Handicapping Analysis
Sat February 24th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Post Time 12:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 IMPERIAL GUN is logical as the favorite as he returns to make his sophomore debut. He showed ability with a BTL effort on debut and improved with a dominant win against a solid group closing out 2023 with improving figures to take this natural next step. #5 SEIZE THE GREY also returns to make a sophomore debut and one that showed progress and improvement with racing and the added ground. Both of his route races were sneaky good dealing with adversity with TROUBLE in the Iroquois (G3) and with TRAFFIC and a strong GALLOP+ in his two turn debut closing out the season last October at KEE.

In terms of value that is lacking on #7 BLOWN COVER one that has shown mild improvement though has had some favorable trips and still must improve as there are others ahead of him at this point. That includes #6 FOOTPRINT and even #1 GEWURTZTRAMINER both returning from the N2 allowance on 1/28 a strong par than the two FG events.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Post Time 12:31 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Tough to split the Asmussen first time starters drawn side by side though giving a slight edge to #1 SIR OTTO with the recent local works to suggest intent and shares some similar published times and dates to #2 STRONSINO one that will ship in to race. #6 MO EL GRANDE also will debut with the series of local works though does show a gap in the published works from early Jan into the first part of February.

Experience could go a long way in this race and coming into this race #5 RUN JALEN RUN has the edge on figures and in the money finishes though has come up short on the win end without much excuse. He returns from a common race with others in this field. #7 EXCITABLE BOY showed improvement last season at HAW and should be sitting on a peak effort in this second start off the layoff and rider change to Bejarano, though overall must improve. There is some foundation and figures to support #9 DAILY GRIND another that has come up short and has been working through gate issues and pattern of SLOG though should be the time for him to step up and should have price compensation as well.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Post Time 1:01 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MOTOWN DYNAMIC took a tough photo beat on debut last month at FG. The form from that race has held up with the winner, Ghalia Princess finish second last weekend in the Ruthless stakes at AQU and two others have come back to break their maiden in their next start. #7 CRUISE MISSILE also took a tough beat in her most recent start going back to opening week, though has been off since and the 12/9 race has not been overly productive.

#4 BELLOFTHEBLUEGRASS worked 10 flat last April while still green and could be live on debut as one of two for Riley Mott. Stablemate #6 VINOBELLO shares some recent local times and though also has some spacing in the published series. #2 HAVAHA also shows up with a steady series of works and a live rider in Castillo making the most of the limited mounts here this season.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Post Time 1:31 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 W W SCOUT'S HONOR does not hold any strong edge in this field though with form, class, and figures in line with many in this group he should be overlooked to upgrade on value. His form this season has been progressive and going back to last year his form over this course was right in line with today's par. #11 FAVORITE OUTLAW might have lost his race before it started earlier this month as he was unsettled prerace WASTED a lot of energy before making his way to the gate and from there outside of a poor start came up short with a favorable trip. He has some concerns as a rebound and top effort is required though should present some price compensation with that recent running line on top of the pp's to go off longer than #2 GUNFLASH and #8 UNRAPTURED with the local and recency edge.

#3 LATE NIGHT RADIO is a longshot to mess around with to pick up a share. His one race over this course sprinting years ago showed some ability and off that race and layoff has continued to improve. This will be his belated return and to the shorter distance, some hurdles in play though should be one of the longer numbers on the board with form that fits with many and many that will be much shorter.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Post Time 2:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 TAP THE CHAMPAIGN will make some changes for this third start though should benefit from the foundation and keying off both starts has met solid competition exiting productive races from the CD debut and what could be a strong event last month at Turfway.

#1 HER BEST FRIEND will make a belated second start this season and upgraded from an EX – EXCUSE on opening day. She had had the hurdle from an outside post in each of the three races to date including the most recent and moves inward for this race. She earned a follow off the WIDE trip back on 11/11 a common race with #8 ENIGMATIC one that was able to save ground throughout and #6 HAPPY TALK another that found a WIDE trip on the day.

Willing to give #7 OFF THE LAM another look as she makes her second start. She made her debut three weeks ago and in a tougher spot first out asked to go a route of ground. She had TROUBLE_S and from off the pace was green perhaps taking kickback and under minimal ask from off the pace started to put in a late run to suggest she has more to show and appears some intent coming right back and making some subtle changes with rider and equipment though keeping her under similar conditions.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Post Time 2:33 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SUN THUNDER is logical as the favorite. His class, speed, and current form this season stack up on par and is the horse to beat. He can get himself beat with the lack of early speed, something that has played a role this season while otherwise has turned in competitive races that are tough to knock other than the again projected shorter number.

The lack of value is the main knock on #5 COSMO as he makes his return off the layoff and will be class tested at the same time. He was scheduled to return this season at this N1 allowance condition earlier this month though was a trainer scratch. He was also named with Torres aboard a rider that will shift to the improving #4 MR. KEATING coming of the maiden win. Visually MR. KEATING should appreciate the added ground and did run in a solid effort last season around two turns at CD to build off of here.

#3 MEGAN'S HONOR has similar form to the other Scott Becker runner W W SCOUT'S HONOR earlier on the card and might be light for this field to make a contender case for, though has enough buried form to get overlooked and get in for a minor share.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Post Time 3:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 HAULIN ICE ran a big race on debut as she was in a tougher spot taking on older and males first out in a full field. She appears to have come out of the race well working twice since and finds the change today to run against fillies.

If for nothing else value alone upgrades #11 QUEEN MALLARD over #10 SNOW FLURRY as the two make their debut here for capable connections. QUEEN MALLARD has a steady series of local works and some quickness based on the published times.

#7 ALOHA BABY is just one of two four-year-old fillies in the field and has the experience edge over the other, #1 PETIT JEAN making her belated debut. ALOHA BABY turned in a strong effort in her debut last April with a WIDE trip and paired up a decent effort two weeks later, perhaps a rush before the end of the meet and ultimately the end of her season. She had a look off those starts returning on 12/30, though did not appear race ready as she was fractious in the GATE and was unprepared at the start as a result and played a role in the outcome.

#5 PRESLEYS TURN has had the gate issues in her two starts though given credit for a BTL effort in the place finish last month, a common race with the AE runners that can be upgraded #13 AUORA GEE and #14 SPARKLY as all three could have been impacted by the WEATHER and poor track conditions.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Post Time 3:35 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 ZEITLOS will finally be given the class test after holding her own in allowance company and clearing the conditions coming into this race. She does have that class hurdle to clear as the projected favorite, though has the benefit of local experience over #7 MUCHO MACHO GIRL and overall form and figures fit in line with many in this field that have some class questions in their own right returning to stakes company.

#1 ADELINE JULIA does hold a stakes run from last year and holds form over this course last season. She could also present a forward move in this third start of the season and from a less than ideal ride in the Mistletoe back on opening week and upgraded from the off track conditions she did not handle in the American Beauty earlier this month. #5 SARAH HARPER has picked up checks in stakes races over this course and distance. There could be some further intent as she makes her second start off the layoff in this spot and should be fit setting a Fast early pace and on the quick turnaround.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:10 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 WEST OMAHA will make her graded stakes debut here with progressive form and current form in this third start of the season. She has been holding her own in stakes company picking up the Silverbulletday win with a perfect trip last month and holding her own in the morning with stablemate Tarifa, the G2 Rachel Alexandra winner last weekend at FG. #1 ALYS BEACH also comes in from the FG where she has been working her way back around for a seasonal debut. She could present a class edge exiting the G1 races last year, though a longshot in those races and returns today giving up recency and off the few works on return, wanted to see a little more from her.

The Martha Washington upset winner, #2 BAND OF GOLD projects to be must shorter as she returns here and for many in the public that missed the wedding. She popped with a big effort on the day and will be required to repeat. She had a great ride from B. Hernandez and pace to target, something she could find once again. Part of that early pace due to rival #4 NEOM BEACH. She has the benefit of early speed, local form along with local form over this course and two turn distance. She will be class tested once again and still must take a step forward, something she has yet to make un order to make herself a main player in this division.

#7 LEMON MUFFIN is tough to make a contender case for though has been consistent and improving and one that could continue the pattern of picking up checks once again.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a big G3 for a $600k purse: #8 MAGIC TAP is a lightly raced improving type that has the foundation this season and perhaps intent for this race in the second start back. Gaffalione is in town to ride and had been a regular rider last season.

Bejarano was a regular rider last season here on #3 SPEED BIAS and returns today with some further intent in this third start back of the season. As far as his races this season he has maintained form and a strong number in the Tinsel stakes place finish. He should have further fitness setting a solid pace (X_FLOW) last month in the allowance and has runstyle versatility that could be effective here.

#10 PROMISE KEEPER had back class giving him a look in the 5th season stakes picking up his first win since a sophomore. His prior win was in grades stakes company winning the Peter Pan (G3) and following that race struggled with timing and layoffs. He also has some form over this course and in this race with a fourth place finish in the 2022 G3 Razorback.

#4 AIN'T LIFE GRAND is listed as the lukewarm 7-2 favorite and while he is capable in this race, he does not offer value in that role and the connections have him cross entered in an allowance here on Sunday.

Oaklawn Park Race 12

Post Time 5:53 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 CRUSHED IT will look to make it a 7/7 short priced double for B.Cox to close out the card. CRUSHED IT comes into this race with the stronger figures as the horse to beat though there are some others that could step up in this spot and look to play spoiler.

The longshot is #4 WILL TAKE IT as he had a tough task on debut from the outside post going two turns in an field of established runners including Imperial Gun, a next out winner and racing earlier on the card. That gave him a look returning earlier this month, though had a legit EX – EXCUSE with TROUBLE+ early on and will return today with a rider change, the blinkers (perhaps even the front wraps) off and appears no worse for the wear working in a longer 6f drill on 2/13.

#10 THOUSAND SPRINGS also comes back from that 2/3 common race and a move off the rail that could benefit this one though still some reservations as he must improve and has been off SLOG in both starts. His stablemate #13 JUST BE HAPPY is sitting on the AE and also has shown some gate issues from the debut to the works returning this year, though one that has more to show.

The two Asmussen trained runners could improve in this spot. #2 GIVE ME A REASON projects to be shorter given his place finish on debut and with Gaffalione taking over. That will shift Keith Asmussen to #3 SITKA one that had a rough task making his debut around two turns from the rail in a full field and was forward early tracking a Very Fast early pace.

#12 GOTTA HAVE DREAMS has not shown much improvement though his current form has been consistent and with foundation over this course and distance could be along for another minor share.

Handicapping Analysis
Sat February 24th, 2024

Stakes Spotlight

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Post Time 4:10 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

HONEYBEE STAKES (G3):

#6 WEST OMAHA will make her graded stakes debut here with progressive form and current form in this third start of the season. She has been holding her own in stakes company picking up the Silverbulletday win with a perfect trip last month and holding her own in the morning with stablemate Tarifa, the G2 Rachel Alexandra winner last weekend at FG. #1 ALYS BEACH also comes in from the FG where she has been working her way back around for a seasonal debut. She could present a class edge exiting the G1 races last year, though a longshot in those races and returns today giving up recency and off the few works on return, wanted to see a little more from her.

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Oaklawn Park Race 11

Post Time 5:23 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

REBEL STAKES (G2):

#7 TIMBERLAKE fits the role as the favorite and the horse to beat in this field. He has the graded stakes form and figures that stand out and while he will give up recency he has been training forwardly into this race. He does project to be a heavy favorite and playing this race with him at that number it is worth trying to get creative with some prices to make it interesting.

#9 LAGYNOS could fall into that role and projected to be the longer of the three Asmussen runners and has some upside as he makes his second start of the season. He will return with a freshening from the Smarty Jones and part of the Fast early pace and is not a “need the lead” type based on his prior starts. His stablemate #1 CARBONE exits the Southwest (G3) was bet down and a weaker favorite last month as he was doing something new. Not only was the distance new but they tried to rate that day and was not as successful and given the rail draw they should be more assertive to allow him to show his early speed.

#13 TIME FOR TRUTH might be forced to show early speed as well given his natural speed and with today’s stretchout in distance without many options from the outside post. Something #11 JUST STEEL will have to navigate once again and still prove himself at the distance and class level.

#8 NEXT LEVEL scratched from the Lecomte (G3) showing up the next week to run a huge race and tougher beat in a solid allowance field. While arguably he was “best” on the day, he must still step up here and show he fits at this level and graded stakes company and has a rider change to Riquelme, a rider with this as his only mount on the card and a return to Oaklawn for the first time since riding here regularly back in 2019.

#5 MAGIC GRANT is one of two in the field not nominated to the TC. In terms of a minor share he worth taking a stab with. He is lighter than others as noted leading into this Southwest (G3) though was on an improving pattern at the time. While he lacks early speed, he was taken in hand and off the pace, something that did him no favors and unable to get himself position and race on the day will return with a rider change as the local connections take another swing.