

OptixEQ Looks at the 2020 Breeders' Cup DISTAFF (G1) by Emily Gullikson

INTRO

The headline in this event in the G1 Distaff will be the match-up between 2018 BC Distaff winner **#10 MONOMOY GIRL** and the G1 Preakness winner **#5 SWISS SKYDIVER**. While many will default to a “two horse race” there is much more depth to this field and some clues in *OptixPLOT* to use the adage, pace makes the race.

OPTIXPLOT

The first thing that jumps out on **OptixPLOT** is the “*SUN*” *Contention* paired with the high *80 SpeedRate*. That is shown visually as well with eight of the ten runners in this field positioned over the *Par Line*, a scenario that suggest runners from off the pace (*Quad III/IV*) could have the advantage.

OPTIXGRID

With a lot of the handicapping focus here on pace/ **OptixPLOT** it is still important to utilize **OptixGRID** going through horse-by-horse and will start by assessing those favorites.

#10 MONOMOY GIRL (8-5/VULNERABLE) in terms of form, *OptixFIG* and class/ *OptixGRADE* she checks the boxes in terms of a contender this afternoon, however pace does create some vulnerabilities at a short price. She was able to stalk with a *FREE* trip in the G1 La Troienne, however might not have that luxury given the far outside post. Granted she was drawn outside that day, the level of *Contention* in *Quad I* was lighter and *SpeedRate* lower allowing her to recover after ground loss into the first turn. With today's 9-furlong distance, she needs everything in her favor as it was back in 2018 with the *PERFECT* trip.

#5 SWISS SKYDIVER (2-1/SOFT) her *OptixFIG* and *GRADES* make her a player this afternoon, though has the same *concern in terms of pace* to get the trip required to win this without much on the morning line to compensate. As shown in her *Past 3 Runlines* she has benefit from *PERFECT* trips in the G1 Alabama and the G1 KY Oaks. The tactical speed that has allowed for her to put herself into those trips, could be taxed here with the *high SpeedRate*. She was able to stalk from a *POCKET* trip in the G1 Preakness though could find the early pace (*80 SpeedRate*) much quicker today with many in here including **MONOMOY GIRL** capable to set fast opening $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile fractions. While she does present favorable on the *Plot* as a *Square* in *Quad II/III* that is a change from her current races where she was positioned in *Quad I*.

While pace could be the undoing for **MONOMOY GIRL** and **SWISS SKYDIVER**, they have the edge over the other runners in *Quad I/III* **#2 HARVEST MOON**, **#4 HOROLOGIST**, **#6 LADY KATE (all TOSS)**. The other *Quad I Square* **#9 OLLIE'S CANDY** does not hold an

edge in terms of pace, *OptixFIG* or *Grades* over **MONOMOY** or **SKYDIVER** and at best to hold for *Underneath*.

#7 POINT OF HONOR (30-1/VALUE KEY) sure the case can be made that she is not the “most likely” winner, though this morning line is disrespectful to her abilities and would be surprised if that number sticks. Looking at *OptixPLOT* and discussing pace the race sets up for a stretch runner and she fits that bill as a *Large Square* in *Quad IV*. In terms of class, she recorded a *B OptixGRADE* in the G1 Apple Blossom with the *BTL Keyword* making a *WIDE MOVE* and *CLOSE* behind the pacesetters, **CE CE** and **OLLIE’S CANDY**. Her form improved from there record a *B+ OptixGRADE* finishing in a blanket at the wire in the G1 Ogden Phipps back in June at Belmont. It is important to understand, the G1 Personal Ensign and G2 Beldame were compact fields and **POINT OF HONOR** was unable to find the right pace or race shape for her run style, which is reflected in the *OptixFIG* and minor finishes. She has the class and speed to compete at this level and should have the ideal setup to run that top effort today.

#8 VALIANCE (12-1/VALUE) as a *Square* in *Quad II*, she holds value over **#1 CE CE (12-1/BELOW)** given the same morning line. **VALIANCE** also holds an edge based on her current improving form, *GRADES* and *OptixFIG* with her recent races on the main track. She will enter this race with some momentum off the two race win streak which includes the G1 Spinster over this course and distance last month.

#3 DUNBAR ROAD (12-1/SPREAD) while the pace scenario does set up for a stretch runner and she is positioned in *Quad IV*, that “deep close” the most ideal trip for her. She found herself in a *Quad IV* type position in the 2019 BC Distaff after a slow start (*SLOG*) and chasing off a solid early pace (similar to what is expected here) was moving with the race flow late for fifth. Some upside could be present exiting that four horse G2 Beldame, and same consideration in terms of *OptixFIG*, though no real excuse for her in terms of overall trip. With a fair start, Ortiz should have her positioned to run more mid-pack, perhaps fall into a *Quad II* type trip here. That trip would be favorable, though she would need to run a much improved race this season and a new career top to compete for win awards. Not impossible and could get overlooked here allowing for some use.

CONCLUSION

As a fan of the sport, it is nice to see the Champions champion, though as a player these are the type of opportunities to get involved in. The name recognition (and even appearance on basic standard pp’s) will create an underlay on **MONOMOY GIRL** and **SWISS SKYDIVER** and value elsewhere with the chance to trust the data and play for an upset.