Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 3rd, 2025

Jim's Picks

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Jim Miller

17 Sandman - 6-1 **19** Chunk of Gold - 30-1 **8** Journalism - 3-1 **18** Sovereignty - 5-1 **9** Burnham Square - 12-1

It's the greatest race in the World! Watch and wager on Xpressbet.com as it is quick and easy to sign up for. You can make same day deposits and withdrawals as well.

I see this year's Derby as a race that has so much pace, with the potential of 6-7 horses being sent early. In all honesty, you only need two to go to ensure a hot pace upfront.

I think the pace is very quick and falls apart, leaving whomever can get the best trip from off the pace to pick up the pieces.

Giving the nod on top to 17-SANDMAN as the gray has continued to progress and could be poised for a dream trip. He got the pace that I would expect to see in the Derby during his Arkansas Derby run and took full advantage. He settled near the back early and swooped the field in the stretch. An added eighth shouldn't be an issue for him on Saturday.

The longshot play with a legit shot to contend is 19-CHUNK OF GOLD for trainer Ethan West. He has flown under the radar and will be a monster price. He has only the debut maiden score, but his last two races are even better than looks on paper. Jareth Loveberry won't be afraid of the Derby spotlight either, finishing second two years ago aboard Two Phils. The last three drills for Chunk are solid and he's going to be 50-1.

8-JOURNALISM will be the Derby favorite and should be based off the massive speed figures in his last couple. The concern is this, he has found traffic troubles in his last couple that he was able to overcome solely because of short fields. What happens if the favorite runs into traffic here and is left with 15 to catch in the lane?

18-SOVEREIGNTY will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of a quick pace. He didn't get that pace in the Florida Derby and still almost overcame it for a win. His Fountain of Youth effort was big, considering he had to close in the short stretch. Alvarado back aboard is a plus.

9-BURNHAM SQUARE looks to be a factor as well. My only real concern with him is the quicker turnaround from the delayed Bluegrass score. He's another who is steadily improving and the price should be right.

The way I would play the Derby if betting is to play both Sandman and Chunk of Gold across the board.

I would box the top five in an Exacta and trifecta. This is the one race where you don't need to spend a ton to score big. Good luck!

Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 3rd, 2025

Peter's Simulcast Plays

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Peter Galassi

7 Luxor Cafe - 15-1 **8** Journalism - 3-1 **9** Burnham Square - 12-1

Handicapping Analysis
Sat May 3rd, 2025

Ron's Picks

Churchill Downs Race 12

Post Time 5:57 PM CST

Analysis by Ron Uchman

18 Sovereignty - 5/1 **8** Journalism - 3/1 **14** Tiztastic - 20/1

Does the best horse always win a race like this? Or does the horse with the best trip often win?

Will the projected blistering early pace actually manifest or will the top trainers and jockeys, who can handicap as well as any of us, decide to lay the horse off that early pace?

With 19 runners, anything can happen.

Buit it would seem likely that the pace will be heated and so have to figure that a runner coming from off the pace will have the advantage.

There are many late runners in here but I keep looking at 18-SOVEREIGNITY. While so many of the closers had blistering early paces to run at (see Arkansas Derby), most of Sovereignity's races featured paces that were more moderate and he was still able to make up a ton of ground. The big knock on him might be a relative lack of seasoning. However, maybe being somewhat fresh might work to his advantage. 8-JOURNALISM owns good speed but he's unlikely to get caught up in the rush to the front end. I can see him sitting in fourth or fifth, waiting for the rest of the speed to come back to him. He won his last four races using that scenario. Can't see his connections changing tactics for this race. Getting the distance is always a concern. While 14-TIZTASTIC seems like a second-tier runner, he is the only one with a win beyond a mile and an eighth and he looked good doing it in the Louisiana Derby.

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Emily's Analysis

Woodbine Race 1

Post Time 12:05 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#2 BEDTIME does not hold any strong edge in this field as an individual though in terms of recency and the 6f distance that upgrades her in this spot and in the face of the projected heavy favorite #5 ELLA IT IS. BEDTIME follows an every other pattern throughout her career going back to last season improved second off with the 10/12 effort and maiden win on 11/28 while coming in from GP just 20-days ago with that race under their belt.

#4 NEENAH also giving up recency though going back to last year fired a big effort in their debut going shorter and while they had the gate issues (TROUBLE_S) that followed in the Glorious Song and December allowance each time showed run at a higher race par than today's event.

Woodbine Race 2

Post Time 12:42 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 HOME FOR A REST is worth a value play in this spot. The early pace should be honest and while they have early speed, key for the 5f distance, they are not a need the lead to find a trip in here. Regular rider S. Vives sticking with #6 SUMMER SNOW opens up the mount for O. Moreno, not a normal call though could be a live one in the first start of the year for this rider.

Woodbine Race 3

Post Time 1:18 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 LEGS LIKE FLATTER showed some run though class weakness starting out 2023, the juvenile season; which supported the change in class and the MOC win. Following that effort they landed an EX closing out the year in the 11/4 race and after missing 2024 return in a reasonable spot to start 2025 for capable connections. LEGS LIKE FLATTER despite the long layoff presents upside in comparison to #6 MAGICAL TRICK one that is who they are and could land the right group today, though raced evenly at this level last year. Similar form carries to #2 ROCKET RILEY one that has been knocking around at this level since their 2023 finale, consistent though perhaps to a fault falling underneath on the win end.

Woodbine Race 4

Post Time 1:53 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

In terms of the lightly raced runners returning from layoffs #6 SOUPER SUPREME brings advantages and based on the ML value over #3 CAPTAIN COURTNEY in this spot. SOUPER SUPREME has the edge in local experience and upside from just last year as a juvenile while their form and class noted for today's distance and the dominant B+ score in the Muskoka Stakes last year. P. Husbands aboard last year and notable remaining aboard here as they can often ride first call for Trombetta, the trainer of CAPTAIN COURTNEY - not to say RM Hernandez is not capable, certainly are, just to note intent.

Woodbine Race 5

Post Time 2:28 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The class, timing and shorter sprint distance could give #4 CARA CARA the edge in this spot and present a value alternative to the favorites - #2 OLIVIA ROSE and #5 LUZ DE LA LUNA, runners that ultimately might prefer more ground and even turf. CARA CARA has been able to handle this shorter distance, race fresh as well as compete under similar conditions and par keying off some B efforts late last year while settling for place.

Woodbine Race 6

Post Time 3:05 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Desruisseaux looking for the first win on the year has sent out a pair of live runners and looks to hold another with #7 ENCHANTED FOREST. They fit this race off the form last year under similar conditions, albeit restricted 2yo company, including a B OptixGRADE in November. They will move up to take on older for the first time and while the other factors fit that is a change that requires a little price compensation, the 3-1 ML as a bare minimum.

#5 BEDAZZLE ME can often fire their race fresh, first of the season and noted with that pattern here. That does not always result in a win, though intent all the same.

Woodbine Race 7

Post Time 3:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 GARDEN OF WAR makes a belated return and number wise from the juvenile season recording a figure that stands out in this group and anything close has them the clear horse to beat. The connections picking a stakes race to debut in is notable and while not the prime time of the GP Championship meet, still a $120k race and full field, where GARDEN OF WAR was co-favored. The form of that race held up with horses running back, many FTS at the time returning with maiden wins including a few stakes types - Governor Sam being one of those breaking their maiden and then going on to win three turf sprint stakes closing out 2024 with a show finish in the BC Juv. Turf Sprint (G1). None of that is outside the public eye and projected shorter number especially with the connections.

Woodbine Race 8

Post Time 4:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Even with the compact field, this is a competitive stakes race where a case can be made for the many. In terms of the race complexion, #1 EARHART should land their trip with early speed on the inside, however does find a change running at the extended sprint distance late last season and route in Jan, though some excuse as that race could have been lost at the GATE - fractious and lunged out.

On class #3 GAL IN A RUSH has that edge They showed up consistent in the graded stakes late year and dominant/B+ making a CLOSE X_FLOW in the Hendrie (G3) last summer. They are another that might be at their best with a little more ground that today's 6f.

The 6f distance appears ideal for #5 STAR CANDY and if there is a time, place and the right number to play this should be it. In terms of class they will be tested here though is encouraging they have tried graded stakes company, going all the way back to second start the Natalma (G1) in 2022 while still a maiden.

Stablemate #4 TICKER TAPE HOME has recorded at times some of the higher figures in the field. They have been able to fire fresh and win off a layoff while fit picking up their first graded stakes win last summer. Distance wise, they appear their best at the extended sprint distance, though to be fair outside of the WIDE trip in the Ontario Fashion (G3) closing out 2024 in October, was their first 6f Tapeta start.

Woodbine Race 9

Post Time 4:45 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 IT'S IN THE CARDS is interesting in this spot with some changes coming back as a sophomore. They started out sprinting and late in the season tough to know if the stretch out was the plan or what was available at the time. The timing could also be a factor starting out late in the year and now given the time to mature. They return with steady works and a live rider for this barn and conditions with some success (and at prices) in prior season.

Woodbine Race 10

Post Time 5:15 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#9 ADAPTED turned in a B OptixGRADE for the August debut and found the drop and wagering support closing out 2024. That effort does not appear a true representation, not their best on the day and noted WIDE trip chasing the pace and could see a change in tactics similar to the debut try and sit and make a run - there are plenty of others that has show early speed and from the outside and rider change that could be the key.

#5 PUNKIN BOY makes a belated return sharing a common race with ADAPTED on 8/11 their debut. The two debuting on the day, racing in the rain (WEATHER) with ADAPTED earning a B and the public attention as the 3-1 co-second choice from a 10-1 ML, though PUNKIN BOY also public attention and honest effort making a CLOSE after a TROUBLE_S. The connections had entered at this MOC $25k level on the turf in September clearing not making that race and the time off since. The barn is capable with these type of maidens off the layoff (last 5 WO seasons positive $.72 ROI - 20% Win, 53% ITM) and appears race ready with the steady and progressive series of works. A. Adams also with success for this barn in the limited starts (17% win, 39% ITM) from Oct-December closing out the 2024 meet.