



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024



Emily's Analysis

Churchill Downs Race 1

Post Time 9:30 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

B. Cox will make a belated debut with #2 PURE FORCE one that had some setback though trained like a good one before the break and coming back around into this year and for this debut on the big weekend. #6 HOUSE UNITED can IMPROVE off their FG debut showing run though TROUBLE and a slight step forward has them on par with the more "established" maidens in this field.

Churchill Downs Race 2

Post Time 10:01 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

No knocks on ML favorite #6 SCYLLA in this spot and the connections wheeling right back in two weeks for this race suggest she is still holding her form and conditioning. More exiting/value sits with #3 JOKE SISI one that is suited to the ONE_TURN and has competitive races from last season with class and speed figure on par for this event and in line with many in this field. #1 NAVY GOAT must pick it up though upgraded from a BTL effort in her most recent (2/29) start and her love maiden track race here last September was sneaky good (B-) given the TROUBLE_S making a MOVE and strong GALLOP+.

Churchill Downs Race 4

Post Time 11:04 AM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 RAISE CAIN is a live longshot that should hold his number given the most recent starts coming back this cycle along with the rail which often scares the public on that alone. He was given a stiff test in California showing up in the Malibu (G1) and showed more than the outcome gave credit to and visually projected to IMPROVE. He was off a few months following and before making a return in the Commonwealth (G3) where he can be upgraded once again making a MOVE through TRAFFIC all while X_FLOW. Today's race shape should allow him pace to target and make his run with potentially #11 HOIST THE GOLD as the controlling speed though at the times he has shown that brilliance has been with track profiles and favorable setups.

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 LEGEND OF TIME is taken seriously in here and one that is likely favored. While he is respected some value can be found including #11 CUGINO with a solid BTL place finish with a credit to class to earn that placing with TROUBLE and X_WIDE trip. #9 NOTED coming off an EX - EXCUSE in the JR Steaks Stakes (G3) and solid turf form prior to that start.

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 T LAW has consistently recorded some of the higher figures with competitive races at this level. He should be assisted by the layoff return at this level two weeks ago making a strong CLOSE at the 6f distance and stretches right back out to a route. He has the edge in this field over **#3 LITTLE STEVEN** and value should the discrepancy hold by post time.

#1 JET FLIGHT has a little more foundation in this third start of the season from the 4/21 common race and moving forward race to race his figure from the maiden win last year is a touch below those other two though not by much and as a lightly raced type can still hold a move forward where as the other two are proven who they are.

#2 BOURBON LIFE wheels right back and turned in a competitive race at a slightly lower level here on 4/7, their stablemate in that event, Category Ten came back to win a conditional \$25k claiming event last Saturday, 4/27. BOURBON LIFE will be tested on the quick turnaround, protected just over a week ago return back to this circuit.

#5 ANCIENT MAN comes into this race lighter on figures and class for this level, though in current form that could be enough for a share. He stretches back out to the preferred distance, though not quite the N1 level on 4/6 when NO_PUSH that day and wheeled back on 4/13 with a sneaky good BTL effort in the 4th place result.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:20 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 MILOLE MAGIC will step up to take on winners though a reasonable placement on this circuit and lateral change in purse/par from the MCL event at TP. She will be taking on older as well though has the foundation from her juvenile season and the NYRA turf figures at the time sit on par.

#9 PROBLEMATICA also will take on older and off a recent maiden win though had a look off that race and back to the turf. Her lone turf start on 12/8 earned a strong figure and the number was not an outlier as that race held form and she could pop with that effort, a race that fits here on the grass and would be the time to catch her at a price.

#8 ANGEL EXPRESS returns to the turf and holds experience over this course and positive timing in the second start back off the layoff - PREP. She can easily present upside from the 3/30 trip a little WARM on the day and chasing in TRAFFIC in a contentious and productive event with three next out winners.

#6 BALI BABY will not be dismissed as a longshot in this race. She comes into this event with the rise in class though back to her preferred surface/distance and her turf races while perhaps a touch light on the win end in the past N1X allowance events, recorded numbers on par with many in this field and catches a lower par than those prior events.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a competitive group with a case to be made on all five in this spot. **#2 RIVZONAROLL** could be the speed of the speed in this race and sitting on a peak effort with the class change and out of a productive allowance on 3/31 with horses improving and holding their form. They have kept this horse after the drop on 12/2, the one race that makes him eligible and after losing him via the claim went right back in quickly reclaimed for the higher tag and has been protected since.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 4:20 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 STYLE is a big move up in this race. Looking at the Plot she is a Large Square in Quad II, a change from many of her races when positioned in Quad IV. The "Fire" Contention rating should assist to work a trip and placement from the connections taking a class drop for this race could all come together at the right time and for that belated win for the barn since the claim. **#5 LADY ATLANTIC** could also move up in today's race shape and Standard Square stronger than rival, **#7 SUMMER AT THE SPA** and not far off rivals **#3 STACK SHACK** and **#6 GO STORMIN GIRL**. The stronger figures and races for **LADY ATLANTIC** were prior to the line layoffs she returned from and taking notice on Standard (current form) she is moving in the right direction for this race and group and could be a further positive with Mojica aboard.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 RIVER RIDGE caught the eye in his debut making a WIDE MOVE and presents upside off that initial start and with that noted the debut figure already sits as the highest in the field.

#4 TOSCANO was set to debut last month at AQU as well as KEE unable to draw in off the AE that day and worked here on 4/19 that same day. He is in capable hands and only saw one quick breeze from the gate back in January heads up with Ravin's Town.

#8 YOUNG MISCHIEF will also debut here as a late season (September foal) four-year-old for a capable barn. The barn was a perfect one-for-one with debuting runners here at Hawthorne last year with first time starting juvenile Jack Sprat at 7-2. In 2022 did not debut a runner at Hawthorne though sent out four FTS in MSW company at Fan Duel with 2 wins and a show. Jockey Bailon was named when they were entered to debut during the first part of the meet (aboard for one of those FD wins at 14-1 and the show at 11.9-1) and noting that O. Mojica has the call here.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 5:20 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The analysis starts with **#4 SIMPLE LOGIC** one that will make the return to the claiming level for the first time in a longtime. The move should be right looking for a win and has held his form and figures, just a touch below a required "winning" effort at the allowance level. While capable, his overall form is not much (if at all) stronger than others in this field and as they project to get their fair share of attention that could create some overlays on others.

#2 RED HORNET with a return to top form is the horse to beat. He can be given another look not just with a return to the turf but from the races this season starting with an excuse opening weekend (3/24) and subtle trip on 4/7 where he was compromised with the race shape and upgraded all around.

#8 LAND MARK DEAL is upgraded with the shift back to TURF and off his prior grass form including the races around two turns, something they were looking for in July (2 scratch off-turf) following a TROUBLE+ trip show finish on 6/22.

#5 ROGUE ELEMENT could sneak away on the board and might be the right time to take a swing. He will return to the turf, a surface where he has recorded some of his higher figures and figures in line with today's par and rivals. His also has shown progression with each start this season, keying off a "trip" as shown in the Past 3 Runlines from the 3/31 return and taking KICKBACK separating himself from the others on 4/14 and less likely to deal with that on this surface.

#3 SIERRA HOTEL will take a rise in class, though proven over this course and distance under similar conditions to today's race. He likely needed the return (PREP) and given a subtle and sneaky flow-upgrade from the 4/13 race.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 DEFIANT MALICE is deserving of another look and the connections taking another slight drop looking to clear this condition. He had legit TROUBLE on both of the local starts this season and showed run in spots through that adversity and against the dynamic.

In terms of race par, this is a lateral move despite the claiming tag rise for **#1 LUCKY PAL** making his second start of the season. He was upgraded last month and from his debut, a race that was given a slight excuse with the SLOG against the profile and had been off since returning with the class drop. The move up is a confident move and respected from a respectable BTL effort making a huge WIDE BURST for position and into a duel with eventual 1-5 chalk winner, Charted.

In terms of the projected odds and as individuals there is not much between **#8 THE SPEEDY ONE** and **#9 BORDER PATROL** in this race. THE SPEEDY ONE has the slight edge with recency and the class drop though one that lacks early speed and cutting back to a sprint, needs to be much the best (at the shorter odds) to overcome. BORDER PATROL has some early speed though closer to a lateral move from the most recent start at TAM; and by recent start that was 136-days ago creating reservations on that front as well.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 6:20 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 DEGREE OF RISK is legitimate in this spot he is the class of the field and stands out number wise if he started from the parking lot he still might win this race. He turned in a competitive B- OptixGRADE race with an X-WIDE trip in his return on 3/23 at TP keeping in mind the top two finished together at the wire and he was in a blanket for the other minors right off that pair. They were entered earlier this week at CD in a higher level allowance though unable to draw in off the AE and the race moved to the main track as well.



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024

Peter's Simulcast Plays

Churchill Downs Race 1

Post Time 9:30 AM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Evan On Earth - 3/1 **2** Pure Force - 5/2 **3** Top Gun Rocket - 5/1

Churchill Downs Race 2

Post Time 10:01 AM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

8 Coppa Girl - 4/1 **6** Scylla - 6/5 **3** Joke Sisi [CHI] - 10/1

Churchill Downs Race 3

Post Time 10:31 AM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

2 Cornishman - 5/1 **1** Cartucho - 4/1 **11** Mindframe - 2/1

Churchill Downs Race 4

Post Time 11:04 AM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Strong Quality - 4/1 **6** Best Actor - 5/2 **10** Five Star General - 8/1

Churchill Downs Race 5

Post Time 11:36 AM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

8 Mischief Magic [IRE] - 4/1 **10** Big Invasion - 5/1 **4** Motorious [GB] - 7/2

Churchill Downs Race 6

Post Time 12:14 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

10 Vahva - 3/1 **7** Alva Starr - 5/2 **9** Red Carpet Ready - 9/2

Churchill Downs Race 7

Post Time 12:56 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Coppice [GB] - 5/1 **3** Chili Flag [FR] - 4/1 **6** Delahaye - 8/1

Churchill Downs Race 8

Post Time 1:46 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

8 Top Conor - 5/2 **12** Nash - 3/1 **1** Carbone - 10/1

Churchill Downs Race 9

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

5 Legend of Time [GB] - 7/2 **10** Set - 10/1 **14** Agate Road - 5/1

Churchill Downs Race 10

Post Time 3:31 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

6 Zozos - 3/1 **2** Tejano Twist - 4/1 **11** Hoist the Gold - 7/2

Churchill Downs Race 11

Post Time 4:27 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

11 Naval Power [GB] - 7/2 **6** I'm Very Busy - 4/1 **1** Integration - 5/1

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

14 Endlessly - 30/1 **2** Sierra Leone - 3/1 **8** Just a Touch - 10/1

Churchill Downs Race 13

Post Time 7:00 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

7 Jefferson Street - 7/2 **2** Discreet Mischief - 5/2 **9** General Partner - 2/1

Churchill Downs Race 14

Post Time 7:35 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

1 Dive Bomber - 9/5 **3** Gun Party - 7/2 **12** Timeout - 6/1

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 1

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 2 Funtime Bayama 6 Do Better 5 Storm Shadow

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 2

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 10 Fast Louie 2 Timely Bet 8 Price Control

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 3

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 6 Enforcer 5 Chain Gang 1 Wikipedia

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 4

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 3 Livinthebeachlife 4 Ron 5 Rockabilly Rebel

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 5

Analysis by Peter Galassi

T 3 Osceola 4 Passarino 1 Ghostly Casper

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 6

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 1 Talk Curdy To Me 4 Powder Play 5 Mist Amber

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 7

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 7 Southwind Sambucca 1 Stormalong 3 Stop The Shootin

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 8

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 6 No Control 2 Whatchulookin At 3 Write Me A Rose

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 9

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 7 La Sun Control 8 Sergeant Slaughter 2 McWicked Time

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 10

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 8 Dragononthebeach 7 Poseidon Seelsrer 6 Dupree Hanover

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 11

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 3 Saulsbrook Ian 2 Brookdale Johnny 9 Call Me It

Woodbine Mohawk Park Race 12

Analysis by Peter Galassi

P 1 Major Hill 2 Rockme Rollme 3 Bayfield Beach



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024

Ron's Picks

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

2 Sierra Leone - 3/1 **4** Catching Freedom - 8/1 **17** Fierceness - 5/2 **11** Forever Young [JPN] - 10/1

THE KENTUCKY DERBY

Fierceness might be the best horse in the race but there's no guarantee that he'll get the best trip or even a good trip. I know his connections say they like the draw but he's going to have to work awfully hard to get position from out there with all the speedy runners to his inside. So, I opted to look for a runner that could take advantage of what promises to be a blistering early pace and that seems to have the ability to get the 10-furlong distance. 2-SIERRA LEONE just seems to get better with every start. He's only a nose away from a perfect four-for-four record. Like that he was starting to draw away in his two races this year, both at nine furlongs. The pace sets up but, as always, it's going to come down to the trip. 4-CATCHING FREEDOM is another who could be favored by the pace. He's another that has been steadily progressing. He finished a couple lengths behind Sierra Leone in the Risen Star but went on to capture the Louisiana Derby at a mile and three sixteenths. However, like top pick and all the other deep closers in this race, they have to deal with traffic jams and one brief check could cost them the race. Obviously 17-FIERCENESS is the one to beat. The Beyer Speed Figure (110) he generated in the Florida Derby was INSANE and people often use the last Beyer as a handicapping source. Obviously in a 20-horse field the trip is all-important and he could struggle to get the right trip from his outside post but he might really be that good. Would love to see the Japanese entrant 11-FOREVER YOUNG run well. By most reports, he is one of the best Japan ever sent here for this race and his perfect record, 5-for-5, lends credence to those reports.

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:50 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

3 Little Steven - 8/5 **2** Bourbon Life - 5/2 **6** T Law - 7/2

3-LITTLE STEVEN could be tough. He's stretching back out after a competitive sprint effort in his local debut. There is plenty of other speed in this race but he could outlast the rest. 2-BOURBON LIFE finished second here in early April. He didn't show much in his follow up effort in Indiana but he was taking on tougher company. He looks like one of the few in here possessing any late run. If a heated pace duel develops, he could fly by. 6-T LAW was one paced in last, his first start for this barn, but that race was probably only a prep. He was racing for the first time since August and he was sprinting. Stretches to a better distance today. Guessing he'll be close at the finish.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:20 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

5 She's Inthearmynow - 3/1 **7** Mitole Magic - 6/1 **8** Angel Express - 8/1

The first local turf race of the season is an interesting affair. Not many of the entrants are confirmed turf sprinters, though most have had at least some experience. As usual, in these short turf sprints, there is an abundance of early speed. Not sure if anyone in here really stands out but have to go with 5-SHE'S INTHEARMYNOW. She has had two turf sprints, recording a win and a second-place finish. Plus, she's trained by Wayne Catalano. She'll have plenty of company on the front end but might be able to outlast the rest. 7-MITOLE MAGIC finished third in her two turf sprints, racing at Aqueduct. Both races were contested early last fall and both were against maidens. However, her "figs" from those races were competitive and she looks like she will do her best running late. 8-ANGEL EXPRESS lost ground throughout in her first start of the year and beat only one rival. However, that was on dirt and she had been far more effective on turf in the past. Like that she has some versatility and is capable of running well on or off the pace. Think we'll see a far better effort today.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:50 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

5 Red Label - 3/1 **2** Rivzonaroll - 9/5 **1** Time Heist - 2/1

5-RED LABEL is a slim pick but he's coming off a strong effort in Indiana, he's a versatile kind of runner that is adept at coming from off the pace or going right to the lead, and he has the right rider to make the right decision depending on the way the pace develops. 2-RIVSONAROLL drops in class. Speedy runner races for the top barn and is another with a sharp rider in the irons. However, he tends to run out of gas late and there is plenty of other speed in here to keep him honest on the front end. 1-TIME HEIST figures prominently. He's two for two at the meet and won both fairly easily. Might be able to handle this slightly better company.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 4:20 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

6 Go Stormin Girl - 7/2 **2** Style - 6/5 **7** Summer At the Spa - 3/1

6-GO STORMIN GIRL has been solid against rivals like these, especially at Hawthorne. She's been in the money in 17 of her local races, winning seven times, including last. She likes to come from off the pace but think she can lead all the way if they send her. It was hard to pick against 2-STYLE. It's not like she's been in good form but she hasn't been in bad form and she's been in against much better rivals. She's dropping to the lowest level of her career and racing without blinkers. Would like her better at a slightly higher claiming level. Drops like this can be a cause for concern. Use caution. 7- SUMMER AT THE SPA might be the best of the rest but think she would have a far better shot on turf.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

7 River Ridge - 2/1 **4** Toscano - 5/2 **1** Young Mischief - 6/1 **2** Pontus - 5/1

Very interesting maiden race. 7-RIVER RIDGE might have the edge. He had one race, at Tampa, where he split the field. Adds blinkers for this outing. Worked well, apparently with blinkers, since that start. 4-TOSCANO is a first timer with great drills. Heard rumors that he was fast and his drills suggest that he is. Races for the top barn and they win with 21% of their first timers. Beautifully-bred 1-YOUNG MISCHIEF shouldn't be overlooked. His drills downstate have been very good. He'll be a much longer price than the top pair. 2-PONTUS finished third versus Illinois breds in his only race. This could be a tougher field but his race was good enough to warrant another look, at least as an inclusion on the bottom of vertical gimmicks.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 5:20 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

12 Jeff the Lion - 10/1 **4** Simple Logic - 5/2 **2** Red Hornet - 5/1 **8** Land Mark Deal - 10/1

Don't think it will rain enough between Thursday and Friday for races to come off the turf but, just in case, we need to take a look at 12-JEFF THE LION. He's entered for main track only and he could prove best if this race does get moved to dirt. 4-SIMPLE LOGIC seems to hold a huge advantage on turf. Ignore his last couple on dirt. Although he has only one turf victory, he is a turf runner and this could be the easiest field he ever met on the lawn. 2-RED HORNET is another with poor recent form but another that has been far better on the weeds. He was stakes placed early in his career and has earned over \$170k in turf races. 8-LAND MARK DEAL has been better in turf sprints but he's another that will benefit from the move back to grass.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:50 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

7 Defiant Malice - 9/2 **8** The Speedy One - 3/1 **9** Border Patrol - 2/1

Have to give 7-DEFIANT MALICE another chance at this level. He's been ineffective in his two local starts but he was routing in his local debut, against maiden specials, and he had some trouble, on an off track, in last in what turned out to be a "key" race from which multiple members came out of that race to win their next. 8-THE SPEEDY ONE finished second in the first two races of his career but up the track in his last two. Now he's turning back in distance and dropping in class. Could reawaken. 9-BORDER PATROL makes his 2024 debut. Five of his seven races have been on turf and all have been at longer distances. But his trainer sports a 22% win average with runners returning from similar layoffs and when they trainer and this jockey team up, they win 38% of the time.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 6:20 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

11 Battle Scars - 7/2 **1** Degree of Risk - 3/1 **3** Professor Higgins - 6/1

11-BATTLE SCARS gets the nod. He finished fifth in the Hawthorne Derby in 2021 in his lone previous local start, after winning his first two career starts at Arlington, but has been far more competitive in many of his races since, despite winning only once since then. He's been drawing outside posts all year, today included, but typically runs competitively. The big change is adding blinkers for the first time in his career. That just might make the difference. 1-DEGREE OF RISK takes blinkers off after a three-race experiment with them. This Grade 1 placed runner, in 2021, is hard to figure. He's spent most of his career on the West Coast where he has had only minor success. In ten career turf races, he hasn't won and managed to finish as high as second only once. He sports the highest turf figures of any in here and it might be argued that he's facing easier company today but that won't be determined until after the race. 3-PROFESSOR HIGGINS could be interesting. This lightly-raced runner ran well in two of his three turf races but both were claimers. He's been gelded since his last start, however, and his recent drills have been brilliant. Might be headed to the best race of his career.



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024



Stakes Spotlight

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

- 11** Forever Young (JPN) - 10-1 **17** Fierceness - 5-2 **3** Mystik Dan - 20-1 **4** Catching Freedom - 8-1
5 Catalytic - 30-1

So much to look at for this year's Derby for a three-year-old crop that hasn't been tremendous to this point. With that said, there is always the potential for horses to continue to grow and mature as they get older so expect some of these to be factors as the season continues. Quick thoughts on the entire Derby field before looking at my selections:

- 1 - Dornoch - I was high on him off back to back wins in the Remsen and Fountain of Youth but he didn't take a step forward in the Blue Grass. With others with pace in here, the inside will be very tough to compete from.
- 2 - Sierra Leone - I'm taking a stand against him in the Derby and if he beats me, so be it. His running style is not conducive to winning this race and his gate antics in the Blue Grass were worse. In the Derby he won't be given the ability to be loaded last and could lose his race before the gates even open. There's zero value at 3-1.
- 3 - Mystik Dan - 20-1 would be a great price but I don't think you'll get it. He had all sorts of trouble in the Arkansas Derby but should be much better here, over a track he has run well at.
- 4 - Catching Freedom - Of the deeper closers I'd rather take 8-1 or higher on him than 3-1 on Sierra Leone. He has improved in every start and is progressing in the right direction.
- 5 - Catalytic - Honestly it wasn't a bad race in running 2nd in the Florida Derby. I wouldn't completely dismiss his chances of hanging around for a piece at a monster price.
- 6 - Just Steel - Ran some decent races in the Arkansas preps but not sure he's up to the ability of these. Tough ask for young jock Asmussen on this stage.
- 7 - Honor Marie - His moves always seem to be while very wide. With a field this size that could mean he's 8-10 wide in the stretch. Fully expect he's much higher than his 20-1 morning line.
- 8 - Just a Touch - Was up close to a very fast pace in the Blue Grass and hung in to the wire. He wouldn't surprise me if he continues to improve.
- 9 - Encino - Getting better with each start but his best races are on the lead, something he is very unlikely to see in this race.
- 10 - T O Password (Jpn) - In due to Win and You're in stipulation. He should be twice his 30-1 ML odds.
- 11 - Forever Young (Jpn) - The far better of the two Japanese runners in here. He's my top pick, he's very, very good. The Japanese breeding program on dirt has greatly improved in recent years. Go back and watch the UAE Derby, he was ultra impressive while racing wide the entire trip.
- 12 - Track Phantom - A speedy type that now adds blinkers for the Derby. Brutal outside draws in last two and still raced well. I wonder though, does he wing it for the lead and burn out Fierceness in here? Possibly...
- 13 - West Saratoga - Just doesn't seem fast enough to me.
- 14 - Endlessly - Can't knock a horse that has won five of six to open his career. He's never raced on conventional dirt though. But in the 30-1 to 40-1 range he wouldn't completely surprise me if he hung around for a piece.
- 15 - Domestic Product - He did finish ahead of Fierceness in the Holy Bull and won a very slow Tampa Bay Derby. Just not sure he's fast enough to win this race.
- 16 - Grand Mo the First - Stalking type but hasn't won beyond 5 1/2 furlongs. Does the Rich Strike impact keep him around 50-1, maybe.
- 17 - Fierceness - The deserving favorite off the Florida Derby and he did defeat Muth in the BC Juvenile last year. The concern is he has shown he's an every other race type of horse, which could set him up for an off day. A work last week that wasn't overly impressive over this surface leaves some concern as well.
- 18 - Stronghold - Normally the California circuit is where the top horses come from, but the two best out West were Nysos and Muth and neither are in this race (although if either were healthy and allowed in I think they would win). He's run well in his two starts this year but didn't take a leap from the Sunland Derby to Santa Anita Derby. Just think he needs to improve to compete in here.

19 - Resilience - A solid victory in the Wood but much like the Santa Anita Debry that wasn't a great bunch. Velazquez rightfully chooses Fierceness as this was a horse who finished behind Stronghold over this track last fall.

20 - Society Man - Trainer Danny Gargan couldn't have gotten it much worse with Dornoch drawn on the rail and Society Man on the far outside. He isn't fast enough to win this race.

21 - Epic Ride - It wasn't a bad race in the Blue Grass but he had a perfect trip and just ran evenly in the lane. He's better than some others that are in the field but still likely only a bottom half of the field finisher if he draws in.

22 - Mugatu - Aside from the Zoolander references, he's not fast enough. Put in at 30-1 but should have been 50-1.

With all of that said, I'm selecting 11-FOREVER YOUNG to win the Derby. He's undefeated, he's improved with every start and won the UAE Derby off a wide trip but under a very confident rider. He can race from just about anywhere and will provide some value in this field. 17-FIERCENESS is easily the best horse on his best day. The problem is that isn't every day. He has speed, he wins from on or near the lead, but he had the easiest of trips in the Florida Derby. Expect so much other pace pressure in here. Last year a bunch challenged early and Two Phil's was the only one to hang around late, finishing second. It could be the same in here for Fierceness. 3-MYSTIK DAN would love to see some rain on Derby day as it moves him up. Even without rain he can contend in here. He battled after trouble in the Arkansas derby but ran on late. Not sure we get the 20-1 on him though. 4-CATCHING FREEDOM is one of only a few in here that has consistently improved with each race. That was a big effort behind a slow pace in the Louisiana Derby and there will be so much more pace to chase in here. I expect he's a clear third choice at post time. 5-CATALYTIC intrigues me as he chased and was a clear second in the Florida Derby. That was just his first start around two turns as potentially he could improve while at a massive price.

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

KENTUCKY DERBY (G1)

This year in the KY Derby there are two horses that are likely to get a lot of attention though in terms of overall race strengths, perhaps not the strongest edition as a whole. The analysis should start with assessment of the favorites and working to poke as many holes as possible in those runners before working outward to the others. #17 FIERCENESS has presented himself as the horse to beat and his tactical speed makes him a threat in terms of trip in a full field getting out in front of others. While initially, he was my "pick" as the "horse to beat" he's fast, class tested and tactical but the races where he runs bad, he runs bad. The Holy Bull (G3) is not a race I can get past as a horse that is going to be a favorite in this race. In terms of #2 SIERRA LEONE he is a good horse with talent and on outcome had some little wrong. The devil is in the details as he was very reluctant to load in the GATE in the Blue Grass (G1) and drifting some (NO_LINE) things that could be real hurdles on this big day and big field. He has looked as good as any in the morning and that does give SIERRA LEONE and upgrade.

This race forces opinions and often they are that forced but often they strong and #18 STRONGHOLD. When looking at this horse there is nothing to knock. He has stepped up with each start and improved this year as a sophomore going in the right direction for this race. Like FIERCENESS, STRONGHOLD has a similar Runstyle with tactical speed to put himself into the race and class to pass horses and resist getting passed late. He has a win at CD and intent could be taken one step further as the connections based out in California made it a point to get this one races in KY right from the jump and could be a tell what they thought of him even before he made his first start.

On numbers he has not run quite the numbers of FIERCENESS (no one really has) but is fast enough to contend; nor does he have the "eye-catching" visuals of SIERRA LEONE though holds a similar record of graded stakes wins with foundation. In any case, he will be much longer than those two with many of the same boxes checked. In terms of playing this race, STRONGHOLD will be THE key horse.

#12 TRACK PHANTOM should be flying under the radar. He might not be on this level as a true contender though for a share, he is an include.

On the fence for both #11 FOREVER YOUNG and #7 HONOR MARIE as they make sense though some questions remain and will be used to some degree lesser than initially thought. Based on form and trip #3 MYSTIC DAN and #4 CATCHING FREEDOM in underneath spots. #1 DORNOCH was and still might be in the mix though information this week about quarter cracks has surfaced and must be noted.

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

2 Sierra Leone - 3/1 **4** Catching Freedom - 8/1 **17** Fierceness - 5/2 **11** Forever Young [JPN] - 10/1

THE KENTUCKY DERBY

Fierceness might be the best horse in the race but there's no guarantee that he'll get the best trip or even a good trip. I know his connections say they like the draw but he's going to have to work awfully hard to get position from out there with all the speedy runners to his inside. So, I opted to look for a runner that could take advantage of what promises to be a blistering early pace and that seems to have the ability to get the 10-furlong distance. 2-SIERRA LEONE just seems to get better with every start. He's only a nose away from a perfect four-for-four record. Like that he was starting to draw away in his two races this year, both at nine furlongs. The pace sets up but, as always, it's going to come down to the trip. 4-CATCHING FREEDOM is another who could be favored by the pace. He's another that has been steadily progressing. He finished a couple lengths behind Sierra Leone in the Risen Star but went on to capture the Louisiana Derby at a mile and three sixteenths. However, like top pick and all the other deep closers in this race, they have to deal with traffic jams and one brief check could cost them the race. Obviously 17-FIERCENESS is the one to beat. The Beyer Speed Figure (110) he generated in the Florida Derby was INSANE and people often use the last Beyer as a handicapping source. Obviously in a 20-horse field the trip is all-important and he could struggle to get the right trip from his outside post but he might really be that good. Would love to see the Japanese entrant 11-FOREVER YOUNG run well. By most reports, he is one of the best Japan ever sent here for this race and his perfect record, 5-for-5, lends credence to those reports.



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024

Jim's Picks

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:50 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

6 T Law - 7-2 **3** Little Steven - 8-5 **2** Bourbon Life - 5-2

Let's see if this is the first career training victory for Irvin Moreno, a longtime assistant to Frank Kirby. Best around two turns, this one posted a solid effort on return while sprinting, running on late. He figures to sit off the pace in here but should get enough speed in from of him to chase. 3-LITTLE STEVEN is one of those with speed who comes out of the same sprint as T Law last out. He chased and ran on late in that spot as he figures to go off favored today. 2-BOURBON LIFE returns to Hawthorne after a trip to Indiana where he never factored while facing tougher. He drops back in for the tag today and figures to be in the mix if he runs back to his race two starts back.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:20 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

2 Samarita - 5-1 **3** First Love - 9-2 **5** She's Inthearmynow - 3-1

This race looks more like a dirt sprint than a turf race. She's never run on the grass but 2-SAMARITA should be very tough in here from just off the pace. She comes off a starter win at Keeneland in her last and was able to string together six victories last summer. As long as she avoid the early pace battle I expect she is a major player late for a barn that is having a fine meet. 3-FIRST LOVE has speed and almost held on in her last. She shortens up an eighth in here which could get her to the wire in time. 5-SHE'S INTHEARMYNOW is another with speed who was a good second to a different Tanner Tracy horse in her last. She has a couple of easy works in Kentucky since that start but figures to be a player in here on turf or dirt.

Hawthorne Race 3 - PLAY OF THE DAY

Post Time 3:50 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

5 Red Label - 3-1 **2** Rivzonaroll - 9-5 **1** Time Heist - 2-1

This is a sneaky good starter race that has a fair amount of early pace in it. Off a solid second in Indiana in his last, 5-RED LABEL could be sitting on a victory today. He won his first two in Kentucky to open the season and has appeared to be a different racehorse since some time away. Let's see if he gets overlooked in here as well. 2-RIVZONAROLL has speed as he gets his best distance today. He could have company early but there is the potential that he outkicks Sonnyisnotsofunny and Bourbon Teddy to the top. 1-TIME HEIST doesn't always look the best while doing it but he somehow finds his way to the wire first. This is a step up off his last couple but he should get more than enough pace to chase in here.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 4:20 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

6 Go Stormin Girl - 7-2 **2** Style - 6-5 **5** Lady Atlantic - 15-1

There is zero early pace in this race, which is the one thing that could work against likely heavy favorite Style. Looks like maybe 6-GO STORMIN GIRL could try for the front as she has had tons of success over this race. She was a good winner in her last with a late rally but I expect she is much closer early in here. 2-STYLE has the class edge on these as she looks to gain some confidence on the drop. She was running on late in her last but the speed cleared and never stopped. To win today she is going to have to rate much closer early. 5-LADY ATLANTIC could be the other potentially to show some speed with there. She runs her best races at Hawthorne and at this distance. Don't be surprised if Mojica is aggressive early from the gate.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

7 River Ridge - 2-1 **4** Toscano - 5-2 **2** Pontus - 5-1

This field looks to have a couple of promising maidens in here. 7-RIVER RIDGE comes in off a good debut effort in his last. He stalked in there and ran on evenly in the lane. He has posted an easy drill over the track since that start as a repeat of that performance should make him a factor today. 4-TOSCANO debuts for Rivelli as he has a consistent workout pattern leading toward his debut. With Lasix first out and the trend for the barn, expect to see some speed from him in here. 2-PONTUS ran on nicely in his last as he faces open-company today. If he gets the pace to chase, don't be surprised if he is picking off horses in the lane.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 5:20 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

13 Beealea - 5-1 **11** Bluegrass Parkway - 9-2 **8** Land Mark Deal - 10-1

If this race is moved to dirt, I don't want to miss out on 13-BEEALEA as he has been good over this track. He showed the ability to rate closer early in his last and ran on late behind a strong winner. This barn is having a good meet and the post should improve if the race does come off turf. 11-BLUEGRASS PARKWAY looks to be solid on turf or dirt as he comes off a short layoff into here. He closed to win behind a slow pace three back and may not get much more to chase in here either. 8-LAND MARK DEAL is another that is good on turf or dirt. He makes his second start of the year but benefits from the move back to two turns.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:50 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

8 The Speedy One - 3-1 **9** Border Patrol - 2-1 **7** Defiant Malice - 9-2

The class drop and move back to a sprint should benefit 8-THE SPEEDY ONE as he makes his second start of the meet. He ran a good second in his debut before stepping up to face tougher in his next three. With the drop back down, expect him to turn things around. 9-BORDER PATROL comes in from Tampa for this spot as he makes his second consecutive start on the main track. He has speed in a race that is lacking pace as he should be able to clear from the outside. 7-DEFIANT MALICE drops a notch as he has a little tactical speed and should be able to get into the mix. The barn has had an excellent meet and Felix is riding well.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 6:20 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

6 Dapper Dude - 15-1 **13** Ronic - 10-1 **10** Aquacat - 12-1

Let's see if we can catch some prices in here as there's a decent amount of pace in the race. Let's see if 6-DAPPER DUDE can rally in time while at a big price. He ran on late behind a good daylight winner in Camp Daddy and that one stepped up to defeat Optional Claiming company in his next. He looks to be solid on turf or dirt and will likely be a price. 13-RONIC is a threat if he draws in as he steps back up off the claim today. He has tactical speed and has worked well over this track. 10-AQUACAT has speed and could be the one looking to clear in here. He comes off a bit of a layoff into this spot but has worked consistently toward the return. Let's see if he can clear in here.



Handicapping Analysis

Sat May 4th, 2024



Howard's Late Pick 4

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Howard Kravets

Race 5: 7 - 4 - 1

Late Pick 4 ticket: 4,7 / 2,3,4,5,8,10,11 / 7,8,9 / 1,12 (\$42)

Maidens going 6f compete in R5, and I have a feeling the Rivelli firster will be very live and take quite a bit of money. I'm choosing experience over possible talent with **#7 River Ridge (2-1)** for Illinois Derby-winning trainer Michael Campbell. The 3yo Kantharos gelding is bred to be good and precocious early. Most importantly to me, he has a start under his belt, a decent 4th vs. some good ones at Tampa. He puts the blinkers on and should show plenty of speed. I also like that he has a work over the Cicero oval. Might pose a problem for First Love late as she's in fine form as well coming from Turfway Park with Felix in the irons.

Race 6: 4 - 8 - 2

The first turf route of the season is a tough nut to crack. Of the many options, I'll go with the soft favorite in **#4 Simple Logic (5-2)** for Trainer Block, but not with a ton of confidence. The last race was just a prep for this on dirt, so don't take too much stock in that effort. Before that, he was very solid in New Orleans and here going two turns...any effort similar to those will give him a big chance to land in the winner's circle.

Race 7: 9 - 7 - 8

In general, I don't like to be as "chalky" as I am with these picks today, but they all seem very logical, and **#9 Border Patrol (2-1)** is no different. I'm a big fan of horses with tactical speed drawn to the outside, plus he has a nice work over the strip on 4/27. He could be a better horse on turf than dirt, but there isn't much to beat in this race. Works are solid for his 2024 debut, and Block's layoff numbers are very good.

Race 8: 1 - 12 - 7

The nightcap is a very tough two-turn allowance race, the type that should really interest bettors to close out the card. Veteran jockey David Cohen is now riding here on the weekends, and is aboard the classy gray gelding, **#1 Degree of Risk (3-1)**. Only for 1/15 lifetime, he needed his last at Turfway, takes the blinkers off, and should sit a nice inside stalking trip in the bulky field. He has steady works from Ky. and should ready to fire a good effort, getting first-run on the deep closers.