Handicapping Analysis
Fri February 28th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 CLASSICALLY has been freshened for this second start on this circuit and with the race back on 1/5 a complete EX – EXCUSE with the TROUBLES+ as their legs buckled and then dropped right to their belly and to their credit showed a MOVE against the dynamic/X_FLOW with the 5th place result.

#2 LEAR finds the class DROP something the connections have been reluctant to do with this runner and noted the change in circuit after the first two starts last season and moved up with the circuit switch. The par and purse from those allowance races make this a lateral move to compete here.

#1 POINT BLANK has shown improvement with each race this season coming back off the layoff. The show finish on 1/24 upgraded with TACTIC- making an early WIDE advance to contest the X_FLOW pace. The pattern from last year followed a similar pattern and the figures from late March/April fit on par here.

POINT BLANK is not a need the lead type and has been able to pass horses something that could be noted with #3 EAST FROM WEST taking a different path into this race but another flow upgrade from the 1/18 TP race and freshened for this move back to the dirt likely to show early speed and joined by #6 YOURCUZFROMBOSTON stretching out for the first time and the hand likely forced from #10 BIG GAIN with the outside post to use for their best chance to compete right back first out against winners.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 1:03 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The early pace should be honest with the complexion of the field and likely to show early speed from the set of FTS as well. #6 SENDING can be given the edge of the front runners and back at the statebred claiming level – the right level for their abilities with the knock outside of race shape colder connections and projected shorter number when it comes to playability especially on the win end though kept in the mix.

That contentious early pace should assist #7 TACTICAL EXPRESS keying off the 12/6 effort when they had a Fast early pace to target at the level and given an EX with the TROUBLES+ on 1/19 for the conditions MSW race on a day with severe track kickback.

#9 WOODCUT finds some changes for this second start and could make they case she has more to show. The change in class could be taken as closer to a lateral move in par though intent with the move to MCL company and appears to have come out of the race well working twice since. Apprentice Gutierrez will get a chance here looking for a third win. That shifts F. Arrieta to #12 MOENCHANTED one that has a look in this spot based on form from last season. Coming back off the layoff was not thrilled with the 1/28 visuals and did not see the next work on 2/23 – the work 3.5 weeks later.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:35 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 BERTIE'S CAUSE looks well placed to contend here back at the claiming level in the second start of the cycle. She should be fit coming off the WIDE trip with the higher par in starter allowance company a few weeks ago and the outside draw and field complexion could see a similar dynamic and trip to the 12/15 success once again. Number wise she has run consistent and arguably faster than #3 CANDY ARCADE the projected favorite, and the two sharing a similar tracking runstyle.

#7 SHIP IT can be given a look as she maker her belated second seasonal start coming back from a productive claiming event from 12/14 and coming back in this spot could present the value and right running style for today's race shape to present the edge over #9 ATLANTIC STRIKE following the same break in this event.

Based on the ML #10 LEGALLY LUCKY could be a number too big to ignore. While she returns with the distance change the class change is the right one to move her up naturally. While route and sprints are two different games keying off the 9/29 Hawthorne allowance her internal fractions from that win would be competitive with today's group at a sprint distance.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 2:07 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 PITTSBURGH should be sitting on a peak effort in this third start of the meet and returning to the route distance and capable of showing early speed. They caught a WIDE trip over a drying out course off the two month break in December and despite the running line and finishing position showed a sneaky CLOSE in the sprint last month – a race won on the front end and outside of the closing place finisher did not have much change in running order. Something to note for #2 COST BASIS wheeling back from that common race and show finish as they will be tested again at the route, two turn distance something they have struggled with in the past on the win end.

#11 VANISKY was moving forward with the timing and shift to Oaklawn and going back to his California days has figures to fit on par. The progression carried to a competitive effort back on 2/3 – a similar par as today's event and noted with the less than ideal timing wheeling right back on 2/24 as well as a higher par that day. They also find a rider change with Gallardo taking over and should be a good fit for this horse.

#4 FIGHT N' READY needs a big turnaround though at a projected big number again is worth a mention. He has had some excuses with the local efforts this season with his off the pace runstyle against the dynamic and track profile in those events.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 SQUARE BABY comes into this race with figures below par though a lightly raced type that could still present upside and run a new top. The race on 10/24 was a big tell that she does not like to race behind horses and unlucky following that maiden win with the rail draw on 11/24 the race she was claimed out of and shows up her a big ride though an assertive move and not just "taking a stab" as the connections had entered at a similar higher level – the 1/23 race others return from here and the connections have had many opportunities to run at a lower level if that's what they wanted.

#8 DAISY DUKE leading off the group from the 1/23 event where she presented upside from the juvenile season and showed the improvement on the day with new top figure. The track profile was tough to make up ground with kickback and the race winner, Gunite Max was able to make the lead and #5 COMPLEX SECRET stayed WIDE and clear to make their MOVE into show.

#9 BAYTOWN BUTTERFLY is another longshot to make the case for. In terms of speed figures she is not always the most consistent though has on multiple occasions recorded figures on today's par and in line with the more obvious type and the pair from 1/23. A lot of the inconsistency is due to placement and timing with the series of four stakes attempts after a debut MCL win and moved up with allowance company at CD in September before stepped back up in the Matron (G3) and followed up with a quick return in allowance company at HS Indy closing out 2024 – a trip with adversity playing a role in the outcome and coming up short as the favorite on the day with the layoff that followed being the one she returns from here.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 3:12 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Tough to knock the BTL effort from #4 EXPRESS CRUISER and recorded figure last month, Though will be tested to repeat against arguably a tougher group and full field coming back today at what is expected to be shorter odds.

#5 BOAT SONG can be given another look here though starting to run out of chances if things do not turn around today. The patience with EX – EXCUSES started back in September at CBY and upgraded making a RUSH X_FLOW in the Hawthorne closing weekend allowance on 10/13. Freshened from that series for this circuit the return to claiming company made sense based on prior OP placement though the EX on the day from the outside post broke slog and made a WIDE RUSH X_FLOW.

#2 J J'S RANGER comes back with the two month freshening for this race and appears intent with the steady works, the addition of blinkers and overall intent for Oaklawn with the timing of the November claim and December placement.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:44 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The majority of the 2/15 group shows up here rerouted after the second half of that card was cancelled due to WEATHER. #4 CHAMPAGNE ROSE has shown intent to run here at Oaklawn entered under similar conditions on 2/1 and again on 2/15 with the connections opting to stay on this circuit noting she was cross entered in the Al Stall Memorial on the same day at the FG. CHAMPAGNE ROSE was given a follow in either race keying off the with solid visuals – perhaps tougher to see with the running line and finishing position in the Jan FG stakes race making a strong inside/SAVED CLOSE and continued to GALLOP+ well suggesting a move forward – a move that fits for this par and in terms of purse finds higher here than those FG stakes races.

#8 ANGEL OF FAITH is a bit of a stab as she must show up with a career top to compete though a case can be made this could be the time for that effort. She returned off the layoff recording a new top with the maiden win in December and might not have handled the track last month and the race won gate to wire by open lengths, the top two running 1-2 around the track.

The noted outcome and track profile can upgrade #11LEMON MUFFIN making up ground for the show finish and overall one that is a consistent type even if to a fault with the pattern of minor finishes including the effort earlier this month catching a higher par than today's event.

The par is noted for #1 BEST SELLER one that will step up all around and while she did record higher figures last year in the claiming races in KY she had favorable trips in both. Not to say she cannot find another favorable trip here just tends to be the conditions for the higher figures, figures that would be needed to win and support in the role of the favorite as the ML suggests.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 4:19 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 HI YAH brings in upside from the races this season and the class change for the connections to further intent. They were given an EX - EXCUSE back on 12/15 with legit TROUBLE+ soon after the start followed up with a flow upgrade as part of the DUEL and Fast early pace on 1/23 with the outside draw in a higher claiming level in a race that has held form going forward.

#12 HELLO HOT ROD also found an EX – EXCUSE losing their footing and breaking a tangle on 1/24, a pattern for many creating a unique bias on the day and the connections wheeled right back on 2/8 perhaps to regain some confidence and first off the Hewitt claim - if nothing else fitness with a WIDE trip stalking a Very Fast early pace with a higher par at the higher $30k level. In addition to the change in class, they return to the sprint distance and their recent sprint figures stack up on par. #5 DAZZLEMESILVER follows a similar race-to-race pattern and overall consistent type in terms of figures to keep in the mix though one that look at the winning efforts tends to need things in their favor and as a result for the horseplayer the right number.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 MAGIC TAP as the ML favorite fits in that role off speed, class and pace however form is lacking coming off the extended 301-day layoff and the prime knock when paired with shorter odds. He requires a “much the best” effort first out and while not out of the question is something that does not appear to offer compensation on the board and could present value on others if willing to step outside the box.

#8 SPEED BIAS should move up as they make their second start of the meet and shift of the rail where they are likely to return to front running ways in this group. They have been most effective with that trip and effective over this course in the past. SPEED BIAS holds the overall class and speed figure edge over stablemate #5 RED RUN though a game racehorse in their own right and arguably “best” with the BTL effort in the BLANKET show finish back in December.

RED RUN has shared common races in the past with #6 MASQUEPARADE one that does not hold any overall edge in this group though does fit and has some recency on his side and potential intent making a return to Oaklawn and picking up Torres. Trainer R. Atras has not sent out runners on this circuit for the past few years and has had success in the past.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 5:23 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 THIS DAMSEL MAYFLY was upgraded with the return to statebred MCL company earlier this month and right back with a similar race par. The longer odds create playability noting the COLD rider aboard a capable horse.

They share a common race going back to last March with #8 DEVLISH GAL one that was making their debut on the day and higher race par in that MSW event. They return for a belated second start, live connections as noted in an earlier analysis and steady works. They were heads up with a stablemate called Zen Dreams one that has recorded figures on par with today’s event trying to establish a base line.

In terms of value the shorter odds are less appealing today for #4 VERY COSMOPOLIATIAN despite making the change to MCL company finds a lateral race par while in against older and number wise must improve something they are capable of, however still a factor that requires price compensation. Price compensation is noted and required for #3 PRESLEYS TURN as they return from the layoff and one that tends to lack early speed to make their late run though fits at this level and placed according to their abilities in this seasonal debut.

Santa Anita Race 1

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 JAI HO fits though does not hold any overwhelming edge as the projected odds suggest. At the same time require a top effort and trip, neither out of the question though lacks value with the question marks. #3 LEOPARDLESS wheeling back for a second start off the layoff and cut back in distance which could be key given the recent efforts. #6 TIANMA returns to this circuit and the care of O'Neill the barn that started out her career. She has few ONE_TURN turf sprints though based on the physicality suited to those conditions and that has been the plan coming back this year noting a pair of scratches out of $32k turf sprints in January.

Santa Anita Race 2

Post Time 3:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 ROMAN EMPRESS could look to turn the tables on some common rivals exiting the 1/31 common race. ROMAN EMPRESS was part of the early pace and both #2 CHOLLIMA and #4 DISCREPANCY rallied from off the pace for the top two spots. ROMAN EMPRESS could present a pace advantage with that early speed in this race and fitness to support in the third start of the cycle and plenty of back numbers on par.

Santa Anita Race 3

Post Time 3:33 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 GROGU requires another top effort with this group though not out of the question based on the 9/27 figure when making a WIDE MOVE X_BIAS with the show finish. Off that race they were tested in stakes company along with another WIDE trip and the freshening that followed. They caught a higher par in the 12/28 N1X allowance in against older and gained fitness making a WIDE MOVE. That effort gave them a look on 1/31 however cut shorter with the EX - EXCUSE racing tight along inside (TACTIC- TROUBLE) running on late/CLOSE when clear.

Santa Anita Race 4

Post Time 4:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 GRACIE'S BIG DAY wheels right back in just over a week looking to IMPROVE off the 5th place outcome with the shift back to the dirt and class drop at the same time. The figures from main track since the R. Ellis claim fit on par and prime contender off those efforts.

GRACIE'S BIG DAY brings in early speed and should track off the two inside runners with #1 THIRSY MAMA and #2 LIQUID SPIIRT project to contest the early pace. #3 PRINCESS DADDY has the pattern of gate issues (SLOG/TROUBLE_S/RUSH) though a strong late kick with a contentious pace to run on late.

Santa Anita Race 5

Post Time 4:35 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 I'M A BAD BOY finds class relief with the return to allowance company and holds a win under similar conditions going back to last October. That race on the main track has them here on the turf to remain eligibly though showed they could transfer their dirt form to the grass with the December sprint - the question here is trip with other front running types and should be an contentious pace. #1 DYNODAVE benefits from a Fast early pace and can move up in this second start of the cycle and returning from open to statebred company.