

Date: August 5th, 2022**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Kid Azteca (1st race)****First Race****1. Kid Azteca****2. Packs a Wahlop****3. Ah Jeez**

First post Friday 4 p.m. **KID AZTECA** can wire the field as most probable winner on the twilight card. He chased blazingly fast subsequent stakes winner Sharp Aza Tack first time out, and last out raced wide and misfired in a dirt stake at Pleasanton. He drops back in to face maidens, returns to turf, adds blinkers and is the speed of the field. **PACKS A WAHLOP** was a well-bet disappointment first out at Gulfstream Park, but that was run over "sloppy" dirt on which he was visibly uncomfortable. Back in California, he moves to grass with a pedigree fine for the surface. Sired by Creative Cause, the 5-for-11 dam of 'WAHLOP won her only turf start by leading gate to wire. Second time out, expect 'WAHLOP to improve. First-time starter **AH JEEZ** worked fast at San Luis Rey and posted a three-furlong Del Mar dirt blowout Sunday. 'JEEZ is by Mendelssohn (progeny 2-for-16 first out per Formulator) and produced by a dam that won her career debut as a 2yo at Del Mar in summer 2017.

Second Race**1. Alleva****2. Cajun Treasure****3. Win With Pride**

Last-out winner at Los Alamitos, **ALLEVA** merits horse-to-beat status in this \$8k claiming sprint. The veteran defeated nine-time winner Facts Matter last out and was claimed by Jonathan Wong. Realistically placed for an \$8k tag, he adds blinkers and should be forwardly placed in a field without a ton of speed. **CAJUN TREASURE** shortens from a route to a sprint after showing speed and tiring eight days ago. The gelding will be ridden by five-pound apprentice Chel-c Bailey and might prefer this shorter distance. **WIN WITH PRIDE** is a 13-win veteran in from the Midwest. The 8yo gelding has been facing good starter allowance company in the Midwest and is dropping in class. Look for him late. **GRAY MAGICIAN** goes route to sprint and drops to the bottom open claiming level for the first time. 'MAGICIAN finished second in the Group 2 UAE Derby in 2019, finished last in the Kentucky Derby, and won the Ellis Park Derby that summer.

Third Race**1. Give Me the Lute****2. Air Force Red****3. Whatmakessammyrun**

Front-runner **GIVE ME THE LUTE** gets the call to lead gate to wire in this salty turf sprint allowance. The speedster won a stake at Golden Gate last out, he finished second in a G3 at DMR last summer. The speed of the speed, his last five turf sprints at this five-furlong trip produced four wins and a second. Come catch him. **AIR FORCE RED** won his last three turf sprints, and though he has speed, he probably will sit right behind the pace. His last-out N2X win was validated when runner-up Irideo returned to win the Wickerr Stakes here on opening weekend. **WHATMAKESSAMMYRUN** will rally late. A stakes winner against 3yos last year, he faced good company recent starts in New York and is listed as a first-time gelding. **HOT BOX** appears to be the main pace rival for the top choice. If he breaks running from the rail, he will keep the fractions honest.

Fourth Race**1. Tiger Spice****2. Miss Baylee****3. Tequila Sunset**

The experienced runners in this Cal-bred maiden-50 are only okay. it is a good spot for a first-time starter such as **TIGER SPICE**. Although trainer Andy Mathis typically races maidens into shape rather than fire first out, 'SPICE might be the exception. Sired by Smiling Tiger (average debut stats), she was produced by a dam that won her career debut and whose first three runners include a debut winner and two debut runners-up. Bullet gate work at Pleasanton before shipping to DMR suggests she is well-meant. **MISS BAYLEE** is fast, probably the speed of the field shortening from six furlongs to five and a half after a runner-up finish in which she was four lengths clear of third. She might be the one to catch. San Luis Rey Downs-based firster **TEQUILA SUNSET** appears to have worked well, though progeny of her sire do not typically win first out. **TEQUILA TIGRE** finished second in back-to-back Cal-bred maiden-50s at Santa Anita and LRC.

Fifth Race**1. Dancing Crane****2. Miss Carousel****3. Equilove**

DANCING CRANE returns to preferred turf footing as tepid choice in this \$32k claiming turf sprint. She misfired on dirt last out, but two previous turf sprints (runner-up and win) are fast enough for these. The likely pacesetter can be gone. DMR turf horse-for-course **MISS CAROUSEL** raced evenly and finished a length and a half behind the top choice last out at Santa Anita while making her first start in more than four months. Now she returns to the turf-sprint course on which she won 3 of her last 4. 'CAROUSEL will roll late. **EQUILOVE** appears to have tailed off, though she has excuses for both recent starts. Two starts back she stumbled at the break and was unable to catch the two pacesetters; last out she raced on dirt though her preferred footing is grass. Back on turf, she has enough speed to be forwardly placed outside the top choice. **INVINCIBELLA** will be rolling late. Her most recent win was a turf sprint on this course last summer.

Sixth Race

1. Slow Down Andy

2. Big City Lights

3. Smuggler's Run

SLOW DOWN ANDY gets the call over speedster **BIG CITY LIGHTS** in this sprint stake for Cal-bred 3yos, a field with seven stakes winners. **SLOW DOWN ANDY** is the most accomplished, G2 winner last winter, G3 winner this spring, and recent runner-up in the Los Alamitos Derby that was his comeback. 'ANDY drops into a state-bred stake and shortens to seven furlongs with a current-racing edge over the field's fastest horse. **BIG CITY LIGHTS** dazzled both starts as a juvenile, highly rated maiden and stake wins before being sidelined with a knee chip. He returns for new trainer Richard Mandella, with solid works, in a race he targeted for several weeks. Seven furlongs is a challenge, but he is drawn outside in the clear. Fast colt a legit threat up front while making his first start in more than a year. **SMUGGLER'S RUN**, stakes winner vs. Cal-bred 3yos in spring, is back doing what he does best, which is sprint vs. Cal-breds. His third last out racing nine furlongs was okay, one turn is his game. Fast recent works, he could tuck into a cozy trip right behind the speed. Two-time stakes **STRAIGHT UP G** makes his first start since spring; **CREATIVE PEAK** is quick, and could keep **BIG CITY LIGHTS** company early.

Seventh Race

1. Kingmax

2. Avenue

3. Flintmore

European import **KINGMAX**, 3yo facing older, can win this N1X turf marathon. His overseas form includes a Group 3 third at a mile and a quarter, he reportedly shipped well and is expected to fire first start in the U.S. This is an important race for the colt. If he runs well, a graded stake against 3yos could be next. **AVENUE** has improved each start including a close third last out in a G3 at a mile and three-quarters. He shortens to a mile and three-eighths and will rally from behind. Last-out maiden winner **FLINTMORE** figures to be forwardly placed in a race likely to unfold at a tepid clip. His trainer-jockey combo leads the meet. Phil D'Amato and Umberto Rispoli entered the week 5-for-12. D'Amato also starts **RIJEKA**, who won a N2X turf marathon here last summer. He is entered in this N1X for the optional \$40k claim tag.

Eighth Race

1. Famous Star

2. One More Bid

3. American Refugee

FAMOUS STAR removes blinkers after he set an insane pace and folded to fourth last out. He smoked :21.22 and :43.31 before hitting a wall. But both previous dirt sprints without blinkers were solid in-the-money finishes. He removes blinkers, drew outside where he can ration his speed, and picks up meet-leading rider Juan Hernandez. **ONE MORE BID** returns to dirt with a series of fast recent works including a :58.80 bullet at Del Mar two weeks ago. Easy half since, contender based on his debut fourth to Taiba and runner-up at a mile in March. **AMERICAN REFUGEE**, gelded sibling to G1 winners Hoppertunity and Executiveprivilege, makes his career debut. He is trained by Bob Baffert, who also entered comebacker **ENCODE** and second-time starter **WESTERN CAPE**.