Handicapping Analysis
Sat January 4th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 6

Post Time 3:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 GOLDENAGEACTRESS showed ability back at the sale and given a look when they were entered to debut during the Hawthorne meet. That followed from the 11/30 debut trip with TROUBLE_S making a WIDE MOVE X_FLOW and can IMPROVE off the effort and 5th place outcome.

#7 RATHER DISTINCT also projects to IMPROVE off the effort back in October at KEE - a TRAFFIC trip making a MOVE and complete ROUTER has the distance to work with on this course.

Second time starter #3 GIN RUN could still be a race out, though looked to use the 12/13 race as a PREP and should continue to move forward with racing.

*Playing AGAINST the projected favorite #4 GOOD CONDUCT and #10 ATERRADORA on the win end.

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

McPeek shows up with a pair in this race #4 HYPNUS making a belated debut one that was working forwardly back at SAR had a setback over the summer and has been on track working their way around and perhaps waiting for the 3yo year with the Lasix and added ground. Leparoux has the call on FTS though had been named aboard #5 CHIEF LIAM when this one was entered back under similar MSW mile conditions opening week. They have that intent as well as an initial start earning a follow in statebred company at AQU.

#2 THE WARDEN presented a strong CLOSE on debut and projected to move forward with added ground though with that change in the second start had a sneaky trip from the rail and into a Fast early pace over the turf. Freshened off that pair of initial start and with the barn change they stayed on as BOS while WIDE in the December start and the first for Moquett.

THE WARDEN is where Bejarano lands noting they were named aboard #3 CRISIS MANAGER when that one was entered in the 12/29 MSW race though in capable hands and back with C. Torres the debut rider. That 9/28 debut is worth keying off of with the greenness reluctant to load (GATE) broke SLOG (something they did in the November start as well) and struggling over the off track (NO_HANDLE) showed run making a MOVE and continued to GALLOP+ past the wire.

#7 HIGH LIMIT has improved with the addition of blinkers and racing. They have the benefit of recency and just one of two in this field with a race over the track. The trip back on 12/7 was not ideal stumbling (TROUBLE_S) at the start and TACTIC- held up behind horses making a middle MOVE.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 ALTO ROAD unable to pick up a win in 2024 allows them to race eligible in today's conditional claiming event. They appear live off the claim, under Torres and back at Oaklawn a course they have experience over though a big change in placement, noting those three prior starts all in stakes company starting from the place finish in the Advent stakes in the juvenile season.

#4 MAN ON THE MOON looked to need the race coming off the layoff on 12/7 during opening week. They have the benefit of the start fitness making a WIDE RUSH and taken in hand (NO_PUSH) after losing ground. They return under similar conditions and since the claim last April, Vance has had some intent and improvement keeping them at the one-turn distance.

#10 DERBY DATE also has the benefit of a race this season and can step forward off that effort and could even bring intent for this race and better value than when entered three weeks ago. The trip that day was subtle, the change in class is subtle and similar with the post position change moving off the rail factors to see progression today.

#2 LARRY'S LEGEND showing up for live connections must be mentioned and could see shorter than the ML suggests. This start marks the third of the cycle and progression in the return races when protected in allowance company freshened for this meet. #9 KNICKS STORY also for a live barn and capable though does give up recency and local experience and trip must also be factor in today's race shape with the projected shorter odds and assisted ML favorite role.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The majority of this field have been rerouted here following the weather cancellation last Saturday. That includes FTS #9 MONTANA CAFÉ one that appeared live with Santana aboard for the connections. The debut has been delayed not just one week but noting they were entered and scratched from MSW events at SAR and KEE last fall.

#12 MIRACLE ON CENTRAL has some buried form going back to the debut behind front running and future stakes winner, Donut God showing a CLOSE and then a flow upgrade setting a Fast early pace for the route distance, an overcorrection on 12/1 and that upgrade noted as The Warden place finisher on that day races earlier on the card.

#5 BERMUDA BLITZ is upgraded with the live connections along with the change in class - the DROP should be the right move off the races to date and recent visuals to suggest some class weakness for MSW condition and higher par. That extends to #3 WACO one that has been racing for the MCL tag though a change today with the $50k tag and finding a lower par then the event over this course at the route distance on 12/15.

The class change is closer to a lateral move for #10 ZOOM shipping in following the debut coming up short at the FG though upgraded with the race flow a Fast early pace. The B. Cox barn has been off to a slower start though likely to turn things around at any point and the public will likely look for that to be here with ML favorite assignment, something that should hold with Flavian Prat aboard., Vazquez named last weekend.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 CALIFORNIA TIGER comes in fresh and likely well-intended in this spot for the $30k tag where they fit on their best day. This one is a true sprinter and can show early speed, often their trip and tactics are determined at the break whether or not this one gets away clean or not. Showing more early foot would put the pace pressure on #6 BRITERDAYZAHEAD one that could look to be the controlling speed and one that has throughout their career found favorable trips to capitalize on.

#3 BEN DIESEL fits as well as any in this race on their best day and could be a clever claim and placement here. The timing and all around conditions on 12/14 played against even before the WEATHER conditions impacted the track profile a further hurdle on the day to this one as the betting favorite. The odds shift dramatically and should be overlooked off the recent running line and for the connections.

#12 GOT THUNDER was claimed at this level back on opening day, a time and place that appeared to have intent racing in for the claiming tag. Something they had been protected from since the Jacobsen claim back in August 2023. With intent, fitness and current form along with capable connections off the claim they fit right back in this spot. The ML is not overly exciting in this full field though could see drift especially with this outside draw.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is another race re-carded with the bulk of the field intact from last Saturday. Without much change to the field; #1 TWO DOLLAR EDDIE could present both the class edge and with the rail draw early speed, a pace advantage in this field. Going back to the debut last March, they were compromised at the break (TROUBLES+) rebounded with a place finish setting the pace from the outside post in the second start and held their own against open company with the return to statebred noted here.

#8 BURLSWORTH looks well intended for this meet with the return race off the layoff back in November at CD, a Flow upgrade on the day and that translates to a Plot upgrade with a shift in shape to a Q1 Square along with the recency edge over many others in this field.

A longshot case for #2 RANCH HAND as the connections thought enough of to debut in the Rainbow Stakes last year – a common race with the more established #7 GOD'S COUNTRY. The effort on the day was tough to assess for RANCH HAND with the stakes placement, WIDE trip and layoff that followed. They did not post a work on the published tab until November following that race though has been consistent and with the longer drills should be fit and would not be surprised to see an honest effort here.

Trainer Tammy Hornsby has quietly sent out some very live runners this meet including a dominant FTS winner Caliente Star to at the least keep #9 PARAMOUNT PAYCHECK on the radar paired with the projected long odds. Should also note with this race being delayed one week to the next year the other FTS #3 VINEY, as a three year old will debut here against older.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 LAT LONG found the PERFECT trip to pick up the maiden win closing out their juvenile season and could find similar on trip returning in this spot. While searching for that second career win, they have held their form and figures under a higher race par than today's allowance event to move up naturally.

#10 GOLDBRICK followed a similar progressive pattern last season with each race leading up to the January dominant maiden score. They were one to follow in the sophomore crop, though suffered a setback delaying the return. That return in the fall at CD brings current experience against older and on trip a flow upgrade from both events.

#5 BOURBON AFICIONADO brings in prior Oaklawn form that stacks up on today's par. Coming back from the layoff giving up recency on others in this field along with their runstyle presents some hurdles on the win end reflected in the projected ML (unlike #2 SILVER HEIST with similar Plot position/shape) though could get some racing luck and at the least a minor share.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 ATTACHE comes into this allowance off a win and consistent form and figures under similar N1X conditioned races, a logical type and on paper the most likely to hit the board. While logical, there are some subtle changes from the rider to distance as the post-position draw with the rail. Those factors should see them assertive from the inside though up until some success for Lukas last weekend, this apprentice rider has ranted to sit back and make a run – things to follow as they gain experience overall and on this course.

#9 JULLIARD is another worth a mention in the underneath spots as they make their second start of the season and rider change looking to move forward with that change and a more assertive hand here. They return likely overlooked by comparison to #6 GUNFLASH finishing a solid place an improved effort for the level connections at this level and by comparison to the allowance outcome from 2023. They look to find wagering support off that outcome and still class questions for #8 GOODASIWONSWAS the reservation at the shorter odds in the 12/14 common race.

As far as the early speed, Hawthorne is represented in that role with the two outside pacesetters upgraded in today's race shape with that potential pace advantage. #10 WILLIE BIRD was GREEN as the surface they debuted over though stepped up and stepped up with the rise in class and with each following start improving figures along the way. E. T. Baird aboard in the two most recent starts makes the trip for this one mount on the card. The older #11 LUNDBURG is more established and one that has Oaklawn experience. Their success last year was at the claiming level, though recorded numbers that fit on par and comes into this race with confidence on a three race win streak.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 KING RUSSELL looks well intended back on this circuit as one that has consistently shown up with their best here at Oaklawn. They picked up the maiden win during the sophomore campaign and black type with the place finish in the AR Derby (G1) – followed up with competitive allowance efforts with less than ideal trips in 2024. The connections have been forced to be patient noting they were entered on opening day sitting on the AE under similar allowance conditions and last Saturday when the racing was suspended due to weather, an abundance of caution.

#6 DAILY GRIND had a longshot look under similar allowance conditions on opening day (12/6). They should hold longshot status at least on the board coming off the 7^{th} place outcome – a running line that does not look like much “on paper” however opposite visually; a BTL effort starting with adversity at the break (SLOG, TROUBLE_S) that forced a MOVE X_FLOW and came out of the race to work a bullet half mile, best of 136 on 12/21 still could see some progression on this just turned 4yo runner.

#7 HOODLUM fits on overall form, class and pace with a favorable runstyle for today’s race shape. Intent could also come into play rerouted here from a similar event last Saturday and given a look with the Al Stall barn shipping in to Oaklawn, a move for only a handful of runners in limited spots in the past few seasons. This one made the trip from the FG where they had been training and could have found another spot closer to where the barn is based though press on here. #11 LAMBETH also based at the Fair Grounds and entered last week scratched from the Woodchopper Stakes has a similar runstyle and figures a more logical type off that coming into this race and will be moved up in the selections if there is a scratch.

Santa Anita Race 1

Post Time 1:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The ML is fair on #1 TALLIS second start off the layoff. While a return to top form is required the two races over the SA turf back in 2023 fit on par. In terms of improvement, they returned to the main track and sprint distance breaking SLOG and SAVED from the rail in a race with no real change in running order.

#4 BALDORO brings in current form and the right change in class back to the claiming level. They will find a rider change with Hernandez aboard, something that is crucial for trip as the early pace could be honest with others in this field.

#7 OOBUBBAKAKAYO returns to the N2 claiming level following an EX back at DMR in November. The effort at this level and distance on 10/11 saved ground to a B- show finish. Trip will be key with the 9f, a distance that could be further than their ideal.

#6 CUPID'S CRUSADER should be sitting on a peak effort and upside with the return to the N2L claiming level. They showed up with cone of the higher recorded figures in this field back in August and followed that up with a B OptixGRADE back on 10/20.

Santa Anita Race 3

Post Time 2:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 PETESOLDFASHIONED is unknown at the distance something that should see the ML stick to create value to get creative with. Outside of the unknown they are placed at the right level, a hidden big drop in class from almost every race throughout their career.

Santa Anita Race 4

Post Time 3:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 KETONIA won at this level back in August and follows a similar pattern with the timing between starts. The other common theme with that race, H. Berrios back aboard and upgraded with that intent as well as from the TACTIC- impacting the outcome on 11/17.

The starter allowance KETONIA won back in August was a slightly higher par than the race #3 CAMERON SLOUGH won under similar conditions just weeks later. All around they fit fit sharing similar runstyle to KETONIA with a late kick (Square) that should be set up with the OptixPLOT signaling an honest pace given the Sun Contention paired with the higher 78 SpeedRate.

Santa Anita Race 7

Post Time 4:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 EAGLES FLIGHT would be no surprise though a very short price on a horse that makes a belated second start, a much tougher/established group than the debut - that debut 222 days ago.

#7 INVIGORATED is proven around two turns and two turns on the main track going back to their dominate B+ debut last March earning a figure slightly higher than the number from EAGLES FLIGHT. They wheeled right back and could be given a pass for the May effort given their stablemate gate-to-wire winner, Mindframe and INVIGORATED had the layoff that followed. They turned in on the turf in November at DMR recorded a strong 94 figure similar to their debut) on 11/2 making a WIDE CLOSE and with a tough far outside draw on 11/30 upgraded making a WIDE RUSH into a Very Fast early pace - the race winner Siennois closing from off the pace (9 lengths back at the first call) and racing in today's turf allowance finale.

Santa Anita Race 10

Post Time 6:14 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

As noted with #1 SIENNOIS earlier on the card, they could find a similar fast pace to set up their late run in this field with the higher 70 SpeedRate. There are a couple of others to upgrade sharing a similar Quad IV Square position including:

#12 LIVING LIFE upgraded in this second start of the cycle, key rider change following a TACTIC- making an X_WIDE MOVE at a time the barn was COLD and hold competitive numbers, B- OptixGRADE under similar conditions at SAE going back to the 2024 races and should run a peak effort here.

#9 MALTESE FALCON also returns with a rider change following a TACTIC- and TROUBLE trip playing a role in the EX - EXCUSE back in August. The return to a flat mile is a different question mark all around as one that has been pointed to longer distance races and with the obvious trip could get public attention and shorter than the 12-1 projection.