Handicapping Analysis
Sun February 23rd, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Brad Cox is one of two barns with a pair giving the edge on local experience to #6 BAOBAB going back to opening weekend, one that has been training steadily since and picks up Prat, a rider that hits with a positive ROI (45% win, 67% ITM) with runners in this category at OP – (100% with select filters). The recency edge sits with #2 ZARDUN one that turned in a solid effort with adversity in the FG debut last month.

Ken McPeek holds another pair and could make the case #1 FEVER NIGHT is more likely of the two to hit the board whereas #5 SHEPHERD presents some upside off the first two starts putting in a strong CLOSE and GALLOP+ on debut leading to the wagering support for the second start last month, a race they might have lost before it started WASTED a lot of energy out of the track and had adversity in running and notable rider change with B. Hernandez aboard.

#3 CLEVER AGAIN makes their belated return to the races and while I have not seen the return works to place visually, the return work tab is steady and appears intent shipping in from the FG to run at OP. J. Ortiz has been a main rider for Asmussen at the FG was aboard Hall Of Fame last weekend with the stakes win and looks to be a live, assertive call for today’s race as these type of returning runners often show early speed and in terms of the distance change that was in the cards going back to a scratch from July at SAR, that race on the turf though in that part of the year on that circuit grass is the only two turn option.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 12:31 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 DISTORTED PRO also requires a best as they return from the layoff though have been able to fire fresh off a similar break in the past. They also hold course experience from last year, contentious allowance races with consistent figures that fit in line with #5 B SUDD and #7 GOODASIWONSWAS some of the more “obvious” types – runners to that fit in this race though based on the ML could lack value.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 QUEEN'S MARTINI returns from a freshening and an EX – EXCUSE for this second start of the meet – a BTL effort despite the running line and finishing position. They made contact with the gate/TROUBLES+ (perhaps a reason for the added time between starts) and from there made TWO MOVES moving up early checked in TROUBLE and ran on again late. Their stablemate #14 POPPERINA also worth a mention should they draw in, she fits this race, perhaps a better fit for underneath as a deeper closer but another with an EX going back to opening weekend.

The odds project shorter today with #1 ASHBURN ALLEY returning form the place finish and photo under similar level higher allowance conditions here though does find some changes along with the odds shift to note when it comes to value moving to the rail, a higher race par and in terms of form cycle ran a huge race off the bench and will be tested to repeat (or improve) off that effort here.

#10 THERSASILVERLININ finds a rise in class though an overall consistent type and this placement with a return to Oaklawn has been the plan noting a scratch under similar conditions on opening weekend. She has kept up the consistent local works and should be fit off the series and intended for this class rise. She brings in tactical speed though not a need the lead type something to assist as far as trip and the early pace is tough to assess as there are some confirmed front runners with the established group lined up.

The early pace includes the returning #11 BROOKLYNN DREW from the layoff, one that could still be a race out though projects to show early speed all the same and similar for another longshot, #7 LAURIE'S SECRET one that appeared a PREP with the return, the addition of front wraps (look for a change today) and passive ride off the bench. While she has the ability to step forward as a lightly raced type, the longer odds are still valid in this case.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 1:31 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 JUSTIQUE looked to move up with the barn change as much as a tactical change with the win last month at the FG. For most of her career she was ridden as a deep closing type though not given her best opportunity with those type of tactics and with that noted along with the placement and graded stakes series he brings in buried form, not just a one race type and merits a look here to pair up wins and arguably has her biggest knock in terms of projected shorter odds.

#1 BENEDETTA is in sharp form and logical in this spot coming off the local win and on a four race win streak. She has tactical speed, some runstyle versatility and as far as the rider change after a win as Keith Asmussen sticks with #8 LADY MOSCATO, Flavien Prat is certainly a capable alternative and has been aboard in the past keying off the allowance show finish back in August at SAR.

In terms of LADY MOSCATO she wheels back from the Bugler stakes and a PERFECT trip and while capable here and tends to do her better running at Oaklawn she still might have to run a little faster against this group that has the edge over her on speed figures, something that would be less of a concern with price compensation though a knock as the third choice on the ML. #9 PISTOL (LONGSHOT) must step up in this third start of the season and from the Bugler Stakes though one that has recorded higher figures in the past that fit on today's par as a contender and perhaps the biggest change for her today is the move to an outside post where she has been more comfortable in the past racing outside of horses.

#4 SANDY BOTTOM could be live showing up here for McCarthy, a barn that does not send many to Oaklawn though had success on this circuit with the multiple graded stakes winning Ce Ce and perhaps looking for a similar with this lightly raced filly. SANDY BOTTOM still has a lot of running to do on the track to make the individual comparison though this is a reasonable spot for her to step forward in second off.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Starting the analysis with #7 CORNUCOPION a horse that should be favored and a default play given the connections, connections that have had success with maidens though rarely ship in a FTS and the works from this one compared to others from this outfit are fine, though nothing that really stands out from the crowd. As they project to take the bulk of wagering support the opportunity to get creative and outside the box in this full maiden field will be there.

S. Asmussen brings back a pair and giving the recency edge to #12 OIL CAPITAL coming back for this second start, a subtle trip and respect the quick turnaround and two works since to further suggest they have more to show. #2 FAUST has had to play catchup with the limited works coming back for a belated second start they were given the “bullet” from the gate on 2/13 though will note they did break SLOG in that drill while best in hand over their workmate and in a prior drill had been in company with older established sprinter, Ryvit.

#11 GUN RUNNER CHARLIE on a very quick return, on that showed run training out in California, caught poor WEATHER and track conditions taking KICKBACK in their December debut followed up with a very easy to see EX – EXCUSE two weeks ago and appears no worse for the wear given another work an easy 3f breeze on Monday and encouraging Vasquez sticks with them.

Vazquez had been named aboard #1 OY GEVALD when they were entered back on 1/25 and could as advertised surprise in this spot – they turned in a solid effort and with the rail experience in the debut last July and while there is a rider change, Gaffalione is no stranger to this barn looking at the sample of KY runners showing a positive ROI 26% winners including some MSW runners and 70% ITM.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 2:33 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

There are still some class question marks on #7 LAMBETH though recognize the intent showing up on this circuit last month and returning with the FG series of works and back on the road returning to Oaklawn for this race. Class could also be a hurdle for #11 SPOILER as they make their local debut; though has efforts that fit on par, a favorable runstyle for today’s race and even with the prime scratches should still hold price compensation.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Watching the races on Saturday and earlier on the card should be noted to establish if there is any type of track profile as that has been the case at times this season after the colder freezing days and noted for #9 RUNAWAY JACK, a deeper closer that should be sitting on a peak effort from the trips third off and should have pace to target though still requires a fair race track for that off the pace run. ML Favorite #3 ATTACHE has a similar runstyle as RUNAWAY JACK and figures in line with each other bringing their best.

#2 JUST STEEL could find their share of attention as often TC types do. The layoff and sprint distance create some hurdles not impossible though things to consider with fair odds to play and in terms of the return works, there should be plenty of fitness with the series and improved visuals on 2/16 with the front wraps off another thing to look for on race day.

#1 CARBONE showed some distance limitations while briefly on the TC trail and remaining at the sprint fits this individual. With that said, they still must show progression from the juvenile and sophomore season though reason to expect this could be the time and place, second off, a shift to the rail from the outside and WIDE trip last month a higher race par for that event noted as well.

#4 NASTY HABIT could also find a move forward in their second start of the season and wheeling right back from a subtle trip in the 2/2 allowance. Prior to that event the connections had considered running in the Byerly Turk stakes when initially carded for 1/23 something to suggest confidence with a runner making their layoff return and first start for a new barn.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 3:35 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#11 IN JUST MY HEELS is looking for her first stakes win and while the connections had that intent during the sophomore season not much luck at the time though with racing and maturity has stepped forward and coming into this race with confidence with local experience.

#9 NEOM BEACH might not have to show she is the best in the race if able to find the best trip in the field. She holds tactical speed something she was unable to show on 1/19 stumbling at the start (TROUBLE_S) checked off heels into the first turn and chased inside behind horses against a course profile with kickback that suited runners with outside tracking trips. She has come out of the race well to sit on a peak effort and could assert for the lead or with the outside draw track if some others try to send and track with first run.

#5 PEIGNOIR could look to take the role up front after racing in the POCKET with slight adversity playing a role in the minor finish as the heavy favorite last month at TAM in the Wayward Lass Stakes. While capable she could fall into a similar betting pattern with the public and does not hold as much of an edge in that role while giving up local experience.

#2 BRU NA BOINNE also brings in similar form and tactical speed while capable of moving forward in the first start of the year and should present value of that pair into this race, a race the connections could have been pointing to.

#1 UNDER THE PALMS also has the edge in local experience and last season, the April allowance was favored over IN JUST MY HEELS on the day and some excuse in that role TROUBLE_S/stumbling coming out of the gate to be fair. UNDER THE PALMS also caught an EX _ EXCUSE back in November in the November allowance, with legitimate TROUBLE, a common race with PEIGNOIR and #10 AMBER CASCADE and worth a value inclusion as she should be higher of the set in this field.

#7 BOW DRAW is a longshot and tough to make a strong contender case though at perhaps the highest odds in this field could with a top effort find her way in the deeper exotics.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:07 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

HONEYBEE STAKES (G3):

In terms #1 MUHIMMA the projected favorite as an individual she fits in that role though things become more complicated when it comes to fitting a race shape. She brings in early speed and from the rail once again is unlikely to hold many tactical options and should find company up front. From there and on the inside, she has a BOS opportunity though at the same time could set up a stalking trip.

#5 QUICKICK fits that pace scenario coming back today to make her seasonal debut. She was given time before returning to the published worktab late in January, has the four drills and longer 5f moves, works I have not seen though enough to have her fit and intent with regular rider D. Davis coming in town to ride and has plenty of mounts earlier on the card to get familiar with the Oaklawn main track.

#12 QUIETSIDE has the edge when in comes to class and with each race to date consistent on the track though today will be the day for her to show she has improved in the speed figure department, a step up to run faster is required to contend in this division. This would be the time and place for her show up. The trip last month in the Martha Washington was subtle TROUBLE behind rival #6 TAKE CHARGE MILADY with the PERFECT trip and another that has improved this year though still requires a step up number wise as well.

While there is certainly a case to be made for more “logical” types to get a call in the selections, longshot #10 FLASH WEAR is worth getting creative with coming into this race. She showed improvement race to race last year and with added ground. The Golden Rod (G2) was a tougher test (DROP) closing out 2023 when it comes to contender though showed interest after stumbling at the start (TROUBLE_S) and early adversity showing interest late behind the division leader, Good Cheer. The connections showed up with the PREP last month against older in a sprint race to establish some fitness and should be sitting on a peak effort here – plenty of price compensation to see if that peak effort is good enough for this group.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RAZORBACK STAKES (G3):

#3 FIRST MISSION expects to go off as the favorite; when it comes to class and speed figures he has that edge and a horse that has shown not quite on the G1 caliber, this $500k G3 event checks the boxes.

#7 DIMATIC also showed some class weaknesses while briefly on the TC trail last season though with trainer recognition found a different path of success where they fit. To contend here, this race requires a top effort, though should be sitting on that peak effort with back numbers to build off of from the sophomore season and second start off the layoff. He is given a flow upgrade from 1/17 allowance part of the Fast early and late pace and noted as he is not a confirmed front runner staying on as the BOS and looks to have come out of the race well training forward and consistent since.

The S. Asmussen barn followed a similar path with #12 RED ROUTE ONE following his sophomore season with consistent stakes performances placed where he can compete; and this spot is one where he fits all around. Coming back in the Clark (G2) he likely needed the race off the layoff and while improvement was projected in the Tinsel Stakes, Santana the pickup rider that day, had this horse detached from the race and to their credit still put in a late CLOSE, and noted with Cornhusker (G3) win rider (and place finish in the Rebel (G2) – 2022) C. Torres taking back over.

Oaklawn Race 12

Post Time 5:53 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#11 TOUCHDOWN ARKANSAS looks massive coming back from the layoff into this race and appears live on return and one of the few 4yo in this field. With the scheduling late in the meet for the Rainbow Stakes, the spot where TOUCHDOWN ARKANSAS debuted in 2024, some connections take their shot with the timing though did not appear the case for this horse, a horse with some ability and some wagering support bet down to 10-1, the 4th choice in the wagering from a 20-1 ML and upgraded chasing WIDE on a Fast early pace along with the time off that followed.

In terms of the group returning from the 1/25 common race, #8 TWO DOLLAR EDDIE stayed on for place as the BOS and could just hold an edge here at the same time has had a potential pace advantage in the past and come up short, something that could open the door again on the win end.

#4 BOTE was in against older that day for the first time and one that turned in a BTL effort from the debut, a winning/B effort on 12/29 and could present some intent with a rider change and two works this month to suggest he has still held form.

#2 MAYOR looks live for their debut, they hold a steady series of works coming into this race including the bullet from the gate back on 2/3 before outworking stablemate Penrod, one that is running in a MCL race on the Saturday card to follow.

#3 CUTTING CLASS is worth a mention on a different path exiting the age restricted MSW event on 1/23 though with a complete EX – EXCUSE on the day checked and stumbled off heels TROUBLES+ at the start and took KICKBACK behind horses after impacting the outcome first out and appears to have come out of the race well two solid half mile works since.