Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 20th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 1

Post Time 12:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A competitive statebred allowance to kick off the card with many individual contenders. The race shape could make the difference here, for example, #2 GEORGE ALLEN has a "winning" race at the level, is in the right timing of his form cycle though his preferred trip (E/EP) is part of what appears a contentious early pace. The type of scenario that could allow #9 TAMBOURINE STAR the pace he requires - STAR should hold a value edge over #1 MYGLORYBEE with a similar runstyle as they step up in class off a peak effort three weeks ago.

The timing and form cycle should have #5 STAR REDEMPTION sitting on a peak effort in this race. He picked up the allowance win on 11/18 well-intended second off the layoff returning to stakes company. The 12/7 race that followed had a subtle trip, one that projected to IMPROVE off on and that is the race to key off of as they return under similar conditions to that race here. As far as the 12/29 route, a pass can be given with the trip - lunged awkward break (TROUBLE_S, RUSH) into TRAFFIC, shifting outside to make a WIDE MOVE impacting the finish.

Fair Grounds Race 2

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 WISH CAREFULLY is logical in the role of the ML favorite as he improved this season and switch to statebred company. #12 SON OF A SHIP also showed improved and a solid figure setting the pace on 11/25, the lone race in statebred MSW company sprinting on the dirt.

Of the FTS, #13 CAUSEWAY BENNY had the edge off work visuals. He requires some racing luck not only to draw in but from the outside.

Fair Grounds Race 3

Post Time 1:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 TARIFA is going to be a very shorter price in this race and might just be the better horse. She will need to be as there are some distance concerns with her overall and likely part of the reason they are taking this allowance spot once again and not going into stakes company. The most recent drill was heads up with West Omaha, running in the Silverbulletday later on the card.

#4 BA DEE YAH has the route/two-turn foundation, though has not shown much progression and to compete here for the top spot she must run faster than what she has run so far.

Atras has been sending out live in a limited sample at the FG. They showed up with a different type of runner with #5 PLAY GOOD PAY GOOD first off the claim where the others had been racing for Atras in their prior starts, this will be the first off the claim this meet.

Fair Grounds Race 4

Post Time 1:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The connections (and public) expected a better result from #4 EVAN SING last month and will look to improve off the outcome and against many of today's rivals. That could be part of the reason for the blinker addition and while they are not expected to be on or near the lead (especially in this race shape) they will try to not get distanced early and for a better break. The SLOG impacted last month as well as the October allowance at KEE, a BTL effort (and BTL in the G2 Turf Sprint at CD) all things considered earning a B OptixGRADE as one of six together at the wire.

Fair Grounds Race 5

Post Time 2:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 HALL OF FAME was working strongly leading up to the debut and played a role was the wagering favorite. He had to settle for place due to a SLOG and TRAFFIC trip with the winner taking first run. The was another factor in play on 11/26 as that spot was the second choice as they were entered in a 8.5f MSW on 11/25 at CD with Rosario named, however they were unable to draw in. That is noted as HALL has trained forwardly since, will have the added ground and Rosario in this spot as initially planned.

Fair Grounds Race 6

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 MOTOWN DYNAMIC has some zip. She projects to be on the lead, though has shown a tendency to break a step slow in practice and a head strong type. #4 NEW WOMAN broke SLOG on debut and a slight hesitancy from the gate working here on 1/13 though otherwise showed run and there is more than what she showed first out.

#7 PLUM LUCKY was bet down from the 8-1 ML on debut. A day where she caught poor track conditions/visibility and racing in the rain. She appears to have come out of the race well working three times since and picking up Saez

B. Hernandez shifts to #8 YES INDEED making her belated debut. She worked 10 flat at the sale and looked fine in the move back in April. I have seen must limited works from her none of the moves at FG and what I have seen is fine there are no knocks. Similar in terms of visuals for #3 GHALIA PRINCESS nothing overly stands out or negative.

Fair Grounds Race 7

Post Time 3:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As the favorite, #1 CHASING THE CROWN fits on class, speed and favorable runstyle for today's race. In terms of form, he will give up local FG experience and recency off the layoff, though has had that pattern throughout his career. He has come up short as the favorite; however close, and that could be too close for comfort as another shorter number is projected to look for alternatives/backups.

#4 FREEDOM'S WAY checks the same boxes with the addition of local FG form. Going back to his maiden days and improved off those races as a youngster into his current self. His form has been consistent at the N2 level with intent to return to this turf course (2023 was not a good year for turf horses at FG with limited opportunities) keying off the placement. Saez taking over today furthers intent with these two having success together going back to that maiden win and sophomore season.

The race shape is less than ideal for #8 TEMPER TANTRUM though he should be sitting on a top effort here, run his race and one that might come up shorter on the win end though to keep in the mix. #11 KENTUCKY GHOST has come up shorter on the win end this season under similar conditions, though has held his form and should continue to do so for the new connections.

#14 NATIVE THUNDER (AE) has upside from the 11/22 event given the TROUBLE_S and should be dismissed off the recent running lines. Going back to his 11/2 race, a competitive effort under similar N2 conditions. That extends even further going back to the first part of 2023 including a dominant win over this FG turf/N2X in March.

Fair Grounds Race 8

Post Time 3:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 PARTYVICIOUS has been pointed to this meet and training locally (and strongly) for the debut. He has progressed with each drill and given a test in company and even overcoming adversity at times and showing gate speed, factors noted with the rail draw. The connections debuting on the first big card of the year could further suggest confidence.

#6 BEE DANCER has an air of class about him and another that looks pointed to debut on the big stage. This guy does not have the "flashy" works on paper though has been in hand and dominant over his company. He has been a little green at times and with the late lead change and step slow from the gate, though there is run there.

Those two have been much more impressive to my eye than morning line favorite #7 EXPLORATION, one that has been working heads up in company with #10 CORNISHMAN.

Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 20th, 2024

Stakes Spotlight

Fair Grounds Race 9

Post Time 4:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

KRANTZ MEMORIAL STAKES

There is no real knock on the morning line favorites in this race with #1 LOVELY PRINCESS and #5 CREATIVE CAIRO both turning in similar efforts overall in the Blushing Stakes exacta finish. Local stakes form carries to #9 TUFANI as she wheels right back with shorter rest for this race.

The value and upside sits with #8 JOIN THE DANCE with back class, figures, and fitness as she returns from the show result in the Blushing Stakes. This race could have been the target all along as was able to get the first start off the layoff and for Stewart as she should be sitting on a peak effort here.

Fair Grounds Race 10

Post Time 4:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

SILVERBULLETDAY STAKES

#1 PERFECT SHOT projected to improve off her debut with added (STRETCH) ground and has done just that with each start. She has plenty of foundation from the three races last year and local works coming into this race and stakes debut.

Rosario picks up the mount on PERFECT SHOT as Saez will be the fourth rider in as many starts aboard #6 WEST OMAHA. She has improved with each start and has the local foundation and experience with the place finish and TRAFFIC trip in the Untapable Stakes behind her stablemate pacesetting chalk winner, Alpine Princess. #8 SISTINA CHAPEL also had an inside SAVED TRAFFIC trip in the Untapable and to her credit has been consistent. She will be given another class test today and around two turns where she requires another move forward to compete for the top spot at this level and two-turn distance.

Fair Grounds Race 11

Post Time 5:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

C. BRADLEY STAKES

Tough to get a feel for this race as a few could be entered indirectly as MTO and scratches would impact the race shape. Many will return from the B. Diliberto Memorial Stakes, a race that messy for most and compromising completely for others. #8 RISING EMPIRE did not have one of the more obvious "trips" though ground loss/WIDE and overall timing in running and in form cycle was less than ideal. Looking at his other efforts over this turf course, his form figures and even class Muniz Memorial (G2) place finish fit in this event. In terms of a rider change, Saez was aboard for his debut way back in October 2020 at KEE, a legit TROUBLE+ trip and followed up by a layoff and stepped forward as an older horse.

Fair Grounds Race 12

Post Time 5:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

LOUISIANA (G3)

#2 SMILE HAPPY is the class of the field and class that can assist to work a trip. Rail runner #1 RED ROUTE ONE lacks early speed to allow SMILE HAPPY to establish position inside and stalking pacesetters #3 SAUDI CROWN. Further pace pressure could come from the outside depending on the rider tactics for #5 FIVE STAR GENERAL. SAUDI CROWN benefits most from #7 KAPUNA opting for the 5th Season at Oaklawn and as reported by DRF Hersh will wait for that race.

#6 CONFIDENCE GAME has yet to run a triple digit figure and failing to do so with others capable of running that faster race has him overmatched. That said, if he is going to run that number, this would be the time. Since returning from the layoff in the Perryville, a race that appeared a prep given the timing and sprint distance. He took a step forward wheeling back in two weeks for the 11/4 allowance, however, he was compromised by the handling sending into a fast pace from the rail. Not only was that not his trip but was also the only 3yo in the field against older horses. The pattern of age carried in the Tenacious as the lone sophomore and his 5th place run was BTL and had adversity throughout getting SHUFFLE out of position at a crucial point in running and following the TROUBLE made a sneaky CLOSE and continued to GALLOP+ after the wire. The TACTIC- were less than ideal and could be part of the rider change decision here.

Fair Grounds Race 13

Post Time 6:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

LECOMTE STAKES (G3)

The case for #4 CAN GROUP is not one that is the "most likely" winner, though likely to offer value and as an overlay in this race. He will get overlooked with the surface switch and dismissed as a "turf horse" based on the recent races. Granted he is proven on the turf, the place where he fits on class and speed, his dirt races did not appear to be a factor of dirt. His debut was sneaky good; the distance was much shorter than his ideal. CAN GROUP finished with a massive CLOSE behind Market Street, one that has not really trained on but did finish second in the Saratoga Special (G2) behind the Norm Casse runner, Rhyme Schemes. The pattern of closing behind stakes runners continued in July behind both Timberlake and West Saratoga both graded stakes winners since. His recent closing run behind stakes winners is documented in the recent turf stakes races including the BC Juv Turf (G1) with the three horses that have run back have finished no worse than second.

CAN GROUP has been training on the dirt and worked in company with stablemate Witwatersrand, the Mazarine (G3) winner on the dirt at Palm Meadows back on 12/3 before shipping in to the Fair Grounds where intent comes into play. J. Loveberry will take over and the type of smart, tactical rider that should fit this horse perfectly.

Santa Anita Race 8

Post Time 6:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

LA CANADA STAKES (G3):

#2 COFFEE IN BED showed class breaking her maiden on debut at long odds and showed that was no fluke as she improved her figures in the two following starts. As far as her two races in graded stakes company, those were the two races she finished off the board. While it will be a common talking point to point to racing off Lasix as the "reason" and a "concern" here. That reasoning ignores the trips and timing and arguably efforts that were more competitive than it appears on paper. That also ignores her race over today's course and distance and overall Santa Anita form. She will make her first start of the season and off the 76-day layoff and looks peaked for a top effort. She has been training very well coming into this race and off the recent works should give her best effort and that effort puts her right in the mix with #1 MUSICAL MISCHIEF, #4 DESERT DAWN and #6 MIDNIGHT MEMORIES and projects to go off at the higher odds of that group.