Handicapping Analysis
Mon February 24th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 TIWANAKU returns to Oaklawn and the main track with the change in class to move up under today's conditions. Following the claim they showed up on 1/5 for their seasonal debut, given a flow upgrade chasing close to a Fast early pace something that carried earlier this month at TP while WIDE at the same time and should be fit in this spot and intent with Torres aboard.

#4 MR. THUNDERSTRUCK has held their form this season though not often at the right level for their abilities or tactically in the right position to compete. That extends when taken out of their runstyle pushing the pace on 12/13 and was competitive following on 1/3 in a higher race par, that higher par continued on 1/26 and tactically taken out of their preferred runstyle again with the 2/8 dynamic.

#7 FIRE BRYAN fits as well as any on his best day and should provide value with the change in distance along with the recent finishing position. In terms of current form, he brings it in the third start of the cycle compromised with the X_WIDE trip on 1/3 and a flow upgrade with the top two from off the pace from a contentious claiming event on 1/26, a race with a similar par to today's race. In terms of race flow, #5 CANDY FOR CARMEL could be a downgrade with the early pace to run at on 1/23.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 1:05 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 LADY ASTRID fits as the horse to beat based on prior form and upgraded from the trip and visuals in the 2/3 common race, a race that could have been a PREP and something for her to IMPROVE on. With that said, K. Harr has continued to ride COLD up until the time of analysis and noted with potential shorter odds.

#2 PETULA can be upgraded in this second start of the meet (PREP) the subtle trip and rider change with journeyman F. Arrieta taking over. She has the ability to show more tactical speed something unable to assert with the WIDE SHUFFLE and despite the outcome and running line showed a sneaky late CLOSE. Her ability to show tactical speed could press #6 SHE'S STORMING looking to turn the tables today.

#9 WAR MUSIC takes a different path into this race and returning to the claiming level on this circuit where she fits and was more effective last season. In terms of the current form she might have required the race off the bench in December and brings an upgrade from the route as part of a Very Fast early pace for the distance. Some further intent could follow for a throwback IL jockey/trainer combination.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:37 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 GASOLINE should be in the right time and place to compete third start of the cycle and finding class relief into this event. The showed up under a similar race par on 1/5 a competitive show result with a WIDE trip and stepped up for $40k a higher par last month was compromised with KICKBACK.

The gate EX - EXCUSE follows #9 W W CRAZY from the 1/24 start and never in position to compete. Trip is the crucial key for this runner at the route distance out of the question though still needs things to work out the right way to win.

#6 SUNRISE DRIVE should find an honest pace for their late run and a young rider that has had some success with off-the-pace types as T. Bacon takes over. They have been able to improve second off keying off the November WO effort and upside from a subtle trip last month. #5 RIGHT TONE has been able to hold their form this season and shows up with a lateral change in par off those events. They caught the eye with a BTL effort on 12/22 and never looked comfortable from the inside and rail draw last month, a noted positive post position shift here.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 2:09 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 OSBOURNE has a look to get back to a top effort returning with Santana in the saddle while looking for their first stakes win. They bring in early speed to keep #3 DISCO BALL honest on the lead, one that could be dangerous if allowed another "LONE" trip.

#2 BOOTH should also come back more assertive they had an EX with legit TROUBLE+ in the mid back on 12/27 still recording a solid figure that day all things considered.

As far as #1 WENDELSSOHN they have been in top for this season though at the same time tend to follow an "every other" pattern and wheeling back in three weeks from a new top in the 2/2 allowance - a shorter 10-day rest into that race from a WIDE trip in the Byerly Turk common stakes race.

#6 CHIRINGO will also look to carry their top form back to this race. They benefit from a favorable TACTIC+ trip as well as some key scratches from the 1/31 allowance.

#4 GOLD LUCK is a legitimate longshot to win though on their best day have recorded figures in line with many of the rivals - class and trip/pace still a hurdle to clear along with presenting a top effort.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:41 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

While #8 MACRON makes sense in here with the consistency this season under similar conditions will try to find an alternative on the win while keeping him in the minor mix. #4 MAJOR BLUE brings in some positives for this race between the trips this season from an EX on 1/5 to TROUBLE_S a few weeks later and now paired with the change to claiming company. Those factors should allow their best chance to compete and continue on a forward speed figure pattern, especially when putting a mark through the EX.

#6 W W SCOUT’S HONOR credited after many hard fought OP battles found their belated win in December and could account for some regression in the 1/5 common race. They return with the 50-day freshening and first time in their career in straight claiming company.

The change in class looks to bring intent for #5 PROPRIETARY TRADE back in this spot for trainer M. Maker - and with N. Juarez sticking with MAJOR BLUE, C. Torres picks up the mount for these connections, combined connections looking for the second win of the meet sending out On A Spree to a dominant win earlier this month.

#1 GOT THUNDER takes the step up in class first off the claim and a horse that has struggled to win this season, though brings in form and this race while a rise in claiming tag is closer to a lateral par that could see them competitive right back. While they need a lot in their favor to win between the change in class and barn the odds could reach overlay territory.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 3:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The pattern of contentious races continues here as any one of the 8 winning this race would not be a shock and many cross connections in this race as well. #7 BIG BOAT gives up some recency though might have required the time to recover and recover from a very physically taxing race in the Breeders Futurity their second career start and following that race added the front wraps and paired up WIDE trips both at CD and in the 12/13 OP allowance both races behind competitive stakes runners.

The only runner in for the high $200k tag is Cal-bred stakes winner #8 R HEISMAN one that fits on class and speed figures and despite coming up short as the favorite in the three recent starts he was right there and just racing luck away from the win. The barn will also return with #3 CURVINO one that has yet to run as fast when comparing speed figures though has to their credit the edge on surface/distance experience and wheeling back from a “winning” effort under similar conditions, albeit lower par last month.

In addition to R HEISMAN, Gary Barber sends out #1 BERMUDA BLITZ one that will be tested off the conditional MOC win last out with a favorable trip and race shape. A favorable trip that also carried #2 WHAT ME WORRY last month with the higher MCL win at GP after catching Burham Square in the December debut and appears pointed to this circuit noting a scratch under similar conditions on 2/7, allowing a little more time between starts and kept up training working twice since including on 2/8 the day after the scratch.

McPeek also brings back #6 CHIEF LIAM one that might have been assisted on 1/4 with the barn scratching Hypnus from that race and did IMPROVE as projected from the debut TROUBLE trip though number wise must improve and perhaps could have preferred to see this one back sooner. His ability to show tactical speed in that win should assist to keep the early pace honest, an early pace that should look for #4 HEAVENVILLE and #5 THE WARDEN to contest right from the jump.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This entire field has some intent behind them and tough to take #1 SPRING DANCER at a shorter number, one that has shown her best in the races to date and come up short of a winning effort and outcome. Perhaps the experience carries in this group though prefer to look towards other “new” faces and would even upgrade #4 COASTER of the pair coming back from the 1/18 common race.

That race also returning with #5 DARE TO FLY though another that requires a bit more and of the S. Asmussen pair in this race would look toward #6 AVERY’S MISCHIEF as the lone runner to make up ground (BTL) after missing the break behind the pacesetting and next out TX statebred stakes winner, Modo.

#7 NOW WE GO showed run in the morning leading up to the debut and might not have shown their best on the day could be upgraded from her debut closing out 2023 chasing a quality type in Miss Martini one that will race later on the card in the Dixie Bell Stakes.

#3 MIA’S MOM would have to pick it up from the first two starts though noted company lines with a few stakes types in the SAR debut though the September CD race has not been nearly as productive.

There is a solid group of FTS and capable connections and connections with #9 THERDGOESONFOREVER and #11 LADY OF SILENCE that will likely get the bulk of support from the runners in this category. Watching them train into this race, they would be no real surprise to have their named called at the end though visually give a look to #2 DANCING EYES one that does not have the jump off the page stats or even published work times though the half mile move on 2/14 is pretty swift and she has some run while not always asked to show it in practice.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 4:17 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 STELLLAR LILY has shown some distance limitations at time and including the freshening earlier this month – setting the pace, a X_FLOW upgrade and race won by her stablemate In Just My Heels. STELLAR LILY has been able to win at the 6f distance in the past and some of her better figures recorded at Oaklawn with just one of her local races a 6f sprint, a MSW race back in Jan 2023 when a sophomore against older at the time and earned a solid figure in that show result.

Santana has been aboard in the past and might have had some options in this race and interesting they land with #10 MARMALADE SKYE one that should they run here on shorter rest comes into this race in top form since the claim for Jacobson and following a winning/B effort for the level with TRAFFIC TROUBLE adversity impacting the place outcome just over a week ago at TP. Stablemate #12 PHAROAH'S HEART turned in a competitive race at the level back in January that would have her in the mix here on repeat.

#1 TRIPOLINA made a bold WIDE MOVE at the level two weeks ago though appeared visually and perhaps the connections more of a ONE_TURN type and noted as she cuts back in distance for this race. She has the experience and place finish going back to December, a solid effort with a WIDE MOVE continued to CLOSE behind the pacesetting winner with the top four together at the wire and GALLOP+ out strong after.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

DIXIE BELL STAKES:

The rescheduled Dixie Bell stakes from the back half of the card weather cancellation last Saturday does not change much outside of the addition of #1 WISCONSIN GAL and subtle changes in post position. #8 MISS MARTINI being one of those with the rail last week moves to the outside here and potentially given a few more tactical options for K. Asmussen. She shows up fresh for the seasonal return and confident placement in stakes company. She turned in a solid effort on debut with the WIDE trip and stepped up number wise with the PERFECT trip MSW win closing out 2024. (That race is tough to assess without others running back though) watching her work into this race looks well training in the morning and looks ready to get back on the track.

MISS MARTINI will face others with stakes experience including her stablemate #3 INNOCENCE one coming off an open length win at Sunland though overall lighter numbers and in terms of par and purse this is a step back up the ladder.

#4 YOU'LL BE BACK had a subtle trip with the early X_FLOW advance making her route/two-turn debut that ultimately settling for place in the Years End Stakes and a contender right back at a similar level. #7 G W'S GIRL also with the stakes experience and the dominant effort winning the Mockingbird Stakes last month. She seems to track and make one run something she also showed at KEE on the turf CLOSE for the BLANKET finish and the early pace should be honest with the addition of WISCONSIN GAL and #6 WHATA MOON shipping joined by #2 GUNITE MAX and #5 SPANKERBOOM runners with sprint speed and intent for this spot and that type of front running trip here.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 5:23 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 JUILLIARD brings intent stretching out from the recent sprints and belated return to the route distance while finding class relief in this third start of the season. Their current form cycle began with a competitive 4th place run under similar conditions off the layoff in December and followed up by a complete EX – EXCUSE last month with adversity start (SLOG, TROUBLE_S) to finish (TROUBLE WIDE) and NO_PUSH late.

#8 SEARCY has been waiting for a race this season and the connections had considered running back in a sprint last month protected in starter company though land back around two turns over the course and distance of the maiden win last season. Since then they have shown where they fit and picking up the claiming win back in August at MTH dictating the placement here.

#5 MYRA'S BOY could have been given the race coming off the layoff on 1/17 noting for that event they were racing above condition at the N4 level. That suggestion of a "prep" along with the WIDE trip played a role in the outcome though coming back to N3 company is technically a sound move and should be fit from that trip in this second start of the cycle. On their best day they have run as fast as rival #6 DOUBLE BARREL one that could be favored here and finds closer to a lateral change in class with the shift to this circuit and today's field. The lack of value based on the ML is noted for #11 BOLT AT MIDNIGHT finding a rise in par with the rise in class coming back from the two month break here.