Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 13th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 SPEED BIAS has the benefit of local experience and conditioning as he wheels back for this race. His early speed should be on display right from the jump with the rail draw and the complexion of this field. That includes rival #7 MAGIC TAP drawn outside with tactical speed in his own right should be tracking right off SPEED BIAS and those two could establish separation from the others. MAGIC TAP will give up a little recency though has been training forwardly and in company on 12/16 with stakes winning stablemate Gigante the recent Woodchipper stakes winner. #4 CREATIVE MINISTER broke SLOG in his return three weeks ago and while he does not project to show speed as the other two he should establish position today and with the added ground looking to stalk-and-pounce. His class and speed is more established and stronger than #2 ETHEREAL ROAD, also for Moquett, with a similar off-the-pace runstyle. ETHEREAL ROAD raced himself into condition, improving with racing and has shown some progression coming back off the layoff in the summer though still need a massive step forward off those efforts compared to others in this field on the win end.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 SINGING GROOM is one of the older horses in this field. He holds a competitive effort under similar conditions from last season, a place finish with returning rider De La Cruz. He brings in fitness for this third start of the cycle and a change in class is a softer race par today exiting the open MCL events. His figure from 12/8 stands up strongly in this group. #11 BRAHMS IMAGE will give up recency off the 153-day layoff though appears some intent as they race for the MCL tag today and not a concerning drop for the $35k tag. He has shown legit early speed and with a top effort coming back he could hold the controlling speed and a flow upgrade as the BOS coming back from the 8/13 PRM event. His early speed and projected value is more appealing than #5 BRADFORD one that has gate issues, the tendency to break SLOG, and must find the trip from off the pace remaining at the 6f distance and recency edge over long time maiden #9 KISSOFTHENILE.

With many sophomores in the field, the age change might not be so dramatic though still should be considered: #6 CHEZ WHIZ turned in a BTL effort on debut with a less than ideal ride and returns off the two month break last month with another less than ideal ride. Physically he made a positive PRERACE appearance though was on hold early racing between horses showing interest late. It should also be noted that he was dismissed off the 7-2 ML. #3 BLOWOUT MOUNTAIN comes back for a second start and class relief as one of many changes for this second start. The blinkers will be added today and looking for them to show more early speed something that was lacking with the SLOG first out and taking KICKBACK behind horses they are looking to get out in front or to the clear early today.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 BOURBON AFICIONADO returns first time for the claiming tag and given the layoffs in just the first two starts likely placed where he can compete and must come out race ready. The form has held from the allowance back in October at LRL with two next out winners, others that have won since and/or shown improving figures. #5 HEY JOE JOE could present some value in this race as one of the more “seasoned” runners in this field. That could be to his advantage with that experience and the connections returning today without a class drop first off the claim and two month break. The DROP for #6 BYE BYE LIAM Is a little questionable and while he does hold the highest figure in the field earned over an off-track, something he could find here and public support to follow. Similar could follow #3 PLAY THE TRUMPET where regression must be considered coming off a new top and effort with the maiden win less than 30-days ago. Dream Walkin/Rufino keep their runners separate in this race and #8 POWER SLAM is the more forward off the two (#4 BELL DOZER) right now though returning from the November 8th race where he was wanting to get out and the rider had to drop the right the outside rein to keep him from bolting.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 COLT FICTION looks well-intended as he returns off the layoff and on this circuit racing protected. Up until last summer, the connections has kept him protected and often overmatched in order to do so. He has held his form and claimed for $20k back in September is eligible for this condition. This will be the third start since that claim for Miller where COLT has held his form against statebred allowance types closing out 2023. His ability to show tactical speed also figures to be an asset in this race; both #3 JACKMAN and #4 UPSTRIKER project to contest the early lead and both capable in their own right though giving the edge to UPSTRIKER coming in fresh whereas JACKMAN Is tough to knock off the two recency wins, though will return on shorter rest after pairing tops picking up checks and kept protected again.

#1 SOLIDIFY is a game racehorse and forces himself to be to compensate for the tendency to break slow. That should be expected here and trip key from the rail with that pattern and off-the-pace runstyle. #5 LYKAN can also make his run from off the pace not always due to gate issues but often a lack of early speed or urgency of handling and for the connections making a return to Oaklawn where he has run well in the past appears well intended overall.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 PENROD should be sitting on a peak effort returning in this spot for Moquett. Going back to his debut, his physicality suggested he would move up with added ground and did just that stepping forward in his second start in October though might require the two turns for his best. He returns from opening week, and from a WIDE trip tracking a Very Fast early pace before losing ground at a time when the barn was cold and has started to find their stride into the new year. #12 JUSTIFIABLY SO moves from one extreme to another as he makes his second start of the season. Going back to the debut and watching him train he suggested there was more available and a horse that will appreciate a route of ground. He set the pace and tired on his own before taking contact. The trouble was less significant overall and in comparison to the fast pace set where like PENROD is a flow upgrade. #2 COMMON DEFENSE also returns from that 12/17 common race and place finish to his stablemate winner, Lat Long. He could present upside in this second start and even present more upside than #10 EL MAGNIFICO one that has shown who he is. He did not show much progression in California and paired that number coming up short with a PERFECT trip last month at the FG.

McPeek also has FTS, #13 ELKO COUNTY on the AE, one that has been training locally and have not seen his development, going back to the summer at SAR he was still an “awkward teenager” growing into his body, a body that definitely needs ground. #1 SITKA also with local form and one that might have been waiting for a 3yo debut and similar for #4 NATIVE LAND, two runners I have not seen train.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 PERFECT FLIGHT returns to Oaklawn and making his first start at the claiming level appears intent with the risk they could lose the horse on the day. Santana will also be aboard and while they did not have success paired back in May at CD, and excuse given on the day, the two did team up for a stakes win at Zia in 2022. #5 SHOOTERS SHOOT ideally prefers a one turn distance though capable of longer at the right distance. It should be noted he did win an allowance over this course and distance back in 2020 and keying off that race could have been reason for the claim and placement here by Schultz first off the claim. That day he won on the lead and a similar tactic could see him mixing it up with others today, tactical will be key from Leparoux. #6 ETHICAL JUDGEMENT does not hold any strong edge in this race though fits on his best day and a case could be made for this day here first off the claim and two month break. He also has shown form and some of his stronger figures over an odd-track, should that come into play.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morse/Patterson look to hold a strong hand with the pair in this race. #2 CONNIE K looked to need the race coming off the layoff and connections giving her that start last month against open company. She should be plenty fit over that drying out race track and pushing the pace as she finds the shift back to statebred company and lower par. #11 KANTEX will give up recency in a first start back off the layoff though ran a big race last year off a similar layoff and the summer season held her own in open company.

#10 SUMMER SHOES also returns from the 12/16 common race with CONNIE K and can improve with that race under her belt and a better trip. The outside post is no bargain here though can project her to show more interest early on in running today.

Lack of recency is noted for #8 KABOOM BABY one that is a major player on her best day though has not often shown that day to be first off the layoff. #11 RUNFEARLESS is lighter overall though at a big number could come running late to get into the deeper minors. The most upside could be projected for #7 BENNYKAYANDSUZYTOO as she makes her second start off the layoff and from the sophomore season, though comes into this race still lighter than her others rivals and similar to #3 MOZINGO coming back from the sophomore season first off the layoff.

#5 SHE’S STORMING also appeared to be given the race off the layoff in the Poinsettias stakes and wheeling back in shorter rest for allowance company, the two week turnaround is still short though not as quick as the OC N1X she was entered and scratched from last week – they will race for the tag today for the first time. #6 GRAMERCY PARK one that showed improvement late in the 2023 season though would need a step up off that today with some of the others in this field.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 STELLAR LILY sneaks back into the N1 allowance condition off the win back in November at RP based on earnings. She has improved in the fall cycle and going back to last season she improved with racing and handled the route of ground she returns to here. On class, STELLAR LILY could present the class edge, though on figures, there is a blanket over the group. #10 LONGLEGGEDLAVERNE should be sitting on a peak effort as she returns off the layoff in this spot. She is softer on class for this N1 level; however she has run competitive races under similar par with today’s coming up lighter than others can for this level. #2 MALIBU SMART should benefit from the added ground and the barn returning under N1x conditions rather than return to the claiming level where she was picked up. The winner of the 11/26 event Dear Lady came back to win and N2 allowance here though the rest of the field that showed up on this circuit struggled in allowance company, something that must be considered and carried to #12 UNSTABLE PRINCESS.

#3 DELPHIA also takes a big step up in class from the recent events at WO but going back to her debut, that type of effort stacks up with this race and race shape. A bit of a gamble that she will run back to that race, so make sure there is the price compensation.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Miller wheeling right back in two weeks and under similar N1 conditions with #2 BIG HAT WILLIE seems a confident move. It is reasonable to assume they were expecting more on 12/29 and compromised with SLOG from the outside post and forced to make a premature WIDE MOVE before losing ground – the winner Lucky Boss was able to sit a pocket stalking trip saving ground. Class wise this spot is more of a lateral move for #7 KING'S OVATION returning here second off the claim for Diodoro. The first start off the claim might have been less than ideal on timing and the poor track conditions that day. As this is the second start of the cycle, a top effort can be projected. #9 KING RUSSELL is the only N2 conditioned runner in this field. While he holds just the maiden win from last season, he showed class in the AR Derby (G1) and over this course in each race last year. He could present further upside returning here as a four-year-old and also as a gelding, a sign that the connections could be keeping him as an older race horse in the handicap division.

#5 MEGAN'S HONOR has come up short on the win end under similar conditions though has a move forward from the 12/9 effort and one that can stick around in the mix and might offer a little more value than #6 CAN'T HUSH THIS coming back from the place finish aided by a perfect trip.