Handicapping Analysis
Thu April 10th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 SECRET OPERATION is the class and highest recorded speed figures in the field to make the case she is the horse to beat on that front. The bigger question marks are the time away from the races, a first start coming back from a break since she debuted in Dec 2022 and for the shorter 5.5f dirt sprint distance. The barn does not have a large sample of layoff returning runners and two published works for fitness. J. Felix taking over could be a live sign, a rider that does not often ride for this barn and did literally pick up the mount with this mare last November at HS Indy.

The race shape is a tough read though with the class and rider change SECRET OPERATION could race closer to the lead than her normal style. It is logical to project #3 NAJAMEANSBUSINESS to look to clear as she did hustled to the lead breaking her maiden last month though still number wise is on the lower end compared to others in this field still suggesting she requires a move forward to win. ***#2 WILDWOOD ADIOS*** has been pointed to this meet to return noted this spot and change in class a step up to suggest some intent after scratching on 3/27 from a $12.5k N2 event to run here for the higher claiming tag.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:05 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 ENTICING OPTION had just the one published work returning on 3/30 and to her credit showed improvement that day and could project another move forward coming back with the fitness second off and shift to an outer post to give a longshot look here.

#3 TWO TIMER brings in some upside as the lone sophomore in the field. She is in her second start off the layoff and class relief overall and from the races to date. She should also bring in fitness not only with that race under her belt but also from a WIDE trip with the outside post and race shape; Fast early and Very Fast late.

In terms of the projected favorites: *#6 DELIGHTED* fits as the favorite from what is on paper and class relief from the 2024 season. She could also be given flow upgrade from 3/21 as part of the Fast early pace while returning from layoff though visually wanted to see more overall and number wise sits on par with many inhere where a top effort is needed. A similar and logical case can be made for *#2 WW BEST OF TIMES* and *#4 REALTA*, though arguably that pair has been at their best with the higher recorded figures on the turf.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Looking at the Plot and the three inside runners, the early pace should be honest. Both HURTS SO BAD and #2 RACARINO are at their most effective when on or near the lead and #3 ROTARY DIAL also bringing in early speed (Q3 Square) to push that pair with #5 ONE PUTT RICHIE also likely in that first flight.

#4 ALIBI IKE should find the right tracking trip right off that first flight with first run. They make a return from a two month break though a favorable spot to compete when it comes to class. Comparing the MVR form ALIBI IKE exiting higher claiming events than rival ROTARY DIAL to hold a class edge and should be overlooked given the recent running lines and recent win for ROTARY DIAL, a race they had to work HARD for despite the open length margin.

ALIBI IKE holds figures on par and similar form and numbers from the races at Hawthorne and buried form including their most recent start – the 2/8 race where they took legitimate contact at the break TROUBLES+ and showed a MOVE through TRAFFIC before getting carried WIDE.

O. K. Hernandez has overall a positive ROI for A. Meraz including live mounts like Category Ten and this season with picks up the mount on ALIBI IKE with A. Centeno shifting to stablemate #1 HURTS SO BAD, a rider that has been aboard Alibi Ike in the past and perhaps just wanted to change things up here and the rider swapping should keep the ML as projected with ALIBI IKE.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 3:55 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 TORTUGA ISLAND finds much needed class relief (DROP) from the Oaklawn pair of races and should move up on this circuit and race par. They caught an identical par to today's event with the win back on 10/31 at FD and even found a similar par despite the higher purse when finishing second in the 11/27 CD race.

The change in class is closer to a lateral move for ***#6 TALL GIRL*** returning to make her second start of the meet. While catching a similar par on 3/27, the higher purse noted on the day as well as the trip less than ideal outrun early behind a Very Slow early pace and from those visuals looks to need a more assertive ride, something that could easily come from J. Felix taking over today.

The early pace and change in class noted for *#1 MO SMOKING* one that was part of the Very Slow early pace stalked by the 15.5-1 upset winner Curls Nite Out. MO SMOKING should be as assertive here with their runstyle and inside draw as well as the current fitness not only from the allowance two weeks ago, but also the statebred series from the FG consistent racing since November. Though with former stablemate #5 LADY HELENA in the field, MO SMOKING projects to find pace pressure and legitimate early speed from that filly stretching out here.

#4 TWO HEARTED could pick off horses late to get in for a share with their late kick. Class and speed figures are lighter on par for the win end though with the scratch of MO SMOKING she could find the right trip in this race shape.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:21 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 PURPLE OCTOPUS figures again as the race favorite and capable in that role off current form and figures placed where they can compete. While today's par is similar from the return last week, they are returning to N2 company racing above condition on 4/3 while also giving up recency. Their main game is to run on the lead and can be tough to catch.

Looking at the Plot, **#7 SECESSION** also brings in early speed and off their races to date could be on the lead with the lead to the first call. They are also a Circle (Circle lack of finishing ability compared to Squares) in that position, they have run against the flow playing a role in the lack of finish. While they have that early speed for today's race shape. The ideal trip for SECESSION should be one of a stalk and pounce – a trip that has not always been given to them though with the rider change and outside post while returning to this circuit and shorter 5.5f distance that could be their winning trip. SECESSION has, more than once, recorded the highest figures in this field while also finding class relief from their prior starts on this circuit.

If the scenario plays as the Plot suggests, a contentious early pace could set up **#1 MINIMO** for the trip tracking with first run. They bring in upside for this form cycle – third off with progressive figures and OptixGRADE moving in a forward direction since coming off the slight layoff and out of the higher N2 races both in terms of par and purse at LRL – those efforts fit as a contender here.

Both *#2 TALLAPOOSA* and #3 CAPTAIN'S FLAG had early TROUBLE_S overall more impactful (imo) for TALLAPOOSA of the pair on the day though less than ideal trips for both. The change in class to run at this level is likely the right one for them abilities though overall still must step up in the speed figure department compared to some others in this field. Perhaps that is note though not out of the possibility for the duo as 4yo's. An in the case of TALLAPOOSA, lightly raced type making just a second start as a 4yo and if able to step up from the figure when breaking their maiden last July (something they've yet to do) that makes them a player.

#5 DURANGO CHROME also lighter on speed figures, though has a solid late kick (Square) and their lone Hawthorne race, the debut last April was BTL and while that race for other connections that race at the least suggests they can run and handle this course some upside returning to this circuit and would not be surprise to see and honest showing along with a late run. Number wise #6 SENOR MIKE has recorded figures on par and competitive on this circuit and returning from an excuse breaking in a tangle (TROUBLES+) and quickly in hand not asked to race on 10/24 – they could require a start returning today from the time away and would check for the front wraps.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 4:47 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This race has a handful of contender and contentious event overall that could even see this as a key race going forward. Especially as many return from layoffs and return at this 5f distance, a distance that might not be ideal for many of those main players while capable all the same in this spot with their edge on class and speed figures.

#1 BALADINE is worth giving a longshot look to as they have win over this course and shorter 5f distance while also showing up with a win and top figure off the layoff. They were not a longshot by any means at even money winning last season on opening week (3/24) as the BOS (22, 45) though with that race par being similar to today and that type of runstyle that could see them with a potential gate-to-wire front running trip.

There are others that have shown early speed though like in the case of #2 SHARP STICK at the route distance. Both #6 CLYDE'S GREEN GO and #8 SPINNING PISTOLS are major threats with class and speed figures on par and appears intent especially with 8yo CLYDE'S GREEN GO one that has the layoff history and must come out race ready, though both prefer to track and finish – allowing a scenario for someone to sneak away upfront.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:13 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 REGAINED POWER was no match for their FTS stablemate Via Del Corso on 3/30 though does not catch a stablemate today and off the 3/30 recorded figure comes in as a solid contender to repeat and likely catch on the front end. They take the drop today though a move not overly concerning in this case and in for a higher $25k on this circuit, though could see some claiming interest.

Perhaps their biggest threat again is from another “Del” in **#3 DEL TORO** returning from an extended layoff to make a belated second career start. They earned a follow going back to the June debut over the HS Indy turf showing a strong middle WIDE MOVE after a SLOG, TROUBLE_S and after that move was in hand late to the wire, though in running showed something to follow. The follow has been patient for all, 309-days into this race and a long worktab with published works starting in late December at CD and a steady March pattern at TP coming into this race.

In terms of race par, this is a lateral move for **#5 PAPA’S NICO BOY** from the races last year mostly from the NYRA circuit. That said, those races all in the juvenile campaign could take a step forward as a 3yo with the other changes in barn, circuit and medication racing first time on Lasix. They brin in steady works through March topped off with a bullet half mile one week ago. The jockey trainer combination has been effective over the years to suggest intent including the two show finishes, both horses showing run last Sunday in visuals and outcome.

Number wise *#1 RED RIZZLER* recorded a similar top figure to that 3/30 effort from REGAINED POWER last season with the place finish in August sprinting on the turf. The grass looked to be the intent for them that season and ultimately where they are best suited though should present a move forward here second off and the edge in recency with the class and rider change as well while running in this group as the only older horse.

Hawthorne Race 8

Post Time 5:39 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Many in the finale return to rematch from the 3/27 common race and could see a similar race shape with an even more honest early pace as noted with the Sun Contention and 43 SpeedRate – a higher SpeedRate than the 20 last out. That is noted with the Plot position for a trip of those runners with #1 RISKY BOY and #2 BREAKING NEWS side-by-side along the inside and #6 ALYANAABI to their outside with #3 RACE DRIVER joining that trio today as they return from the layoff bringing in more early speed.

That scenario along with the slight change in distance to 5.5f could assist runners from off the pace and for **#5 ONE WAY HOME**, a positive change making a strong CLOSE on 3/27 behind their stablemate first run winner, One Putt Richie. The slight change in distance could also upgrade *#7 HATCHET CREEK* one that should be fit coming back from a WIDE trip in that common race and coming back on shorter rest with D. Cohen aboard, a positive for a horse that has struggled with the recent layoffs – a front wrap removal would be further positive sign.

As the race shape could look to set up ONE WAY HOME a similar Plot position and shape to **#4 SHAKE UP** returning here and class relief from their races last year and first start on this circuit for live connections as noted in Race 7, could be live looking for the late double.