Handicapping Analysis
Fri January 17th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Fair Grounds Race 1

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 GOLDEN CITY moves up naturally on the class drop and fin the second start of the meet after a WIDE NO_PUSH trip back on 12/20. The change in class moved up #2 SECRET WIDE on 1/1 earning a follow to IMPROVE from the WIDE MOVE after the SLOG.

Fair Grounds Race 2

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 NATIVE STAR finds a positive change in class and STRETCH out in distance to move up naturally off the prior races this season. A similar upgrade in terms of class for #8 JACKSON D making a belated return to the dirt and based on the maiden form on the main track should be able to hold their current form with today's surface switch.

The change in distance is an unknown for #7 HARPES HILL stretching out for just the second time in their career. The only other route race was in MSW company where class and race flow played a factor and tough to hold the distance alone against them in that case.

Fair Grounds Race 3

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 COIN MINOR can IMPROVE from the 1/1 start and returning from the WIDE CLOSE trip in this third start of the cycle. Today's condition is similar while in for the $30k tag though finds a much softer race par than the event a few weeks ago and since returning from the layoff and the stakes races in prior seasons.

Fair Grounds Race 8

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 OAK HILL LG brings in current form for this third start off the layoff and change in class. The caught a higher par off the layoff in November and stretched out two weeks ago and can IMPROVE off that effort and MOVE X_FLOW trip back to prior form and figures hat fit on par here.

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 HOLDING PATTERN has the benefit of a start this season and a positive change with the class DROP second of the cycle. Class wise they were overmatched in the allowance group on 12/21 though no favors with the trip breaking SLOG and showing interest with an X_WIDE MOVE despite the running line and finishing position.

#3 PEACE DOG returns to Oaklawn with the drop in class and could be key to compete here where they fit. Last season they were in too tough with the higher OC conditions and stakes attempt though going back to the three local wins from back in the 2022-23 season was the MCL win and the other two in restricted claiming company with a similar par and race shape.

#2 YOU VEE CEE holds a similar runstyle and a subtle change in class returning to statebred company off a TRAFFIC trip in the 12/21 return. Some of their better efforts and figures have been recorded over this course. Those efforts make them competitive here.

The lack of overall early pace paired with the rail draw could see #1 CAMPISI take up that role as the come off the layoff in this first start off the claim as well. The Wilson barn has started a limited sample this season with two wins both horses off long layoffs and both horses showed early speed ridden by today’s R. Santana Jr.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 12:58 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 CAN’T STOP WILLIS has shown run despite how it may appear on paper following them since their debut racing in TRAFFIC projected to IMPROVE put forward a competitive effort in the second start at long odds making a WIDE MOVE at CD followed up with a legitimate EX – EXCUSE in October at KEE. They have been working steadily since and could be one we have not seen the best of yet and jump up under today’s conditions and race with many in this field recent sophomores taking on older.

One of those sophomores #2 SPURGEON was given a follow from their SAR turf debut and moved up with the second career start. Number wise that August race fits on par here and should be sitting on a peak effort third making a positive PRERACE+ appearance off the layoff in November and with adversity in the 12/13 trip that did not allow them to run their race that day.

McPeek also shows up with #1 ELKO COUNTY could find the same upside as one the older horses and catching the right group. As one of the more experienced in this field they have recorded competitive numbers and races at times with some of those over this Oaklawn course from last year. #7 DARROW comes into this race on the opposite end as a 4yo in a second start stretching out in distance. He worked in company with stakes horses last year and since the sprint debut last month has been working with sophomore stablemate Admiral Dennis, racing in the Lecomte this Sat at the FG.

Sophomore #3 BROTHER TONY makes the change in class though has the local experience and route figures from the socal races that fit on par and those efforts presenting a class edge to #5 BOLT’S TREASURE another that will look to transfer their form here.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:26 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 GUANA CAY was reclaimed by Contreras and makes a belated return to Oaklawn, a course they have run over in the past and with success over this course in that 2021-22 season. She also fits this condition as a 9x winner that is eligible with the most recent win back in July at Hawthorne protected at the time in a higher OC event. GUANA CAY runstyle is similar to #8 MO SENSE one that was not entered when this race was drawn last week and shows up here with a drop in this second start of the season though a lateral change in par, something that has them short on contender status and likely short on the board as well.

#2 LADY MERCEDES could provide a price alternative to MO SENSE with similar form, class and runstyle. Intent appears in play they return to claiming company - the right move with the class DROP - claimed back on 11/8 and likely given the race protected wheeling back on 11/27 and in the right level to compete and retains C. Torres in the process.

#3 MARINA'S GOLD had a look last month and showed run, a sneaky good effort despite the 5th place finish and can all around IMPROVE. Outside of the timing second of the cycle, they will stretch out in distance and one that has shown early speed in the past. While not a "need the lead" type there is a scenario W. De La Cruz could be on the gas right from the jump, something that would add pace pressure for projected favorite, #10 DREAM PRINCESS in this spot.

In terms of DREAM PRINCESS they are certainly capable, and the barn has had success this meet placing runners where they fit. The value looks short in this full field on a runner that does fit though does not hold any strong edge over the others especially when factoring the layoff and giving up local experience.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 1:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 MALACHI was playable off the KY debut showing run over a tricky course and lands as a new face showing up on this circuit and in at the MCL level. Number wise they would not require much improvement to be on the level of their proven rivals and with just one starter this season, trainer Cameron Milligan did not pick up the win with their lone runner, though did get improvement out of that horse and if similar here is capable.

They will face a few others from that common race last month: #6 REAL BLUES was upgraded with the class drop on 12/29 and showed as much on the track with the outside post making a WIDE MOVE and competitive show finish and should hold form back under similar conditions here. Rival #9 STAYGOLDPONYBOY was also given the far outside post in that December common race and one that was vulnerable with that draw and the race shape. They can be upgraded here with the WIDE trip and going back to the BTL effort at CD and TROUBLE+ on 12/7.

Those two with different post positions and overall race shape could apply pace pressure to rival #4 CHICK COMMAND one that has shown legitimate early speed and with the weight break coming back today could look to try and steal on the front end.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Bejarano potentially had some options here and will take over on #1 PRIMO CANARY as they wheel right back for this second start, a pattern that has been used with success by trainer C. Hartman in the past. Class along with the lack of experience was concern in the debut earlier this month, though should benefit from the experience, subtle class DROP and physically a router back at the mile distance and compared to some of the other second time starters could be overlooked..

#10 STIGLETS is one of the more established in this field and one that has the route experience and flow upgrade returning from the 12/13 event. The change in class should present a further positive for a runner that has been searching for the right level.

#2 GATESKEEPER recorded one of the higher numbers in this field in their debut last month with a subtle trip they will look to translate here with the stretch out in distance. The appear no worse for the wear coming back in less than 30days, a recorded half mile work on 1/4 and remain protected in today's conditions with this placement.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 2:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 LUNA VIEJA was unfortunate with the call last season with the DQ after hitting the wire first though found quick redemption picking up the win next out at the FG and could still be looking for the local redemption showing up in this spot and in for the tag, a first time since taking on winners.

Trip will be key in today's race shape and with the rail draw as the early pace should be honest. That is in part to #8 J T'S IMAGINATION not quite a second thought though a second place finish under similar conditions last month and should hold form here with the lateral change and post position shift.

A pair of barns bring in a pair of runners with #12 BEN FRANKLIN for McPeek and back with Leparoux first time in for the claiming tag. They brings in a strong late kick for today's dynamic and to complement stablemate #4 COUNT DRACULA, one that has done their better running on the lead.

S. Asmussen could have a similar 1-2 pair as #6 FIREBALL BIRDIE with the weight break and some tactical speed makes a lateral change in class from the RP events, something that requires a best today for the top spot. Stablemate #2 CAWKAB has struggled to return to a best since their sophomore season and with some subtle trips along the way a case can be made for them here. They were against the race shape last month dropping back for the claiming tag, though could find a similar dynamic and trip to the ELP August race resulting in that most recent win.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:24 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 VIABLE has been most effective and recording higher figures when able to sit back and make a run, today's race shape could find that trip while returning to the two turn distance. Their effort and figure making a CLOSE and GALLOP+ in the September MSW fits on par and one of the higher recorded figures in this field.

(They will find a common rival as #8 IRINA'S CHARM shows up to make their season debut in this spot and only a second time at the two turn distance. The other race doing back to October at KEE on the turf, a tougher spot with the higher par and established group while still looking to find where they fit.)

That number is in line with the top from #5 LEMON MUFFIN from the setup win in the Honeybee (G3) last year as well as pairing the figure in November. Those efforts along with recency presented a look as the horse to beat on 12/20 and while the trip (TACTIC-) and SLOG was not ideal there are still some class questions to answer once again.

Some class questions could also land with #3 STANDOUTSENSATION from that 12/20 common race though kept in the mix for underneath; and similar class questions for the McPeek runner #2 MISS HEBRIDES

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 3:52 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#12 SEAS OF NORMANDY had a longshot look making a return to Oaklawn on 12/13 and given another look, one of contender status back from a BTL effort. Their runstyle is one best with a target and should have that in today's race shape with other E/EP types and the outside draw paired change in class returning to claiming company does not have to be as far back sitting behind first flight with first run.

Number wise #9 DR. SOULFIRE has consistently and most recently recorded the highest figures in this field. While a major contender on that front they will be tested to transfer those numbers to the main track and perhaps overlooked in that conversation is today's 8.5f distance, as one that has spent the majority of their career racing shorter. That change in distance is theme with others in this field including #2 CORREDOR, #3 GOOD LIKE MAGIC and #11 VERACRUZIN should translate to a faster early pace for the route distance and post positions that includes #1 GOLD BARON from the rail and might present more early speed.

A contentious early pace would upgrade #10 MYSTIFIER one that makes their way into this conditional claiming event and was not part of the group entered in the N3 claiming condition last Friday. Like SEAS OF NORMANDY they had a "longshot" look in the 12/13 return to Oaklawn and might have required the race though to their credit made a CLOSE into a Slow early pace while racing WIDE to bring fitness today and buried form that is perhaps less obvious than #8 STAR NATION, a proven closer.

#6 STAND PROUD will also stretch out in distance off the recent races though one that started off their career and spent the first two racing seasons at the route, two turn distance many of those races and minor finishes over this OP course and distance. They came off the layoff last year with success sprinting, however the success could have been as much a factor of class relief than shorter distance and off the recent races and progressive numbers in this third start of the cycle at the least should be in the time and place to put forward a top effort and longer odds for playable compensation.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 DIMATIC fits this N4 condition making their first start of the year and reasonable placing to start off the 4yo campaign. This was not a horse that was overly flashy to start off their career though one that developed with racing and showed speed figure improvement through the hearty 2024 season. Number wise they have yet to record the numbers like rival #1 SPEED BIAS, one that makes a return from the layoff and while they have plenty of races that make them a prime contender have that hurdle along with the rail and other potential speed to tackle as far as trip.

The timing and race shape did not develop for #4 DENINGTON in the 12/21 allowance and upgraded as they land here in this third start of the cycle with form and higher figures from last season to fit on par. They are not one that must run for the higher claiming tag though opt to do so the first time racing for a tag in their career.; #10 MYRA'S BOY also racing for the optional tag and optionally for the connections racing above condition as well.

#3 ARRO SMASH finds as good a spot as any to stretch back out to the two turns. They bring in fitness for this thirds start off the layoff and tough to take much from the 12/20 TP sprint when breaking SLOG and NO_PUSH perhaps not the ideal timing working just four days earlier and has come out of the race with a pair of works since along with the move to this circuit and could even look for the front wrap removal to signal further intent.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 4:50 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#12 KING PEANUT will look to get back on track this season with barn change from a less than ideal, abbreviated 2024 campaign. Their prior form with the dominant (B+) juvenile debut was an effort paired in the Rainbow Stakes during the 2023 3yo season when in top form with figures that fit on par here with regular rider since the start, F. Arrieta back in the saddle.

They find a change in post with the outside, a switcheroo with and main rival #5 ONE TEN STADIUM from when this race was initially drawn last Friday. ONE TEN STADIUM fits as a major player though will give up recency and one that more than the race record has the pattern of breaking SLOG and trip becomes key and going over the races a major factor in the outcome settling for the minor awards.

In terms of early pace it should be honest with #2 BETTYS CASH, #3 ATTA PARTY and #4 TABLE MONEY lining up side by side along the inside. Those three all hold positive factors from their return race this season, however, find a contentious spot and projected contentious pace with each other sharing a runstyle along with #8 MIRI A COINCIDENCE and #10 AL'S ROMEO another that was not entered in the race last week. #6 BLAME J D and #11 CHOCTAW ZIP could be lighter as far as contenders though a runstyle to pick up the pieces.

An underneath slice can be earned for the trio though outside the box, #1 BELLAMYS ROAN is a longshot to try and get into the mix at longer odds. At times they have run some of the higher figures in the field and proven with those races over this course and distance even if not always consistently doing so.

Santa Anita Race 1

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 READY TO DATE finds some positive changes to move forward in this second start off the layoff and chasing open length and next out winner, Oveta's Hobby last month. The return to the turf is a positive while in MCL company (DROP, SHORTER from 9/6) and sticking with the sprint distance. The sprint race back in October presents upside given the TROUBLE trip on the day and figure that sits on the higher side of today's par.

Santa Anita Race 4

Post Time 4:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 SHARP RIDE looks well placed to get back to winning way with the change to claiming company and sifter par than the races from the summer to closing out 2024. The WIDE trip last month should present fitness and favorable runstyle in today's race shape. #4 SOLID TUNE also holds some buried form returning to the N3 claiming conditions where they have been compromised with prior "trips" an upgrade though requiring price compensation at the same time.

Santa Anita Race 5

Post Time 4:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 BEE CATCHER is cleverly placed in this spot as one that prior to the 12/6 claiming race could race protected in today's condition. That LRC race was not their ideal surface, upgraded with the move back to TURF and STRETCH from the 11/23 race - the connections looking to just get a race before the end of that meet.

Santa Anita Race 7

Post Time 5:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

With price compensation #5 GIRLCANTHELPIT is playable. They fit to compete in this spot and with today's race shape though a terrible gate horse with the pattern of SLOG going back to the debut and VSLOG compromising their two efforts against winners putting in a strong CLOSE and can IMPROVE off the race just 16-days ago.