

**Date:** July 11th, 2020

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: Lil Sydney (7th race)**

**First Race**

**1. Foreign Protocol**

**2. Octopus**

**3. Mister McLean**

**FOREIGN PROTOCOL**, a Northern California-based four-time winner, gets the call in this claiming sprint for 3-year-olds. He returned to form three weeks ago with a decisive win vs. low-level claiming 3yos at Pleasanton, he has won twice at this five and a half-furlong distance, and his figures are appropriate for this level. Off the pace and into the winner's circle to give No Cal-based Quinn Howey the first Del Mar victory of his training career.

**OCTOPUS** is speed, first start since a romping maiden-32 win on this racetrack last fall. Sharp workouts for his comeback, he is realistically spotted in a low claiming race. Juan Leyva, assistant to trainer John Sadler, is currently calling the shots. The colt's owner, Hronis Racing, was the leading Del Mar owner the past three summer meets. **MISTER MCLEAN** defeated older N2L claiming rivals last out in his first start on dirt. He will be forwardly placed. Class dropper **HYDROGEN** adds speed.

**Second Race**

**1. Handsome Cat**

**2. Shootin Money**

**3. Carpe Victoriam**

**HANDSOME CAT**, who ran the best race of his career last out against older Cal-breds, drops into a \$50k claiming turf sprint for 3yos. He chased a fast pace last time and held his position; this field is easier. The speedsters drawn inside flatter his closing rally. **SHOOTIN MONEY** also ran well last out, third after chasing fast fractions in a turf sprint at this level. He is sharp, has more speed than the top choice, and should get first run if/when the two speedsters falter. **CARPE VICTORIAM** was claimed by Hronis/Leyva/Sadler from a \$40k dirt mile win last out at Churchill Downs. Not sure if he benefits by the surface switch to grass, but his dirt form is solid. **FINAL FINAL** goes route to sprint, allowance to claiming, synthetic to turf. He will make the last run. **SHARP WARNING** and **D K'S CROWN** are the aforementioned speedsters that help insure an honest pace.

**Third Race**

**1. Da Kine**

**2. Bigfoot City**

**3. Trojan Magic**

Second start back from a layoff and dropping to rock-bottom maiden-20, **DA KINE** gets the nod. He ran the best race of his career the only time he raced on Del Mar dirt last summer, he may have been too close to the pace in his sixth-place comeback vs. maiden-40 company. Easier foes, likely off-pace strategy second start back, and possible wagering value as a non-favorite. No Cal-based **BIGFOOT CITY** drops from special-weight all the way to maiden-20 for his first start on dirt. His two sprints vs. special-weight maidens on synthetic at Golden Gate compare favorably to this field. **TROJAN MAGIC** looms a potential favorite/potential pacesetter, dropping to his lowest level and cutting back to one turn after setting the pace and fading in a maiden-40 mile at Los Alamitos. He is expected to vie for favoritism, but his form has been on a steady decline and front-runners have not won their fair share here the past two summers at seven furlongs. **TROJAN MAGIC** could win nonetheless, but he sure looks like an underlay. **CONVEX** drops in class for his comeback, first since he was gelded.

**Fourth Race**

**1. Sapori Girl**

**2. Surface**

**3. Constantia**

Eleven-start maiden **SAPORI GIRL** and seven-start maiden **SURFACE** are the top contenders in this maiden-50 turf mile. Tough to trust either, although the third-place finish last out by **SAPORI GIRL** was better than it looks on paper. She broke from post 11, was four- and five-wide throughout, yet missed by only two and a half. She moves from post 11 to the rail, and with a ground-saving trip can finally break her maiden. **SURFACE** pressed and faded in a comeback, her first in more than six months. Her form last fall includes a pair of runner-up finishes in special-weight turf races at Golden Gate; those make her a fit against these. **CONSTANTIA** is speed, dropping another notch after dueling to deep stretch last out and finishing seventh. **OLIVE YOU MORE** opened up a crazy six-length lead last time, then weakened to finish second. That was on the main track at Golden Gate, she seems to prefer turf, and is reunited with a familiar rider in Victor Espinoza. Expect a different strategy than last time.

**Fifth Race**

**1. Hot Rod Charlie**

**2. Cross Indian**

**3. Raisebeforetheflop**

Maiden 2yos sprint five furlongs, **HOT ROD CHARLIE** gets the call based on pedigree and works. A sibling to 2019 champion sprinter Mitole, 'CHARLIE appears to have worked well for his debut, this field did come up particularly strong. But he is not perfect. Juvenile progeny of Oxbow win only 6 percent first out, yet the colt's works suggest he is ready to fire. Second-time starter **CROSS INDIAN** has an upset chance after a better-than-looked sixth-place debut. He was shuffled from between foes early, surrounded in traffic much of the trip, kept to his task and actually finished with run. He ran like a maiden that will benefit from a race. Second time out, likely high odds in a small field, improvement expected. **RAISEBEFORETHEFLOP** makes his debut for trainer Peter Miller, whose 2yos are firing. 'FLOP is a sibling to three multiple winners, though juvenile progeny of sire Liam's Map have won just 6 percent first out. **TRIPPLE SHAKE** debuts for a stable that sends them ready; **GIRTHER** finished an okay fifth in his debut, in front of **CROSS INDIAN**.

**Sixth Race**

### 1. Duplicity

### 2. Psycho Dar

### 3. Speedy Justice

**DUPLICITY** dusted a decent maiden field at Churchill Downs, he can fire right back in this allowance turf sprint. The fifth- and seventh-place finishers from the maiden race won special-weight races next out. **DUPLICITY** worked a fast half since returning to California, and might be the speed of the speed. **PSYCHO DAR** ran as if he needed the start in his fifth-place comeback last month. It was his first in 10 months. 'DAR ran well over this course last summer, and figures to improve second start back. **SPEEDY JUSTICE** won his debut by more than seven lengths in a turf sprint here last fall. Off since, working well, he adds speed. **DISTANT VISTA** goes route to sprint and should rally in a race that sets up for a closer. **TOROSAY** might be ranked too low by this handicapper; he finished a creditable third last out in a stakes race, and adds more speed. This course played fair in summer 2019. With the rails at this 12-foot setting, there were nine turf sprints: 3 winners led gate to wire, 2 winners pressed from second or third, 4 winners rallied from fourth or farther back.

#### Seventh Race

##### 1. Lil Sydney

##### 2. All I Can Say

##### 3. Rogallo

**LIL SYDNEY** improved each successive start since returning as a first-time gelding in May. He won a maiden-20 two starts back, and last out actually ran okay while racing above his conditions in a N3L claiming sprint won by a stablemate. Now he drops to N2L, which is usually the right spot for a maiden-20 winner. 'SYDNEY is not a front-runner, but does have enough tactical speed to be forwardly placed in a race without true pace. **ALL I CAN SAY** is a route-to-sprint closer that might be compromised by the pace scenario. But his current form is solid, second and third at this level; he outran his odds both previous starts on this track. **ROGALLO** could vie for favoritism based on speed figures last year and early this year. Claimed last out for \$25k, he immediately drops to \$16k N2L, which is the bottom level for winners. The move makes sense considering he was dusted last out. His stable employed the claim-and-drop move with success in February with a similar low-level claiming horse. Canadian Game was claimed for \$25k, he won next out for \$12.5k. **MANTARY ISLAND** returns from a long layoff as a first-time gelding, first time entered for a claim tag.

#### Eighth Race

##### 1. Big Score

##### 2. Souter

##### 3. Voodoo Song

A lively pace scenario in this turf mile stakes benefits the closing style of comebacker **BIG SCORE** and racing-fit **SOUTER**. The call is **BIG SCORE**, who early in his career ran well fresh (debut winner, graded winner comeback at age 3). Now 6, unraced since fall, he has faced tougher company, and returns in a restricted stakes race that sets up for his late rally. Although this race is designed as a prep for the G2 Del Mar Mile on Aug. 23, **BIG SCORE** still gets the call to win with a closing rally. **SOUTER** returned from a layoff/freshening with a solid third in a Grade 3. He lost ground racing wide most of the trip, and closed willingly in a race won by the pacesetter. Solid comeback. **SOUTER** has always been just a cut below the best in the turf mile division, but he fits in this spot. **VOODOO SONG** won a Grade 1 in 2018; he drops in class after he got stirred up and cooked in a pace duel against tougher. He figures if he can ration his speed. The presence of front-runners **BOLO** and **KIWI'S DREAM** complicate the pace scenario. The front end looks crowded.

#### Ninth Race

##### 1. Diva in Charge

##### 2. Paige Runner

##### 3. Rather Nosy

**DIVA IN CHARGE** figures to start at a short price in this maiden-50 starter allowance, non-winners of three races. She is two-for-two since stretching to a route; both wins were highly rated. Looks like a low-odds favorite. **PAIGE RUNNER** was no match for the top choice last out, but now goes second off the claim by Doug O'Neill, an angle that is 14-for-49 the past two years. **RATHER NOSY** is a sprinter stretching to a route for the first time. Her sprint form is solid, she probably is the one to catch. **BUYBACK**, runner-up both recent starts vs. similar on turf, is also effective on dirt.

#### Tenth Race

##### 1. Nurse Goodbody

##### 2. Sweet Devil

##### 3. Vegas Palm

Lightly raced **NURSE GOODBODY** is the obvious choice in this maiden turf route, based on her runner-up finish second time out. Stretching out off a single debut sprint, she was shuffled back and lost position on the far turn, angled outside in the stretch to re-rally, ran her final quarter in :23.15 and missed by only a length. Sharp. The race was late May; if she reproduces the effort in early July she can win at a short price. **SWEET DEVIL** returns to turf after a midpack prep in a dirt route that produced two next-out winners. Her third in a similar maiden turf route two back puts her in the hunt. Tough post (12), however. **VEGAS PALM** is an eight-start maiden with five in-the-money finishes including runner-up finishes both recent sprints. **RED DIAMOND** finished well in her debut sprint.