Handicapping Analysis
Fri March 15th, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Park Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SWEET SODDY J has some questions overall and on the circuit switch making a return to Oaklawn. This can be take as a softer spot than the Advent stakes back in December and following an every other pattern he should be back to a top effort, a different part of the cycle at that time. In addition, there is a scenario where he does hold a pace advantage with his early speed on the front end.

#1 DREWMANIA also will look to improve on this circuit as another also ran in the Advent stakes earlier this season. Class wise it was a big ask at the time and the trip was far from ideal at the shorter distance. Some similar intent could be gathered coming back to this circuit, off the recent win and the inside has at time been favorable and could be a further asset along with the weight break here.

#4 BOURBON AFICIONADO a lightly raced type must continue to move forward though has the start this season and in terms of par and purse is a lateral move. The trip was not ideal on the day making MOVE through TRAFFIC and in part to the rider decisions, notable here as there is a change with Bejarano taking over. The pattern of layoff lines creates some reservations (similar to the recent breaks for #5 JUST ASK WATTS) though some price compensation should follow the Robertson trainee.

The filly #3 OUR KEEPSAKE has the benefit of local form and has held some consistency. Still she must step up here as this is a class rise coming off the N2 win last month.

Oaklawn Park Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 POLTERER looks obvious in here but is he a little too obvious; he is coming into this race off the solid figures against a higher allowance class though has had some favorable trips and running back on shorter rest perhaps he has peaked and in terms of odds projects to return today shorter than previous races this season. He should hold form though perhaps room for the top spot and keeping #6 R DOC in the mix for an underneath spot as well.

#1 ON A SPREE could show up with intent for this season and his seasonal debut. He has a steady strong of work and local works as of late with a live rider in Vazquez. ON A SPREE has some tactical speed, though not a need the lead type and could work out a trip from the inside, something he was able to do pairing up wins last summer at Ellis Park.

#4 TRUCULENT caught a tough group, a tough spot and poor track conditions in the seasonal debut back on 1/27. He has the benefit of that race, the distance change, and further changes with the blinkers off and Esquivel on factors that could ask on trip, something that will be required here. Trip and a top effort will also be required for #5 T BONES TRICK the 12-1 place finisher from the 1/27 common race and returning as the favorite coming up short in that role on 2/17.

Oaklawn Park Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 TWIRLING TIGRESS had a longshot look two weeks ago and similar as they wheel right back from that race. This season she has improved race to rate and yet to run back to a top effort from last season, races that fit on par. Trip, more specifically rider TACTIC- played against her as she broke on top then was forced to rate giving up her pace advantage on the front end, something she could find here, and a more assertive ride is expected.

#5 LUCKSME could end up chasing and looking for first run and to keep her perfect record intact returning from a long layoff. The time off can be a hurdle and given the race record and open length wins is likely to be short showing up here.

#4 CODE FOR SUCCESS also wheels back from the 3/1 common race and off a WIDE trip. On the day she fit as an individual with figures on par, though a concern with trip from the outside and her off the pace, deeper closing runstyle. #3 VELIKIY also wheeling back today and in this second start off the layoff. Number wise she is lighter than others coming into this race though has some overall upside and should improve this afternoon.

Oaklawn Park Race 4

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#10 AUDEN is a logical type in this spot with the class drop coming out of a tougher maiden event earlier this month. He was favored on the day has some question marks in that role as the class change for the 3/1 race, a step up from the October HS Indy MSW event and was giving up recency as well. He should move up naturally and with fitness returning from a subtle trip with ground loss/WIDE. His sophomore stablemate #11 WITHOUT OBJECTION also could present a move forward in his second start of the season and subtle flow upgrade and fitness returning from a higher MCL event both in claiming tag and par last month.

#9 LEAD FOOT could get overlooked off the recent running lines and finishing position. Number wise he fits on par and upgraded from the 2/23 race making a WIDE MOVE and following a similar “every other” pattern should be sitting on improvement here.

#8 PRINCE IS MY BOY also with another look wheeling back in a week and upside from the races this season. He has caught the WEATHER impacted poor track conditions in both races and a TROUBLE_S/rough start that had him compromised last week. #3 CHADRON also on the quick turnaround and a positive distance change stretching out though still must improve and for the connections could get attention on that alone.

Oaklawn Park Race 5

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 MAZING MARK should be overlooked for the connections and for the first time here at Oaklawn he is placed where he can compete. He was overmatched in stakes company in the Bath House Row stakes last April and similar off the bench last month in a higher allowance condition. In each start he held his form and paired numbers, not quite the level needed to compete in those events though numbers on par here.

#8 A LA CARTE will stretch out here a change for this horse and that change should have him as one of many in this field looking to keep the pace honest. There has not been much intent to stretch out at this point and there are some concerns with that though at the same time he fits with this group and visually there are no big questions with the change here.

#10 SOUTHERN SUNSET earned a big figure breaking his maiden on 1/27 though there was plenty of reasons to question that number going forward and even more reasons to play against at the shorter number when he returned from it in the February allowance. The connections know what they are doing with the drop here and a more reasonable spot for this horse overall and should find some interest in the claim box. While this spot makes sense as he fits with this group, if to removing the 1/27 figure as an outlier his other figures albeit as a sophomore sit in line with #7 AUTO GLIDE one that should be higher of the two.

The change in class is closer to a lateral move for #2 WALDRIP showing up here first off the claim. His form coming into this race has been consistent this season and some upside off the sprint trips especially with the added ground as this one should appreciate.

It will be interesting and perhaps a prep for #1 LIVINGSTON protected here off the layoff and back to the dirt. His 2023 finale on the turf was BTL and that effort gives him a look under similar conditions though this is not quite that.

Oaklawn Park Race 6

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The Rosin barn will be represented by #3 CHARBON making their debut for a barn that does good work with first time starters. This colt looks pointed to this meet and with progressive works including the two most recent recorded half mile moves. Another first time starter #2 THIS IS USCAR making his debut for Jordan Blair a barn that has been on an unbelievable run this season sending out live runners a trend that is tough to ignore. This colt comes into this race with a steady series of works, though has been training out of town however appears plenty of foundation in that series.

Two other first time starters #8 HOBY CAY and #9 DUKE OF DUVAL make their debut for Steve Asmussen. The pair in capable hands should hold plenty of fitness and with DUKE OF DUVAL showing up locally in his recent works to prepare for this debut.

Local and overall experience can go a long way in these races and #7 BURLSWORTH might be the least obvious showing to take on open company, though also finds a change to run against 3yo only a change from the debut against older. #6 MO EL GRANDE turned in a solid number and effort making a late run after a poor start. He continued to GALLOP+ out and one that should handle more ground though finds themselves back at the 6f here. Some upside could be projected for #4 INDY CHARGE one that was training here at Oaklawn prior to his TP debut; and #1 CAPITAL CONNECTION shopping in and fresh for this second start out of the FG though both could find this as a step up with the circuit switch.

Oaklawn Park Race 7

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 CALRISSIAN comes back with a subtle change in class and now with the benefit of local experience in his second start of the meet. He looked live on the day with buried form and gave an honest effort chasing inside behind the eventual pacesetting winner, Dance Some Mo.

#11 HARD TO COME BY has buried form and progressive form leading into this third start off the layoff. He has the local experience and can pop with a big race from time to time and likely to be overlooked especially in contrast to the rival just to his outside #12 HUMOR ME NOW a reclaim for Asmussen and on their best day there is not much between the two.

#4 AIN’T THAT A KICK needs a lot of racing luck with his off-the-pace runstyle. While he has the pattern of SLOG, at the same time he has held his form this season, including a BTL effort back on 12/17 and the class drop could hit him in the right time and place here. #7 HEIR TO GREATNESS returns fresh and looking to get back on track in this spot. His better races fit as contender and in line with how he has been bet this season though one that must turn things around and find his better form needed here to compete.

Oaklawn Park Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 LEAR is a bit of a risk as the lone 3yo in the field of older as he makes his debut. There could be some positives with that at the same time and this one has been working forward and perhaps even a confident move landing here after training at the FG with a live rider in Santana and a subtle weight break.

#1 CASTLEWARDEN recorded solid figures last year and those numbers on par with this event and in line with many established rivals in this group. Overall he still must move forward and coming back with the rail draw to work a trip and given the connections and prior betting pattern could be favored once again.

#5 SIMOVIC is tough to dismiss from the top three given his record this season and tough to find a bad sprint race from him and one that is capable of winning. His class edge and ability to show some tactical speed gives him the edge again over common rival #8 MILLERS RITE one that can be along for the minors and not dismissed in that role and #4 DON CORLEONE the 2/19 pacesetter that has lacked finishing ability.

There are some select races and figures for #6 PANCAKE HOUSE that standout and going out for the live Jordan Blair barn. Those better races have been at the longer distance and different surface, a big change coming back from the big layoff.

Oaklawn Park Race 9

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 STUCK N SNOW fits in this race and level and has some buried form coming into this event with the positive distance change back at a sprint. His form is established and progressive from last year and has shown similar coming back in 2024 with a similar race-to-race pattern. He was likely given the race against open in January off the layoff and compromised by the trip on 2/3 a race that had a subtle near excuse unable to show his best or run his race on the day.

#5 MIDNIGHT TAXES can also be upgraded returning from the 2/25 with the distance change shortening back up to a sprint with a credible front end effort setting a solid pace. The route race should allow him to keep up his fitness and looking to move up the finishing position ladder in the third start back this year. The race favorite, #8 TWENTY TO PARK lacked value in that role as he was doing many new things on the day taking on winners and the route distance while coming off a dominant debut win. The figure from the 1/12 race stands out in this field and an obvious major player with a repeat performance – he is also worth a follow with a pair of maidens from that January event returning in today's finale.

Oaklawn Park Race 10

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 STRATO is upgraded off his debut back in January given the trip a rough start/TROUBLE_S and TRAFFIC the overall race visuals to suggest he can IMPROVE. He was assigned the 12-1 ML and went off at odds of 11-1 however opened up with a lot of early money, the first click favorite drifting from the 3-1 to the post time odds.

The place finisher #10 ROCKET SANDERS also makes a belated return and did chase the open length winner Twenty to Park doing his best to hold for the minors. While he finished second, so did #5 RYNO WRECKER back on opening week setting a past pace and with the pair of subtle excuses since. The outside post paired with a terrible start had him compromised on 1/26 and the placement again open MSW had him compromised last month.

#1 MACHO STRIKER might not be the most obvious of the older horses in this field, though could present some upside and left in the top three to make his case. He showed some run in spots making his debut late last season in open MSW company. He had the long layoff returning for the new barn and far outside post in January and might have lost his race at the GATE before the start and the WIDE trip giving him no favors after.

#2 TASK is more obvious of the older runners on that caught the eye in a sneaky debut on the turf and validated those visuals with a BTL effort on 1/1 and similar result last month. While he has run well each time, he also has shown a poor habit out of the gate and has translated in running leaving himself a lot of work to do from off the pace. Similar SLOG for #9 PEARCY ROAD last year and playing a role in the outcome. He will return as a 4yo and number wise was consistent last year with those figures on par though a similar off the pace trip should be expected and compensated for on the board.

Sophomore first time starters: #7 TWO DOLLAR EDDIE could be race ready off a steady series of works and some solid times out of the gate in February. Similar could carry to #6 WILLIE CAT for Morse keying off the March 3rd gate move, though did have some gaps prior and missing the month of January.