Handicapping Analysis
Fri January 12th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 3

Post Time 1:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 BRIE'S MISSION was unable to establish position (TACTIC- WIDE) returning from the layoff last month. Despite the trip he was able to show some run in spots and past the wire GALLOP+ noting the top five finished together at the wire. While and IMPROVE is possible earning the C+ OptixGRADE the class drop also appears logical placing him where he can compete. #2 ENGLISH BOBBY comes back from the 12/22 common race a race where there was an extreme dynamic and most of the field either SLOG or TROUBLE_S and he made a RUSH into a Very Fast early pace before losing ground. #1 DROBNY returns to the turf where he recorded his higher figures, his races were not on the MSW level and required the DROP they find here.

Fair Grounds Race 8

Post Time 4:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 STORMY COUNTRY DAY returns with a massive rider upgrade and back from a poor ride (TACTIC-) that played a role with the race on the day. She can improve off that race and improve off the debut figure, a number that stacks up with the others in this field.

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 ALMOND FUDGE holds legit early speed and early speed compared to others in this group. She has lacked some finish in her two most recent starts; however she was setting Fast/Very Fast early pace in those events at a higher OFR/Par. The change in class returns to a par similar of that when breaking her maiden, putting forth a top front running effort back in September at CD. #1 ADIOS MUCHACHAS will make her first start off the claim for Mason and while it is a bit concerning with the three month break some of that is moderated by returning to the same level of the claim back in October at KEE – a productive event with four of the five to run back next out winners. I went back and forth with her as a top pick; while the rail is not a knock overall this filly has shown the tendency to break slow and took kickback playing a role in the outcome on the day. #2 JANUARY JUBILEE broke her made on debut back in November at CD though had to work had to do so overcoming a poor start and projected to regress off the debut effort. Some of that came into play on 12/31, though also did not appear much intent for this filly with her stablemate Ready For Trouble favored in the event and finishing third. The class drop and returning to the claiming tag (while also picking up Lasix and a significant weight break) suggests intent here.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 DARIO should benefit from the local experience and added ground as they wheel right back for this race. The outside post played a role in the WIDE trip, though visually the 6f distance also did them no favors based on the physicality. He also showed up in front wraps that day and might see that change here along with the others in play. #4 DOC HIGGINS also suggested they would require more ground off the debut visuals and their physicality. The added ground today coming back for a second start and with the class drop, one that is not much of a change in terms of par and circuit should have them competitive with today's group. #7 MR. WORKS is tough to project much improvement off of last year especially off the layoff when they took a couple of races to find their top form last season. With that said, there could be intent returning in this spot as a statebred runner with a bonus and with a live rider in Vasquez. #10 LUCKY SUPER NOVA also a statebred and one that comes into this event with recency, third start in a month. He will return to the route distance where he debuted, a tough spot for a FTS though with the foundation if there was improvement available this time should be it.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 SAMMIES SAMURAI returns with local form and should be in the right level to compete this season. Last meet she was in a much higher N2 condition and played a role on the win end, though had some trips and was still competitive. She is giving up recency, though has shown she can run her race fresh. Her tactical speed as well as GHOST BAYOU should given #8 OH MY GAWD pace pressure early and further vulnerabilities with the timing wheeling back off a HARD effort to break her maiden last month for a HOT barn. #1 GHOST BAYOU moves up in this second start of the cycle and subtle class drop today. The rider change could apso suggest further intent and the shift from the outside to the inside a further benefit for this mare and to show her early speed. #5 BYZANTINE looked well intended on 12/17, following a similar pattern from prior season. While she could have been well intended on the day she might have lost her race before it started as she wasted a lot of energy prerace and tactically was out of position and given an excuse with the race dynamic. Upside is present and looks to be some intent with the rider change, though trip is key shortening back up to the one turn distance.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 LIFE ON THE NILE has shown since the beginning of his career as a "second off" improving type and returns with that pattern today. Going back to 12/15 he was entered as one of two for Ward and after taking contact at the start, chased WIDE in a passive ride before being taken in hand the rest of the race. He wheels back for this spot with a work since, a rider change and the class, the right move for this one as he has shown who he is and needs to be placed for his abilities. Trainer G. Garcia has had some success with the Turfway Park shippers and shows up with #8 JEWELSTOWN. He has numbers on par to compete, more tactical speed than shown in the two recent starts as well as local form over this course and distance going back to last season. #5 ASSET BASIS is worth a mention and one to keep in the mix at longer odds. He is wheeling right back and with a softer race par from the event 11-days ago and with the very positive distance change getting the added ground/STRETCH for this ROUTER. Overall he requires a big effort, a new top to win though does appear intent for this meet and distance. #2 AIN'T THAT A KICK is upgraded from the BTL effort under similar conditions here last month. While there was an honest pace to move into, he was the only runner to make up ground. He will need to engage earlier to compete and does have the tendency to SLOG, though last month was also restless in the gate and played a role at the break. #6 STAR NATION returns from that common race and one that also chased from off the pace could be upgraded as well and does appear intent for this meet and since the claim by Hartlage.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Throughout this meet there has been many live runners stuck on the AE and found their way into the race on race day and mentioned with both #13 HAULIN ICE and #14 RYNO WRECKER. #2 YAQUI VALLEY has been waiting and waiting in the wings likely for this meet to run against AR-Bred runners, but also for a three-year-old season to race on Lasix, both come into play here. Similar intent could be in play for #8 PALMETTO DEVIL returning for a second start and from productive debut race. He does show some local works though a gap in those published moves throughout December. Some intent could follow #10 BERABERABERA off the Hawthorne debut, a race that has held form and at the time Robertson cold with these type of debuting juveniles. The barn has been a little cold to start the meet though always dangerous when they can turn it around at any time and has steady work with main rider Gallardo.

Trainer M. Shirer has a lot of “1’s” attached to his career though less in the first time starter category. There is a small sample since 2015 with many finishing in the money, though just one win back in 2019 at HS Indy. Trainer Kevin Martin sends out #3 GET AWAY WITH IT one that has been pointed to this meet and was unable to draw into a MSW event back on 12/9, opening week. The trainer stats might not show recent strong numbers with first time starters though going back to the start of his career he had success with debut runners and those horses showing speed and going off at longer odds. Brad Cox clearly can get a first time starter ready on debut, however here at Oaklawn went 2/18 in 2023, 2/10 in 2022, 3/17 2021… and many at shorter odds. #11 GENTLE BEN will debut for Al Cates, a barn that can send out a first time starter with stats similar to Cox on this circuit. Their works back in November suggest some sun and similar to the half mile move on 12/10. Morse also has strong local debut numbers and a win on the year with a first time starter called Hess and will look for similar success with #12 JIMMY, one that must come running with the outside post.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

On December 15th, #1 DIVA TREVA had a long shot look with prior form, figures, and early speed. She showed that natural early speed though poor tactics (positive rider change today) rating the speed into a duel and lost her line and ground off the turn on a day that appeared favorable to inside runners - #2 AMERICAN BAND along the inside in that common race. #12 PRINCESSDREAMCESS fits at this level and won under similar claiming conditions last meet. She was effective on the lead though just might have been due to her ability compared to others in those event as she showed she has some versatility making a move from mid pack to finish second in higher level OC company in April. #5 HALAGA also has tactical speed though has shown she can pass horses. She will return to the main track and while she is 0/2 on the dirt, both starts at HS Indy had some adversity in trip that played a bigger role than the surface itself. #7 PATTERN BET could be a race out though has a similar RunStyle and form as #6 SHE’S BULLETPROOF where the two could find a “trip” though lack any strong edge at shorter numbers.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 RIBBONSINHERHAIR could present upside with the return to Oaklawn. Last season she was overmatched at the higher N1 allowance conditions, though turned in honest efforts for her abilities and now can race eligible for this condition with the $40k race last out at LRL; something that could have been the plan all along. #2 ST. BENEDICTS PREP turned in a “winning” race under similar starter allowance conditions back in November at CD. The SLOG that day at her further off the pace than prior starts and her maiden win in October allowing her to find tactical speed and figures in the allowance last month at Turfway. #9 PILLBOX was kept protected first off the claim on 11/23 and could be some intent as they race protected here once again. On her best day she is a major contender though is not always as consistent with that top effort though should be live here for the connections and with this meet in mind given the timing of the claim.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 HEYWOODS BEACH fits as an individual and looking to get on track as he starts his 7yo season. The return off the layoff at DMR looked by all account a prep on the day and could suggest they return on this circuit. Sadler did not send anything to Oaklawn the last couple of seasons, though going back to 2020-21 he was on fire here – the upper 20% winners and average 50% ITM. though brough a string in 2020 winning around 23% 36% ITM finishing with a check in 54% of the starters in 2020 and in 2021 with 50 starters and picking up 11 wins with another 12 to finish in the money. #3 TIME FOR TROUBLE is also proven at longer distances, though has shown regression second off and noted returning from the win last month. On the contrast, #6 DASH ATTACK could project improvement second off as he exiting the Tenacious Stakes, a higher race par last month. He has back class and form at Oaklawn Park where he started his racing career back in 2021.

Arrieta sticks with #2 COMMANDPERFORMANCE, one that has at least shown intent for the longer distance races. He did not have an ideal journey with an incident in running on 12/15, one avoided by #7 FROSTED DEPARTURE with the lone trip. Also returning from that common race, #1 BUCK MOON is a game racehorse and has level connections with Contreras in this second start of the meet, though also unproven at this longer distance.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SCENIC BEAUTY is tough to endorse off her first two starts and requires a big move up projection to get there. If there is one to improve with Lasix she has that right and also would be the time as she comes back with experience over this course and distance and out of a productive debut back at KEE. A similar projection would have been required for #4 HONOR CAT back on 12/8 to run the race she did that day and one that will be a much, much shorter price today – a likely shorter of the “established” group that all have left something to be desired on the win end.

McPeek returns with a pair: #1 MY FAVORITE GIRL being the more established though has not shown much progression and visually appears to have some class concerns and the connections might feel similar as she was entered and scratched from a higher $100k claiming even on 11/22 at CD. #8 PACE’S TWO SENSE returns for a belated second start and can project improvement. She was training well leading up to the debut on the CD main track and debuted on the turf perhaps for the two turn experience. As far as that first start she had a subtle trip bottled up along the inside. She did not start training after that race since December though has some steady local works to build off the prior foundation with improvement not out of the question.

#6 WHAT’S HER NUMBER turned in a BTL effort on debut keeping in mind the track profile on 12/9 and she made up ground on the top two that set pace and finished together at the wire. Similar consideration could upgrade #5 PEPPERS GIRLFRIEND returning from that same common race and had intent to stretch out in distance entered and unable to draw in off the AE on 12/31.