

**Date:** August 5th, 2021**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Algeria (8th race)****First Race****1. Paige Runner****2. Smiling Ann****3. Sherilinda**

Despite uncertain current form, **PAIGE RUNNER** merits horse-to-beat status in this low-level claiming route. Off two months in spring, she pressed and faded to finish last in her comeback. But now she drops from \$25k claiming starter to \$8k claiming, her late-2020/early-2021 form was outstanding, she could wake up returning to the Del Mar surface on which she won by open lengths in fall. **SMILING ANN**, an 11-win veteran, is rounding into form, third start following a one-year layoff. It also is her second start off the claim by trainer Bill McLean, who is 8-for-25 (32 pct) second off the claim the past four years. If she returns to her 2020 form. **SMILING ANN** will give the top choice all she can handle. **SHERILINDA** pulled up last out after early trouble, but returned with a regular work pattern and drops to the bottom claiming level.

**Second Race****1. Respect the Hustle****2. Tom's Surprise****3. Mountain Spirit**

**RESPECT THE HUSTLE** faces a formidable rival in stakes-placed **TOM'S SURPRISE**, but the turf-route form of 'HUSTLE gives him the edge. He scored two sharp turf-route wins in spring, he ran okay last out on dirt at a slightly higher level than this \$16k claiming starter, and his versatile style allows him to adapt to the course profile. Closers have dominated turf routes at all rail-setting configurations this meet; the rails move to 24 feet this week. Early double for McClean? **TOM'S SUPRISE** ran super last out, runner-up in a \$100k Cal-bred dirt stakes while running long for the first time. Question is, can he also run long on turf? Legit contender if yes. **MOUNTAIN SPIRIT** is proven long on turf; his allowance form last year puts him in the picture with the top pair. He is eligible to this claiming starter because he ran for a \$16k tag last out (dead-heat win).

**Third Race****1. Flipping Fast****2. Angel of Freedom****3. Park Avenue**

With two sprints under her belt, **FLIPPING FAST** is ready to stretch out and win this maiden route. Respectable third both starts, she is sired by route stallion Pioneer of the Nile and produced by a route mare. The first three weeks of the summer meet began slow for her productive stable, that is likely to change. **ANGEL OF FREEDOM** ran better than looks in her first route last out. She stumbled at the start, was hard-held and keen, then went one-paced to finish third. The winner Fi Fi Pharoah returned to win a Cal-brad stakes race. With improving form and a route under her belt, 'FREEDOM enters as a legit contender. **PARK AVENUE** sprinted twice last year as a 2yo with little fanfare, but could be an improved filly this year. First start since September, first at two turns with a pedigree to support the distance, and first-time Lasix. Her trainer-jockey combo is 8-for-16 the past six months.

**Fourth Race****1. T Bones Trick****2. House Limit****3. Studly Perfection**

**T BONES TRICK**, runner-up in a "live" \$16k claiming route last out, is obvious returning to the \$8k level he was claimed from two back. He defeated two next-out winners that race; his runner-up finish last out was flattered when winner Red Valor returned to win a \$20k claiming route opening weekend. 'TRICK can win from off the pace. **HOUSE LIMIT** drops again, all the way to the \$8k claiming bottom. He may have lost a step since last year, but could wake up on the drop. Historically productive DMR stable 0-for-29 this meet, that is sure to change soon. Front-runner **STUDLY PERFECTION** returns to the claim level of his most recent win, and is likely to attempt a theft from the inside post. Two of the three dirt miles last week were won by the pacesetter. **JAN'S RESERVE** crushed similar by seven lengths last out at Los Alamitos. However, he did not hit the board four previous starts at DMR.

**Fifth Race****1. Consider Me Gone****2. Mamma Rama****3. Naughty Evelyn**

This maiden-20 route for fillies and mares is a complete scramble. None of the entrants can be trusted including top choice **CONSIDER ME GONE**, runner-up last out in a slow race that was her first route and first at the bottom level. She benefits by a five-pound apprentice

allowance, and might be best of a weak lot. **MAMMA RAMA** stretches out for the first time his year after an okay runner-up sprint that was her best race. She might be improving; she is bred to run long. **NAUGHTY EVELYN** shows up at rock bottom for her comeback. Her year-old turf form against better makes her a contender first start back against a modest field. **BOSSY SOUL** missed by a length last out in her first route, first at this level. **PATRIOT MISSILE** drops to maiden-claiming and stretches out in her first try since changing trainers. This race is perplexing.

#### Sixth Race

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##### 1. Keep Dancing

##### 2. Nice Ice

##### 3. Pawnee

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Late-runners have dominated turf miles this summer; the profile benefits **KEEP DANCING**. Her four grass routes this year produced two wins and two seconds; she missed by only a head last out behind a mare who was winning for third time in her last four starts. Outside post not a deal-breaker for **KEEP DANCING**, who can tuck in early, rally wide, and mow them down. **NICE ICE** is a Del Mar turf horse-for-course: six starts produced two wins and two seconds. This is her first in four months, she fires fresh. Perhaps the main challenge is the course profile. **NICE ICE** is a front-runner, but only one of 22 turf miles this summer was won on the front end; more than half of all turf miles were won from the back half of the field. Honest mare **NICE ICE** otherwise enters as a legit contender. **PAWNEE** disappointed with a wide trip running long on dirt, but previous routes (dirt) make her a contender. She ran okay her only previous start on turf. This is the only scheduled Thursday mount for Mike Smith.

#### Seventh Race

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##### 1. Carmen Miranda

##### 2. It's Simple

##### 3. At the Spa

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**CARMEN MIRANDA** can upset this Cal-bred 2yof stake. She won her debut despite racing somewhat greenly, the filly she beat (Zuboshi) returned to win by more than six lengths. 'MIRANDA worked well since raced including a fast half-mile on the DMR track last weekend. Expect a big step forward second out; her 54 debut Beyer is not a concern. Four of the last seven winners of this stakes race earned 56 or less their previous start. **IT'S SIMPLE** dominated maidens two months ago; the race was validated when the runner-up and sixth-place finishers (both entered this race) returned to win. **IT'S SIMPLE** is cross-entered in the G2 Sorrento Stakes on Friday, same as two-for-two stakes winner **AT THE SPA**. The latter crushed maidens by seven, then scored a decisive stakes win second out. She is technically dropping in class from open company to state-bred. She drew a tough inside post this race, she is favorably drawn outside for the Sorrento against better company. **MADIHA**, fourth in her maiden debut, merits a longshot look second out for a stable whose second-start 2yos usually improve.

#### Eighth Race

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##### 1. Algeria

##### 2. My Indy

##### 3. Cant Stop This Man

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**ALGERIA** enters this maiden-50 turf mile as the most probable winner on the card based on his sub- 24-second closing fraction last out in which he missed by a neck while finishing more than three lengths clear of third. His closing style matches the course profile. **MY INDY**, a 12-start maiden, will rally late while returning to his preferred footing, which seems to be turf. A longshot contender is **CANT STOP THIS MAN**, stretching to a route and switching to turf after a pair of thirds in maiden-claiming dirt sprints. He is sired by Can the Man, whose progeny have compiled a 21-percent win rate long on turf. Potential pacesetter faces a challenging course profile, yet worth a look.