Handicapping Analysis
Fri January 26th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 MEMES was a vet scratch when entered under similar conditions back on 12/30 and from the rescheduled 1/19 event as the morning line favorite that day projects to take on a similar role here. They have been trying to get into a race this meet under similar conditions, find that here though will give up recency and some fitness given the weather adversity. #6 MY BROTHER MIKE one that shares common running lines finishing behind MEMES back in CA with the return to a sprint and while he is who he is, the shorter distance being a positive along with the longer odds being the most appealing thing about him.

#9 SHADY DAREDEVIL one that is probably at the right level for his abilities, though with a colder barn right now and lacking local experience while giving up recency returning from the 230-day layoff.

In terms of the group returning from races on 12/30: #8 LIGHT HORSE HARRY finds considerable class relief for this second start. The connections had intent to debut here last season and without luck getting prepared enough for a race. He has the benefit of a start, local experience and the timing and drop suggests intent for a move forward. That race a common race with longtime maiden #1 BOURBON ON FIRE one that should find the right group for his abilities exiting the higher race par events throughout his career.

AR-bred #10 DALTON'S RUTROW comes back from a BTL effort in his return last month and upgraded from the BTL races last year though one that must show a big move forward and new top something less further value consideration to #7 DANCING ROCKET less appealing of the pair overall and from the projected 4-1 ML. #12 MOTOWN COLLECTION should be a big number from that common race and a legit longshot to win, though on his best day and sneak in for a share.

The lone FTS #10 AMAZING SUCCESS is AR-bred runner and 3yo's against older.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 ANTIGRAVITY has been unlucky with the cancellations as the connections have pointed to this meet and should make this race. The placement today is the first time against straight claiming company and considerable class relief from the bulk of their races including many at Oaklawn. His form has been consistent on this course, a couple of near misses including landing on the wrong side of the photo with the prior placement against much tougher than he finds here playing a major role in the local record.

#9 BEAVER HAT has similar buried Oaklawn form noting his overall record against much tougher though recorded consistent figures that stack up for today's event. He has been freshened for this meet and reclaimed by S. Asmussen placing him back under similar claiming conditions from where he was lost and picked up last year.

The change in class also comes into play for #3 MOTOWN MUSIC in his second start of the meet. The change in class also comes with a rider change to Torres from a less than ideal traffic trip on 12/29. The drop could have some reservations, though they were claimed for $40k and already picked up a check in November making this type of drop not out of character for the connections.

Torres will often ride first call for Broberg sending out #7 HOME VISIT where F Arrieta lands today. The tactics should be straight forward here looking for the lead though could find more company than it appears on paper as #6 BIZZY LEGS and #8 GET BACK GOLDIE (even #1 MAKE NOISE and #4 COLOSI) hold legit early speed they have been unable to show this season with some poor starts and primarily overmatched in allowance company taking the logical drop today.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 HEIR TO GREATNESS shows up back around two turns where he has spent most of his career. The sprint distance was a knock along with the outside post sprinting as the favorite on 1/5. Going back to 1/5, the race was run in the rain, poor track conditions and visibility #4 COMMANDER REX finds a lateral change in class and similar distance intent and also projects to show his more tactical route speed.

#11 LEGENDARY LORE was not entered in a prior start and that could suggest intent and a sneaky new face where the others have been waiting through cancellations. His current dirt form does not appear too appealing though going back to his juvenile/sophomore seasons he was recording some of the higher figures and numbers that stack up strongly as a contender in this group. #8 LEVY as he returns to Oaklawn. He broke his maiden over this course and distance first off the layoff last March. He fill find class relief in terms of a softer par from the races against winners in KY.

Another group returns from a common race on 12/17: #6 RUNNINGFORCASH takes the aggressive drop first off the claim returning here for live connections. Going back to the 12/17 event, he had a look on the day and disappointed overall though the trip was slightly less than ideal and part of a Very Fast early pace where improvement could be projected. These connections have connected at shorter prices and could be the case here off the claim and while capable, price compensation is required. He was shorter on the day than returning rival #1 HUMOR ME NOW one that is capable though does not offer value in the projected in the morning line favorite role. There should be longer odds on #9 ASSUMPTION stands out over the other two on form from prior seasons, though has struggled to get back to those efforts since returning from the long layoff. The front wraps that were added last out could be a positive sign with removal.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 GENEROUS LOVER presents upside and intent for the connections making a belated return. She showed progression through the two starts last season and wound up in competitive company. She shows up first off the layoff, barn change and with a steady series of works to suggest she is race ready and given the prior history the type that is required to do so.

As far as #8 BLUE SQUALL and #9 LEMON MUFFIN both have been consistent and recording figures on par with this field, form they will look to carry here against older company – though have a class/recency edge over many of those rivals. The sophomore duo return from the 12/31 common race with the winner of that race, Tanya Showers (Hartman) making a big move from off the pace with pace to close into. LEMON MUFFIN made a late move as well though had some early ground loss where #8 BLUE SQUALL found herself WIDE throughout.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 MIA BABY has back numbers and form that fits at this restricted claiming condition. Going back to November she had an excuse with legit TROUBLES+ and made a premature MOVE into a fast middle portion of the running before being taken in hand late. She should be fit for this second start of the season and cycle with the local spin and coming back from a WIDE trip assisted by the outside post last month.

#6 AWESOME VIEW faltered at this level back on 12/8 and will look to rebound for the new connections first off the claim. As far as that day she was parked with the outside post in a field of 10, (the chalk winner, Royal Meghan saving ground) and forced out of her natural RunStyle sent into a duel and the combination could have played a role in the outcome and trip.

#1 LICHITA was able to pull off the upset first off the layoff last season almost a year to the date. In that event she was able to establish an EASY and LONE lead from the rail and benefit as her main rivals had trouble. The pace scenario is tricky here with her potential main pace pressure sitting outside or on the AE and for certain they will be on the lead right from the start looking for history to repeat.

#4 ESSENTIAL BUSINESS could keep the pace honest. She is another that has found some “SETUP” scenarios in her prior wins. The connections bring her back off the bench and out of races that appear to hold “class relief” however is taking more of a lateral move based on race par from the 2023 events.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#12 MACHO STRIKER debuted late last season and the lack of options likely played a role in placement against open company noted as he lands in statebred company here. He earned a follow off the visuals; a GREEN effort breaking SLOG, taking KICKBACK, and making a middle MOVE and projected to IMPROVE off that race.

#1 HIT SCENE will step up to MSW from the debut against MCL last season, though as one of the older horses in this field, he will find a more lateral (if not drop) change given the complexion of the field. While improvement might not be expected, running back to his debut will have the others forced to improve here.

Sophomore #2 ALL GREEN LIGHTS ended up at odds at 10-1 noting he opened up with early money as the favorite (and support in the multis) on debut and despite the outside post. The draw and lack of experience seemed to play against him in running and did show some interest, not asked for his best late with the pacesetters running one-two, including today's rival #10 RYNO WRECKER.

There are two FTS in this field, though perhaps #8 HAULIN ICE will scratch and find another spot as this could be tough for a 3yo filly to debut; #3 BURLSWORTH could be live on debut and with the timing as Moquett runners are finding their stride in 2024. This one will give up experience though the half mile move on 12/17 could tip the hand as they have some run.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 INVARIABLY had a subtle trip under similar conditions on 12/29 still earning a B- GRADE and returns with a rider shift to Vazquez to suggest further intent here. Trip will be key from the inside and with his runstyle though has been competitive under similar conditions and some of his higher career figures recorded over this main track.

The pace scenario is tricky in this race as some have shown early speed at times and will be up to rider tactics today. #3 MUST BE LOVE is one that consistently tends to race forward and with the two runners on his inside lacking the same early foot, they will likely try to take advantage of the inside speed role here. #7 RACKATAPTAP is one that has shown tactical and early speed at times in his career. That was not the case last out with the outside post though did try to make a WIDE RUSH and from there a BTL effort moving gamely through traffic.

#8 STELLAR TAP has run some of the higher figures in the field and did so while under the care of Asmussen starting off his career. He failed to improve and that came with the eventual class drop. He was reclaimed over the summer has been off 150-days since and remains at the bottom level of claimers here. While he has the races that might have the others running for the minors, the lack of recency, off the current form and shift to the sprint distance creates some overall reservations.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The conditions of this MSW should be noted as there are restrictions in the sales price from auction to compete here. The change in class is still a step up for #1 WHEN I LOOK AT YOU listed as the ML favorite. In addition, she has benefit favorable race shapes especially the debut at a time the McPeek barn was hot at CD. #6 SPIRITUAL LADY has respect coming off a BTL effort with TROUBLE in the place finish on 12/31 though also could have been flattered by the race FLOW. While neither would be any surprise, prefer to get creative for the top spot.

It is tough to ignore that Esquivel aboard SPIRITUAL LADY last out shifts to #3 THE BIG CALHOUNA. The class noted earlier comes into play for THE BIG CALHOUNA finding class relief from the 12/16 open MSW event. She had a subtle EX - EXCUSE with the SLOG and WIDE run X_BIAS. It is encouraging she came out of that debut to work from the gate on 12/31 with a swift 48.1 In addition, she had some public support and flattered with Midshipman's Dance to pair wins with Mockingbird Stakes here earlier this month.

The Hewitt pair of #10 SAFECRACKER SUE and #8 CATHOLIC SUE also returning from that event with the latter finding further changes in addition to class for this second start including a rider change as K. Jordan reunites with #9 SHE'S NOT A JOKE. The two were paired when she made her debut last June at PRM and a BTL effort given a ton of adversity to come up just short as the favorite. The change in class back on 12/9 was a bit of a concern against MSW on this circuit though comes back today in restricted MSW company and class relief as a result.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 HAPPY IS A CHOICE had a longshot look when giving up recency returning from the long layoff earlier this month. His juvenile form showed progress and ability with the maiden win earning a strong figure at KEE, a number that fits on par here. While he did come up short as the live longshot, his effort was encouraging with some TROUBLE_S, making a WIDE MOVE and continued to GALLOP+ after the wire.

HAPPY IS A CHOICE could present a move forward in this second start off the layoff and look to hold his own against the more established and seasoned, and logical #7 BOURBON BASH as expected to hold the favorite role as projected on the ML.

#12 HALMSTAD returns with the blinkers and looking to rebound after a complete EX – EXCUSE on 12/9 with the poor start and excessive ground loss. Even though they can be given a pass on the day, the role as the favorite seemed a mistake given the pressure against older, first local start and coming off a taxing run in the Steel Valley Stakes just 19-days earlier and comes in fresh here.

#3 B MINOR was schedule run under similar N1X allowance conditions on 1/14 and had a big look that day coming back from an EX – EXCUSE to close out his 2023 season. That race earlier this month was scheduled for 8.5f and shortens up for this race. There could be some concerns there as they did appear to want to run the route distance and take this spot after the cancellation.

#1 PLAUSIBLE DENILE and #4 DISTORTED PRO have some class concerns though not out of it to get a minors share.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Potentially fireworks in the finale with three double digit runners on the morning line looking to play spoiler. #9 ALEJANDRO I know that he hasn’t won but still has a solid record here finishing in the money some BTL efforts at a higher race par earning figures that fit with today’s group. #8 ARMAGNAC has been a pretty common type overall though has numbers that make him competitive and if he is to return to those efforts this would be the time. The change in barn is notable as well as the distance is key getting the start under his belt noting he was washed out (WARM) chased WIDE while in HAND and was not in a positive to show his best sprinting that day. #7 TRIDENT HIT holds his most recent wins in claiming company, though has competitive races under similar conditions going back in his form. He will five up some recency though has been able to run off a layoff in the past and should present plenty of price compensation.

In terms of the shorter prices runners, #5 U. S. ARMY recorded a big figure with the stakes win last month, though had the race flow in his favor. He should find early condition with #12 ARDENWOOD, one worth upgrading of the two pacesetters, looking to get himself into the race from the outside; and #8 ARMAGNAC likely to show early speed today as well as positional speed from #2 FULL SCREEN along the inside. #3 ESCAPOLOGIST is unlikely to, though has shown early speed in the past and must step up along with #1 NOTARY after faltering with a perfect trip earlier this month under similar conditions. #6 WINNEMAC AVENUE in top form though taking a step up in class here.

Santa Anita Race 3

Post Time 3:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 BUCK OWENS turned in a BTL effort under similar N3L claiming conditions back on 11/26 at DMR. He has been protected since and paired up WIDE trips in both. His off the pace runstyle requires price compensation requiring pace to close into and should have pace here.

Santa Anita Race 4

Post Time 4:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 BERT'S PROSPECT finished behind some of today's rivals on 12/30 though his BTL effort (WIDE, MOVE, X_FLOW) was right in line (B- OptixGRADE) and puts him right back in the mix here. On debut, he showed more early speed against open company and could take that tactic here with the inside post. #6 BE PUNCTUAL has back figures from early last year to support him coming back today with an improved effort. His 7th place can be upgraded chasing WIDE/X_BIAS against the inside favoring track profile.

Santa Anita Race 5

Post Time 4:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 TRUSTY RUSTY recorded one of the higher figures in this field when he broke his maiden last April over this course and 6f distance. He has not run back to that number for these current connections though has held his form and has sneaky form coming into this event. The race par back on 12/9 was higher than today's making a MOVE, GALLOP+ in the place finish and should be fit with the WIDE trip over the turf 11-days ago and appreciate the added ground here.

Santa Anita Race 6

Post Time 5:08 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 GREGORIAN CHANT could present value today in a different race shape/post after coming up short as the favorite earlier this month. He should save ground with "speed" on his outside and saving ground for position should allow for first run on the outside drawn closers.

Turfway Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Longshot #1 AUNT RUTH comes into this race with form in the third start of the cycle and showing more than perhaps the running lines and finishing positions suggest. She will find some changes with the class drop and race shape as the pace here projects to be honest and suits her runstyle.

Turfway Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 TELESCOPIC catches a more "established" group as they present upside in this second start. Going back to the 12/22 debut, he raced as a colt that needed experience/GREEN showing run after the SLOG with a MOVE and continued to GALLOP+ after the wire. He will return today with that first start to build off of, a rider change, the added ground and has come out of the race well recording two solid works at Keeneland since.