

Date: August 31st, 2020

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Lil Richards Bello (1st race)

First Race

1. Lil Richards Bello

2. Crooked Finger Ray

3. Zero Down

The Monday program begins with "best bet" **LIL RICHARDS BELLO**, whose third-place debut two back would be fast enough to handle these older Cal-bred maidens. He switched to turf for his second start, and did not have a good trip. Off slow, shuffled on the backstretch, he rallied inside on the turn and through traffic in the lane, and finished well for fifth. Much better-than-looked, at a distance shorter than he prefers. He stretches from five furlongs to six, returns to dirt, drew near the outside, and with a better takeoff and clean trip can kick off the card with a win. **CROOKED FINGER RAY** ran well to finish third three weeks ago while returning from a one-year layoff. His debut on this track last summer as a 2yo was solid; he has a right to improve second start back returning to dirt. **ZERO DOWN** is a seven-start maiden who finished more than three lengths clear of third last out in the best race of his career. **ARICKAREE** makes his career debut with apparently decent works.

Second Race

1. Capital Heat

2. Scream and Shout

3. All Star Heat

Cal-bred fillies and mares sprint on turf, it's a good spot to take a shot at a potential price with **CAPITAL HEAT**. She improved a bunch second out, stretching out, even though she finished sixth of 10. But she produced improved speed chasing a fast pace, and hung tough to the middle of the stretch before she faltered. She cuts back to a sprint, figures for a pressing trip just off the pace, and with minor improvement can post a minor upset. **SCREAM AND SHOUT** was hounded into submission last out, third as the odds-on favorite after dueling inside over a Los Alamitos surface that typically favors the outside. Freshened two months, by a sire (Blame) whose progeny can run on turf, she is fast and will set or press the pace from the outside. **ALL STAR HEAT** finished an okay third in her main-track debut, although that race was weird due to the slow pace. The gray has turf influence in her pedigree. Her dam was a turf stakes winner; three of her four foals won on turf. The point is, **ALL STAR HEAT** could move up switching to grass.

Third Race

1. Impression

2. The Creep

3. Concur

Del Mar horse-for-course **IMPRESSION** gets the call in this \$10k claiming route. He only had four rivals behind him last month when he pressed his way to victory vs. \$8k claiming company, but he won a legit \$20k claiming route on this track last fall. The in-form veteran has tactical speed for a pressing trip; no reason he cannot fire right back as the likely chalk. Over the past 16 months, reliable trainer Bill Spawr is 11-for-19 with favorites. **THE CREEP** tumbles in class, from \$25k-\$32k claiming while going turf to dirt. His only dirt victory was two years ago on this track in a maiden-40. His current ability is uncertain, but he can improve facing easier company. **CONCUR** is a dropper with speed, going sprint to route while plummeting from \$20k claiming. Wire to wire threat.

Fourth Race

1. Teddy's Barino

2. Luxury Liner

3. After Midnight

First-time starter **TEDDY'S BARINO** gets the call in this turf-sprint scramble for Cal-bred maiden 2-year-old fillies. She is no sure thing. Her sire gets just 8 percent debut winners from 2yos, her stable typically races maidens into condition rather than fire first out, and she does not have a published workout since Aug. 17. But she did work a sharp half-mile from the gate that day, her dam won her debut and produced a pair of debut runners-up. She gets a top rider to launch her career. Tepid choice only. **LUXURY LINER** figures as one of the favorites. She finished a promising third after a slow start in her debut, then found two turns out of reach second time out. She cuts back to a sprint for a stable that has had success with distance turn-backs. **AFTER MIDNIGHT** appears to have worked well for her debut. She is trained by Carla Gaines, who also entered debut filly **CLOSING REMARKS**. The truth of the matter is this race is a complete raffle.

Fifth Race

1. Big Dress

2. Take Her Temp

3. Ruthies Racer

Another raffle for 2-year-old fillies, this is a maiden-32. **BIG DRESS** gets the call after showing brief speed vs. Cal-bred maiden special-weights and maiden-50s. The sprint speed she produced two starts back suggests she is quick enough to establish position from the inside post. That is not much of an endorsement, but this is not much of a field. **TAKE HER TEMP** finished an even-paced second in her debut, a race won by next-out starter allowance winner **Aflect Diva**. **TEMP** is likely to improve second time out. **RUTHIES RACER** ships from Florida, adds blinkers and drops in class for the second start of her career and first for Peter Miller, who also trains **TAKE HER TEMP**. **DANCING DANA** finished last in her debut, but adds blinkers for a stable known to spring an occasional upset with second-start maidens. Since the beginning of the 2019 Del Mar summer meet, Craig Lewis is 6-for-17 with second-start maidens. Only one of the six winners was a favorite; three were adding blinkers ala 'DANA, and all six winners were sired by Clubhouse Ride. Same as this filly. Bombs away?

Sixth Race

1. Red Bunting**2. Colombian Gold****3. Lavender**

RED BUNTING finished an okay fourth in her return from a five-month layoff; it was a tough turf route in which to return because the pace was severe. Fast fractions do influence late-runners such as 'BUNTING, who split the field. With that race under her belt, second start back, she figures as a contender in this N2L claiming turf mile. **COLOMBIAN GOLD** is a 3yo facing older, but her form is solid and the speed figure she earned three back in a maiden-62.5k victory puts her in the picture. **LAVENDER** drops from starter allowance to N2L claiming; her relatively close fourth-place finish last out fits with these. **INVINCIBELLA** chased blistering fractions in the same race the top choice exits. She finished second, in front of the top choice, and might be ranked too low by this handicapper. The knock is she has not won a race since the second start of her career in a five-furlong synthetic surface sprint two years ago in England.

Seventh Race

1. Wishful**2. Dorita's Lemon****3. Bounty of Gold**

WISHFUL is likely to start as one of the more heavily favored runners on the card, dropping from starter allowance to \$20k claiming N3L. She repeatedly finished in the money vs. better than these. Seems like a standout, although she lost the last three times she went favored. **DORITA'S LEMON** returned to form when she returned to dirt, third last out at this class level. For what it's worth, her last-out 70 Beyer is the top last-out figure in the field. Inside post no bargain in a sprint, of course. **BOUNTY OF GOLD** ships in from Golden Gate where she finished third of six last weekend. Big nine-pound weight break over the top pair.

Eighth Race

1. Ajourneytofreedom**2. Scarto****3. Great Power**

AJOURNEYTOFREEDOM should be tough in this N1X/optional \$80k claiming turf route, based on summer form that includes in-the-money finishes in a pair of stakes. He was gelded since raced, drops in class while entered for the optional tag, and is making his first start for Miller. Lots to like, including the simple fact he might be the best horse in the field. **SCARTO** stretched out for the first time and crushed older starter allowance rivals. Maybe two turns on turf is what he has wanted all along. **GREAT POWER** switches to turf and drops from a G3. He was billed as a good one early in his career, but has had a tough time stringing together his starts. This is the first time the lightly raced colt has been able to put together back-to-back starts without a layoff. **MECKLENBERG** had a tough trip in his fourth-place U.S. debut. He should improve second start back.

Ninth Race

1. Into Victory**2. Apache Pass****3. Magical Smile**

INTO VICTORY wheels back in eight days and goes route to sprint after being claimed from a runner-up finish around two turns. This maiden-20 sprint came up weak; her speed figures tower over the field. Looks like a low-odds standout. **APACHE PASS** encountered trouble and finished eighth last out against better company. She drops to the bottom. **MAGICAL SMILE** returns from a one-year layoff for a stable quietly having a solid year, 6-for-21.