

**Date:** August 22nd, 2021

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: Gregorian Chant (8th race)**

**First Race**

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**1. Satchel de Ritches**

**2. Dark Hedges**

**3. Reedley**

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**SACHEL DE RITCHES** might be compromised by the rail draw in \$10k claiming sprint, but maybe Flavien Prat can coax the veteran to tuck just off the speed. 'RITCHES was claimed for \$12.5k after dueling and tiring, drops off the claim for new trainer Peter Miller, and has run okay rallying from behind. Best horse if he fires from the inside. **DARK HEDGES** and **REEDLEY** are speedsters who could get in each other's way. **DARK HEDGES** ran smack against the grain of an anti-inside bias last out for a \$20k tag. He dueled from the rail, led to midstretch, tired and finished fifth. Not bad, actually. He was claimed, the claim was voided when he did not pass post-race inspection, and now his claim price is cut in half. He will be under pressure from **REEDLEY**, who drew outside where he can apply pressure. He bombed last out, but the post change is significant. The top three are speed; the race could fall apart in favor of late-runner **STAY HAPPY**.

**Second Race**

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**1. Viazar**

**2. Frazzled**

**3. Lookin So Lucky**

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Five of the six entrants in this starter allowance turf route exit the same race. **VIAZAR** finished second in the race after uncorking a :23.31 final quarter-mile. She is the obvious choice second start back from a long layoff. The filly that finished behind her in third (Deise Delight) returned Thursday to finish second with a troubled trip. Umberto Rispoli takes over on **VIAZAR**, who should be tough. **FRAZZLED** is the only entrant coming out of a different race. A 3yo facing older, she was compromised by a bad start last time, yet rallied to finish an okay fourth. Del Mar is her favorite turf course (maiden winner last summer), she picks up the meet's leading rider. **LOOKIN SO LUCKY** pressed the pace to deep stretch last time and got swallowed while racing for the first time in more than six months. She may improve second start back.

**Third Race**

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**1. California Kook**

**2. Samurai Charm**

**3. Fi Fi Pharoah**

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Stablemates **CALIFORNIA KOOK** and **SAMURAI CHARM**, up in class off decisive victories for Miller, get top billing in this N1X dirt route. 'KOOK has a touch of "class," runner-up last summer in the G1 Del Mar Oaks, and she proved last out she can handle dirt when she dusted Cal-breds from off the pace. No reason she cannot win right back, unless barnmate **SAMURAI CHARM** speeds to another front-running win. 'CHARM stretched out last time and won a fast starter allowance by more than nine lengths. Sharp filly on her way up the ladder, although the filly drawn to her inside might keep her company early. **FI FI PHAROAH** is back doing what she does best, which is run two turns. **GINJA** is the aforementioned pace rival for 'CHARM.

**Fourth Race**

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**1. Erebus**

**2. Sippin N Kissin**

**3. Gold Rush Candy**

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He will not be 45-1 again this time, but **EREBUS** is the right choice after a runner-up effort second start since being gelded. He made the lead between calls in the stretch, got collared late, and finished more than two lengths clear of third. Inside post no bargain, but he does have some speed and definitely is on the improve. **EREBUS** is by hot California stallion Stay Thirsty and trained by Walther Solis, who also starts Stay Thirsty-sired longshot contender **SIPPIN N KISSIN**. The latter had trouble all three starts, and finally gets a new rider and an outside post. He might be a better maiden than his first three starts look. Of course, that comment may also apply to **GOLD RUSH CANDY**, who was odds-on first out, but unable to make the lead and finished a disappointing fifth. He reportedly has more speed than he showed. Improvement quite likely. **STAN THE HOT MAN** finished a creditable second in his debut on synthetic at Golden Gate, six lengths clear of third. 'MAN is the high-figure starter in the field and an obvious contender.

**Fifth Race**

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**1. Racetrackers**

**2. Man On the Moon**

**3. Mount Pelliar**

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**RACETRACKERS** drops to the bottom class level for winners (\$16k claiming N2L), and if he handles the switch from turf to dirt, he should handle this modest cast. His only dirt start was a third-place debut in January 2020, so the footing should be okay. **MAN ON THE MOON** was caught wide throughout and misfired as the favorite in a claiming race for 3yos. Probably a toss-out race. His one-turn miles in Kentucky were respectable, and make him a contender at this low level. He broke his maiden running long in Louisiana. **MOUNT PELLIAR** exits the same race; his races in spring at Santa Anita put him in the hunt. Not much of a race actually, and pacesetting duties are up for grabs.

**Sixth Race**

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**1. Witch Moon**

**2. Quinevere**

**3. Pop Pop's Dream**

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First since August, eight-start maiden **WITCH MOON** drops in for a claim tag for the first time, with the field's top speed figures and proven form against better than she meets in this maiden-50. She figures to fire first start back. **QUINEVERE** finished second at this level three weeks ago, with a :23.69 final quarter-mile that is solid for this class. **POP POP'S DREAM** was given a test drive in her career debut, finishing sixth vs. special-weight maidens in a turf

mile. Class drop second out, and though she lost by more than five lengths she ran her final quarter in :23.50. **BADGER KITTEN**, stablemate of the top choice, makes her California debut after showing ability this spring in Florida and Delaware. Like her barnmate, 'KITTEN is first-time claim tag.

#### Seventh Race

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##### 1. **Scream and Shout**

##### 2. **Kind But She Lies**

##### 3. **Miracle of Hope**

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**SCREAM AND SHOUT** shows up at rock bottom for her first start in nearly a year. She has enough speed to establish position from the inside post. **KIND BUT SHE LIES** ran the best race of her career last out, runner-up at this level in her first try over the DMR surface. She finished more than three lengths clear of third and should bang out a maiden-claiming win soon. Also-eligible **MIRACLE OF HOPE** drops in class and fits if she handles dirt. Her first four starts, against better company, were all on turf. **WHISKEY BLUE** adds blinkers for her second start, while **MONGOLIAN PANTHER** is another who drops in class for her comeback.

#### Eighth Race

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##### 1. **Gregorian Chant**

##### 2. **Lieutenant Dan**

##### 3. **Collusion Illusion**

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**GREGORIAN CHANT** is on his way to becoming an elite turf sprinter, but his development hit a snag last out due to curious strategy. He was inexplicably asked for speed in a G2 at Belmont Park, pressed the pace, and gave way. Odd tactics, because three previous starts he rallied from off the pace to win fast turf sprints at Santa Anita. A bona fide closing sprinter, he is reunited with jockey Juan Hernandez, who rode him four previous wins. He can sit, wait and blast home to win this Grade 3. Five furlongs is short, but turf sprints recently played fair to all styles including deep closers. **LIEUTENANT DAN** scored a convincing comeback win one month ago, gate to wire in a quick :56.42. 'DAN is probably best of the speed, and also versatile. If a rival insists on setting the pace, he can sit just off. A multiple Cal-bred stakes winner, he fits with open company. **COLLUSION ILLUSION** scratched from the G1 Big Crosby with a minor hiccup. He won the Big Crosby (dirt) last year, but sired by Twirling Candy he may appreciate turf. Arguably the "class" of the field, he will be running late in a field with speed to flatter his kick. Stakes winner **GIVE ME THE LUTE** is fast, proven over the DMR turf, and runs fresh. This is his first start since a fast-pace stakes win in early June.

#### Ninth Race

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##### 1. **Azul Coast**

##### 2. **Bold Endeavor**

##### 3. **Zestful**

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**AZUL COAST** ran well in his comeback, rallying wide before losing his punch and finishing third while starting for the first time in 10 months. He earned a career-best figure while making his 4yo debut, and obviously has improved as an older horse. Lightly raced with just seven starts, solid works since his comeback, he can follow through on his rally this time while running back at the same N2X dirt route level. **BOLD ENDEAVOR**, beaten favorite five straight, went too quick on the lead both recent starts. He might be more effective from off the pace, and with front-running stablemate **ZESTFUL** breaking from the rail, 'ENDEAVOR might get the chance for his preferred pressing trip. **ZESTFUL** is speed, along with **ORDER AND LAW** and **TAISHAN**. The race sets up for the **AZUL COAST**.

#### Tenth Race

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##### 1. **Finnley's Kitten**

##### 2. **Unusual Ride**

##### 3. **Chao Mar**

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Tough outside post (12 of 12) for **FINNLEY'S KITTEN** in this turf mile, but her fourth-place debut stamps her the one to beat in this maiden turf mile. A Cal-bred by Kitten's Joy making her debut around two turns, she was shuffled back on the far turn, angled out for the drive, finished well and galloped out well. Despite the challenging outside post this time, 'KITTEN gets the nod second out. **UNUSUAL RIDE** removes blinkers and tries a rider switch after losing her punch in a similar Cal-bred maiden race that was her first route. No excuses, but probably worth another chance unless it turns out she is best as a sprinter. The best of her three starts was a neck loss going six and a half in her debut. **CHAO MAR** closed ground all three starts in sprints at SA. One mile should be within reach.