Handicapping Analysis
Sat March 23rd, 2024

Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 UPBEAT MELODY sneaks into this race with the conditions posting his two wins in 2023 though the recent win in May just weeks before the eligibility cutoff. He will return to HAW the shorter distance, Baird aboard and with a steady string of works – all around intent for this spot on opening day. #9 LYRICAL POET also has early speed and will look to clear as he makes the surface switch to stay on the dirt. He could deal with others in that role and has never passed a horse. The far outside could be the big hurdle for #14 FEROCITY (AE) if he clears the first big hurdle of drawing in.

#3 ONE LAST HAND also holds a pair of wins from early in 2023 and comes back today fresh for Watkins a barn that had a strong 2023 season and starting off 2024 with a win at TP and OP. The shorter 5f distance could be a test for this one though can project them to show early speed as many for this barn often do and similar for J. Felix. The shorter distance for #8 RUSSIAN TO WIN is the bigger unknown that current form for live connections. He has been training locally and facing tougher last season he fits on those factors. The recency and shorter distance is the advantage for #11 HINK'S PALADIN, though the only advantages as he comes into this race lighter than many others.

#5 BREAKING NEWS has the one win last year, a win under similar $5k conditional claiming company. The majority of his races were contested at a higher class, purse and par though requires a massive turnaround something that could be in play given the freshening, a live rider in A. Centeno and could also look for a front wrap removal with the wraps added in those most recent three starts.

Granted #7 ALPINE GHOST was "second off" when he made his 2023 seasonal debut on 3/16 but that race was a legit effort in the 4th place result sprinting 5f behind the pacesetters and if the pace is contentious or there is some bunching up he is one that could benefit from that scenario and just land in the right time and place.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:08 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Rivelli FTS starters take a lot of wagering support and for fair enough reason as they often win. There are two in this field where the older and Baird aboard #1 CROWN ROYAL KID is likely to be fancied over #6 SENDEMDOWNTHEROAD though probably not be much.

#8 MY TENNIS SHOES is one of the 4yo and one of the few coming into this race with current and solid form from the FG meet. He turned in a BTL effort on 2/9 and competitive show finish racing on the off-track through TRAFFIC. While he has that going for him, he has not shown much early speed and while he could be a solid anchor to hit the board the run style and shorter distance is something to consider for the top spot.

#5 LATE BLACKSMITH might be worth getting creative with. He is statebred bonus eligible, a 4yo, showed early speed first out, has recent works and some subtle changes in class with the blinkers added. They could present upside over #4 GOD GUNS N GUTS one that finds the right class change with the DROP returning to this circuit.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 ROBUST took a tough beat and did a lot of running staying on as the BOS last month at DeD. The effort was potentially taxing though should have some recovery with the 36-day break since that race off the bench, a quicker turnaround would be more concerning. They have early speed though also have passed horses and do so from an inside post. That could be key here with other E/EP horses in the field including #7 MCVICKER a main threat for Vanden Berg as a lightly raced type that will take on older though first time to run for a tag and looks to be very dangerous.

#5 MINNESOTA MOON will cutback to a sprint something he has only done one other time but might be the right move for this one. The drop in class is another positive as he is who he is and just needs to find the right group. He has the one start this year back on 1/11 chasing WIDE early before losing ground in a race that has held form and could present a further positive here.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 4:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As noted in Race 2, Rivelli runners get a lot of attention in these type of spots and likely to be the case here with the lightly raced second time starting #3 GIANNO though this is a different game. They will make a second start must step forward, take on older and do something new as they stretch out in distance with all of those factors needed to project a competitive outcome here -and something that requires price compensation to make that leap. It is also worth noting they have been entered a couple times since the November debut, both races scheduled for turf and at the $32-30k MCL condition.

#9 REGIMENTAL is likely going to be the alternative and in contrast has established form and recency out of the FG meet and on the one week turnaround. The timing can go one way or another too much too soon or a ready horse that after today will get a break. His main track races have been sneaky good. His highest figure at CD around two turns and has a show finish with a less than ideal trip here last July and a full EX - EXCUSE trip with TROUBLE on 1/7 at FG.

Perez has a pair of older, more seasoned, established maidens that could take to these conditions and the edge in this field: #2 WOLF HUNTER is the most established though has consistent figures on the main and route distance and familiarity with Lezcano; #10 MONEY AGENT is unproven on the dirt and willing to give a pass to the lone dirt start with the time off that followed. He has upside all around and from the “trips” last year, proven around two turns and today’s race par being softer than the events last year moves him up naturally.

#8 WICKED GUS debuted in a common race with #7 ELECTRIC CHARGE back on 11/4 at FanDuel and was a good debut given the challenges going two turns first out, taking on older and showing run through some adversity with the self-inflicted poor start (SLOG, TROUBLE_S) and making a MOVE X_FLOW.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

While it might be worth trying to getting clever with prices in the other maiden events, #1 WHOLE LOTTA LUTE is a use here at the projected shorter number. He will make a belated debut as a four-year-old IL-bred with some upbeat moves coming into this race. Given the delay to career and in MSW company this one looks as race ready as they can be and should come out running. Outside of the Chris Block trained #9 GOOD APPLE making some changes for this second start, the rest of the field have shown who they are and can open the door for a “new” face to jump up.

#4 HAND OVER MY HEART is lightly raced and still can present upside. He will step up to take on older in this sophomore debut with the circuit switch and rider upgrade. He showed run in the starts last year and with a stronger rider on their back for the November race they might have already cleared the maiden condition.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 5:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a clever spot for #2 MADELYN BELLE first off the claim and returning to Hawthorne. She was claimed for $25k and as an IL-bred can run for the higher $20.3k tag in this spot and in for a number not far off what she was claimed for and even if claimed with a win on top makes the investment.

#4 DESSERT FIRST comes into this race with current form and local form from last season. She broke her maiden in the first local appearance back in November 2022 and returning here last May put in a BTL effort with the show finish sprinting 6f; a strong run after a messy break behind a very in form Rivelli runner called Wilma Mankiller.

#7 APRIL'S GEM also must race for a tag today though had run for a tan last season. Last season she also pulled off the upset in the first part of the meet (3/16) when she was able to get to the lead (rail draw that day) and took advantage of the cold wins to a front running 17.7-1 upset score. O. Hernandez was aboard that day and for much of the 2023 success and his presence noted elsewhere picking up the mount on #5 SMOOTH JUSTICE. On her best day she can be right there, though will give up recency and remains protected, a good spot off the bench to get some fitness at the least for this IN-bred mare.

Her stablemate #6 FIRST KITTEN last seen at HS Indy make a return to Hawthorne, a track where she is a different race horse. She along with Centeno had a ton of success going back to 2022 and tough to ignore though will be tested to come out running off the layoff, this type of break is one she has not has since the spring of 2022 – she did not miss a beat since the break she returns from today.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:28 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a race to get creative and seek value with alternatives to #4 GOLD OAK and #7 ANNA AFTER MIDNIGHT in this spot looking at horses that might been best suited to today, not necessarily seeking out the "best" horse in the race.

#1 JOCELYN comes in with recency some subtle trips, a sneaky close last month and a class drop shifting to this circuit and class level. Trainer E. Lopez has found success with their runners as of late and had a strong 2023 Hawthorne meet including early on in the season picking up multiple wins in the first few weeks.

#5 ARRINGTON is a longtime maiden and has those reservation and requires some of those longer odds to hold and compensate. On her side, she has local experience and has been able to fire fresh. She showed up on this circuit for her second career start with a competitive place finish and last season another competitive effort sprinting on 8/27 as part of a BLANKET finish under today's MCL conditions.

#8 BABAS GAL has struggled with the level of competition this year at OP, though those races have kept her fit as she shows up here with form for this race. She is on an every other pattern and while those numbers are not anything with a big edge the timing is on her side all around and at the longer projected odds gets consideration.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 5:56 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Morning line favorite, #1 LILY'S WOOFY takes the drop here and with eligibility with the limited starts since the layoff. She is looking for that first win since 2022 though has maintained form, has recency and some early speed to factor in this race and from the rail.

Following the Oaklawn season and runners from the Genaro Garcia barn shipping in from Turfway to Hot Springs and finding success with that move something they will look for here with #2 CAN'T BE TOUCHED. She wheels right back for this second start of the cycle and upgraded from the WIDE trip on 3/14, a day/week that favored inside runners and her 5th place finish was behind the top two that finished together and clear at the wire. While there could be intent in play, trip is noted as she has yet to pass a horse and there are many in here that will look to show early speed and kept honest as #4 PLAY TWENTY and #7 SMILE AT THE STORM will be out there and willing to take this field gate-to-wire.

If they go quick, that scenario assists #3 PALAGO one that has also had success first off the bench, though would want a little more than the 5-1 ML given her trip from off the pace at 5f. #6 TIMELESS GLORY one that has had most of her success at longer distances though a lot of that success here and a couple of in-the-money finishes sprinting and some trouble with the trip sprinting and less than ideal race-to-race timing last August.

The Bahena runner (BABAS GIRL) is worth a follow in Race 8 with a similar pattern for #5 MISS WINDY SLEW exiting the Oaklawn meet and outclassed on that circuit though keeping her fitness and conditioning by racing. She has a further interest as an IL-bred racing for the $7500 tag a change from the one race here closing week (9/3) in against a higher class and a tough set of mares in Samarita, First Kitten and Long Tall Woman all next out winners.

Hawthorne Race 9

Post Time 6:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 BASEBALL POLITICS makes sense as the favorite; he is one of the few in this field that fits the condition with 5wins and the most recent back in May. He has some published works over the winter at FD and was also entered and a vet scratch from a conditional $10k claiming event earlier this month (3/7) at Oaklawn. While logical there are others in the field also capable and might present better value.

#3 CRANKSHAFT with his record of 8 wins to compete here. He comes back from the 112-day layoff though throughout his career has not finished worse than 3rd off similar breaks. One of those, one year to the date finishing third after making an EASY_LEAD and lacking finish at the 5.5f distance and will be a touch shorter at the 5f here. The tactical speed and inside post could be the edge over his main rivals drawn outside.

#11 BERNIE LOMAX is one of those "logicals" and could battle BASEBALL POLITICS for the role of the favorite. He will also come off the layoff and has some tactical speed which will be necessary to compete to avoid getting caught wide. A similar trip and necessary assertive tactics will be required for #12 JRUE BREEZE one that has the edge on recency coming out of the FG meet. He was claimed back on 2/13 has been given the proper rest and recovery in his form cycle something that was required after running a top, a peak effort (B+) with the win back on 12/21.

#4 LAKE MILLS takes the drop as he returns from the 206-day layoff. The drop is less of a concern after the series of minor finishes and lack of that win in 2023. He fits at this level off the consistency from last season, and certainly capable here; however he will come off the bench and perhaps even more questionable the shorter distance which could have him off the pace. The off the pace trip is also factored for #1 MAQAMAT.