Handicapping Analysis
Sun March 2nd, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 C. C. HARBOR is a live mount for jockey K. Harr in this race and should hold the value required with the cold trend in this race. With each race this season C. C. HARBOR has shown improvement and interest in running though overall placement in open allowance company has kept her from a more competitive outcome and the legit longshot she has run as in those races. Today’s par moves her up naturally and back with statebred company for the first time this season and under conditions in this circuit where she has been competitive in the past.

#3 SULWE is cross entered in the Saturday stakes where distance wise fits with form at the sprint distance though in this spot does not have to face Hauling Ice and perhaps that will dictate the placement. The 1 1/16 distance is arguably not her ideal though capable under the right conditions and showed that last season with the right TACTIC+ and lower par (even lower than today) picking up the 3/28 win.

The distance is a question mark for both of the D. Ward entrants while #1 GOLD STRATEGY is coming out of a route race finishing in a blanket for the minors on 1/24 and has the series of route races from last summer at PRM this is a different level when it comes to class. #6 SUMMORYA has some class question of her own though one that has recorded competitive efforts and figures under a similar and even higher par in the past and since her debut win on this circuit as a juvenile. The connection were forced to be very patient after the claim last March off the win returning from the layoff on opening day where she has held her form and figures this season and a better draw and softer par here.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 1:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SPIN THE BREEZE might have been a little short (PREP) coming in from the break back at Oaklawn and with that race under their belt along with another change in class should move up with today’s group. She has held her form and figures though struggled with the higher class and the drop at this point and after winless 2024 looking for that belated second win. Further intent could follow with the rider change as Esquivel takes over.

#11 CRYSTAL SYMPHONY turned in a BTL effort at this level and sprint distance going back to December and following up that effort with two route races both subtle TROUBLE and should appreciate the return to the SHORTER distance and today’s race shape along with the draw could assist Arrieta to find the right trip.

The slight edge to #4 END OF INNOCENCE over #3 NO PAY NO HAY both similar efforts and with the race flow on 2/14 though neither along with #9 IFUAINTFIRSTURLAST are exciting as prime contenders though kept in the mix for a minor share. Their overall numbers not far off from #7 MISS ANALYZED one that will return from the layoff to the sprint distance though keying off the 3/23 effort last year and winning race that followed could be right there and should be race ready off the series of works.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:38 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#3 MONEYSHOT was eye catching with the place finish in the BC Derby (G3) back in September and off that race and organic change in running style has held their form this season in the right spot looking for a win. They turned in a competitive race under similar conditions with the show finish back in December – a common race with #3 ULTIMATE STRIKE one that ran a career top on the day, a race that stands out from the others though a repeat has them right back in the mix - MONEYSHOT wheels right back from the sprint just two weeks ago with the early WIDE MOVE (TACTIC-) playing a role in the outcome. The timing is noted, though in this case could be the edge when it comes to recency over others.

That includes #2 RIVALRY one that has recorded the highest figures in the field though a concern for a horse that still has conditions to return from the layoff racing for a claiming tag. Similar could leave some question marks for #5 DJANGO racing first time for the claiming tag in the seasonal debut and trip noting a pattern of SLOG/gate issues.

#4 BRAVE BLEND also brings in recency showing up for their first start on this circuit. The move could signal intent and less concerning with the surface switch as there is no lawn at Oaklawn – their form has been consistent and appears a versatile type on footing and more a function of class and trip for a winning outcome.

#1 STELLAR VINO requires a top effort to compete though could be the time and place as they make their second start of the cycle and should be fit making a RUSH to DUEL X_FLOW last out in a higher race par. The fitness could also pair with intent since the claim for $50k back in November has been protected in the two starts since and returns without a drop in claiming price here.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 2:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 LIL BRO COOP ships in off buried form and back at Oaklawn under Esquivel where they closed out the spring series of races with a win over this course and similar route distance. Following that April win they remained protected - a solid effort at the longer 70-1 odds back in November with the place finish and took the move to claiming company though a higher $30k tag. That change also with a change in tactics showing a little more early speed and coming back from the 1/17 race - a flow upgrade with the top two from off the pace and given the 41-day freshening into this event.

#3 MIGHTY MESSAGE deserving of a look back following an EX – EXCUSE just a week ago taking a legit stumble out of the gate before making an X_WIDE RUSH and in hand after losing ground. The race all around could have been an excuse before going in the gate given the higher placement off the claim and in this spot return to the level they were claimed at back on 1/24. That 1/24 race a common race with #2 AARON, #4 PATCH O' BRIEN and #10 BIG DRINKER with MIGHTY MESSAGE the shorter odds of that set as well as #1 AIN'T THAT A KICK closing for 4th at 52-1 and could look for a similar underneath result albeit at projected shorter odds here.

#9 BEN DREAMING returns to make their second start of the cycle and under similar N3 claiming conditions from the 1/17 event – a race cover a course that was tough to make up ground and showed some interest noting the top three ran 1-2-3 around the track.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:48 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 SIMOVIC is overdue for a win and one that often recorded the highest figure in the field fits on that front as well as runstyle for today's race shape and brings in current form in this third start off the layoff to cycle back to a top effort. The change in class conditions is noted though one of a handful in this field that will race protected.

#6 NYQUIST FREQUENCY will race for the higher tag though not a severe DROP or letting them go on the cheap, just looking for the right spot to pick up the win. Their races to date fit on par and consistent figures with this group. Some further intent could follow the change in class as they return to make a seasonal debut racing as a gelding and utilizing a subtle weight break as apprentice T. Bacon takes the call.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 3:20 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 BUTTERFLY QUEEN made up ground against the course profile back on 1/17 (BTL) that race her first start back off the two month break might have been taxing especially when paired with the quick two week turnaround into the 1/31 race and change in tactics making a WIDE RUSH before losing ground. She has been given 30-days since and a rider change, C. Torres taking over that could see a return to a patient stalk and pounce trip and there should be an early contentious pace to set up that run.

#5 BABY GUNDIN lands here as well returning from the 1/31 claiming race also with a WIDE trip finishing in a blanket for place and their runstyle should benefit the projected contentious early race dynamic. The conditioning should carry along with the timing coming back in this second start of the cycle with the race over the course gaining local experience and back numbers that fit as a contender in this group.

#3 FEARLESS KRISTIE finds the distance change back to a route and looking for that along with the timing to move her up off the efforts this season. There is reason to suggest she has more to show, starting off the year with an EX – EXCUSE unprepared at the break the first two races this season in a higher par starter allowance class. As far as the distance change the sprint-to-route pattern was used by the trainer last season with the allowance races at PRM and could sign intent as well as a subtle change in Plot position and shape from the prior races this season.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is as good as stakes racing gets with a quality field of seven and every horse fits this race as a contender. Trip/pace often makes the race in this scenario and starting with #1 BOHEMIAN BO the winner of this race last year in front running ways and should look for similar here with again the rail draw and retaining Torres – a rider that could have had some options. The race par last year had pace pressure though not a blazing pace and should be held accountable on the front end with #7 MIDNIGHT TAXES in this field. They were not asked to show speed in their layoff return even with the rail draw though perhaps that signaled a “prep” and from the outside should put themselves in the race and press outside horses, a trip that has been effective for them in the past.

#6 NAVY SEAL was compromised with the rail draw in this event last year and SLOG that followed though has shown consistency while looking for their first stakes win and could be that opportunity to fall into the right trip.

With Torres sticking with BOHEMIAN BULL, F. Arrieta takes off the 2023 Rainbow Stakes winner as the regular rider of #4 KING PEANUT to pilot #3 LOCHMOOR today. Arrieta was the pick up rider closing out the 2024 season with the stakes win. They have moved forward with each race in this current cycle and while they require the right trip and pace to win at the 6f distance, it is not out of their abilities and could look to get the first jump on #2 ONE TEN STADIUM those trip roles reversed in the 2/7 common race.

#5 WILLOW CREEK ROAD was run down by ONE TEN STADIUM in that 2/7 common race, though a winning effort and a tough beat. They could fall into a similar first run tracking trip though will be tested in terms of form coming back today with another top effort, the race that would be required to win and even return with a share noting the ground saving place finish behind BOHEMIAN BO last year.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 4:22 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

There are some question marks on #5 VELOCIRAPTOR a 4yo that has run the same race each time showing early speed losing ground late and number wise for the level on the average side; similar concerns in a different direction could carry to #8 TROUBLE'S ROARING returning from the layoff and another that tends to run the same race each time and often a similar underneath outcome – those factors opening to the door on the win end.

With that said there are questions on the others with experience as well though should present slightly more price compensation. Even in the case of #6 SECRET LEGEND following VELOCIRAPTOR from the 2/8 common race the two running a similar race visually and upside as a lightly raced 3yo. Those two finished behind a R. Moquett FTS called Hymn and the barn with a FTS in #7 GRAND ORACLE for this race one that has shown early speed and should be assertive in this group with R. Santana aboard.

#9 PERFECT FORCE as it is a bit of a stab they will step up returning off the layoff to make their sophomore debut, they would require some progression from the juvenile figures though their best is not far off those other two established 4yo's. Some intent could follow with Bejarano taking over – a rider that in the last 5 years has a positive ROI aboard maiden runners for this barn with about 26% winners and 44% ITM. Bejarano had been aboard #12 JESTER SANG for their closing two starts last season and coming back off the layoff here as a 4yo. They did record their highest figures in the debut a number that could still require a boost though a "newer" face with live connections and price compensation tough to be too negative on them in these conditions.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:53 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 BESTFRIEND ROCKET could be looking for a similar trip and fall into the right one that was effective closer out 2024 with the December LRL win. Figure wise they will be required to improve with the circuit switch though not a big ask and appears to be coming into this race well with the local works, works I have not seen to match visuals to times, unfortunately.

K. McPeek has a pair in this race and while #5 LURED AWAY races for the optional higher tag and stepping up first against winner his races on this circuit fit on par and events with a higher par than the two starts stablemate #7 FIRST DIVISION exits into this race. Both make for a fit though arguably there should not be as big of a separation in odds as the ML suggested.

Oaklawn Race 10

Post Time 5:25 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The early pace could be contentious and make things tougher on #7 ROCKET NIGHT and #12 CHOU CHOU D'AVEN especially at shorter numbers on the win end and create a scenario to suit #11 DR. STORM. They find a class drop for the third start back this season with progressive form coming into this race – a third off pattern for the previous connections resulting in a BTL place finish last summer. They have shown the gate issues, the pattern of breaking SLOG and making their late run and some value is required. That might not be the case for #3 DEVILS FORK as the prime knock one that certainly capable of getting it done here though with their pattern of SLOG/gate issues is tougher to take a shorter number especially paired with a full field.

Some jockey shuffling to note as Esquivel takes over on DR. STORM and off #10 WESTEROS with Arrieta landing there and C. Torres jumping to DEVILS FORK today. In terms of WESTEROS, they have in my opinion been disappointing in the races this season, spots where they fit based on the prior form. Perhaps the local conditioning and return to the route distance is the wake up call as they still have those competitive races in them and while less confidence off the recent efforts, the higher odds today might be worth a stab. The rider change is worth a mention though Arrieta shows a positive ROI with Contreas at Oaklawn over the past 5years 25% winners and 59% ITM and similar numbers with maiden runners in this category.

#2 BIG WALK will need a big run and number improvement to compete though some overall upside at this level. From the MSW events visually they looked to need the class drop – the DROP they found coming back off the layoff to make their seasonal debut just two weeks ago. All things considered they could be given an upgrade with the timing and taking a hard bump out of the gate, contact at the start/TROUBLES+ under poor WEATHER and track conditions, racing in the rain declining conditions that had the back half of the card cancelled, a note for the others returning from that 2/15 common race.