

**Date:** August 28th, 2020**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Miss Costa Rica (7th race)****First Race****1. Mamba Queen****2. Maxim Strider****3. Kate Boss**

Two-year-old maiden fillies sprint on turf in a split of race 7; this might be the softer division. **MAMBA QUEEN** is a Cal-bred facing open, and already making her fourth career start, but her pedigree has turf influence (by Square Eddie, grass on bottom) and 'QUEEN is likely to set the pace. Her last-out fourth was better than it looks. She dueled/pressed, shook off her pace rivals,, then got swallowed by late-runners. Not bad racing five and a half on dirt. She shortens to five furlongs and gets the tepid call to wire the field. **MAXIM STRIDER** makes her debut for the meet's leading trainer. 'STRIDER is the first runner produced by a turf-winning mare; a recent 47.80 gate work suggests speed. **KATE BOSS** makes her career debut for a stable with a history of success with debut runners in turf sprints, while first-time starter **ESPERER** debuts for an outfit that has posted multiple upsets over the years in summer at Del Mar. **ESPERER** has a European pedigree, hence turf first out.

**Second Race****1. Himiko****2. Overwhelming Love****3. Last First Kiss**

Runner-up two recent dirt sprints, **HIMIKO** stretches to a mile as controlling speed with a two-turn pedigree. Sired by American Pharoah, she is a sibling to Kentucky Derby-Preakness runner-up Bodemeister. The fastest in the field, loose on the lead, HIMIKO could be long gone at a short price. However, Northern California shipper **OVERWHELMING LOVE** enters with an upset chance based on her runner-up finish two back in a dirt route and a horrible trip last out on turf. She took up on the first turn and was forced seven-wide, virtually eliminated, but somehow re-rallied to finish third. She probably was best. She is not as "fast" as the top choice on figures, but all three of her starts were two turns and she will be running late. **LAST FIRST KISS** is a six-start maiden with four successive in-the-money finishes including three route races. She will get there one of these days.

**Third Race****1. He's Like Violence****2. Honos Man****3. Seeking Refuge**

**HE'S LIKE VIOLENCE** was a faster horse than these last year; his okay fourth-place sprint comeback theoretically sets him up to win on the stretch-out/class drop. This race is restricted to non-winners of two lifetime, or 3-year-olds. 'VIOLENCE missed by a little more than a length in his comeback; he has speed for a forwardly placed trip in a route race without much pace. **HONOS MAN** is the "now" route horse, runner-up vs. similar N2L claiming company here a month ago. He is an improved gelding since moving to grass three back. 'MAN looks like the best threat from off the pace. **SEEKING REFUGE** finished a length behind 'MAN last time out, and will be running late. **GO TIME**, a 3yo, stretches out from an okay third vs. his age group.

**Fourth Race****1. Zorich****2. Self Taught****3. Vodka Twist**

**ZORICH** slides to \$25k claiming N2L for the first time, and enters this dirt route as simply the fastest in the field with an up-front style that should play well assuming he avoids a duel with the horse to his outside. Those are the only two apparent front-runners. **SELF TAUGHT** could produce speed while stretching out from a runner-up finish in a sprint. It is uncertain if he can stay two turns, but his last two sprints were decent efforts in Kentucky and California. **VODKA TWIST** benefitted from a slow pace to win a N2L claiming race. The win was not highly rated, but he knows where the wire is. A two-time winner, he is eligible to this race because he is a 3yo. **ALVAARO** is the aforementioned front-runner/pace-presser that could keep the top choice company early.

**Fifth Race****1. K P D Day****2. Spanish Count****3. Palace Prince**

**K P D DAY** ran super in his debut, fifth in a maiden-claiming turf route despite losing ground start to finish after breaking from the outside post. He drew comfortably in post 6 for his second start. If he runs two alike, he should be right there. However, he faces droppers from the maiden special-weight ranks that figure as contenders in this maiden-50. Those include **SPANISH COUNT**, a second-time starter/first-

time gelding, returning from a long layoff for a trainer whose who excels with horses returning from layoffs of six months or more. **PALACE PRINCE** is an eight-start maiden with ability. He did not have the greatest of trips losing ground last time out at a slightly higher level. He moves to an inside post, drops and gets a beneficial rider switch. **JUROR** drops from special-weight and adds blinkers. You don't see many colts sired by Tapit running for a \$50k claim tag.

### Sixth Race

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#### 1. September Secret

#### 2. Reign of Fire

#### 3. Afleet Diva

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**SEPTEMBER SECRET** drops from the G2 Sorrento into a starter allowance. If she reproduces her maiden-50 romp two starts back, she can be long gone. She is quick enough to make the lead from the inside post. Come and catch her. However, **REIGN OF FIRE** will be breathing down the neck of the top choice. **FIRE** pressed legit fractions last out in Cal-bred stakes and did well to hold third. Drawn outside, dropping in for the \$50k optional claim tag, improving speed figures, she enters as a must-use against the favorite drawn inside. **AFLEET DIVA**, stablemate of the top choice, was claimed for \$32k from a romping debut victory. She benefitted from an inordinately slow pace in that win, however. The splits are likely to be quicker here.

### Seventh Race

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#### 1. Miss Costa Rica

#### 2. Pizzazz

#### 3. Brilliant Cut

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Two-year-old maiden fillies sprint five furlongs on turf in a split of race 1; this is the stronger division and includes the "best bet" on the card. She is **MISS COSTA RICA**, a fast-working daughter of first-crop sire Hit It a Bomb (turf). **RICA** is a sibling to Gas Station Sushi, a debut winner/sprint stakes winner for the same trainer, Richard Baltas. Fast works, pedigree for grass, if she breaks running from the inside post and runs to her works, she can take care of business first time out. **PIZZAZZ** is a War Front firster who appears to have trained well enough for her debut. Her dam was a route mare, so it is not clear if this race is merely a prep for longer or if she can win first out. Second preference, regardless. **BRILLIANT CUT** has something the top pair lack. That is, racing experience. She finished an okay fourth in her career debut on dirt, and she is bred for turf. Also-eligible **FREEDOM FLYER** is by win-early sire Constitution.

### Eighth Race

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#### 1. Proud Emma

#### 2. Message

#### 3. Zusha

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**PROUD EMMA** wheels back in 12 days and stretches to two turns after a promising runner-up sprint comeback. Three of her four career wins were two turns, she won a starter allowance over the Del Mar track in fall 2018. She can win if she catches likely pacesetter **MESSAGE**. The latter is not "fast" on numbers, but she could be loose out front. Her only start this year was a solid second after dueling in an allowance race in May. She could shake loose. **ZUSHA**, third in this stakes race a year ago, has been racing exclusively in graded stakes races since then. She returns to a restricted stakes race and will grind away from just off the pace. Her comeback misfire can be excused. She was upset when she shipped to Los Al on race day, stayed unsettled all day, and ran like it. Throw out the race. She has been fine in schooling sessions at Del Mar. **HANG A STAR** also drops from graded stakes. Not sure if two turns is her deal, but her sprint figures are solid and she was probably in over her head in a G1 her only route. **SMILING SHIRLEE** is a 3yo facing older; she has won running long, but her fastest races have been sprints. The truth is, all five starters appear to have some sort of shot.

### Ninth Race

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#### 1. Constantia

#### 2. Cheerful Charm

#### 3. I Give Up

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The outside post does **CONSTANTIA** no favors in this maiden-50 turf mile, but she is rounding back into form, and off her third last out at this class level, she gets the call. She has enough speed to establish position before losing too much ground into the first turn; she switches riders to red-hot Rispoli. **CHEERFUL CHARM** improved a bunch second time out, runner-up vs. Cal-bred maidens. She is a 4yo that has raced only twice, so the drop to \$50k claiming is not really a concern. **I GIVE UP** is a nine-start maiden that will be running late; **JOURNAL ENTRY** is an 11-start maiden who returned to form last out with a decent third at a slightly higher level.