Oaklawn Stakes Race Analysis   **Sunday, May 5, 2024**

By Jeff "Money" Taylor

RACE 10 - $200,000 LAKE OUACHITA STAKES (5:10 p.m.): What better way to draw the curtain on the richest stakes schedule in Oaklawn history than with an evenly matched group of seasoned Oaklawn veterans going a middle distance. Collectively, this group of eight has 50 local starts. Ironically, however, the one with the least amount of Oaklawn experience may prove the one to beat. **Law Professor (#1, 3-1 morning line),** third in last year's G3-Razorback after an unplaced and troubled effort in the 2022 G3-Oaklawn Mile in his only two Hot Springs appearances, comes in riding a two-race winning streak in New York. He splits the difference today between those last two distances of eight and nine furlongs fresh off a career best 100 Beyer Speed Figure he earned in optional company in late February. Christian Torres, who easily defended his riding title from a year ago this season, should work out a great tip from along the inside with his G1 placed mount.

Silver Prospector (#5, 5-2) has been installed as the morning line favorite, but Oaklawn regulars are well aware of how rarely he comes by trips to the winner's circle. He has averaged exactly one of those a year dating back to 2020 and while he did get his picture taken two starts back in a one-mile optional affair, history has not been kind to him in that regard.

Offering much better value than the aforementioned pair is **Ben Franklin (#8,10-1).** Although he is still working on getting through his conditions for trainer Kenny McPeek, who had a huge weekend at Churchill Downs, he has developed a real fondness for the Oaklawn surface, having finished no worse than second in his four starts here this year. The late developing 4-year-old seems to be figuring things out and if he gets a legitimate pace to work with, unlike last time when dealing with a pedestrian :49 1/5 half mile split, he should come running late.

Those pacesetting chores could fall to **Frosted Departure (#3, 4-1)** who pulled off the wire job in winning a non-three other than at Keeneland four weeks ago. Also trained by McPeek, the son of Frosted did the same in winning here back in December. Things don't always go his way up front but when they do, good things happen. Without a significant amount of other speed present, the chance he gets loose up front is a real possibility.

Wagering Strategy   -   Win: #8
Exactas: 3 w 1, 5, 8; 8 w/ 1, 3, 5