Handicapping Analysis
Sat November 29th, 2025

Emily's Analysis

Churchill Downs Race 2

Post Time 12:28 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#8 SUN DODGER was intended for turf when they debuted last month at KEE and taking KICKBACK over the main track finds the grass today. In terms of the trip other things played against them in addition to taking dirt making a RUSH between horses (COVER) then NO_PUSH behind a Very Slow early and Slow late race shape to impact further and noted with the running line and finishing position.

Del Mar Race 1

Post Time 1:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 ALERAMO seems to prefer the DMR turf course keying off the BTL local debut in 2024 and returning in September with the maiden win despite TROUBLE still holding clear by open lengths at the wire. They look to rebound for this spot, second out against winners and second of the cycle encouraging for a runner that has had the layoff lines to return without one here and under identical conditions.

The change in race par and second off timing also projects to move up #1 SAKURA FLAVOR in this spot. She brings in current and buried form while cutting back to a flat mile where perhaps trip becomes the biggest hurdle as the other handicapping factor boxes are checked.

Del Mar Race 3

Post Time 2:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Keying off second time starters with upside from their debut races:

#1 CHANNEL PLACE caught a debut sprint back on 8/24 with minimal change in running order and proven productive going forward. This filly looks to continue that trend in a belated second start with the ability to IMPROVE from the in running visuals while picking up a rider change and added ground.

#3 HAWAIIAN MOON brings fitness and subtle flow upgrade into this second start making a RUSH and chasing a Very Fast early pace in their 10/24 extended sprint debut. Interesting this is where J. Velazquez lands having been aboard M. McCarthy stablemate #4 LILO LIL in their two starts to date out in KY and competitive B-OptixGRADES with WIDE trips in both events.

Del Mar Race 5

Post Time 3:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

While #9 STAY HOT makes the most sense in this field and taking up the role as the favorite, the shorter number on them (as well as some others) is less appealing to play.

By contrast the double digit odds add appeal in this case to #6 ASTRONOMER one that holds some class, form speed figures on par. While none of those are any strong edge in this group, they stack up as well as others while potentially overlooked to make the overlay case for here.

Del Mar Race 7

Post Time 4:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Some intent looks in play for #2 SPECIAL WOOD given the connections and placement for today's race. This being the first stateside start and while there could be a lack of conditions available for them, the move to graded stakes is notable. Especially in the case of the ship to run out west where they have been training in Ocala, FL and scratched from the 11/27 Wait A While stakes at GP to run here instead cross entered for both events and even prior to the late surface switch.

Del Mar Race 10

Post Time 6:02 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

With #7 MADAKET ROAD dropping from the graded stakes events should have no excuses here though a shorter number to find out.

Finding alternatives to get creating with: #5 TESSUTO is not the most consistent when it comes to running a peak effort, though if there are to this could reasonable be the time and place coming off the layoff for a barn that has sent out live runners this meet; #6 WAYNE THE BRAIN was uncharacteristically WARM in the 11/1 allowance and forced to RUSH impacting their overall outcome on the day. While today's event is under similar conditions the purse for that BC undercard event more than double today's race. #8 MESCALERO is a wild card with the changes in terms of class/surface/distance though with that said and overall form cycle should be sitting on a peak effort while tested in those other categories.

Del Mar Race 11

Post Time 6:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#12 HOTROCKET holds established form at this level and the right time and place as they return in the third start of the year and back to the route distance for a peak effort.

#3 WE CAN was very fractious in the GATE making their layoff return back on 11/1. They thrashed around, reared up multiple times and had to be backed out before reentering and ultimately lunging out at the start. Prior to entering the GATE they made a positive PRERACE+ appearance and if they did in fast lose their race before it start this could be the time they return to the turf efforts prior to the layoff and those number fit on par.

The pair of sophomores returning from the Let It Ride stakes in #4 LYLE THE CROCODILE and #11 HIDING IN HONDURAS both recording B- OptixGRADES with some subtle adversity in their own trips paying a role in overall outcome. The pair while capable must come out with a top effort in against older and some price compensation which might not be there with the connections and exiting stakes company while this allowance closer to a lateral move.