The Simple Case for Stradivari in the Belmont Stakes

With the amount of unique and useful information that OptixEQ provides, you don't always need to dig too deep to uncover opportunities. We think this Saturday's Belmont Stakes is an interesting example. When you review the race's OptixPLOT, you'll see that the balance of early-pace to late-pace runners is heavily skewed toward closer types, as per the OptixRPM.

So, we obviously begin our assessment by looking at the two early-pace types, who should have a distinct advantage. Those horses are #5 STRADIVARI (5/1) and #6 GETTYSBURG (30/1). When we review Gettysburg's OptixNOTES below, we see a litany of "SHORTER?" projections. At today's 12-furlongs, he's an easy toss for us.

6	GETTYSBURG	20160611	16	BEL[11]	D	RTE (12f)	---	Belmont-G1	★	I			
6	Gettysburg	20160526	40	BEL[8]	D	RTE (8.5f)	Fast	OClm 80000n1x	3	90	B-	WARM WARM_UP PRESSED NO_FINISH	SHORTER?
6	Gettysburg	20160521		PIM[11]	D	RTE (8.5f)	Muddy	SirBartonB100k	X	X		Scratched Trainer	
6	Gettysburg	20160416	27	OP[11]	D	RTE (9f)	Fast	ArkDerby-G1	5	93	B-	PRESSED X_FLOW	
6	Gettysburg	20160320	36	SUN[9]	D	RTE (9f)	Fast		2	103			
6	Gettysburg	20160213	35	TAM[5]	D	RTE (8.5f)	Fast	SFDavis-G3	5	86	C	SAVED NO_KEEP	SHORTER?
6	Gettysburg	20160109	28	GP[8]	D	RTE (9f)	Fast	Md Sp Wt	1	89	B+	LONE	
6	Gettysburg	20151212	44	GP[1]	D	RTE (8.5f)	Fast	Md Sp Wt	3	77	B-	PRESSED	SHORTER?
6	Gettysburg	20151029		BEL[6]	D	RTE (8f)	Good	Md Sp Wt	9	82	C		

Reviewing Stradivari's OptixNOTES below, we see a lightly raced horse with a load of talent, who appears to be sitting on an "IMPROVE?" race.

5	STRADIVARI	20160611	21	BEL[11]	D	RTE (12f)	---	Belmont-G1	★	I			
5	Stradivari	20160521	34	PIM[13]	D	RTE (9.5f)	Sloppy	Preaknes-G1	4	94	B-	RANK	IMPROVE?
5	Stradivari	20160417	134	KEE[2]	D	RTE (9f)	Fast	Alw 62000n1x	1	105	A-	NO_PUSH	
5	Stradivari	20151205	27	GP[1]	⊗	RTE (8.5f)	Good	Md Sp Wt	1	91	B+	PADDOCK(+ PERFECT HOT	
5	Stradivari	20151108		AQU[4]	D	SPR (7f)	Fast	Md Sp Wt	4	81	C+		

In his third career race at KEE, he earned an OptixFIG of 105, with an extended comment that reads: "**buried this field, never asked."** His 105 OptixFIG is the second-highest overall in the field—second only to the favorite Exaggerator's second-place Kentucky Derby effort (108). In only his fourth career start, he ran a solid fourth in the Preakness with an extended comment that said: **"was rank and a bit unsettled in the early part of the race while behind horses; eventually, he settled down and ran a pretty even race, but with only four starts under his belt, this guy seems to have more upside capability."**

It appears he got a ton of education out of that experience. In today's race, he should be up close, stalking Gettysburg, and we can see him making the lead on the final turn and staying on in the stretch. The two concerns are today's distance and his price.

The distance is a question, but it is for everyone else in the field as well. We like the way he stayed on in the Preakness, despite wasting energy while being rank behind horses early in the race. He should get a comfortable outside stalking position today, and we think 12-furlongs is well within his scope.

The second, and more important issue, is his price. We are okay with his M/L of 5/1. However, with Belmont Park being his talented connections' home track, he may get overplayed. We'll want to get at least 4/1 or better.