Handicapping Analysis
Sun April 19th, 2026

Emily's Analysis

Hawthorne Race 1

Post Time 2:40 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

The challenge with the opening race separating #2 PREMIUM and **#4 STRANGE ARRANGE** comes down to draw and today's 5f sprint distance. Those subtle factors along with local experience (and slightly higher projected odds) shift focus to STRANGE ARRANGE – one coming up as a flow upgrade (X_FLOW 3/9 FG) for this second start of the current cycle.

The rail draw for #1 UNCAPTURED PULSE along with the shorter 5f sprint distance while giving up recency are hurdles in here – not impossible to overcome though things to consider when playing on the win end. #3 ICE SHARD could reasonably be assessed needing the race, potential prep, for a horse who has spent much of their time on the track at the route, two turn distances.

Hawthorne Race 2

Post Time 3:08 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 KEEN GAL has a projected class edge over today's rivals noted her debut here at Hawthorne last season in MSW company turning in a B- OptixGRADE while GREEN. She held her form following at the FG however was not always positioned ideally in terms of timing and conditions. Arguably her preferred surface/distance is the grass going longer, however could still compete here under these conditions and provided she is not the favorite.

In terms of ML favorite and projected favorite #2 VERONICAFORTHEWIN she brings in current speed and closer to a lateral move if not a softer par given the recent FG starts. Those changes could be key especially coming back from the 2/6 FG event where she did not have an ideal start TROUBLE_S/RUSH (something of a pattern for this filly) before PRESSED SAVED through Slow early/late race shape and unable to hold position late.

With VERONICAFORTHEWIN projected to take up the controlling speed, the changes she will be "lone" in that role is less likely given some tactical speed shown from #5 ENGAGEMENT at Oaklawn as well as #6 WW BEST OF TIMES in their more competitive races.

A contentious early pace still requires racing luck and fitness for off the pace trips at 5.5f furlongs though things to keep #4 D'ARGONAUT in consideration as well as #3 CATNIP HILL mostly underneath.

Hawthorne Race 3

Post Time 3:36 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#1 BIG D finds a considerable upgrade returning to Hawthorne, in addition to a change in class for this start. They dropped in for the claiming tag back on 2/26 with BIG D taking contact at the break (TROUBLE_S) and chasing WIDE in a race with minimal change in running order. BIG D will be tested to run a “faster” race to contend for the top spot though given a lightly raced individual with upside to do just that given the figures posted as a juvenile to project that necessary move forward.

The 5f distance of this race is something BIG D holds experience with picking up the open length MSW win as a juvenile last August where as ***#2 WOLF HUNTER*** does have that distance change to consider in this race. WOLF HUNTER terms to run to their level of competition and overall consistency in terms of speed figures which fit as a contender in this race – even consistency when looking at speed figures off similar layoffs to the one they return from here.

WOLF HUNTER is likely to track and make a late run and there should be some contention on the lead to target given #3 REGAINED POWER, a confirmed front runner along with #5 RODAVLAS one that tends to run their best race when on lead as shown by their LONE open length maiden win at Hawthorne last Jule.

Like the progression number wise required for BIG D, #4 GAME SANTA falls into that same camp. While upside is projected for GAME SANTA given their races last year, those races would still need a boost and unlike BIG racing figures as a juvenile, GAME SANTA starting out his career last year as a sophomore.

Hawthorne Race 4

Post Time 4:04 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

While **#1 CAME UP ROSES** picked up their maiden win last season around two turns, physically she could be better suited back at today’s ONE_TURN/SPRINTER distance. With that change noted she fits for today’s N2 level finding class relief from all three starts in 2026 noting she was racing above condition on 1/15 at the FG and at the higher claiming level/tag in the following two starts, 2/5 FG and 3/15 OP.

Class relief also comes back into play for her stablemate ***#6 ILLY SIMZ*** to upgrade here as well. ILLY SIMZ could be looking for some Hawthorne redemption going back to last season with an EX in their 7/13 return and followed up with a TROUBLE trip on 8/13 with the layoff that followed. Coming back from the layoff, at the FG she held her own under similar $5kN2 conditioned claiming events while showing early speed, something to note in today’s group and when looking at the OptixPLOT of the race in Quad I, above the ParLine.

With ILLY SIMZ looking to clear from the outside rivals *#3 GREAT OWL* and *#5 SPIRIT TO INSPIRE* should pick up that chase and while not “need the lead” types have tactical speed (Quad I) along with finishing ability (Squares) to compete under today’s conditions.

#4 BALLYBAY BEAUTY overall fits as a contender at this level and has a recency edge coming into this race with progressive form and figures from the FG in this current cycle. With that said, the shorter sprint distance could present a hurdle on the win end, though will note last season (6/29) recorded a B OptixGRADE sprinting 5.5f at Hawthorne making a WIDE MOVE to finish second though together with the first run winner, Foxy Zorra at the wire.

#2 GIVEN GRACE could be “given” a start coming back around and off the layoff. Following her form cycle from prior seasons, she is one who tends to need the race and race into shape – something to note and following going forward.

Hawthorne Race 5

Post Time 4:32 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

In terms of ML favorite **#6 PEOPLE FORCE** they should be in the right spot to compete given recency and significant change in class. Today's par is much lower than not only what they have faced since entering the T. Tracy barn coming off the layoff last September though arguably since the start of their career.

As far as today's race shape and Plot position, there could be some "knocks" with PEOPLE FORCE in terms of pace given their Plot position as a Quad I Circle noting the Fire Contention and honest 58 SpeedRate. While that should be considered into value, the Circle in this case should also be noted with context especially returning from the 3/14 FG trip making a RUSH with TROUBLE on the first time and taking pace PRESSED X_FLOW impacting not only outcome on the day, but the Plot "shape" going forward.

The Contention/SpeedRate should assist #1 CRAFTY KING in this case though they hold other hurdles such as form, giving up recency off the 81 day layoff while making a belated return to the dirt to run for the claiming tag. And in that case prefer, **#2 NEW YEAR SURPRISE** with a similar Plot position/shape, projected higher odds, as well as the edge on recency coming back for a second start off the layoff while also given the ABOVE rating on Speed and ABOVE+ on Plot.

Both #4 HAWAIIAN HIDE AWAY and ***#5 REGIMENTAL*** will return from slight layoffs to start off the season and noting REGIMENTAL has been able to fire fresh off a similar break in the past and upgraded on that front here.

Hawthorne Race 6

Post Time 5:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Similar to the Plot/race shape in Race 5, we are looking at a Fire Contention and honest 31 SpeedRate in this event when assessing pace. Assessing pace also assessing ML favorite *#4 NOT FALLING BACK* one that does not hold a pace advantage (AVERAGE+) in here as a knock at a shorter number while holding the ABOVE+ rating on class exiting the higher conditioned turf events. As far as the shift back to the main track, they are unproven noting their green with significant TROUBLES+ at the break while racing GREEN and RANK appeared more than just the surface impacting performance.

With that change in surface, along with their most competitive races on the lead we should see J. Loveberry aggressive from the start and often setting Fast/Very Fast early paces is something impacting their Circle, aka finishing ability.

#6 WAYLLEN RICHARD should look to capitalize on the early pace should the race shape start to slow late. In addition to finding a trip, they fit on Speed figures and Class for today's par along with current form coming back under similar N3 conditions recording a B OptixGRADE on 2/19 at the FG noting the top three together in a BLANKET at the wire.

#1 OLIVERIO could be sitting ideally in position for first run (ABOVE+ PLOT) they are returning from a new top effort with the 3/9 FG win and testing as they take the rise in class here. Upside sits with #5 VINO COURAGIO making a return to Hawthorne following success over this course and distance in 2025. They look to hold intent with recency as well now in the second start off the layoff.

As a longshot, *#7 STORM'S REFLECTION* is just that; though could see improvement with the race under their belt coming off the layoff on 4/8 at HS Indy and wheeling back for this start. While they need to find their top form with the quickness to compete, to their credit they have races which fit along with a positive Surface/Distance Plot position and shape.

Hawthorne Race 7

Post Time 5:28 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Heading into the finale, projecting a lot of attention on **#4 COUNT THE GREEN** for the connections making their debut. As an IL-bred they will race for the higher $22.5k claiming tag to suggest a positive on that front along with a steady series of recent works for this sophomore. The barn notable success overall with FTS and in this category at Hawthorne at odds of less than 3-1, in a 17 horse sample with five wins (29%) and another five (59%) ITM.

#3 KAZOOM finds a lateral change in class fits off the claim and DUEL X_FLOW upgrade recording a B-OptixGRADE on 3/6 and overall consistent speed figures which should hold here for the new connections and circuit switch. While holding similar Class/Speed to rival *#5 HURRICANE EXPRESS* one wheeling back from a tough beat as the favorite given trip adversity and finishing together in a BLANKET at the wire just over a week ago (4/8) at HS Indy.

Turfway Park shippers #2 HONOR POINT, flow aided in their 2/21 debut and *#6 STREET STYLE* (lateral class change) should see their from translate on this circuit and reasonably placed for their new connections.

#8 MY LAST ESCAPADE projects to be one of the longer priced runners in this field and while they are a legitimate longshot they can be given some consideration with the tendency to run “in the money” and ran off a similar break and spot early in the meet with a place finish at 24-1 last season.