Handicapping Analysis
Sat March 22nd, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Oaklawn Race 1

Post Time 12:35 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 PRIMO CANARY has been their biggest hurdle in terms of the pattern of SLOG. After giving the field a head start in each race this season they have showing run and overall efforts that should translate to this group and level as the slightly new face compared to others that have run under similar conditions and par.

#8 MAGIC MOVER can also be given a flow upgrade from the 3/8 common race their first start around two turns and first start off the cycle. The lack of recency on the day should benefit them showing up here with that race under their belt as well as fitness making a WIDE RUSH into a Fast early pace, the winner Sprint Out Pass rallied from off the pace and MAGIC MOVER was in hand after losing position. Arrieta will take over today and since 2021 holds a positive J/T ROI here at OP with 31% winners, a perfect 2-for-2 in MCL company and overall 54% ITM.

#4 CHARMING TIGER finds a subtle change in class as they return to straight 3yo company for the first time in 2025. The change along with the conditioning could have them in the right time and place for a peak effort in this third start of the cycle and off the claim. They can also be given a subtle flow upgrade returning from the 3/2 event with the top two from off the pace.

Oaklawn Race 2

Post Time 1:06 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#11 CHAPTER AND VERSE has the outside post and likely some ground loss though with their early speed could still present a pace advantage in this field. She was questionable at the distance with the shorter number back in February and moved up back at the sprint under similar conditions three weeks ago – an X_FLOW upgrade making a RUSH into a Fast early pace.

#7 UNION DAME has consistently recorded figures that fit on par as they show up here in the second start off the layoff into a new lower MCL condition. The change along with the conditioning should move them up naturally. A projected shorter number comes into play today a notable shift from prior starts at double digit odds.

#9 SIMPLE DREAMS debuted under similar conditions back in December and earned a follow projecting to IMPROVE off the trip and perhaps that projection carries here looking to put the 2/2 race aside with slight layoff lines splitting those events. At the least there should be plenty of price compensation on a lightly raced runner that might not have had the opportunity to show their best.

In terms of the AE pair: #13 PARIS ACCORD will need just one to run and should move up naturally with the change in class, a change from the races this season with the higher purse statebred and competitive events overall. Fellow AE #14 ALLTAIL wheels back from a TROUBLE trip two weeks ago has some upside coming back under similar conditions.

Oaklawn Race 3

Post Time 1:37 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 SITKA might be able to take advantage of the pace scenario looking to press rival #5 I'M WIDE AWAKE wheeling back after a HARD fought effort and tough beat just weeks ago with minimal rest and recovery. SITKA will require a top effort with some class questions going back to last year and shorter projected odds than the two starts this season under similar conditions.

#1 B SUDD could look to rebound here given a slight reset in their form cycle, a pattern that has been used in the past by these connections. B SUDD has held their own at this higher N1 allowance level going back to prior season with many minor finishes looking to secure that first condition win here.

#3 UNPREDICTABLE BAY could run as advertised coming back from the long 537-day layoff. On their best day they fit with races and speed figures on par though still a big hurdle giving up this type of recency. The connections are capable with long layoff returnees and is a positive to see a steady work tab, placement and first call rider Esquivel back aboard.

Oaklawn Race 4

Post Time 2:09 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#7 DANCING EYES has more to show as she returns from the debut less than 30-days ago and appears to have come out of the race well working twice since – two solid half mile drills. The first out effort should also provide needed experience and fitness as she was given a long WARMUP took contact at the break (TROUBLE_S) and made a RUSH into an honest early pace/X_FLOW with some in running TROUBLE all things playing a role in the outcome where better can be projected.

#4 LUCK IS A LADY also brings upside from their debut breaking SLOG from the rail and put in a sneaky CLOSE despite the running line and finishing position. The move off the rail should help though still need to follow her from the gate for improvement as she had that same pattern training from the stall in the morning.

Gate issues have been a hurdle for #1 AVERY'S MISCHIEF missing the break in the December over poor track conditions and sneaky BTL as the only runner to make up significant ground. She was given time before coming back last month and again another SLOG making an early RUSH to recover moving into TRAFFIC and put in a late CLOSE behind her stablemate winner, Dare To Fly.

That race a common race for #10 COASTER on that was upgraded going back to their juvenile debut projecting to show more early speed and has shown more early foot this season though another that has been less than efficient out of the gate with TROUBLE_S in both starts. Some changes will be made with the blinker removal and Bejarano addition while also moving to the outside post.

#2 BRAVE SAMANTHA is worth a mention training well for her return still presenting TURF visuals in those works something noted for the three races last year in Kentucky and ultimately might benefit from the surface switch though still should given an honest showing for connections that have had success this OP season.

Oaklawn Race 5

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Trainer L. Schultz has had success with longer layoff returnees at OP – a smaller sample though the success around this time of the calendar year and #2 TIM TAL fits today's race on class, speed and in terms of their runstyle to work a trip under Arrieta. The works have remained consistent for the return and since the scratch under similar conditions last month.

#3 I'M NO JOKE finds subtle class relief off the races this season, races that have held form and figures just not quite to the level of par and their competition. The change should move them up naturally and well placed for the new connections.

I'M NO JOKE took part in the early pace in their most recent start and won as the BOS back in November though not a need the lead type – something that could be key here as the early pace could be contentious with many in this field that appear to run on or near the lead to compete.

That contentious scenario should benefit some of the off the pace types such as #10 HELLO HOT ROD one that could be overlooked off their recent running lines and finishing positions with buried and current form coming into this race. They recorded a solid figure back on 1/4, a number that fits on par and was flowed up by an EX on 1/24 and WIDE trip back around two turns on 2/8 and upgraded making a WIDE MOVE against the course profile in the most recent 2/28 start.

#8 JOHNNY UP also has a strong late kick to run on late though in terms of speed figures comes into this race on the lighter side than others in this field, a hurdle on the win end though could still find their way into the underneath mix.

Oaklawn Race 6

Post Time 3:12 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 CAROLO RAPIDO is looking for their first win since last July and could be the right spot for them to get back to those winning ways. Following the ELP win they turned in a BTL effort in the Super Derby an effort worth going back to watch the replay as the running line and finishing position does not do them justice and while there could even check out the EX – EXCUSE at KEE closing out the 2024 campaign in October. Their return on 1/5 was a competitive number and effort with the WIDE trip show outcome behind their stablemate winner with timing and the higher class along with a subtle trip too much for them in the General Macarthur stakes.

#8 CREATIVE MINISTER also finds class relief as the Gen Mac stakes show finisher and overmatched in the Razorback (G3) last month. The connections run here first time for the claiming tag a move that seems the right one as they have earned checks in the allowance and listed stakes level though in a win drought since 2022, the spring portion of their sophomore campaign.

As far as stablemate #1 MENDELSSOHNS MARCH they will also race first time for the claiming tag and another in a win drought since their early sophomore season though has not need as consistent in terms of outcome since, though consistent number wise, numbers that fit today's par though no strong edge in that department over others in this field.

Former McPeek runner, #6 INTERLOCK EMPIRE turned in a winning type effort for the level back on 1/24 - a race with a similar par and purse to the level they return to today. They will also return with Arrieta and a similar form cycle pattern, 43-days rest noting the shorter two week turnaround and front wrap addition on 2/7 lacking intent that day.

Oaklawn Race 7

Post Time 3:46 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 ACCELERATING will make their seasonal debut looking to keep the win record intact for this third career start. While there are some hurdles giving up recency and the rail draw, this filly has early speed to establish position from the jump and consistent works as far as fitness. She has been given a test in the morning to prepare for this race working heads up on 3/1 with Gulfport stakes placed this year in both the Ring The Bell and King Cotton stakes.

As far as stablemate #6 GLEE she has struggled to compete as a prime contender at this higher stakes level and circuit so far keying off the CD Debutante last June as well as in the Myrtlewood at KEE and again in the Year's End Stakes. While she still has that hurdle today. She has shown the ability to pass horses and if the early pace is contentious she could pick up another minor award.

Like ACCELERATING, #4 KIMCHI CAT will also make her seasonal debut returning in this spot and looking to validate the Bolton Landing figure and stakes win here today returning to the sprint distance. She has trained forwardly and appears live off the bench for the connections given the work tab and visuals.

Oaklawn Race 8

Post Time 4:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 ROWDY RASCAL has spent the majority of their career at the route distance and remains sprinting, a change that could fit this runner. The change in distance also paired with class as a change coming off the layoff - most of their racing at a higher level whether allowance or stakes company and notable statebred stakes winner in their career. This start marks the third of the cycle, a flow upgrade WIDE DUEL on a Very Fast early pace off the layoff in January and recorded a figure on par in the event last month – an effort they could take another step forward or even at the least pair up to compete.

#4 VALE does not have any strong edge as an individual though will look to make up for it with recency and current form. Their races this season have not been "bad" effort just not quite on the level. The connections drop in for the claiming tag for the first time this season and since the win last September to suggest intent at this point in the meet. As far as the recent outcomes trip has not been ideal with the DQ from place back in Dec and TROUBLE_S at the start less than ideal TACTIC- in the races that followed.

Overall and isolating Oaklawn form there is not much between the pair #6 MEAN JAKEY and #7 IAN GLASS on their best day, to keep both in the mix - and both follow a similar pattern wheeling back in two weeks for a second start of the cycle. MEAN JAKEY makes this move second off the layoff and could be upgraded racing in light rain WIDE on the DUEL from the outside post to move forward here. IAN GLASS moved up in the January event, second off and with that a pattern this year find a change in class, the first time races back in for a tag since they were claimed during this meet almost a year ago, the 4/19 TROUBLE trip and has been a productive horse for this barn since.

Oaklawn Race 9

Post Time 4:51 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 MORELLO could be considered the fastest horse in the race at the same time the slowest (SLOG) horse from the gate, a pattern that has been a major hurdle throughout his career. That along with the pattern of layoff lines is likely factor in the decision today coming back for the claiming tag – a spot that could see them claimed and higher enough claiming tag reasonable with the class change and time off. The ML could be fair as there are the noted reservation though at the same time could see that come down and on this type of horse would like to see some support (prior winners under similar conditions off similar long layoffs at Oaklawn were all below 5-1) though too short opens up other avenues in this competitive race.

Former stablemate #1 BOURBON HEIST comes back under similar conditions, still eligible for this conditional level and given time for the new barn and for a horse that does tend to prefer a little more time between starts. That suits his form cycle whereas rival #10 PAYNE certainly a runner that fits on class and speed though could be peaked this season and coming off a new top number with a favorable trip to win 26-days ago.

#7 MAJOR BLUE has been pointed to this meet and looking for the win without much in terms of racing luck starting off with a legit EX – EXCUSE in the Jan seasonal debut stumbling at the start (TROUBLES+) following up with a higher race par three weeks latera and moved up as the BOS – a slight flow upgrade on 2/24 setting up the top two finishing together at the wire. MAJOR BLUE has tactical speed, though not a need the lead type and does have some potential need the lead rivals on their inside to track in #2 ELI’S PROMISE, #3 CONGRATS ON FIFTY and even #4 LUNDBERG one that could be included at longer odds and progressive form into this third start of the meet.

In terms of numbers and runstyle there is not much between current Jacobson trainee #5 TOP GUN TOMMY and former #8 GOT THUNDER with value on the latter as both horses need a lot in their favor to win at this level and GOT THUNDER not only presenting higher projected odds but a better trip with their runstyle in this race shape.

Oaklawn Race 11

Post Time 5:56 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 STUCK N SNOW should not be stuck setting the pace today with the complexion of this field including the three inside runners and many in this group stretching out in distance. As far as the races this season, the aggressive tactic played against them setting a Very Fast early pace from the rail in allowance company back in January and with the class change and similar approach was game taking a tough beat as the BOS under similar conditions to today’s race on 2/14. Competitive at that similar statebred claiming level, they fit here and fitness overall wheeling back from the WIDE trip despite the rail draw at a higher par in against open company earlier this month.

#6 STORM STRATEGY was competitive all things considered going back to the 2/14 common race as a horse that was giving up recency on the day from a 231-day layoff and given no favors with the outside draw. His local record has been consistent and most competitive when they have a fast early pace to chase and a likelihood for that scenario here.

#8 POINT BLANK could drift up from the ML especially with the rider change for this race and a horse looking for their first win since 2023.. That moves them up on value and in terms of current form and runstyle fits this race shape at the very least to be along for a minor share once again.