By Jeff "Money" Taylor

RACE 10 - $200,000 LAKE HAMILTON STAKES (4:55 p.m.): When the connections of sprint phenom **Skelly (#6)** announced their intentions to defend their title in this race from a year ago a couple of weeks back, there was genuine concern that this year's running might seriously lack for number of entries. It did not look that way initially, when seven rivals signed on to try the track's best sprinter. The connections of **Straight No Chaser (#1)** elected to remain in California, however, unlike last year when they shipped in to account for an optional claimer that they won impressively on Arkansas Derby Day.

As formidable as the formidable as the favorite looks on paper with the defection of the second choice, it is still not going to be a walkover. **Edge to Edge (#5)** established himself as a top shelf local sprinter by winning the Eclipse stakes last month while earning a 101 Beyer. Third in this race in 2023, the Chris Hartman trainee has not run worse than that position over a fast track since, including a runner-up finish to **Skelly** in optional company here in late December. If the strip dries out from the rains from Thursday and Friday, he rates as a contender.

Mish (#2) is another coming off a stakes victory as he captured the NYRA Sprint at Tampa on March 14 as the even-money favorite. The Field Commission gelding has been ultra consistent for trainer Saffie Joseph dating back to last June, having missed being involved in the exacta only once in nine tries.

Even with the scratch eliminating some of the potential early speed, the remaining players all seem to prefer running the front, with one exception: **Payne (#8).** Although his accomplishments are modest compared to his stakes winning counterparts, his one run style could wreak havoc if someone can soften up the heavyweight in the early going.

Wagering Strategy   -   Flyer Win Play: #8
Exacta Box : 6,8

RACE 11 - $200,000 ARKANSAS BREEDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP (5:35 p.m.): Sometimes good form is difficult to maintain but **Lochmoor (#2)** appears to be doing just fine in that department, especially after stretching out to a middle distance in his last couple of starts. In those two wins, he defeated no fewer than eight of the eleven rivals he catches back today. His usual running style of lurking in the second flight and firing down the lane looks to once again be an ideal fit with some shaky potential pacesetters present today. His even-money price will likely say it all as he appears to be one of the most likely winners of the afternoon.

Navy Seal (#1) showed a little more life last time than what he had previously displayed in five previous starts this season. While he had to settle for third behind today's favorite, it was an improvement from a fifth-place finish to that same rival the start before. He too would seem to benefit from a pace meltdown up front and should be along for at least another share.

One of those likely to be involved in the early pace battle would seem to be **Willow Creek Road (#6)** since he was setting the fractions in **Lochmoor's** last win before weakening when that one came calling in midstretch. That effort came over a sloppy strip, which the son of Hightail had not shown much fondness for previously. Perhaps dryer footing today will allow him to stick around a bit longer, although as second choice on tote, his value appears marginal.

Black Apple (#10) saw a three-race win streak snapped in his last race when he simply failed to fire in reporting home a distant sixth. It is worth noting that that trio of wins at the current stand all came over off tracks, including

a win in open starter allowance company to begin that win skein. Should the late week rains persist, a rebound could very well be in the cards and at double digits on tote, there is ample value.

One Ten Stadium (#7) is a grizzled Oaklawn veteran with 14 local starts. While no match for today's favorite when they last met in late March, he did report home second with a modest rally of his own. His third career victory has eluded him thus far and this is a tall order to change that today but has he been involved in the superfecta in all five starts since returning from a layoff in mid-December and another gimmick finish appears doable today.

Man in the Can (#11) also looks like a fringe player. Trained by Ron Moquett, as is **One Ten Stadium,** he exits a couple of fourth-place finishes to **Lochmoor.** He has seen a gradual ascent in his Beyer numbers in four starts here this season and has tempered his early speed a bit later in his career, preferring instead to race in the second flight.

Wagering Strategy   -   Flyer Win Play: #10 (if tracks is anything but 'fast."
Trifecta Key: 2 w/ 1, 7, 10, 11 w/ 1, 7, 10, 11