similar pace dynamics in the pace. Stablemate #6 SPIRTIED BEAUTY has back numbers that fit with this group on her best day and returns from a BTL effort after breaking VSLOG and needs a better break to contend here.

Fair Grounds Race 10

Post Time 5:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 WAR COUNT could hold a pace advantage and use that to his advantage as the projected race favorite. He will return giving up recency and there are some others in this field with "hidden" form this season to consider at longer odds: #6 STEAL IT BEACK was competitive at this level on 11/25 and returns from a legit EX - EXCUSE last month. #8 ZONG TOUCH looked to need the race as well as the added ground/STRETCH and should be plenty fit for this second start of the cycle with the WIDE trip and long GALLOP+. #11 J B GRAY also projects to IMPROVE off 12/21 event, though this distance change is a different concern and requires a new top to win this event.

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Intent on the class drop and timing for #3 DUTCH MILLS in this second start off the layoff and picking up Lasix for the 3yo debut for Ortiz. He caught a strong group and productive MSW event on debut back in July and chased WIDE in hand for his return last month going a route of ground, a race where the fourth place finisher Imperial Gun returned on 12/31 to break their maiden impressively by open lengths in MSW company.

#6 JUST ASK WATTS races on an every other pattern and following that cycle should rebound here. His effort back on 11/13 sits as one of the higher figures in this field and the strength of that race noted with one next out winner and show finisher Mr Philip turning in a strong second on this circuit in MSW company on 12/31. The class drop for JUST ASK WATTS returning here in this second start of the meet could suggest further intent.

#4 MASTER OF DISGUISE has early speed and some changes that could make the difference on the win end. This will be his first start off the claim returning as a 3yo where he will pick up Lasix.

The 11/26 CD event has produced two next out winners albeit at a lower MCL level at TP, though runners coming back to improve their figures in the follow starts. That positive could carry to #8 EXPRESS CHARGER making their first start off the claim for Garcia and could be intent here as well noting a scratch from a $50k MCL event where they would have been overmatched on 1/1.

#9 LEAD FOOT has come up short of the "winning" effort at the level, though has been consistent and holds form and fitness returning from the WIDE trip last month.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 NORTHERN DIAMOND was reclaimed out of her most recent start and looks to be intent for this meet. She will make a belated Oaklawn return with the connections picking this spot rather than a similar starter allowance on 12/2 at FG - an off track that day.

McKnight has been sending out live runners to start the meet and upgrading #6 WINYAH BAY with that current trend. She is unproven on the dirt, though has proven and current form that fits with today's field.

#5 GHOSTLY NIGHT fits this condition and could present as the "speed of the speed" in this race. She will cut back in distance for this event and presents a move forward with the timing noting she required extra recovery after the taxing win back in October. She is preferred of the morning line favorites as #1 ROYAL MEGHAN steps up in class returning here off the win; and #10 INVALUABLE one that has form at this level, though J. Sharp has been "colder" to start the meet and her runstyle combined with the outside post requires further compensation.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 SIMOVIC returns to Oaklawn and the sprint distance where he has recorded his better efforts and figures. He fired a big race off the bench last January against the profile with poor track conditions that favored horses forwardly placed. Looking for a little more early speed the blinkers were added in February and he was compromised early stumbling at the start and racing in traffic after. The two route races that followed had him exposed at the distance.

#7 MUSICAL MAESTRO must improve though if there is that progression this should be the time. He debuted early in the juvenile season and looked to need more ground though also needed time off. He returned last month making an easy lead stalked by the winner. His early speed could be an asset in this race and against others that have not show natural early speed. #2 RAGING has the benefit of experience and local experience returning for the second start. He lost his footing out of the gate and made contact with a rival breaking inward at the start and raced rank pulling into the race. He appears no worse for the wear wheeling back in three weeks with a work between the starts.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 KING PEANUT broke his maiden impressively on debut for a barn that is not known for winning first out. He showed his class on the day and throughout last season with his two standout figures sprinting on a fast track. #7 WILLOW CREEK ROAD was not as dominant breaking his maiden on debut though picked up the win and improved all the same. He has a near perfect record noting the 4/15 place was a blanket finish. #8 ONE TEN STADIUM does not present as much upside as the other rivals, though trades for foundation and recency. This will be his second start off the layoff and returning to statebred company and a slightly lower race par than many of his race and the entire 2023 season.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The 2023 #6 SPEITFUL SAM will struggle once again, though his prior seasons make him a major contender and could return to those efforts here. This will be his first start off the recent layoff and returning to the dirt and sprinting since entering the Robertson barn. He has shown legit early speed and that runstyle combined with top effort also could have a pace advantage and that edge over #11 CREEKMORE.

It is encouraging Esquivel sticks with #4 VIOLENT GIGI first off the claim and wheeling back for Ortiz in just 30-days. The race par is a step up from the event last month, though with a top effort is condition he has been able to compete under in prior seasons.

#1 COST BASIS also could find his top form that is required to compete in this second start off the layoff. The placement also finds him back in at the claiming level, conditions where he was competitive last season.

This is a big step up for #3 RACKATAPTAP though a big price returning today from a huge effort on 12/29, a winning effort on the day though had adversity from the post and trip running on late for show and out past the wire.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 FULL AUTHORITY returns to similar conditions and will look to rebound as the beaten favorite last month. There should be plenty of price compensation today and in this full field. While he had just four others on 12/15 that played against him with the dynamic, minimal change in running order with the pacesetters running 1-2.

#6 WALKER'S WIN also returns for a second start of the season and reasonable class relief. This spot is a drop from the 12/16 and the higher OC$62.5k event they scratched from on 12/30 to run here instead.

Asmussen shows up with a pair and there are pro's and con's on each and tough to split with the same morning line where the board should be the guide. #9 AIR COMBAT has run some of the "faster" races and returns for the $30k tag they were claimed at back in January, however at a condition claiming event and steps up for this open condition. #8 SOARING BIRD is a seasoned race horse with form over this course from last season that fits with a top effort and trip - trip that is noted with the shorter 6f distance, requiring ideal handling.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 SASSY LASS has buried form and can often return with a top effort in the second start, every other pattern. Going back to the 12/16 return she broke SLOG and moved up along with the race flow on the inside and continued to GALLOP+ after the wire to suggest she has some fitness returning here and can show early speed if required as well. She appears to go off at longer odds than rival #5 LASSIE MY GIRL returning from the common race last month with the show finish. The connections will add the blinkers here and there appears to be some experimentation with that change and shorter number.

Given the 12/16 race flow, #8 ONE WAY OR ANOTHER can be upgrade tracking close to the early pace stalking in the pocket and finished together at the wire with Rivercrest Girl, a well intended runner on the day and sat off the pace.

Taking a different path into this race, #11 SHE'S STORMING wheels right back from the Poinsettia Stakes last week, a race that she was overmatched in and in hand all signs pointed to a "prep" on the day. She holds form, form that could be buried over this course and a "winning" effort with the show finish under similar conditions last April.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#11 HIGHLAND FALLS is less exiting at the shorter number in this full field from the outside post though tough to deny that he is logical as he fits on class and speed figures.

The ML number is also less appealing on #10 ESCAPOLOGIST as one that will likely have to take back to make a run though capable. #9 MONEY SUPPLY might go off shorter of the two coming off the recent win streak (similar for #4 BEAR OAK) and looking to hold his form here and up in class slightly where they were pointed and peaked in the claiming crown last month. #3 ROMAN CENTURIAN does not have as strong of current form coming into this race though shares a similar running style to those runners and also has buried form over this course and condition.

#2 CAMP DAVID lands in this spot after scratching from a higher N3X allowance on 12/29 and in for a claiming tag price he has raced for in the past. Part of the decision to scratch could have been due to the rail draw, a post that has caused issues for him in the past. He is better when sitting outside horses and does draw outside the speed of #1 PAT'S PROPERTY here.

#6 ARDENWOOD also has early speed and found his top form over the summer at Delaware Park. He was dominant in his allowance win prior to the break though was all out and projected to need time off after. The connections had considered running in the Tinsel Stakes and a trainer scratch from that 9f off-track race decided to wait for another day.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The bulk of the field returns from the Mistletoe Stakes last month, a race won by #3 BUTTERBEAN from off the pace. The complexion of this field should present a different scenario and tougher for her to work that same trip. #1 LOVELY RIDE was downgraded due to the projected pace scenario and could find a different dynamic for her runstyle in this compact field and rail draw. She could inherit the lead with #5 ICE ORCHID sitting right off of her and a scenario where those two run 1-2. The WIDE MOVE effort from ICE ORCHID could be upgraded over #2 MISTY VEIL one that save ground throughout. Class is the big test for #4 TIZ A MACHO GIRL and will also give up some recency off the 43-day break though is an honest race mare.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SUN THUNDER could easily get back on track in this spot and returning to Oaklawn over a course and distance where he has had success. Looking at the 5-2 morning line, the number could be short despite being that horse just as he comes off the layoff and comes from off the pace.

On speed, class and pace #2 RIVALRY fits, though assessing current form he comes in at a short price as he gives up recency, local experience and holds just two published works since his most recent start back in early November and with the barn change.

#4 BEN DIESEL will make his return off the layoff and with the barn change for Willis Horton. As far as the layoff BEN DIESEL broke his maiden on debut and return off the layoff late in 2022 with a strong place finish pairing a top figures. He will also return to a flat mile and while the distance change might not look like a big deal it could be all the difference for this horse.

#3 BOLZY took a couple races to get going late season and could be concern coming back off the layoff. With that said, he showed up with a steady series of works, local form at the surface and distance and retains Eramia, a rider that only has one other mount on the card and longshot in R7.

Santa Anita Race 1

Post Time 2:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 IN HER PRYME is a bigger type and should appreciate the STRETCH out in distance for the second start. That should move her up and also present intent based on that physicality and distance change for the second start. #3 BLONDEZILLA also presented as a ROUTER when she made her debut last February and should be overlooked for these connections and less off her two starts.

Santa Anita Race 7

Post Time 5:07 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Trip is key for #9 REAL FIRE, though one that requires the added grounds returning form the 5f sprint last month. She also could require showing more tactical speed to get it the race and not leave herself too much to do late. Some intent could follow #6 ARINNITI into this race as she will make her very belated debut. She has been entered three times since 11/8, twice at this distance and N1X condition and all three with Berrios named.

Santa Anita Race 9

Post Time 6:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 HULA CANDY is just one of many contenders, and the scenario that makes it tough to take a shorter price. Going back to their debut last May he turned in a BTL effort and paired that up with a BTL in June with legit TROUBLE+...and followed by another two TROUBLE trips before breaking their maiden in October. True to form he turned in a BTL effort in the N1X event last month, a much more competitive race that the result and trip.

Turfway Park Race 1

Post Time 4:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 DIRBAS turned in a BTL effort in the show finish on 11/30 and earned a B OptixGRADE in the process. he will take on some "new faces" in this field with a slightly higher race par, though one that is tough to ignore at ML.

Turfway Park Race 4

Post Time 6:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 FAST N HAPPY moves up on the DROP once again and upgraded from the 12/22 event making a WIDE MOVE showing more run than it may appear. #6 LASERJET finds a more subtle drop coming back from a B- TRAFFIC trip two weeks ago. #9 GIRL GOODBYE also had a similar TRAFFIC trip and takes the drop though could be some concern with the class change after that 11/30 race and has not started in 37-days.

Turfway Park Race 9

Post Time 8:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 LOMACHENKO looked to require class relief off the debut visuals back in September. They planned for that change back in November at HS Indy remaining at the MSW, though the drop with the circuit switch. He has steady works coming into this race and could be the right time for this one to pop getting overlooked off the initial start.