

Date: November 8th, 2020

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Colt Fiction (1st race)

First Race

1. Colt Fiction

2. Gate Speed

3. Hollywood's Best

Runner-up on turf last out at this level, **COLT FICTION** returns to the Del Mar surface on which he scored a sharp maiden win two starts back. 'FICTION is quick enough to be positioned second behind the likely pacesetter, the closing rally he showed two previous dirt starts suggests six and a half furlongs is fine. Rock-solid, likely favorite, most probable winner on the card. But he'll have to catch aforementioned pacesetter **GATE SPEED**, who set a blazing pace last time and finished second in a very good comeback effort. The speedster is sure to show the way into the lane, it's just a question of whether or not he can stay six and a half. Although he squandered a midstretch lead his last three starts at shorter distances, it should be noted he won a 6.5-furlong maiden race last fall by open lengths. Win or lose, 'SPEED is the one to catch. **HOLLYWOOD'S BEST** improved every start including a Cal-bred maiden win last out at this distance. **ZORICH** will rally from the back.

Second Race

1. Provocation

2. Himiko

3. A Melis

Stablemates **PROVOCATION** and **HIMIKO** head this small-field sprint for N1X fillies and mare. **PROVOCATION** scored a highly rated debut victory, defeating her stablemate, when they met in January, then was overmatched last out in a G3 mile. Back to a sprint, working well for her comeback, logical choice. She is trained by Bob Baffert, who also entered **HIMIKO**. The latter put it all together last out with a sharp maiden win over four rivals. She has more gas than her stablemate, and looks like the one to catch. **A MELIS** took a shot on turf, and regressed. That also was her first start in two months. Now she returns to her preferred surface (dirt) and has a prep race under her belt. Expect an improved effort.

Third Race

1. Dancing Dana

2. Big Mama Sue

3. My Princess Ellie

DANCING DANA stretches to two turns after a creditable sprint second at this level. The 2yo filly missed by a neck to the odds-on favorite, finished nine lengths clear of third, and earned a decent speed figure. Sired by Clubhouse Ride, a mile should be within reach. **BIG MAMA SUE** also stretches out from a decent maiden sprint win. The filly she beat (Complete Control), was among the favorites in the third race Saturday. **MY PRINCESS ELLIE** and **SMOOTH RITHMS** both have something the top pair lack. That is, experience around two turns. They both scored low-rated and visually unimpressive wins last out at this mile trip. The fittest in the field is 'ELLIE, who already has three routes under her belt.

Fourth Race

1. Barraza

2. Savile Row

3. Affable

A pair of Bob Baffert-trained first-time firsters top this maiden sprint for 2yos. **BARRAZA** and **SAVILE ROW** have worked in company; it appeared on XBTv.com video **BARRAZA** worked slightly better on Oct. 15 and Oct. 31. But not by much. **BARRAZA** is by win-early sire Into Mischief, the colt is the first runner produced by multiple graded winner Halo Dolly. Sharp works, pedigree, trainer, ready to roll despite the inside draw. **SAVILE ROW** is by Quality Road, he might want longer than six furlongs. But his works are fast, and though his stablemate looked slightly better on workout video, 'ROW drew a better post near the outside. **AFFABLE** was purchased for \$600k at a 2yo sale in spring; he makes his debut with a solid work pattern for trainer Mark Glatt, whose maidens typically race their way into condition rather than fire first time out. **NO PEDIGREE** has a race under his belt, fifth in a turf stakes after setting the pace to deep stretch. With a class drop to MSW, he should improve. He does have speed.

Fifth Race

1. Paladar

2. Ronamo

3. Polar Wind

PALADAR returns from a long layoff with a series of black-letter works at San Luis Rey Downs for a trainer whose comebackers typically fire. Based on his highly rated wins in a maiden special-weight and N1X in winter/spring 2019, the Richard Baltas trainee already is the fastest horse in the field. As long as he avoids a pace duel, he can win this N3L starter first start back. However, pace is a potential hiccup. He made the lead both wins last year, but there is other speed in this field. **RONAMO** took a shot on turf, and sputtered. But his dirt form, including a fast N2L starter win over the Del Mar track in summer, puts him squarely in the hunt. Better yet, he rallies from behind and there is plenty of speed to run at. **POLAR WIND** was gelded since his most recent start in September; he likes the Del Mar surface and will rally late. **SYNTHESIS** is quick, and a candidate to set the pace. **BRONN** also has speed.

Sixth Race

1. Allie's Pal

2. Ensleys Dream

3. Mensa On Tap

The speed of the field, returning to the Del Mar surface on which she ran super first time out, **ALLIE'S PAL** gets the call to wire this maiden sprint for Cal-bred 2yo fillies. She ran okay second out, runner-up at Santa Anita, but the fractions she set at Del Mar in summer suggest she might prefer this surface. Win or lose, the one to catch. **ENSLEYS DREAM**, in the money both starts here in summer, breaks from the rail but has speed to establish position behind the

top choice. Freshened two months, expect her to return as an improved filly. **MENSA ON TAP**, sibling to debut winner/stakes winner Tap the Wire, was scheduled to debut on Oct. 23, but was listed as a vet scratch. She returned to San Luis Rey, posted another solid half-mile "breezing" workout, and appears ready to first out. **WHOSMILINGNOW** debuts with decent-looking works, while **GREAT CURVES** showed gate speed in her Oct. 30 work.

Seventh Race

1. Just Grazed Me**2. Miss Megan****3. Warren's Showtime**

The best horse in the field, multiple stakes winner **JUST GRAZED ME** should start as the solid favorite in this main-track stakes for Cal-bred fillies and mares. 'GRAZED ME won her comeback last month on turf, she also runs well on dirt, worked well since raced and drew a cozy outside post where she can press or stalk. Slam dunk? Not necessarily, because her Phil D'Amato-trained stablemate **MISS MEGAN** has an upset chance on the front end. 'MEGAN makes her second start back from a layoff; she has a history of improving second start back. She also loves the Del Mar track. The last time she ran here, in summer 2019, she won a maiden race by more than 12 lengths while earning an 87 Beyer that matches the top dirt fig of the favorite. 'MEGAN is quick, could make the lead, and has a shot to steal it. **WARREN'S SHOWTIME**, whose Grade 1-winning dam Warren's Veneda won this race in 2013 when it was the Cat's Cradle Stakes at Hollywood Park, shortens up and drops into a Cal-bred restricted race after winning a G3 turf mile for 3yo fillies. 'SHOWTIME seems better on grass than dirt, although she won a state-bred dirt stakes in June. Look for her late.

Eighth Race

1. Microrithms**2. Independence Hall****3. P R Radio Star**

An interesting allowance sprint ends the week. **MICRORITHMS** is a small horse with a big heart. He has five wins from eight starts and speed to lead start to finish. He won both summer starts at Del Mar in front-running fashion, then scratched Oct. 16 when entered for a \$62.5k claim tag at Santa Anita. He returns without a tag, should make the lead and gets the call to wire the field. However, the "best horse" probably is **INDEPENDENCE HALL**, a comeback G3 winner making his first start in California and first since March. He won the first three starts of his career and was the only 2019 juvenile to earn a triple-digit Beyer, 'HALL is using this allowance sprint as a prep race for the G1 Malibu when Santa Anita opens in December. The point is, he does not "have to" win first start back. But he could. He won his career debut last fall, and appears to have trained well for his comeback. **P R RADIO STAR** is a Del Mar horse-for-course; he won a pair of highly rated sprints here I summer before misfiring in a G2 won by Breeders' Cup Sprint contender C Z Rocket. 'RADIO STAR has been freshened, worked fast, and should come back firing. **ANYPORTINASTORM** is a multiple stakes winner all over the map (Washington, New Mexico, Northern California) making his first start in three months and first since transferring to Peter Miller.