

Date: November 26th, 2020**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Papale (1st race)****First Race****1. Papale****2. Today Matters****3. Red Hot Cat**

Happy Thanksgiving, first post 11 a.m. **PAPALE** drops from special-weight maiden races on turf, into a maiden-40 on the main track. The gelding has worked well recently on dirt at Santa Anita; trainer Mark Glatt won with 7 of his last 14 MSW-to-MCL droppers. Second-time starter **TODAY MATTERS** is likely to improve, also dropping in class. He ran first out like a horse that will benefit adding blinkers. He was completely void of speed, floated wide early, tucked in, then went evenly through the lane. Not bad, not good, just an okay debut. Easier spot here, and **MATTERS** also has worked well on dirt. **RED HOT CAT** sprinted twice against California-bred company, and did not get close. But he might appreciate the slower tempo of this mile race, and his trainer's five-year win rate with stretch-out maidens on the main track is 23 percent (10- for 44). Bottom line: the top choice looks tough.

Second Race**1. One Fast Bro****2. Burnin Turf****3. Cool Your Jets**

Lots of ways to go in this Cal-bred maiden turf mile. **ONE FAST BRO** gets the call based on his last-out third in a similar race on this course. He pressed the solid pace, shook away in the lane, then got collared by rivals that rallied from fourth and sixth. Rock-solid effort off just a single sprint comeback. This is the third start of his campaign, blinkers off, he can make the lead or press the pace outside. **BURNIN TURF** ran super in his only start, third by two lengths in a similar statebred maiden route. However, that race was in March. Gelded since, he appears to have trained well, and he showed first out he runs well. Comebackers from this stable typically race their way into condition rather than fire first start back, but as well as **TURF** ran in his debut, that might be less relevant. **COOL YOUR JETS**, stablemate of the top choice, finished in front of his mate last out while racing for the first time in nearly a year. Solid comeback by the 5yo gelding. He figures as a contender if one can overlook he is a 13-start maiden. N. K. **ROCKET MAN** stretches out off a decent third in a sprint. He helps keep the pace honest.

Third Race**1. Julius****2. Lionite****3. Leading Score**

In a deep field of \$40k claiming sprinters, DMR horse-for-course **JULIUS** gets the call. He is 3-for-5 over this surface, and returning to the claiming ranks after being run into the ground against tougher allowance company two starts in Kentucky. Come and catch him. If the top choice falters, then late-runner **LIONITE** might be along in time. His third last out was possibly better than it looks. The winner led gate to wire, **LIONITE** closed from near the back to miss by only a length and a half. First start off the claim, up one class level, look for him late. **LEADING SCORE** returns from a one-year layoff, first time in a claiming race. All three of his career wins were first start back from a layoff, including a win on this track in summer 2019 when he was returning from a 20-month layoff. Pace-presser **HORSE GREEDY** should get a good trip just off the top choice, while comebacker **ROYAL TRUMP** will be rolling late.

Fourth Race**1. Avenue de France****2. Applecross****3. Dolce**

AVENUE DE FRANCE ran the best race of her U.S. career last out, uncorking a :22.23 final quarter and missing by less than a length in a race dominated by two front-runners. The winner led gate to wire, the runner-up was positioned third. **FRANCE** has been a work in progress since arriving from France, but she is gradually improving and the one to beat in this N1X turf route for 3yo fillies. Comeback dropper **APPLECROSS** is racing in an allowance race for the first time since her career debut in England in spring 2019. She has faced top company most every start, her sixth in the G2 San Clemente here in July puts her squarely in the hunt. She is trained by Richard Baltas, who also entered stretch-out sprinter **DOLCE**. The latter goes long off a solid runner-up allowance sprint, she is quick enough to set or press the pace. However, she will have company up front in the form of stretch-out **WOKE UP TO ACES**.

Fifth Race**1. Most Sandisfactory****2. Western Smoke****3. Street Behavior**

MOST SANDISFACTORY is an 11-start maiden, but he ran fast enough to win both previous starts at this maiden-20 level, third at Santa Anita and second in summer at Del Mar. He has tactical speed and the top figures. Seems obvious. **WESTERN SMOKE** drops from MSW to rock bottom while returning from three-month layoff as a first-time gelding. His midpack finish in a MSW on turf here in summer suggests he could give the top choice a fight. **STREET BEHAVIOR** has improved each successive start since stretching to two turns. His runner-up finish last out was flattered when the winner returned to finish second in a relatively fast race against winners. **MONGOL ALTAI** adds blinkers second start back. Longshot to hit the board, perhaps?

Sixth Race

1. Never Be Enough

2. Orglandes

3. Quick

Although **NEVER BE ENOUGH** faces much tougher in this G3 marathon than she defeated in a restricted stakes race opening weekend, the consistent mare might be the one to beat. She won her last three starts at one mile, but she can run all day. She won over hurdles at two miles in Europe; when she finished fourth at this 11-furlong distance on this course in summer, her loss was partly due to a premature move. Sharp mare gets another class test seeking her fourth straight. **ORGLANDES** was supplemented to this after a solid N2X win at Belmont Park last out. Not sure who she had behind her (runner-up returned to finish fifth), but it was only her second start in the U.S. She was a proven stayer as a 3yo in Europe and likely to continue her upward pattern. **QUICK** ran well last out finishing second in a N2X. She rallied from last, and missed by only a length behind a front-running winner. During the summer meet here, she missed by a neck in a similar turf marathon. Look for her late. **BLAME DEBBIE** wired a G3 going a mile and a half last out at Keeneland, which makes her an obvious contender on the front end.

Seventh Race

1. Octopus

2. Smileforme

3. Big Barrel

OCTOPUS, who finished second both starts at this N3L claiming level before being overmatched last out, returns to his proper level and figures for a good trip pressing the pace from the outside post. Both career wins were on the DMR dirt. **SMILEFORME** drops from allowance races in Northern California while making his first start since moving to the Jonathan Wong stable. The class-drop gelding has run figures plenty fast enough for this class level. The presence of Flavien Prat insures positive intent. Wong and Prat have teamed seven times; two wins, in the money all seven. **BIG BARREL** finished seven lengths behind the top choice when they met in October, but the effort by 'BARREL was better than it appears because he lost considerable ground and was making his first start in nearly seven months. **DORITA'S LEMON**, a filly facing boys, goes first start off the claim by an excellent f.o.c. trainer.

Eighth Race

1. Bench Judge

2. Bud Knight

3. Turn the Switch

Based on his solid runner-up finish vs. slightly easier last out, **BENCH JUDGE** gets the call to win this starter allowance first start off the claim by Peter Miller. 'JUDGE stumbled at the break, set the pace, shook off his pace rivals, and got worn down late. The 1-3-4 finishers rallied from the back, 'JUDGE was the only front-runner to stick around. He ran well on the Del Mar course in summer, and figures as the one to beat with a front-running/pace-pressing trip. **BUD KNIGHT** will be rolling late. Runner-up last out vs. Cal-breds at a mile and one-quarter, he ran arguably the best race of his career on this turf course, at this class level, in summer. **TURN THE SWITCH** was completely eliminated at the break last out when he steadied, got shuffled and lost position. Under the circumstances, his third-place finish was actually very good. Up in class first off the claim, he fits with a pressing trip.