

**Date:** August 2nd, 2020

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: War Path (11th race)**

**First Race**

**1. Secret Touch**

**2. Julius**

**3. Justin's Quest**

Close call between horse-for-course specialists **SECRET TOUCH** and **JULIUS**; both scored solid wins opening day and both were claimed. **SECRET TOUCH** gets the nod, he won a \$16k claiming route that was his third win over the Del Mar track. Claimed by Doug O'Neill, the versatile gelding can press the pace or rally from behind. **JULIUS** is likely to set the pace. He scored a daylight sprint win opening day vs. N3L rivals, and was claimed for \$20k by Peter Miller. **JULIUS** carried his speed two turns on this track last summer also, and will try to take them gate to wire. Only one of the first 10 dirt routes this meet was won by the pacesetter. **JUSTIN'S QUEST** parlayed a rail-skimming trip into an even-money win last out, while **ZESTFUL** returns from an eight-month layoff with a solid workout pattern. Though not quite as quick as **JULIUS**, he will keep that rival honest. **BLAME IT ON KITTY** will rally from last.

**Second Race**

**1. Red Bunting**

**2. Saporì Girl**

**3. Kalliniki**

**RED BUNTING** has not won a race since her debut two years ago in England, but she has repeatedly finished close against better company than she meets in this \$32k claiming turf mile, N2L. Off since March, she runs well fresh and also has run well over the Del Mar turf. The rails are at 30 feet this week, so it will be interesting to see if the course profile that was "closers friendly" will change at the new configuration. If so, **RED BUNTING** would be up against it. **SAPORÌ GIRL** scored a sharp maiden-claiming win here three weeks ago, due partly to a ground-saving trip orchestrated by jockey Umberto Rispoli and partly due to her :23.22 final quarter. She has more tactical speed than the top choice, which could prove beneficial if the rails-at-30 setting promotes forwardly placed runners. **KALLINIKI** drops for the first time into a claiming race; she will be forwardly placed. **KLEEN KARMA** gets a beneficial rider switch to Flavien Prat, and may also benefit by the shorter distance of this mile turf race.

**Third Race**

**1. Touchdown Brown**

**2. Jazz Hands**

**3. Good With People**

**TOUCHDOWN BROWN** made his career debut with high expectations, and the 2-year-old ran to advance billing. The bet-down favorite raced comfortably in third position, cruised wide into the lane, kicked into overdrive and won by more than five lengths. Impressive win, followed by sharp workouts at Del Mar through July. Fast, versatile, no telling how good. Obvious choice. **JAZZ HANDS** ran off the screen in his debut, winning by 11 lengths. Although the quality of the field he beat remains suspect, his ability is indisputable. Sharp win by a promising colt. **GOOD WITH PEOPLE** wired maidens here three weeks ago and is the only entrant with a race over the Del Mar track. From the inside post, his only option is to "go." **POSITIVITY** won the first 2yo colt race of the season in SoCal, winning by more than three lengths. His recent bullet works over the Del Mar track suggests he might be ranked too low by this handicapper. Contender.

**Fourth Race**

**1. Seaside Dancer**

**2. Devils Dance**

**3. Swirling**

**SEASIDE DANCER** could have finished second instead of third opening weekend, but she was blocked at a critical stage in the stretch. She finished okay along the inside, and is facing a slightly easier lineup in this \$40k claiming turf sprint. She has tactical speed, she can finish, and actually looks solid as one of the favorites. **DEVILS DANCE** drops in for a \$40k claim tag returning from Kentucky. She was a consistent turf sprinter early this year at Santa Anita, and she broke her maiden in a turf sprint on this course in fall 2018. **SWIRLING** pressed her way to a 16-1 upset last out on dirt at Los Alamitos, she is 5-for-17 on turf and also has won on this course. Front-runner **RED LIVY** will keep the pace honest, if not set the pace outright. The challenge facing the nine-time winner is she has not hit the board in six turf starts at Del Mar (three sprints, three routes).

**Fifth Race**

**1. Gotta Be Lucky**

**2. Soothing**

**3. True Mischief**

Contention is deep in this maiden-20 route. **GOTTA BE LUCKY** is a 15-start maiden and therefore difficult to trust, but she has run long at this class level only twice in her career, runner-up each time. She was overmatched in a comeback prep, now drops in class and stretches back to a mile as the tepid choice. **SOOTHING** returns from Indiana Grand, where she finished second last out in a maiden-16 on turf. She ran well, she can dirt or turf, and she will be running late. But the race she exits turned out counterproductive. Nine from that race ran back and produced just two runner-up finishes. Still, **SOOTHING** has a shot from off the pace. **TRUE MISCHIEF** drops from maiden-50 and stretches to a mile with enough speed to make the lead if she wants. **OUR ROMANCE**, an 11-start maiden, finished third last out in her first try at this low class level.

**Sixth Race**

**1. P R Radio Star**

**2. Facts Matter**

**3. Vander Kelen**

**P R RADIO STAR** scratched from the G1 Bing Crosby on Saturday to run instead in this \$12.5k claiming starter allowance Good move, his sharp N2X win

opening weekend would probably be fast enough to handle this gang. He is a nine-time winner, two-for-three as the favorite. However, he will have to catch likely pacesetter **FACTS MATTER**, who could wire the field. Northern California allowance winner two back, third last out in a \$40k claiming race at Pleasanton, he returns to Del Mar for trainer Tim McCanna and jockey Tiago Pereira, who teamed one week ago with \$114.40 winner Sweet River Baines. **FACTS MATTER** is a legit threat, gate to wire. **VANDER KELEN** finished an okay third in his comeback, his first start in close to a year. Improvement possible second start back. **BOTERO** was compromised by a tough trip finishing third for a \$20k tag last out in Kentucky. Not sure where he fits on the SoCal class ladder, but his Midwest form is actually pretty good.

#### Seventh Race

##### 1. Moonlight d'Oro

##### 2. Royal Blend

##### 3. Frosted Blue

First-time starter **MOONLIGHT D'ORO** is training like the real deal, and the 2yo daughter of Medaglia d'Oro should come out firing. She is billed as a top juvenile filly prospect for trainer Richard Mandella; two fast gate works since arriving at Del Mar suggest she is ready to fire. **ROYAL BLEND** is a well-bred filly making her debut with a solid work foundation for Cliff Sise, who won with his last two first-time starters. 'BLEND is by Into Mischief; she is the first foal from an unraced sibling to graded stakes winners Silent Sighs, Proposed and Prospect Park. **FROSTED BLUE** has been posting fast workouts over the fast Los Al surface. Her first-crop sire Frosted is seeking his first win as a sire (from six runners, into Friday). **ROLL UP MO MONEY** worked fast Ruidoso Downs, and posted a pair of solid works here at Del Mar. She is by Uncle Mo.

#### Eighth Race

##### 1. Microrithms

##### 2. Oil Can Knight

##### 3. Drop the Chalupa

**MICRORITHMS** returns from a layoff of a year and a half, with a history of running well fresh, and racing at a class level (N1X/optional \$40k claiming) that he already won. Entered for the optional tag, drawn outside his pace rivals, seems logical. Bob Baffert won with 3 of his last 10 comebacks returning from a layoff of a year or more. **OIL CAN KNIGHT** had trouble early and was eased in an allowance race that might have been too tough anyway. Winner two straight before that, he has speed to establish position inside and is two-for-three at Del Mar. **DROP THE CHALUPA** will rally late, first start since May. He won his career debut, so he obviously runs well fresh. **BIG SCOTT DADDY** also returns from a long layoff.

#### Ninth Race

##### 1. Colombian Gold

##### 2. Lady Noguez

##### 3. Breakfast Ball

The maiden-62.5k claiming win by **COLOMBIAN GOLD** two starts back would probably be good enough to handle this modest field of \$40k claiming 3yo fillies racing a mile on turf. She has speed, and also can finish. **LADY NOGUEZ** is in from Florida, where she hit the board three successive turf routes for claiming 3yo fillies. Look for her late. **BREAKFAST BALL** finished second, more than eight lengths clear of third, last out on dirt at Pleasanton. She won her only previous start on turf. **AWESOME DRIVE** won a maiden-40 by open lengths and now switches to turf first off the claim.

#### Tenth Race

##### 1. Ollie's Candy

##### 2. Ce Ce

##### 3. Hard Not to Love

**OLLIE'S CANDY** has not won a race since this G1 a year ago, but she might be in the best form of her career based on outstanding recent performances. She ran winning races both recent G1 starts. She engaged in a kamikaze pace duel two back, shook off her rival, and got collared. Last out, similar. She chased a blazing pace, kicked away, but got worn down by a pair of late-runners. 'CANDY would benefit from more patient handling than either recent start, she figures to get it switching to Flavien Prat. Assuming she rations her speed, she can turn the tables on **CE CE**. The latter is legit, notwithstanding her odds-on third last. She previously won successive G1's and has had this race on her radar since early in the year. The closer is owned and bred Bo Hirsch; this race is named for his late father Clement L. Hirsch. **CE CE** will sit back, and rally late. **HARD NOT TO LOVE** is a spooky but talented one-eyed filly whose shenanigans in the post parade last out caused a delay to the start of the G2 Santa Maria. She actually ran well, rallying from off the pace over a racetrack that was blatantly pro-speed. **FIGHTING MAD** exploited the bias to wire the Santa Mara field. Speed was not as effective the first two weeks of the Del Mar meet as it was the day **FIGHTING MAD** won at Santa Anita. Regardless, she is likely to set the pace with a chance to steal it.

#### Eleventh Race

##### 1. War Path

##### 2. Divine Armor

##### 3. Hollywoodhellraiser

**WAR PATH** is sitting on a maiden win in his fifth career start, based on his runner-up finish last out in a fast race. First start in four months, he finished well to miss by a head behind Tiberius Mercurius, the program favorite Friday in an entry-level allowance, race 6. **WAR PATH** should be tough at a short price. Also-eligible **DIVINE ARMOR** is a five-start maiden switching for the first time to turf. Four in-the-money finishes include two highly rated maiden routes; generally speaking, the competition in a maiden route is easier on turf than dirt. **DIVINE ARMOR** needed his last, he may be dropping in class from maiden dirt to maiden turf. **HOLLYWOODHELLRAISR** lost ground rallied wide in his career debut, missing by a length at five and one-half furlongs. He is bred for two turns. **JUROR** makes his California debut after he was purchased at a June auction for just \$55k. That is a low number for a colt sired by Tapit.