

**Date:** August 29th, 2020

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: Vittorio (6th race)**

**First Race**

---

**1. Ambivalent**

**2. Waspirant**

**3. Man Friday**

---

With two sprints under his belt, 2-year-old **AMBIVALENT** is ready to stretch to a mile. He finished second up in his debut, and third across the wire in the G2 Best Pal. Both races, he finished like a colt that wants two turns. He returns to the maiden ranks as the one to beat. **WASPIRANT** raced evenly in his fourth-place debut, a race won by Del Mar Futurity early favorite Dr. Schivel. **WASPIRANT** is bred to route, by Union Rags and produced by Breeders' Cup Distaff winner Life Is Sweet. His trainer won with 3 of his last 5 second-start maidens going sprint to route. **MAN FRIDAY** split the field in his okay wide-trip debut. His dam was a sprinter, but **FRIDAY** is by American Pharoah. A mile should be fine. **BOLU** got bet some in his 8-1 debut, showed speed and faded. He might enjoy the likely softer pace of this two-turn trip.

**Second Race**

---

**1. Secret Touch**

**2. Winning Element**

**3. Wilshire Dude**

---

**SECRET TOUCH** returns to the class level at which he won the first race of the summer season. Although he ran okay last time out, it turns out \$32k claiming/starter allowance was slightly out of reach; he finished fourth of five. Back where he fits in a \$16k claiming race, he meets a field with pace to flatter his closing rally. **WINNING ELEMENT** drops precipitously in class after setting the pace to deep stretch and finishing a decent fifth in a \$40k claiming route on turf. **ELEMENT** is a six-win veteran dropping to a new low. He probably is the one they must catch; speed has been holding at a mile on dirt: 6 of the last 13 won by the pacesetter (into Friday). **WILSHIRE DUDE** was claimed from a sharp win for \$12.5k; he can keep **ELEMENT** honest on the front end. **KYLEMORE** will be running late; he won Del Mar races late in the meet each of the past two summers.

**Third Race**

---

**1. Freedom Lass**

**2. Zuchera**

**3. Hello Bubbles**

---

**FREEDOM LASS** did not have a good trip in her California debut, finishing fifth after losing ground three- and four-wide throughout and also making a premature move. Her effort was better than it might appear. She moves from post 9 to post 1, and switches jockeys to the meet's leading turf rider. With a ground-saving trip and patient tactics, **LASS** can win. **ZUCCHERA** is the fastest finisher in the field, she rallied from last to miss by a head in the same race the top choice and two others in this field exit. She is the only entrant who ran the final quarter-mile of her last two starts in less than 24 seconds. Win or lose, she probably will finish fastest. **HELLO BUBBLES** is unproven around two turns, but she is a new face to this starter allowance class level, making her first start in more than three months. **GOODTINGSCOMINPINK** finished second in the common race, in front of three rivals in this field.

**Fourth Race**

---

**1. Cajun Treasure**

**2. Blame It On Kitty**

**3. Dr. Troutman**

---

Recent dirt works by turf specialist **CAJUN TREASURE** suggest he can handle the change in footing. Up in class after a N2L claiming win on turf last month, he posted a series of sharp main-track works since including a bullet move one week ago. Tab for a minor upset on the surface switch. This is his first start on "fast" dirt. **BLAME IT ON KITTY** will rally late, as usual. In the money all six starts on dirt this year (lone win \$12.5k N2L), his two starts this summer at Del Mar have been solid. He will need pace to flatter his closing rally, and he might get it. **DR. TROUTMAN** would have been the top choice if this race was on turf. He ran super in his comeback three weeks ago. He set a fast pace, hung tough to deep stretch and tired to third while starting for the first time in 11 months. If he handles dirt, he could be gone. But his six starts on dirt produced just a single third-place finish. **THE STIFF** will be clunking along from off the pace, while lightly raced **POLAR WIND** drops in class and switches to a hot rider.

**Fifth Race**

---

**1. Fierce for Sul**

**2. Chitu Me Too**

**3. Lilypop**

---

Debut runner-up in a fast-pace dirt sprint, second-time starter **FIERCE FOR SUL** switches to grass, shortens to five furlongs, takes off blinkers and could be gone. She finished second to a top filly (Secret Keeper) in her debut, and benefits by the shorter distance. The Del Mar turf course has been kind to speed at five furlongs; 12 of the last 22 turf sprints (into Friday) were won by a horse positioned one-two after the first quarter including seven gate-to-wire winners. **CHITU ME TOO** ran okay first out, runner-up with a rally-wide trip over this course. She did benefit from a collapsing pace in that race, as all the speed surrendered and the top finishers rallied from the back. Still a promising debut, and maidens from this outfit tend to improve with racing. **LILYPOP** has posted a series of fast works for her debut; eight-start maiden **PREDICTABLE TULLY** figures off her runner-up finish in her most recent start three months ago.

**Sixth Race**

---

**1. Vittorio**

**2. Petruccio**

**3. Go On**

---

A better-than-looked fifth-place debut and subsequent fast gate workout by **VITTORIO** sets up the \$750k juvenile colt as a likely winner second time out.

He broke slowly and was away last in his debut, uncorked a four-wide move through the turn, then went evenly to the wire in a race dominated by the 1-2-3 pacemakers. It was actually an outstanding effort; VITTORIO returned with a bullet gate work Aug. 16 that suggests he will break cleanly second out. Drawn outside, stretching from five furlongs to six, he should move up a ton. **PETRUCHIO** finished third in the same race, three lengths in front of the top choice. However, PETRUCHIO had the race flow in his favor (speed dominated) and also benefited from a ground-saving trip. Not sure if the race was as good as it looked. On the other hand, he is a candidate to improve now that he has a race under his belt. **GO ON** is a first-time starter whose 58.60-second gate work Aug. 16 was second-fastest of the day. Inside post no bargain, but if the work was legit, he clearly can run more than just a little bit. HONORARY DEGREE broke slowly in his seventh-place debut; improvement likely second time out at a big price.

#### Seventh Race

---

##### 1. Big Sweep

##### 2. Beguiled

##### 3. Croughavouke

---

**BIG SWEEP**, 3-for-3 sprinting, faces a challenge stretching to two turns and switching to turf for the first time. Her only loss was her only route, on dirt. But the two-time Cal-bred stakes winner looked good both recent turf works (viewed on XBTv.com) and she meets a field light on speed. Despite uncertainty regarding distance, the lightly raced filly gets the call to make the lead and be gone. **BEGUILED** might have been best three weeks ago in a similar N1X turf route for 3yo fillies, but she was blocked from to deep stretch and finished fourth by a half-length. She might have won if she found room earlier. The improving late-runner figures as a contender with a clean trip. **CROUGHAVOUKE** will be among the favorites as she drops into an entry-level allowance after eight successive stakes (four times in the money). Blinkers on, class drop, late-running contender. AVENUE DE FRANCE misfired in her U.S. debut, last by a long way. She is believed to be a better filly than that race suggests based on her two-for-two record in France. OVER ATTRACTED figures as a contender off her runner-up U.S. debut two back; she completely misfired last time in a G2.

#### Eighth Race

---

##### 1. Microrhythms

##### 2. McKale

##### 3. Desert Law

---

Bob Baffert trainees **MICRORITHMS** and **MCKALE** enter this short sprint as the speed of the field, both have won at this N2X class level, both are entered for the optional \$80k claim tag. The call is MICRORITHMS, who is quick from the gate and likely to set the pace from the rail. He virtually wired a N1X/optional \$40k claiming field a month ago at this five-and-a-half-furlong trip. Pacemakers won more than a third of races this summer at this distance (8-for-23). Stablemate MCKALE will push the pace from the outside. He won this condition three starts back in January, and would probably get first run if his stablemate misfires. **DESERT LAW** dueled and cracked last time in the G1 Bing Crosby. He missed training into that race, and perhaps was in too tough anyway. Third start back, dropping in class, his 2019 form would crush. But neither start this year has been that great. He is trained by Carla Gaines, who also entered stakes winner TIGER DAD. The latter defeated his stablemate two back, then pressed and cracked last time without an apparent alibi. He adds speed to the field.

#### Ninth Race

---

##### 1. Border Town

##### 2. One Bad Boy

##### 3. Gregorian Chant

---

**BORDER TOWN** was visibly uncomfortable last out in a turf marathon; he threw his head around while pulling, never relaxed behind the slow pace, and tossed in a third-place clunker at even-money. However, either of his two previous starts at shorter distances (G3 sixth, N1X win) would be fast enough for this group. He shortens in distance, should get pace to chase, and gets the call over 2019 Queen's Plate winner **ONE BAD BOY**. The latter has been off more than a year, but his comeback works have been sharp and he might be the "class" of the field. Flavien Prat could have ridden either of the top two; he ends up on TOWN. **GREGORIAN CHANT** finished an okay third last out in his first since he was gelded. It was the best race of his career based on figures; he might be a better horse as a gelding. LINCOLN CITY moves up in class following a sharp N1X win after breaking from the rail. He moves to the outside post, which is tough go, but he has tactical speed to drop in before losing too much ground.

#### Tenth Race

---

##### 1. Flagstaff

##### 2. Giant Expectations

##### 3. Law Abidin Citizen

---

**FLAGSTAFF** skipped the G1 Bing Crosby at six furlongs to aim for this G2 at seven furlongs, a distance at which he scored his two most recent wins including a G2. The gelding has speed for a pressing trip, bullet works indicate he is ready to fire first in nearly three months. **GIANT EXPECTATIONS** won this race in 2017, finished second in this race in 2019, and has worked well for his first start since recovering from a splint injury last fall. He has trained well, likes the track and distance, and will be rolling late as he tries to become the first horse to win this stakes race at age 7 or older. **LAW ABIDIN CITIZEN** finished a bang-up third last out in the G1 Bing Crosby. He dueled early, put away two pace rivals that finished last and next-to-last, then was unable to hold off the one-two finishers that rallied from the back of the field. Super effort at six furlongs. He figures to make the lead from the rail, and could be long gone depending on much pressure he gets early. MANHATTAN UP looms an off-the-pace upset candidate in his first start since he was gelded. Look for him late, possibly at a price.

#### Eleventh Race

---

##### 1. Blackout

##### 2. Truth Seeker

##### 3. Combat Zone

---

The "race shape" was against **BLACKOUT** last time, he set the pace and faded to sixth in a turf sprint dominated by closers. The top five finishers rallied from the back of the field. BLACKOUT drops one level to \$32k claiming and is reunited with the last jockey he won under. If he can ration his speed, or tuck behind the pace rivals to his inside and outside, he can this turf sprint nightcap. **TRUTH SEEKER** flew late to miss by a head at 26-1 in the same race as the top choice. The flow benefitted 'SEEKER, but it looks like there is plenty of pace to run at here, also. **COMBAT ZONE** returns from an extended layoff as a first-time gelding, entered with the "no-claim" waiver. That move typically signals optimism. ALLEVA drops in class and returns to turf. Wakeup third start back?

