

Date: November 22nd, 2020

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Life Is Good (2nd race)

First Race

1. Save the Story

2. Our Romance

3. Our Bonnie Lass

SAVE THE STORY ran a winning race last out when she sped clear, opened up on strong fractions, and got worn down late. That maiden-25 was the same 6.5-furlong distance as this maiden-20. Color her gone. If not, then 14-start maiden **OUR ROMANCE** could get up. 'ROMANCE finished second in back-to-back starts vs. similar. Sooner or later, the career maiden will catch a field she can wear down. **OUR BONNIE LASS** will be rolling from the back of the pack, possibly at a generous price. This is her first start in more than three months; the best race of her career was her debut. The point is, she runs well fresh. The past five years, trainer Ray Bell and jockey Tyler Baze have teamed for a number of upsets including \$23 Bronzino, \$15.60 Brookes All Mine, \$25 Chief Lion, and \$39.60 India Mantuana. IT'S A RIDDLE is a 12-start maiden with eight in-the-money finishes. Someday perhaps, similar to **OUR ROMANCE**.

Second Race

1. Life Is Good

2. Wipe the Slate

3. Santos to Wilson

First-time starter **LIFE IS GOOD** is ready to rip, based on his impressive gate work (viewed on XTBV.com) early this week at Santa Anita. The Into Mischief colt popped the gate in company, was kept under a hold throughout the work, yet still clocked the day's fastest time (1:00.20) for five furlongs. Bob Baffert sends them fit; the speedy colt should be tough to beat at a short price. **WIPE THE SLATE** debuts with a solid work pattern while drawing a comfortable outside post. This 2yo crop is the first sired by 2015 champion juvenile/2016 Kentucky Derby winner Nyquist, who is off to a successful start as a stallion. **SANTOS TO WILSON** is the only starter with racing experience, third with trouble last out. The filly who finished in front of him returned to win next out. **ROMAN CENTURIAN** appears to have worked well for his debut. **SCALES OF JUSTICE** is an Uncle Mo firster; his Grade 1-winning dam Balance has underachieved as a broodmare. Only one of her first six foals is a winner.

Third Race

1. Florentine Diamond

2. Mariah Girl

3. Flat Out Joy

FLORENTINE DIAMOND has a problematic history of slow starts, but when she breaks running like last time, she can be very effective. She dueled on a blistering pace, led in deep stretch and weakened to third at 41-1. That race was five and a half; she shortens to five furlongs and can be gone with a clean takeoff. **MARIAH GIRL** goes route to sprint, adds blinkers, and goes first start off the claim by high-percent f.o.c. trainer Doug O'Neill. The past five years, he is 40-for-166 in the category. 'GIRL is not quick, but will be rolling late in a race that should unfold at a quick pace. **FLAT OUT JOY** is not exactly bred for turf, and her last-out maiden win was ordinary. However, that was just her second start back from a long layoff and she could tuck into a cozy trip positioned right behind the top choice. If that rival falters, 'JOY might get first run.

Fourth Race

1. Soothing

2. Boonesboro Beauty

3. Fruitfully

The class drop by **SOOTHING** is suspicious. From a series of respectable efforts in starter allowances, she nosedives to \$8k claiming. Strange. But the presence of top rider Flavien Prat on the Bob Hess trainee alleviates some concern. As for the surface switch from turf to dirt, the only time **SOOTHING** raced over the Del Mar main track she won a maiden-20 by five lengths with Prat. Obvious favorite should be tough at this level. **BOONESBORO BEAUTY** was compromised by a horrible trip last out, finishing third for a \$10k claim tag. She broke from the outside post (9 of 9) and lost ground every step of the way. Four-wide on the first turn, four-wide on the far turn, made the lead at the top of stretch, then lost her punch. Super effort. Down a notch in class, better post, worthy alternative to the favorite. **FRUITFULLY** is a 6-for-24 pro shipping in from pandemic-closed Golden Gate Fields, where she won her last start from far off the pace. She will rally late, along with eight-time winner **SHOE GAME** from Emerald Downs.

Fifth Race

1. Master Ryan

2. Queen's Code

3. Fat Stacks

Who will beat **MASTER RYAN** this time? The trouble-prone 10-start maiden has lost five straight as the favorite, finishing in the money every time. One of these days, he will get a clean trip and post his long-overdue maiden win. The horse that beat him last out (First Prez) was scheduled to start as a contender Friday in an allowance race (race 6). First-time starter **QUEEN'S CODE** followed his three-horse team drill Nov. 11 (outworked by two stablemates, both winners) with a quick blowout on Wednesday. Seems to be on his toes first out. First-timer **FAT STACKS** worked a bullet five furlongs from the gate on this track last weekend. A sibling to route stakes winner Wound Tight, he figures as a contender. **CRANKIN** adds Lasix after showing speed and fading in his debut. He might be the one to catch.

Sixth Race

1. Shimmer Me Timbers

2. Crash Corrigan

3. Big Well

SHIMMER ME TIMBERS could be gone in this Cal-bred maiden-50 for 2yos, based on his runner-up debut. He sped to the lead, shook off two pace rivals, opened up in the lane and only got collared late. Although he must stretch his speed another half-furlong, with a race under his belt, six furlongs should be okay. Come catch him. **CRASH CORRIGAN** blew his chance at the break in his comeback two weeks ago. He was antsy in the gate, then just stood there when the gates opened to be away far behind the field. He did show some late interest, and came back with a bullet gate drill early this week. Contender assuming a clean takeoff second start back. First-time starters **BIG WELL** and **JOE DON LOONEY** seem to have trained okay. The truth is, after the top pair, this race is a scramble.

Seventh Race

1. Tripoli

2. Ekklesia

3. American Farmer

A mile and an eighth was slightly out of reach last time for **TRIPOLI**, who led to deep stretch but was collared by closers who rallied from the back of the field. **TRIPOLI** finished fourth by a half-length. He drops from N1X vs. older to N1X vs. 3yos, shortens to a mile, and can win with an up-front trip. **EKKLESIA** scored a highly rated N1X win on dirt last time; the win was validated when the third-place finisher returned to win a minor stakes race. **EKKLESIA** ran well twice on the Del Mar turf course in summer. **AMERICAN FARMER** drops from N2X vs. older; **RIP CITY** is on a roll and seeking his fourth straight win by moving up in class.

Eighth Race

1. Galilean

2. Take the One O One

3. Rookie Mistake

GALILEAN is always tough in Cal-bred stakes. He won his last five statebred stakes, short and long, turf and dirt. The reliable colt drew a comfortable post near the outside of this Cal-bred sprint, and enters as simply the best and fastest in the lineup. One potential hiccup is this is his first start on Del Mar dirt. Meanwhile, **TAKE THE ONE O ONE** is three-for-three on Del Mar dirt, with a reasonable upset chance. He shortens to one turn and drops from a Grade 1 route in which he set a blistering pace before packing it in. He actually ran well under the circumstances, while facing infinitely better company (Improbable, Maximum Security). Although he typically runs two turns, he is effective around one turn. The veteran is 3-for-5 in sprints. If there is a significant odds discrepancy between the top pair, 'ONE O ONE might be the better bet. **ROOKIE MISTAKE** will roll late shortening to a sprint; **BRICKYARD RIDE** is pure heat but must deal with fellow front-runner **BETTOR TRIP NICK**. **OLIVER** returns from a layoff as a first-time gelding. He also will rally.

Ninth Race

1. Itainteasybeingray

2. Chicks Dig Munny

3. Misty Cat

After two sprints, Northern California-based **ITAINTEASYBEINGRAY** is ready to stretch out, switch surfaces and win. She is bred to route on turf. Sired by Kitten's Joy, she is a sibling to five winners including full brother Chief Kitten, a turf-route stakes winner. **CHICKS DIG MUNNY** adds blinkers and drops from maiden special-weight to maiden-80. Weight break helps, in with a seven-pound apprentice allowance. **MISTY CAT** enters with arguably the best form, third in a pair of MSW turf routes open to either gender. The shipper from Golden Gate drops in for a tag, moves into a gender-restricted race, and has the top speed figure in the field. **CUTETIP** goes long and drops in class, while first-time starter **MALIBU HANNAH** might be ranked too low by this handicapper. Her trainer won with a first-time starter running long just last month; the Malibu Moon filly's maiden dam is a sibling to three G3 winners.