Handicapping Analysis
Fri January 3rd, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This race starts with the Garcia entry and key part in #1 MORE THAN FIVE back under similar N2 conditions from the common race two weeks ago with a game effort behind Corredor sent out from another very live barn to start the meet. The early pace should be honest even without entrymate #1A KYKEON, setting the pace, one that merits a look in their own right if for nothing else one of a few in this field with a win at Oaklawn.

At the projected shorter number will try to get creative with outside of the obvious second choice types: #2 PAY RAISE holds numbers that stack up with this field from their juvenile season. They returned from the layoff into claiming company with progressive numbers leading to the December allowance, a race they likely lost at the GATE very fractious and WIDE trip from the outside draw after and could be some intent here with the change in class, rider and three week timing.

Trainer Ian Jewell is just on their second season here at Oaklawn and looking for that first win with about 20% in the money coming back with #8 OUR BLOKE for the second start of the meet and moving to an outside post with the weight break for this second off the layoff and this season could present improvement and intent with the longer odds attached.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MR. THUNDERSTRUCK had a look number similar conditions last month and taken out of their runstyle with the scratches on the day turned in a good effort to hold place. They should be able to fall into their preferred tracking trip today and fitness wheeling back under similar conditions off the claim for the new connections.

The race winner #9 KHOZY MY BOY picked up the win, one of many this season for very very live connections and tough to dismiss on that current trend and will look to keep the win streak going here with another shorter number projected. With this runner they have versatility and could be key with the complexion of this field for C. Torres here. Their runstyle is similar to #6 ROCCO STRONG the two that expect to be favored in this race.

The rider change and layoff also comes into play for #4 BOOGIE BODE with M. Chuan back aboard. A rider that was aboard for their win last season and could be intent coming back around today off the bench. Number wise they are lighter than today’s par and had a softer par in the competitive races last season, though on numbers alone has turned in races as fast as the Amoss pair including #8 MAD ADAM one that based on the ML could be much shorter on the board than their actual odds to win.

In terms of the early pace, the 10yo #1 HOME RUN TRICK should be on the lead right from the jump and try to take this field gate-to-wire with back class in their corner. There are the clear reservations with the older horse coming off the layoff in the past and for these connections, though can be tougher as horses get older. That said coming off the layoff with the older horse might be the time to have them race ready and a positive with Arrieta aboard, a rider that has had success with them in the past and riding well this season – and does not look to be shorter odds to take the swing.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is such a good field, every runner in this race knows how to win and game group full of contenders top to bottom (modern day stakes races wish they could be like this, but I digress) with the preference to recency.

Starting with ML favorite and leading the Jacobsen pair, #5 ANTIQUE SILVER could present the class, upside and runstyle edge to #3 ROSE PALACE as a closer splitting the pair as contenders, though ROSE PALACE perhaps the strongest closer (big Square) in this field to keep in the mix especially for underneath. ANTIQUE SILVER still must show she can run the number and effort that earned the win back on 11/9 at CD to compete though has been given the right timing something that was not there and subtle excuse attached to the 11/27 effort.

#2 LAURA'S CHARM might prefer the turf though has shown as recently as September capable on the main track at the right level and with the right trip. Those factors came into play with the win that day though a win not out of the blue with consistent form and figures that fit on par and the connections have been looking for this ideal spot noting a pair of scratches in stakes events from December landing here to start the year.

Trip and a top effort will also be key for #1 PRINCESS IS OLIVIA one that finds a rise in class to race protected, the right move to at the least find out from the three race win streak. Number wise she has not shown much progression and while consistent especially as of late there are "faster" rivals in this field she must contend with an trip as well from the inside where they are likely forced to the lead.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The price and timing should be right to give a look back to #5 CRYSTAL SYMPHONY following the trip and BTL effort under similar conditions last month with interest (TWO_MOVES) through TROUBLE adversity and still competitive despite the 6th place outcome to IMPROVE on and will find a rider change today with journeyman Arrieta taking over.

#7 STRABELLA could also be given an upgrade from that event noting the WEATHER conditions did not NO_HANDLE (The noted WEATHER conditions on that day for the returning group should be noted with the inside deeper) and the race could have need the race off the bench and added ground returning to the route distance in this second start of the cycle – also with a rider change. Keying off the 10/24 common race back at KEE they were compromised on trip behind rivals #1 ROYAL LAUGHTER and #10 GRACE GIVEN both runners that were on the Very Slow early pace and assisted their outcome on the day tracked by the pocket trip winner. Both are capable here though ROYAL LAUGHTER does give up recency and GRACE GIVEN with the connections first off the claim and overall consistency likely favored with that in play, even with #2 EVOCATION in the field, could see those odds flipflop on the pair.

Also worth giving a mention to #6 UNSTABLE PRINCESS one that has recorded consistently some of the higher figures in this field and in the right level to compete. The hurdles today are the layoff they return from as well as runstyle, a deeper closer though again not out of it though things to consider on value.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Trainer Kevin Martin had a couple of very live longshot runners last week and taking note with those efforts and a pair in this race. #5 KITIARA unlikely to be the "longshot" in this race as a logical type and one that has been competitive under similar conditions in this second start of the season, cycle and from the WIDE trip on opening day oh and leading rider, C. Torres taking over. Stablemate #7 LITTLE BURRITO likely the longer of the two though would include with that trend while tougher to make the strong case for on paper is not out of it on this circuit and back to the statebred level while bringing in early speed

#2 SUMMER SHOES might not be as good as she once was though might just be good enough for this group. She caught at tough statebred OC event with the mixed field and higher race par with the WEATHER conditions thrown in the mix. The effort would make her tough to back under those similar conditions however catches much softer here and on the 19-day turnaround with Bowen back up takes away some of the "drop" concerns with the class change.

#4 SHE'S STORMING is another looking for the right conditions to compete and upside under similar conditions today in the second start of the season with that race (PREP) under their belt. The timing suggested a race could be required and outside of that did not have much go right with rider TACTIC- (a noted change here) and WIDE trip that at the leads should provide fitness. Previous rider sticks with #10 HEATED ARUGMENT one that fits the role as the favorite based on prior season numbers though current form and figures from the layoff return lack and edge over others in this field and lack value as the projected heavy favorite with that in play.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#11 MAGNETIC BEACH was claimed for $30k and stepped up off that claim now dropping back down to that level with fitness, recency and the distance cutback with an every other pattern those two one turn races with the higher figures and place outcome.

Bejarano sticks with #2 DINAH'S GIRL one that has been consistent at this level, though a touch short of a winning effort. That consistency is noted along with the race over this course and slightly higher par despite similar numbers to rival #1 HIGH SUMMER shipping in for the Garcia barn second off the claim.

Taking a stab with #9 PAYTON'S BEAUTY one that also has the benefit of recency and upgraded with the class DROP and racing in the WEATHER impacted conditions behind pacesetting winner Modo in a race with minimal change in running order and minimal ask (NO-PUSH) out of PAYTON'S BEAUTY on that day. As far as class, this is closer to a lateral move from the MSW races at CBY when bet down on debut, a competitive effort and followed up return last month racing

In terms of the FTS, #3 REECHO trains with runoff speed and can often get rank int eh works something they showed back at CD and in the gate drill on 12/20. Off those visuals and Santana aboard would look for them to be out in front and try to take them as far as they can. #12 SHANETT showed good energy on 12/19 another that could also show early speed and might have to, given the draw. #5 PHILLEEISRAEL is not one I have seen train including back in October working a half mile bullet from the gate at Hawthorne. That work recorded at the end of the meet and showed a gap until early December both longer drills, to suggest there is plenty of foundation there and capable hands the connections turning out a FTS with a good effort on debut last month.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a tough race that starts with the question on the projected favorite #9 I'M NO JOKE one that under normal circumstances would be play against coming off a favorable front end trip with the race flow and does not hold a similar pace advantage in this race, however the extremely live barn makes it tough to pick against though perhaps some others make for better plays.

#1 WIND OF CHANGE finds a similar hurdle as the other 10yo coming off the layoff earlier on the card. If ready and back to even close to their best they are a contender. The signs could point that way given the connections and C. Torres assigned – a rider that will often ride for the I'M NO JOKE team.

The opposite in terms of timing for #4 LIGHTNING STRUCK one that has been on a long campaign of racing without a break since coming off the layoff last January. Their better races in 2024 fit on par though not always the most consistent and often those higher figures are recorded with some give in the ground, an off track.

Both #5 WARP RIDE and #6 ATOMIC TONE could move up in this second start of the season and shift back into placing company. WARP RIDE is a little bit more of a stab still unproven on the dirt, though overall there is not much between the two on class, speed figures and runstyle to go with the longer of the pair.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The lack of a big move forward in the races from #2 COMPLEX SECRET opened the door to alternatives on the win end in the 12/13 race and similar as she has remained consistent has the benefit of a local start though still has left something to be desired to get excited on the win end. The overall effort was similar for #7 INDY BAY given the change of trips between the two. INDY BAY making just a second start could hold some upside though a much shorter number this afternoon especially with the rider change as Torres takes over.

#5 SPOTAWAY worked closer to a blowout from the gate on 12/20 used for early speed on their work mate and then cruise control the rest of the half-mile move slowing late in that 50 flat clocking and continued all the way out in the drill with their stablemate. They should be absolutely fit and race ready and even with Bejarano aboard present some early speed.

#8 BELVEDERE CLUB also shows some early speed in comparison to their mate on 12/22 under wraps in the half mile move. Physically could need the race and more ground with surface versatility. As far as the two J. Ortiz runners I have not seen either train so going off a more mediocre piece of info, trainer/jockey stats both combinations while higher percentage in other categories have yet to connect with a FTS on this circuit.

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Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The layoff return for #6 PHAROAH'S HEART on opening day could have been a prep starting from the public dismissal on the board assigned the role of the 2-1 ML favorite and similar in running when they broke SLOG and projected to be part of the early pace, that SLOG assisting front running winner and stablemate #4 CHANDANA, Connie K a race flow aided front running 10-1 score. PHAROAH'S HEART second off and back under similar conditions in under 30-days should at the least return to that preferred runstyle while and improved effort all around can be projected.

#8 BACKYARD MONEY also looked a bit short on fitness off the layoff. There was no trip excuse though unable to hold or improve as needed doing enough to hold for the minors. The race should provide fitness and while a top effort in line with ones recorded last year are required to compete, she does have those efforts to run back to.

As far as that common race #9 DEALING JUSTICE was a longshot to keep in the underneath mix and did just that. A similar outcome could fall her direction though the odds appear much shorter based on the ML. The lack of value being the prime knock for #5 MISCHIEVIOUS GAL on the quick turnaround (might appreciate more time between starts) along with the rise in class.

In terms of the change in odds that could follow #1 ALWAYS ANGELS one that did not offer value returning from the layoff last month in that contentious event, though longer odds after that 9^{th} place effort and today should also land a better racing dynamic for her runstyle.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 SEQUIN LADY finds a subtle form cycle upgrade with the timing between starts. She seems to require a little more time, 30+ days for a top effort something that was not provided back in October at KEE and with the softer figure for her abilities despite the show outcome on 11/27. Her stablemate #5 BACKED BY GOLD has been given plenty of time but might be a need the race type timing and one that does their better running on or near the lead and could find company in that role and perhaps even a trip asset to SEQUIN LADY.

Their former stablemate #7 AWESOME ANNMARIE finds closer to a lateral change and protected off the claim, a consistent type now in the Hartman barn should be able to hold their form with today's group. Similar could be said for #1 FOREVER HOME one that has the rain to overcome and might be forced into the lead with some other faster types in this field.

The local race record for #12 AMERICAN BAND would not be any surprise for the public to latch onto and come down from the assigned double digit ML. She will give up recency from the 165-day layoff though an exchange for class brought back down after the SETUP Matron stakes win in March.

#10 AUSTRIAN NAVY has been a competitive type throughout her career though saw the rise in figure returning from the layoff and going back to last March with the surface switch and conventional dirt. While her races fit as an individual the outside post with other early speed to their inside might make for a tougher trip to try and last gate to wire. #11 MAJESTIC OOPS also move forward with the shift to the dirt and some upside with the change in age while also showing runstyle versatility something for Torres to work with in this spot.

Santa Anita Race 2

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MARULA caught the eye in the DMR paddock on debut and ran to their looks (B-) while earning a solid 80 figure in the process. The visuals that presented PRERACE+ carried in running (MOVE, GALLOP+) as one to follow with the STRETCH out in distance and looks pointed (PREP) to this meet and with the key added ground.

Santa Anita Race 3

Post Time 3:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

ML favorite #3 THIRST FOR PASSION is one of a few in this field that has consistently run in the MSW conditions with the one grass race, the highest figure recorded in the three starts. Those factors give her a look along with the presence of Prat, something that should keep them favored into post time.

#4 DANZING MAXINE turned in competitive races on the grass prior to the long layoff they return from here though going back to those races and visuals could be one that still wants to STRETCH out.

Santa Anita Race 8

Post Time 5:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 POSITIVITY could have been pointed to this SA meet with the connections bringing them back off the layoff last month - a mere 19-days ago. Taking that race as just a "prep" they should gain fitness with the RUSH and brief duel/FTQ followed up by the NO_PUSH. The return with F. Dettori and back to their ideal distance, an extended sprint.

#6 SLIDER brings some upside in this third start back off the layoff. The connections showed intent to ship to KEE and upgraded/X_FLOW from that race and show finish, a B- OptixGRADE under similar conditions. As far as the Stormy Liberal Stakes they can be given a pass as it was "not their day" they were fractious in the GATE and contact/TROUBLE_S at the break.

Santa Anita Race 9

Post Time 6:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 LOOKIN FOR CURLY presents as a TURF runner and upgraded with that surface switch. In addition to the positive surface switch, their current form has been progressive pairing B- OptixGRADE in both starts and improving numbers. They will require a top effort with a solid projected favorite #1 MAX N' LOU one that moves up off their current form into this spot with the key class DROP.