

**Date:** July 27th, 2020**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Rio Ocho (4th race)****First Race****1. Harvest Moon****2. Velvet Queen****3. Great Return**

**HARVEST MOON** was fortunate to win a maiden race last out; runner-up My Happy Girl broke slowly, raced wide, and was best. But the win by 'MOON was just her second start, she did it setting/pressing a fast pace. It would be tough to win this N1X dirt mile with the same style, because this field is loaded with speed. But 'MOON showed in her third-place debut (on turf) she can rally from off, and if able to ration her speed, she could get a cozy trip forwardly placed just off the pace. Bottom line: the well-bred and lightly raced filly has upside; she gets a weight break as the only 3-year-old in the field. **VELVET QUEEN** is speed on the rail, with one way to go. That is, straight to the front. She "won" this condition in January but later was disqualified; she returns with a solid work pattern for a trainer whose comebackers usually are ready to fire. 'QUEEN probably is the speed of the speed. **GREAT RETURN** tries dirt for the first time; she already won this condition, but that was turf. Revised guidelines allow N1X winners to retain N1X eligibility switching surfaces.

**Second Race****1. Quick****2. Gypsy Spirit****3. Muchly**

Trouble-prone **QUICK** is past due for a N1X win; she finished in the money all three starts in the U.S., with trouble every time including her runner-up finish last out at this mile distance. One of these days she will get a clean journey and bang out this condition. **GYPSY SPIRIT** should vie for favoritism based on her runner-up U.S. debut two back and creditable effort last out in a Grade 3. She returns to the allowance ranks and should be right there if she reproduces her Santa Anita form at Del Mar. However, like the top choice, 'SPIRIT is tough to trust. She is 1-for-21, with four seconds and six thirds. **MUCHLY** found nine furlongs slightly out of reach last out, she lost her punch late and finished second. She benefits by a cutback to one mile. ZEST might be ranked too low by this handicapper. Her comeback was sharp, she has tactical speed and also can finish. Her 23.60-second closing quarter last out is the fastest recent final quarter in the field.

**Third Race****1. Midnight Garden****2. Awesome Amanda****3. Real Good Deal**

Lightly raced **MIDNIGHT GARDEN** followed her maiden-20 debut victory with a creditable runner-up finish at this N2L claiming level. Off two months, she clearly runs well fresh and faces a modest field. **AWESOME AMANDA** was only prepping in her comeback, a \$25k claiming N2L in which she was entered "not be to be claimed." She drops for the money run second start back, with enough speed to establish position from the inside post. **REAL GOOD DEAL** has been stuck at this class level, but finished in the money four of her last six.

**Fourth Race****1. Rio Ocho****2. No Slo Mo****3. Cosmo**

The fifth-place U.S. debut by European **RIO OCHO** was much better than it looks on paper, and sets up the maiden turf router as most probable winner on the Monday card. 'OCHO was keen early, blocked seemingly full of run from the five-sixteenth to midstretch, took up at the eighth pole looking for a seam, finally found a clear path, finished willingly and galloped out in front after the wire. Super effort. With a clean trip second out, he should be tough. **NO SLO MO** is believed to have more speed than he showed either start, and with the addition of blinkers is likely to be more forwardly placed. When he "steadied" in the stretch last time, the trouble appeared self-caused. It looked like he jumped a shadow on the turf course. Lightly raced son of Uncle Mo is believed to be better than his first two starts. **COSMO** drops from the G3 Los Alamitos Derby back into the maiden ranks. His close third two back on grass puts him the hunt. **WAR PATH** might have been the top selection, but he is mired on the also-eligible list and would be compromised by post if he does start. His form is excellent, he missed by only a head last out.

**Fifth Race****1. South Beach Gal****2. Approved for Flyby****3. Warren's Empress**

**SOUTH BEACH GAL** drops to Cal-bred maiden-50 and switches to turf after showing speed and tiring to split the field in her debut in a

Cal-bred special-weight turf sprint. Possibly the speed of the field, she can be long gone second out. **APPROVED FOR FLYBY**, program favorite when this race was originally scheduled July 17, drops from Cal-bred special-weight to Cal-bred maiden-50, and takes off blinkers. This is an easier spot. **WARREN'S EMPRESS** drops in for a tag, goes route to sprint, turf to dirt, and will be running late. **LITTLE MISS ELLIE** missed by only a neck first out at this level, despite her rider losing his stick at the eighth pole. Decent debut, validated when the third-place finisher returned to win a special-weight for statebreds at \$100.40.

#### Sixth Race

##### 1. Hootie

##### 2. Conquest Lemonraid

##### 3. Worthy Turk

A \$25k claiming scramble at a mile on turf, **HOOTIE** gets the call in a race that could go a number of ways. His recent form is decent; he lost ground last out from post 9 yet missed by less than three lengths. Drawn closer to the inside, his best recent race might be good enough. Of course, his 0-for-6 record on the Del Mar turf (one third) is a concern. **CONQUEST LEMONRAID** ships in from the Midwest, with turf form early this year that fits with these. The race from which he was claimed last out for \$16k already produced at least three winners. **WORTHY TURK** drops in class and is reunited with Flavien Prat. **FRENCH GETAWAY** might have been the choice, but he is mired in an outside post in this mile turf race. He is 2-for-4 on the Del Mar turf.

#### Seventh Race

##### 1. Most Sandisfactory

##### 2. Hapi Hapi

##### 3. World Affairs

This race was scheduled for July 17, but the card was cancelled. **MOST SANDISFACTORY** remains the one to beat. Runner-up at odds-on last out in a maiden-30 sprint, in the money all six starts, 'SANDISFACTORY stretches to a mile and drops to the maiden-20 bottom. The knock on the six-start maiden is MCL stretch-outs is a relatively low-percent angle (13 percent) from this typically high-rate (20 percent-plus) stable. **HAPI HAPI** got all messed up when he bore out on the first turn last time in his initial route attempt, yet still managed to finish second. Good effort by the Clubhouse Ride gelding, who has found his niche around two turns. **WORLD AFFAIRS** will drop in class from maiden special-weight and make his first start since changing trainers. This is his first start for a claim tag. **DRINK TO THAT** was an expensive yearling, returning to the race at age 4 while entered for \$20k.

#### Eighth Race

##### 1. Mesut

##### 2. King of Speed

##### 3. Untamed Domain

A sharp runner-up comeback by **MESUT** in a sprint stakes sets him up for a stretch-out win at one mile while dropping to N2X. Although it is questionable whether he really wants to run this far, he ran okay in a route in his final start prior to a layoff last year and also finished second in a turf route in 2018. This is his fifth try around two turns; his comeback effort tilts the scale in his favor. **KING OF SPEED** was overmatched in a G3 last out; his fourth-place finish two back in a similar N2X mile puts him in the hunt. The race shape was against him that race; the one-two finishers rallied from behind. This race has less pace, 'SPEED could get a comfortable trip setting easy splits or sitting second behind the stretch-out sprinter two stalls to his outside. **UNTAMED DOMAIN**, graded stakes winner early in his career and runner-up in the 2017 Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf on the Del Mar course, makes his first start since last fall and first for a new trainer. Works look good, though layoff horses from this stable typically race into condition rather than fire first start back. Third preference nonetheless. **FIGHT ON** is the aforementioned stretch-out sprinter quick enough to make the lead if he wants.

#### Ninth Race

##### 1. Li'l Grazen

##### 2. Silk From Heaven

##### 3. A Melis

This Cal-bred N1X/optional claiming sprint was scheduled for July 18 when racing was cancelled. When the race was redrawn, **LI'L GRAZEN** got the worst of the draw and now breaks from the rail. But she does have speed, and might clear the field anyway. Runner-up both recent starts at this Cal-bred N1X/optional claiming level, she set a blazing pace last out racing five and a half at Los Alamitos, opened up and got collared. Super try. If she rations her speed, she can be gone. If she falters, this is anyone's race from behind. **SILK FROM HEAVEN** rallied from far back to upset the top choice last out at this level 'HEAVEN entered back for the optional claim tag and will roll late. **A MELIS** added blinkers and dusted maidens by four lengths chasing a solid pace. She might have been a contender Friday in the Fleet Treat Stakes for Cal-bred 3yo fillies at seven furlongs, but she opted for this shorter race at six furlongs. Turf-to-dirt route-to-sprint **CLEARLY GONE** will rally. She is racing into condition, third start following a layoff after an improved third last out at in a turf mile.

#### Tenth Race

##### 1. Rockie Causeway

##### 2. Empress of Fire

##### 3. Cassie Belle

Another contender in a rescheduled race got the worst of it when post positions were redrawn. This Cal-bred maiden turf mile was

postponed from July 17, and **ROCKIE CAUSEWAY** finds herself mired on the also-eligible list. She would likely lose ground if she does draw in. Her fourth-place debut was solid. Racing two turns, she was keen early, wrangled back, shuffled and lost position on the far turn, re-rallied inside and finished with run. Not sure what type trip she can get from this outside post, but nonetheless the one to beat based on her debut. **EMPRESS OF FIRE** raced evenly to finish fourth in her sprint debut; afterward her rider suggested two turns on turf. This is two turns on turf. The second-start maiden should improve off her respectable debut. **CASSIE BELLE** is an eight-start maiden with four in-the-money finishes including a career-best runner-up effort last out at five and a half.