



## Oaklawn Stakes Race Analysis

Friday, March 29, 2024

By Jeff "Money" Taylor

**RACE 9 - \$200,000 TEMPERENCE HILL (4:55 p.m):** The state of the marathon appears alive and well at Oaklawn as a full baker's dozen have signed on to try three turns in this twelve-furlong affair. Experience at extended distances is always a good place to start in the handicapping process as a mile and a half can often tax the American pedigree.

While he hasn't tried today's distance on dirt, **O P Firecracker (#3, 10-1 morning line)** has been this far on the turf, a surface he does not particularly care for. That effort last fall at Keeneland produced his best Beyer Speed Figure (88) over the infield and that number stands to improve on dirt. In his three tries over the main track here at the current stand, he has picked up minor awards in all three while going only two turns. His last came in the G3 Razorback when 30-1 and this spot should provide some class relief as well. He gets a solid and energetic rider in Vasquez and trainer Robert Medina is building some momentum as the meeting heads into the home stretch.

Possible favorite **Red Run (#13, 4-1)** is a winner at today's distance on the grass and he was involved in the trifecta in each of his two dirt tries going this far, including a good third in the G2-Brooklyn at Belmont last summer. The son of Gun Runner could have drawn better, but he is quicker than most and should secure forward position in the short run to the first turn. His form tailed off a bit to conclude his 2023 campaign, but he has had some time to freshen for trainer Mike Maker, who wintered the son of Gun Runner in South Florida. He worked a nice five furlongs locally 10 days ago in gearing up for his return and he lit the board in both of his starts here around this time last year.

Also drawing the outside was **Classic Causeway (#12, 9-2)**. This G1 winner (Belmont Derby on the grass as a 3-year-old) has consistently raced at a higher level than his rivals today, including a couple of starts at prestigious Royal Ascot last summer. He too has tactical speed. Enough, perhaps, to make the early lead where he has run well from previously. He has not started since his return from Europe late last summer, however, and a mile and a half is not the kindest distance in a return to action. It is encouraging to see he came close to wiring the field in last season's Essex off a layoff of shorter duration. Conditioner Kenny McPeck does have a solid string of works in him, including a "bullet" five furlong move at the Fair Grounds last week.

**Strong Tide (#6, 6-1)** comes in off an identical layoff, having last seen action on August 23 of 2023. He won the prep for this race in 2022 in wire-to-wire fashion before reporting home fourth at the same distance in his next start, a finish he would repeat in last year's edition of this race. Another trifecta or superfecta finish is certainly not out of the question.

**Wagering Strategy -**

**Win & Place: #3**

**Trifecta Key Box: 3, 13 w/ 3, 6, 7, 12, 13 w/ 3, 6, 7, 12, 13**