Date: August 22nd, 2020   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Li'l Grazen (2nd race)

First Race

1. Princess Noor	2. Flash Magic	3. Peachtree Road

First-time starter **PRINCESS NOOR** has been turning heads ever since she breezed 20.20 seconds at a 2yo sale in spring and sold for $1.35 million. By first-crop stallion Not This Time, whose progeny are 4-for-16 first out, 'NOOR has continued to post fast workouts in California. The highly regarded filly is the second runner produced by graded winner Sheza Smoke Show, and should fire first out. Her main rival is Bob Baffert-trained stablemate **FLASH MAGIC**, a sibling to 2017 Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner Good Magic. A first-time starter, 'MAGIC looked good working in company with a stakes winner last week, her bullet gate move Aug. 7 also was impressive (viewed on XBTV.com). 'MAGIC is by Pioneerof the Nile, whose juvenile progeny have won at an average 13 percent rate. **PEACHTREE ROAD** debuts with sharp workouts including a three-furlong gate work Monday that suggests she is "live" first out for Richard Mandella. 'ROAD is a by 13 percent juvenile debut sire; she is a sibling to 10 winners including undefeated stakes winner Princess Arabella. FROSTED BLUE trained better than she ran first time out. The second-time starter could improve despite the rail.

Second Race

1. Li'l Grazen	2. Wandering Patrol	3. Square Peggy

LI'L GRAZEN should be tough in this Cal-bred N1X, a level she won twice already including a highly rated win last out over A Melis, who returned to win by open lengths. 'GRAZEN, entered for the optional $20k claim tag, has speed to be forwardly placed and looks like the most probable winner on the card. **WANDERING PATROL** returns from a one-year layoff with a history of running well fresh; she won her career debut. The figures she earned prior to her long layoff are just about fast enough for this level. **SQUARE PEGGY** looms an upset candidate. She has speed to establish position from the inside post; she won a maiden race on this track two summers ago. LOUD LOUD MUSIC figures as a contender based on her turf form, but two starts on dirt were subpar. However, one of those dirt races was her career debut and the next was a stakes in which she was an overmatched longshot. She might deserve another shot on dirt against this easier company.

Third Race

1. Chaos Theory	2. Mikes Tiznow	3. Sparky Ville

CHAOS THEORY can post a minor upset in this G3 turf sprint, his first start since he was claimed two months ago for $62.5k by trainer John Sadler and owner Hronis Racing. 'THEORY fits at this level; he won a turf sprint stakes in winter 2019 and ran second in the same Fair Grounds stakes this year. The N2X/optional claiming race he won last out turned out to be a key race. All 11 rivals he defeated ran back: four wins, two seconds. 'THEORY was visually impressive working a lively half-mile over the Del Mar turf Sunday morning; he can rally for the win if he can catch likely pacesetter **MIKES TIZNOW**. The latter scored a sharp comeback victory in June, his second stakes victory and first start in a year. Freshened since, apparently working well, proven over the Del Mar turf, he is the one to catch. Pacesetters won two of the first six turf sprints this summer with the rails at zero. **SPARKY VILLE** is the high weight based on his G3 runner-up three back, and solid allowance last out on this course. He should get another ground-saving trip positioned just off the pace. TOROSAY is quick, and will keep MIKES TIZNOW honest on the front end. Multiple stakes winner BAJA SUR is usually close at this level.

Fourth Race

1. Secret Keeper	2. Harvest Moon	3. Provocation

The challenge facing **SECRET KEEPER** in this route stakes for 3yo fillies is her lack of seasoning and inexperience around two turns. She would be the first this century to win the Torrey Pines in just her third start. But 'KEEPER is very good. She scored dominant sprint wins her first two starts, and is bred to run long. Her full sibling Into Chocolate won a route and finished third in this race last summer; their dam is a maiden sibling to G1 turf route winner Harmonious. The point is, 'KEEPER is bred for the mile distance. She has speed to be forwardly placed, the manner she finished both sprints suggests two turns is within reach. But one could argue **HARVEST MOON** is more qualified. This is her fourth start, she won a N1X dirt route last time by more than four lengths while earning the highest figure by any in this field (on "fast"). Proven around two turns, with the top speed figure, 'MOON will vie for favoritism. **PROVOCATION** was no match for the top choice last out, and is also making just her third career start. But the lightly raced filly has room to improve and she will keep the pace honest. AURELIA GARLAND ships in from Kentucky; the last time her Midwest-based trainer shipped a 3yo filly to the West Coast, My Majestic Rose won the G2 Summertime Oaks in 2019 at Santa Anita.

Fifth Race

1. Lane Way	2. War Path	3. Comradery

LANE WAY is starting to look like a career maiden: five starts, five in-the-money finishes. But his runner-up last out in his initial turf route was fast enough to win a normal maiden race; it was flattered when third-place finisher Tallien returned to win his next start. The pace scenario of this turf mile looks tepid, 'WAY figures for a front-running/pace-pressing trip. **WAR PATH** also has raced five times, he finished second as the favorite last time in a race won by Tallien, who previously finished more than four lengths behind LANE WAY. Regardless, blinkers-off WAR PATH will be running late. **COMRADERY** finished a promising third in his U.S. debut and second career start. Layoff runners from this stable typically improve second start back. Upset chance? Eight-start maiden ABSOLUTE UNIT finished in the money all four starts on turf, but his ability to stay two turns is uncertain.

Sixth Race

1. Fratelli	2. Baby Gronk	3. All I Can Say

FRATELLI drops to the lowest level for winners ($16k claiming N2L), with proven form on the Del Mar track. He romped in his debut here in November, then was overmatched in a pair or tough starter allowance races. Freshened, dropping, fastest on figures, the one to beat. **BABY GRONK** also drops to the bottom, although his winning desire is questionable. He has one win, five seconds, four thirds and lost six times as the favorite. Based on ability, he enters as a legitimate contender. But he prefers to run alongside his rivals rather than run past. Second preference. **ALL I CAN SAY** will roll from behind as he shortens from a route to a sprint. He finished in the money his last four starts at this level. SQUARE DEAL, two-time stakes winner here last summer (disqualified once) as a 2yo, plummets to the bottom after finishing last vs. Cal-bred allowance runners.

Seventh Race

1. United	2. Combatant	3. Red King

The top distance turf horse in California is favored to extend his graded stakes win streak to four. **UNITED** won a G2 last out at a mile and one-eighth distance that is shorter than he prefers, he stretches to his preferred marathon distance for this mile and three-eighths race. The class of the field, with tactical speed and ability to finish, obvious choice. **COMBATANT** looms an upset candidate in the first turf marathon of his career. He won the G1 Santa Anita Handicap on dirt in March, his next two starts were bad-trip misfires including an off-slow last-place finish a month ago behind Pacific Classic favorite Maximum Security. First time on turf since relocating to California, COMBATANT will rally late, possibly at a price. **RED KING** dominated the G3 San Juan Capistrano by more than four lengths last out; trainer Phil D'Amato won this G2 five of the last six years. WARD 'N JERRY moved too soon in the San Juan, and paid the price late finishing third at odds-on. He finished only a head behind United when they met here in winter.

Eighth Race

1. Take the One O One	2. Potantico	3. Extra Hope

The inconsistent **TAKE THE ONE O ONE** gets the call to wire the field as he drops out of a pair of Cal-bred stakes into a second-level allowance dirt mile. A horse-for-course at Del Mar (maiden and stakes wins), 'ONE looks like the speed of the field and can lead gate to wire if he runs to his N1X upset three starts back. **POTANTICO** also is a Del Mar horse-for-course, two wins and a second from three starts here. He gave Pacific Classic entrant Dark Vader a battle last time. POTANTICO possesses enough speed to keep the top choice in his sights, and would be among the first to attack if the pacesetter falters. **EXTRA HOPE**, multiple graded-placed, is arguably the "best horse." But this is his first since November, uncertain if he is cranked first start back. He might need a start. Third preference, nonetheless. UNBROKEN STAR merely split the field last time, but his highly rated N1X win two back puts him in the hunt. Last-out Cal-bred sprint stakes winner EL TIGRE TERRIBLE meets older for the first time; he was compromised by a bad trip his only previous route.

Ninth Race

1. Neige Blanche	2. Miss Extra	3. Warren's Showtime

The G1 Del Mar Oaks is a good spot to take a shot and back European shippers with proper credentials to defeat a modest cast of local fillies. **NEIGE BLANCHE** and **MISS EXTRA** are from France, both make their U.S. debut. The call to post an upset is G3 winner NEIGE BLANCHE, 3-for-6 overseas and making her first start for trainer Leonard Powell. Her last-out victory was at the expense of a modest field, a description that applies to this year's Oaks field. NEIGE BLANCHE arrived in California weeks ago, posted three local works, gets Flavien Prat for her local bow and can blast home for the upset. MISS EXTRA figures as one of the favorites based on her G2 win two starts back at Chantilly. She is fresh off the plane, posted her first U.S. work Tuesday, and should come out firing for Richard Mandella and Umberto Rispoli. This race was won by Europeans making their U.S. debut in 2000 and 2001 (No Matter What, Golden

Applies). **WARREN'S SHOWTIME** switches to Mike Smith after a strange trip last out in the G2 San Clemente. She dropped farther off the pace than expected, finished well, but too late. The mile and one-eighth distance of this race suits 'SHOWTIME. The distance is a reach for LAURA'S LIGHT, though she won a G3 at this trip two back and won her last four starts on turf, all stakes. She has tactical speed, and will get first run into the lane.

Tenth Race

1. Maximum Security	2. Higher Power	3. Midcourt

MAXIMUM SECURITY or **HIGHER POWER** in the TVG Pacific Classic? It's a close call, even though 'MAX finished six lengths in front of his rival last out. The longer distance of this mile and a quarter race benefits last year's Pacific Classic winner 'POWER, but the call is 'MAX, first across the wire every start except for a runner-up finish last summer. He overcame tough conditions (early duel, lost position, re-rallied) to win his comeback here last month, and worked well since. Still not sure if a mile and quarter is his optimum distance, but the gritty colt refuses to lose. From his outside post this time, he figures for an in-the-clear trip. HIGHER POWER returns to his preferred mile and one-quarter trip; the best races of his career including a blowout in this race last summer were at this distance. He finished far behind the top choice last out, but that was a mile and a sixteenth. Ten furlongs might be the equalizer. **MIDCOURT** has one way to go from the inside post. That is, take the lead and try to wire the field. He gave 'MAX all he could handle last time, and missed by a nose. Come catch him. DARK VADER might be in tough, but he will be running late.

Eleventh Race

1. Salvator Mundi	2. Shadow Sphinx	3. Southern King

Runner-up at this level last out, **SALVATOR MUNDI** merits horse-to-beat status for a streaking trainer and hot rider. **SHADOW SPHINX** returned from a long layoff to win a starter allowance in June, a length and a quarter victory despite severe fractions. His pace rivals finished far back. Close call between the top pair. **SOUTHERN KING** won this condition two back; a mile and three-eighth last out was too far. He returns to his winning level, while entered for the optional claim tag. TIBERIUS MERCURIUS finished only a half-length behind the top choice last out.