Date: July 26th, 2020   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Galilean (10th race)

First Race

| 1. Baja Sur | 2. Bombard | 3. Blitzkrieg |

Based on his sharp runner-up comeback in a turf sprint stakes, **BAJA SUR** gets the call to win this five-pack turf sprint allowance. A multiple stakes winner who typically improves second start following a layoff, BAJA SUR has tactical speed, and a finishing kick. The comeback race in which he finished second was somewhat validated when the third-place finisher returned to win a minor stakes race at Pleasanton. Stakes winner **BOMBARD** returns from a one-year-old layoff with a series of bullet workouts. He won both previous times he returned from a layoff in a turf sprint. **BLITZKRIEG** wired a G3 turf mile last out. He can sprint, and will rally late.

Second Race

| 1. Go for a Ride | 2. Speakerofthehouse | 3. Rogallo |

GO FOR A RIDE was kayoed by a hot pace last out; he finished fifth in a race dominated by late-runners. His pace rival Abusive Gary already came back to win his next start, now 'RIDE catches a route field without true speed. In light with a 10-pound apprentice, he can win this $16k claiming N2L with a front-running or pace-pressing trip. The splits should be relatively soft. **SPEAKEROFTHEHOUSE** drops to the bottom class level for winners, after a pair of fifths vs. $25k claiming N2L rivals. Though he is dropping just one class level, this field is significantly easier. **ROGALLO** stretches back to two turns and switches to Flavien Prat.

Third Race

| 1. Sugary | 2. Lostintranzlation | 3. Tammy's Window |

A pair of veteran mares in dubious form are tepid choices in this $25k claiming turf mile. It's a good spot for **SUGARY** and **LOSTINTRANZLATION** to rebound. SUGARY finished last both recent starts. But she drops in class, with a solid once-a-week workout pattern since raced, and an affinity for the Del Mar course on which she 2-for-5. It is possible, at age 7, she has had her fill of racing. A similar comment applies to front-runner LOSTINTRANZLATION, who has been facing significantly tougher. She drops in class and meets a field short on pace. Gate to wire? **TAMMY'S WINDOW** needed her last start, her first in nine months. Class drop and rider change second start back. Excellent trainer-jockey combo: Peter Miller and Flavien Prat entered the weekend 15-for-28 on turf since the start of the year.

Fourth Race

| 1. Big Cheddar | 2. Bold Effort | 3. Hudson River Park |

In the money five of eight against better, **BIG CHEDDAR** drops to the maiden-20 bottom level for the first time while going route to sprint. Fastest in the field on numbers, with a positive trainer stat. Doug O'Neill won with 9 of his last 19 maiden-claiming favorites going route to dirt sprint. **BOLD EFFORT** makes his debut with a series of slow workouts, but first-time starters from this outfit have a history of running faster than they train. 'EFFORT is a sibling to five winners; his trainer Bob Hess Jr. trained the only debut winner by this sire (Give Me a Hint, by Merit Man, won by more than nine lengths on this track Aug. 12, 2018). **HUDSON RIVER PARK** drops from special-weight to maiden-claiming; AIR JOCKEY drops from Cal-bred special-weight to maiden-claiming.

Fifth Race

| 1. First Empress | 2. Miss Bennet | 3. Destiny's Journey |

FIRST EMPRESS returns from a three-month freshening, and returns to California, while dropping in class after misfiring in an Oaklawn Park race that produced a pair of next-out winners. The filly's third-place finish two starts back, albeit on a surface labelled "good," would be fast enough. **MISS BENNET** drops from $25k claiming N2L to the bottom level for winners, which at Del Mar is $16k claiming N2L. Outside post no help, but 'BENNET has speed and outran her odds both previous starts on this track. **DESTINY'S JOURNEY** finished in front of 'BENNET two starts back and also is dropping for the first time to the bottom level for winners.

Sixth Race

| 1. Plum Wild | 2. Smiling Annie | 3. Bella Vita |

This Cal-bred allowance turf sprint is a good spot to take a shot at a price with **PLUM WILD**, returning to turf for her first in more than four months. She runs well fresh; her two most-recent starts following a layoff were relatively fast on numbers and she missed by less than a length her only start on turf. He rivals are modest, recent works suggest she is cranked. **SMILING ANNIE** ran okay last out, but she was wheeling back in six days and not as sharp as she was the previous week. Freshened since, speed for a pressing trip, and numbers within range of the 77 Beyer par for this level. **BELLA VITA** ran super finishing second in the $150k Evening Jewel Stakes two months ago at Santa Anita and would have been a contender Friday in the $125k Fleet Treat Stakes

for Cal-bred 3yo fillies. Instead of that seven-furlong dirt stakes race, she shortens to five furlongs on turf, which might be her preferred trip. She sprinted twice on turf, runner-up by a nose in her debut and maiden winner by more than five lengths second time out.

Seventh Race

1. Posterize	2. Lionite	3. Oh Marvelous Me

Off a last-place finish in a turf route, **POSTERIZE** might be a tough read in this $32k claiming dirt sprint. Or, not. He wired similar two starts back with the same pattern; in his start prior to the win he finished last in a turf route. Same pattern this time. POSTERIZE is quick enough to press the pace outside the speedster on the rail, and if he runs back to his June 20 win at Santa Anita can handle this group with an up-front trip. **LIONITE** earned fast numbers winning this spring in Arkansas and Kentucky; he was claimed from an okay fourth last out and makes his California debut as a legitimate contender from off the pace. **OH MARVELOUS ME** did not have a good trip finishing fourth behind the top choice last out. 'ME moves from the rail to the middle of the field and will be rolling late. PURE COMEDY arrives from Northern California with an okay comeback prep under his belt; I'M BUSY is the aforementioned front-runner expected to set the pace from the inside post.

Eighth Race

1. Bowies Hero	2. United	3. Combatant

Horse-for-course **BOWIES HERO**, Del Mar stakes winner three of the past four years, seeks a repeat in this G2 at a mile and an eighth. Based on his sharp comeback and affinity for the course, 'HERO gets the call over **UNITED**. The runner-up comeback by BOWIES HERO was outstanding. First start in more than seven months, far back early, he ran faster each successive quarter-mile (:24.13, :23.50, :23.03 and 22.97) and missed by only a length to the pacesetter. Rock-solid return by 'HERO; trainer Phil D'Amato won this race three of the past four years. UNITED is the "class" of the field, multiple G2 winner and runner-up last fall in the G1 Breeders' Cup Turf. UNITED also has run well at Del Mar. The challenge is distance. He might want a more than a mile and one-eighth. **COMBATANT** looms an upset candidate, despite his 0-for-8 record on turf. He won the G1 Santa Anita Handicap on dirt two back, and improved since his most recent start on turf. His last is a toss. He got dirt in his face, was never comfortable, and backfired at Oaklawn. Likely to return to form returning to California; trainer John Sadler won this race two years ago with Catapult at $44. ORIGINAIRE won a highly rated N2X two back, then reproduced the effort finishing a close third vs. UNITED. NEPTUNE'S STORM might be ranked too low by this handicapper. His up-front running style could play well in a race likely to unfold at a tepid pace.

Ninth Race

1. Friar's Road	2. Divine Armor	3. Charlito

In a wide-open maiden mile, late-runner **FRIAR'S ROAD** gets the call. A two-time runner-up vs. similar, he was thrown to the wolves last out and not good enough finishing a distant sixth in the G1 Santa Anita Derby. Now he is back with maidens, in a race with enough pace to flatter his closing rally. Also-eligible **DIVINE ARMOR**, three-time runner-up vs. similar, misfired last out. But three previous second-place finishes make him a contender. **CHARLITO** sprints like a colt that will appreciate two turns; he finished an okay third in a sprint here opening weekend. HOLDEN THE LUTE stretches out and will lead as far as he can; STILL IN THE GAME is a nine-start maiden with who finished second his last two maiden dirt routes. SOLO ANIMO stretches out after finishing well in both sprints. This race is tough.

Tenth Race

1. Galilean	2. Camino Del Paraiso	3. Irish Heatwave

GALILEAN trounced Cal-bred stakes runners last out on dirt; he will be tough in this Cal-bred stakes on turf if he reproduces his form changing surfaces. Based on pedigree (Uncle Mo and El Prado), grass should be no problem. Sharp horse in peak form merits "best bet" status. **CAMINO DEL PARAISO** could vie for favoritism in this historically predictable race. Favorites are 7-for-13 (turf) since this Cal-bred race was inaugurated in 2006. 'PARAISO has something the top choice lacks. That is, proven form on grass. His close third last out in the G3 San Francisco Mile was validated when runner-up Kiwi's Dream returned with a super runner-up finish in a stakes race here opening weekend. **IRISH HEATWAVE** returned to form last out with a solid allowance win at Golden Gate. Sharp allowance horses win this race with regularity; six of the last 11 winners were moving up from N1X or N2X allowance races. IRISH HEATWAVE will roll late. GRINNING TIGER will be forwardly placed.

Eleventh Race

1. Vangogo	2. Miss Mozart	3. It's a Riddle

VANGOGO makes her first start in a year, returning at the maiden-20 bottom, with speed and a fast workout six days ago that suggests she could be tough to catch at five and one-half furlongs. **MISS MOZART** returns from a layoff of nearly a year and a half, first start since changing trainers. Slow workouts, but suspect she might be better than her first three starts suggest. **IT'S A RIDDLE** returns to the track on which she finished in the money all three starts last year. CAUGHT IN A TRAPPE had trouble last out; her third-place debut in February puts her in the hunt.