

**Date:** August 1st, 2020

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: Freedom Fighter (3rd race)**

**First Race**

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**1. Sorriso**

**2. Bob's Sniper**

**3. Moonoverthebayou**

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**SORRISO** drops to the bottom level for winners (\$16k claiming N2L) after a fast pace foiled his chances at a level higher. Drawn outside his pace rivals this time, shortening from six furlongs to five and a half, obvious choice with a front-running/pace-pressing trip. **BOB'S SNIPER** ran better than the line looks last out in his first try at this low level; he did not have a good trip. He pressed the early pace inside a pair of longshots, sucked back to chase, then got stalled on the turn while stuck behind a tiring leader, angled out for room and actually finished with run. The winner and seventh-place finishers returned to win. Good try by 'SNIPER, who is reunited with Brice Blanc and looks live at a price, rallying from off the pace. **MOONOVERTHEBAYOU** returns from a five-month layoff while dropping for the first time to the bottom; **STREET IMAGE** won a fast maiden-20 here opening weekend and is realistically spotted for his first against winners. He adds speed, as does comebacker **ESKIMO ROSES**.

**Second Race**

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**1. Honor A. P.**

**2. Uncle Chuck**

**3. Thousand Words**

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**HONOR A. P.** emerged as the top West Coast 3yo with an impressive victory last out in the Santa Anita Derby, a race that produced two next-out winners. 'A. P. returns from a short layoff in a race designed merely as a prep for the Kentucky Derby in early September. The point is, **HONOR A. P.** does not "have to" win, even if he is the best horse. As long as he runs well in this prep, he should give Tiz the Law all he can handle next month in the Kentucky Derby. **UNCLE CHUCK** is the real deal; he followed his debut maiden romp with a decisive victory in the G3 Los Alamitos Derby. Now two-for-two, training super since raced, he would give the top choice a target to run at. However, **UNCLE CHUCK** is not a confirmed starter; the Travers at Saratoga, one week from today, might be on his agenda. **THOUSAND WORDS** ran okay finishing second to 'CHUCK last out; it was the first in nearly three months for 'WORDS. Improvement possible second start back. **CEZANNE** pressed a fast pace and won a N1X allowance in workmanlike fashion. The two-for-two \$3.6 million colt could make the lead if **UNCLE CHUCK** scratches.

**Third Race**

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**1. Freedom Fighter**

**2. Epidemic**

**3. Scary Larry**

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Plenty reasons to like 2yo first-time starter **FREEDOM FIGHTER**, the first juvenile starter of the season for Bob Baffert. The colt is sired by Outwork, whose juvenile progeny have won 20 percent first time out. Baffert won with 35 percent of his debut 2yos the past five summers at Del Mar, and 'FIGHTER is making all the right moves in the morning. He worked in company with graded winner Once On Whiskey on July 19, and last weekend worked a bullet half from the gate in 47-flat. Ready to roll. **EPIDEMIC** also debuts with fast works; Ryan Hanson trains the Orb colt, who is a sibling to G2 winner Stanford. **EPIDEMIC** posted a pair of bullet gate works over the Del Mar track; Hanson popped in late June with debut juvenile Weston. **SCARY LARRY** has a steady workout pattern for a trainer that does not usually work them fast. Keith Desormeaux is 2-for-6 this season with debut 2yos. **WYFIRE** debuts with fast works. Truth is, the top choice should be tough to beat.

**Fourth Race**

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**1. Bud Knight**

**2. Big Buzz**

**3. East Rand**

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**BUD KNIGHT** returns to his preferred surface after a total misfire on dirt. His highly rated runner-up finish two starts back at this level on turf would be fast enough. The winner of that race, Salvatore Mundi, was among the favorites in an allowance (race 6) on Friday. **BIG BUZZ** is a habitual bridesmaid (one win, six seconds), but his form is undeniably sharp. Claimed for \$40k from a runner-up finish opening weekend, he makes his first start for new connections and will be rolling late. **EAST RAND** finished only two and one-quarter lengths behind **BIG BUZZ** last time out; 'RAND also will be running late.

**Fifth Race**

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**1. Nolo Contesto**

**2. Dreams of Valor**

**3. Shortlist**

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**NOLO CONTESTO** can win this entry-level allowance dirt mile from off the pace if he runs as fast as his runner-up finish in his seasonal debut two months ago at Santa Anita. 'CONTESTO has always been well-regarded, as shown by his ambitious campaign last year as a 3yo. He finished fourth in the G1 Santa Anita Derby, seventh with trouble in the G2 Del Mar Derby on turf. He had been off seven months when he returned with a solid second in a fast race in May. It looks like there is plenty of speed to set up his off-the-pace rally. **DREAMS OF VALOR** stretches out from two sharp N1X sprints. He has speed to set or press the pace; he ran well around two turns finishing a close third at this level in early March. **SHORTLIST** is among the fastest on speed figures; his runner-up finish last out in Kentucky was validated when the winner returned to win two of his next three starts.

**Sixth Race**

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**1. Officious**

**2. Sweet and Cheeky**

**3. Fierce for Sul**

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A promising fourth-place comeback by **OFFICIOUS** sets up her up for a maiden win second start back. She was aggressively ridden chasing a fast pace in her comeback, hung tough to the middle of the stretch and tired. She benefits shortening from five and one-half furlongs to five, and if she follows the pattern of many Phil D'Amato trained comebacks, OFFICIOUS should move forward second start back. She will have to hold off the rally of **SWEET AND CHEEKY**, who finished well for second and third her first two starts. She will rally late, while also-eligible **FIERCE FOR SUL** would be the speed of the field if she draws in. She set a wild pace first out and finished second. Shorter distance, turf influence in her pedigree, gate-to-wire threat if she starts.

#### Seventh Race

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**1. Taming the Tigress****2. Mamba Queen****3. Will Take a Kiss**

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**TAMING THE TIGRESS** finished fourth as the favorite in her debut three weeks ago, but the effort by the juvenile filly was actually very good. She broke from the rail, stumbled, raced in traffic, was never comfortable and missed by less than two lengths. Solid debut. She posted two sharp works since raced, moves to an outside post and should be tough to beat. **MAMBA QUEEN** improved in her second start, runner-up behind CTBA Stakes (race 8) favorite She's So Anna. 'QUEEN is quick enough to make the lead from the inside post, and has a shot on the front end. Two that finished behind her last out returned to win maiden races. **WILL TAKE A KISS** adds blinkers after a respectable fourth-place debut. Also-eligible **LUXURY LINER** broke slow but finished with run in a solid third-place debut.

#### Eighth Race

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**1. I'm So Anna****2. Big Andy****3. Righteously**

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A dominating Los Alamitos maiden win by **I'M SO ANNA** stamps her the rock-solid favorite in this stakes race for Cal-bred 2yo fillies. 'ANNA had a tough trip as the favorite in her third-place debut; second time out she crushed by four lengths with a relatively high 66 Beyer. Drawn outside, versatile style, two easy works over the Del Mar surface, 'ANNA figures tough to beat at a short price. **BIG ANDY** could have faced maiden Calbreds in race 6, but opted for this stakes race instead. First across the wire before she was disqualified in her debut, then creditable runner-up second out, the improving filly gets a rider switch to Flavien Prat and will rally from off the pace. She has a score to settle with **RIGHTEOUSLY**, who improved a ton second out to spring a maiden upset. Her running style suggests this five and one-half furlong trip is ideal. **LOVE WINS** scored a decisive debut victory in early May, this is her first start since.

#### Ninth Race

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**1. Tagline****2. Better With Age****3. Naughty Evelyn**

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**TAGLINE** figures to be heavily favored in this maiden-62.5k turf route, based on three successive in-the-money finishes and a tough trip last out. She tried to rally along the inside in the stretch, got stopped and steadied, switched outside and rallied to second. Likely winner with a clean trip. **BETTER WITH AGE** makes her California debut while returning to her preferred footing, which is turf. Her grass races in winter and spring in Florida are good enough for this bunch. **NAUGHTY EVELYN** ran super last out, setting a fast pace to deep stretch before tiring to second. Her effort was validated when third place Satori Girl returned to win a relatively fast maiden-40 with a 73 Beyer. **DEL MAR DRAMA** drops in for a tag.

#### Tenth Race

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**1. Wildman Jack****2. Collusion Illusion****3. McKinzie**

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The sprint division in California is wide open and a muted pace scenario in this G1 suits graded stakes-winning turf specialist **WILDMAN JACK**, who can post an upset his first start on dirt. His up-front style could play well in a race void of serious pace; his bullet gate work Sunday in 46.20 (fastest by a second) was extraordinary and shows he handles the Del Mar dirt. If his previous debacle at Keeneland can be forgiven (hot and humid, no energy), and if he handles dirt in the afternoon, 'JACK can post a front-running/pace-pressing surprise from a post near the outside. Lightly raced 3yo **COLLUSION ILLUSION** won both starts on this track last summer, he faces older following a G3 win vs. his age group. This race was won by 3yos Zensational in 2009 and Smiling Tiger in 2010; the 3yo Goldencents in 2011 finished second. 'ILLUSION will be running late; one concern is the horse he beat last time out returned to finish a disappointing second. 'ILLUSION is four-for-four in sprints. Presumptive favorite **MCKINZIE** is expected to scratch and wait for G2, seven-furlong Pat O'Brien on Aug. 29. **FASHIONABLY FAST** finished second to MCKINZIE last out; 'FAST has enough speed to be forwardly placed while cutting back from seven furlongs to six. **LAW ABIDIN CITIZEN** is a sharp veteran in top form.

#### Eleventh Race

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**1. Nina En Fuego****2. On Mars****3. Bella Chica**

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Taking a shot with first-time starter **NINA EN FUEGO** in this Cal-bred maiden turf mile. Her main rivals are career maidens with repeated losses at short prices, so this might be a good spot for a new face. She is trained by Tim Yakteen, who is an outstanding 4-for-7 with debut runners in Del Mar turf routes the past five summers. Price play. **ON MARS** could start favored again. Third and second both recent starts, arguably the fastest finisher in the field, she will be running late. **BELLA CHICA** stretches out for the first time, and adds blinkers. Her pedigree is fine for a mile.