

Date: August 27th, 2022

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Speaker's Corner (9th race)

First Race

1. Wall Street Trader

2. Holiday Arousal

3. Monologue

A repeat of the 14-length maiden-claiming win two starts back by **WALL STREET TRADER** would win this N2L \$16k claiming route. 'TRADER was overmatched last out in a starter allowance sprint, his runaway route win is fast enough. He projects for a pressing trip in the clear, or setting the pace outright. **HOLIDAY AROUSAL**, two-for-two in routes, arrives from Northern California, where he defeated a good claiming rival by a head last out at Santa Rosa (Mashhad Flats has 3 wins and 4 seconds from 10 starts). 'AROUSAL defeated that rival by a head in his first start against winners, and fits perfect in this spot. **MONOLOGUE** is another claim-and-drop starter from a stable that started many claim-and-drop runners this summer and won 2 of 17 (through Sunday). The last-out Kentucky win by **MONOLOGUE** earned the same fig the top choice did in his maiden win.

Second Race

1. King Zog

2. The Big Cheeseola

3. Start Them Up

The runner-up debut by **KING ZOG** suggests he will not be a maiden for long. He lost ground into and through the turn, shook off his pace rival, fought back in the lane, lost by a head and finished more than three clear of third. If he runs two alike, he can win this Cal-bred maiden-50 for 2yos. **THE BIG CHEESEOLA** finished last after being asked a lot in his debut: two turns, turf and special-weight Cal-bred maidens. Now he drops in for a \$50k tag, shortens to a sprint, and switches to the dirt track on which he trains. Improvement likely. First-time starter **START THEM UP** makes his debut for a trainer Dean Pederson, who has won with 7 of his last 14 starters. With debut runners the past three years, he is 4-for-19. Juvenile progeny of Upstart have won 19 percent first out; the gelding is a sibling to Cal-bred allowance winner A Melis.

Third Race

1. Emerald Lake

2. Sky On Ice

3. Callhercontessa

EMERALD LAKE faces six rivals in this Cal-bred turf route, she finished in front of four of those last out when second in a similar race. That was her first start in more than four months, and she broke from a tough post (11 of 12). Now she has a comeback under her belt, and this time is drawn inside. Logical choice. **SKY ON ICE** finished faster than the top choice last time (final quarter :24.31 vs. :24.63), but 'ICE had too much to make up and finished fourth. She can be positioned closer to the front than last time. Although she did not hit the board in four starts over the Del Mar turf, her good effort last out suggests that is not a major concern. **CALLHERCONTESSA** wired maidens at 27-1, and though she is unlikely to get the same easy trip as last time when she set slow fractions, she is lightly raced (two starts) with a right to continue her improving pattern. **YOUTE** went too fast setting the pace last time, and tired to fifth. Front-end contender if she rations her speed more efficiently.

Fourth Race

1. Stanford Man

2. Geezer

3. Montana

This Cal-bred maiden-50 is a split of the second race, and a good spot for **STANFORD MAN** to make amends after a disappointing last-place debut. He showed speed in works prior to his start, but was passively ridden, raced behind traffic and lost interest. He was gelded since, runs back at the same level, and is believed to have more zip than he showed. If he breaks running from the rail, he could spring a mild upset. First-time starter **GEEZER** is the fifth foal from a speedy dam whose first four runners are winners including debut winner Princess Alexis. Works look okay, trainer Hector Palma's five-year win rate with maiden-claiming firsters is 18 percent (8-for-52) including several high-odds winners (\$23, \$71, \$37.40, \$34, \$27). **MONTANA** drops in class second time out. First-time starter **BUFFALO RUN** is a sibling to debut winner Kristi's Tiger and debut runner-up Sugaratsundown. Juvenile progeny by Danzing Candy have won 21 percent first time out.

Fifth Race

1. Warren's Queen Bee

2. Back On the Street

3. For Love Not Money

WARREN'S QUEEN BEE faced better than these last time and ran okay finishing sixth in the big field. She drops from starter allowance to \$25k claiming N2L, her Cal-bred maiden-50 win two back might be good enough. **BACK ON THE STREET** moves up slightly in class after a respectable runner-up finish in a \$16k claiming N2L. 'STREET seems to have improved since changing trainers two back. **FOR LOVE NOT MONEY** shortens back to her preferred one-turn trip and also returns to preferred footing, which is dirt. **DARLING DONNA** might be ranked too low by this handicapper; her 75-Beyer maiden-claiming romp last time out over this racetrack is the fastest by any of these. **DONNA** has speed, so does her rail-drawn stablemate **MACHTENHAIRONFIRE**.

Sixth Race

1. Queen's Code

2. Dadstar

3. Always Litt

QUEEN'S CODE drops in for a claim tag for the first time, returns to a sprint and gets a rider switch to Joe Bravo. The gelding's runner-up turf sprints in May and June would be tough to beat if reproduced on the main track. 'CODE appears to have trained well over the DMR dirt track on which he will run. **DADSTAR** returns from a nine-month layoff with a solid work pattern, adding Lasix, and getting a seven-pound apprentice allowance. **DADSTAR** had speed last year as a 2yo, and is expected to show it first start back under the apprentice rider. Trainer Mike Puype won with 4 of his last 7 maiden-claiming comebacks off six months or more. **ALWAYS LITT** got bogged in traffic last out and missed by only a length at this level. His 66 Beyer is the highest dirt figure in the field.

Seventh Race

1. Woodbine Way

2. Lexington Humor

3. Baby Steps

Runner-up at this N1X turf-sprint level last out, **WOODBINE WAY** breaks from a more comfortable post position, moving from the rail to post 8. She has speed, but runs best from slightly off the pace. That is the trip she figures for. Lightly raced **LEXINGTON HUMOR** missed by only a length at this level last out, albeit on dirt. Not sure if she is as effective on turf. Her turf start was not as fast as her dirt starts. Second preference nonetheless. **BABY STEPS** is speed with a speed rider. She finished third last out in the race the top choice finished second in, but one could argue **BABY STEPS** ran as well as the runner-up because she set the pace to deep stretch. **SHE'S A PERFECTLADY** returns from a five-month layoff with a three-race win streak and proven ability to fire fresh.

Eighth Race

1. Kid Corleone

2. Letsgetlucky

3. Apprehend

KID CORLEONE dusted N1X sprinters in his comeback, like a colt that can go up the ladder. He pressed a strong pace and simply ran away with a big fig (98 Beyer). The least experienced in the field, 'CORLEONE has the most upside. If he repeats his comeback, he can be gone. **LETSGETLUCKY** drops to N2X following a pair of in-the-money finishes in graded stakes. Third last out in the G1 Bing Crosby, the consistent sprinter finished in the money all 11 starts and has a versatile style that adapts to any pace scenario. **APPREHEND** reestablished his affinity for the DMR main track with a runner-up finish last out behind graded winner C Z Rocket. **APPREHEND** is a lightly raced 3yo (like the top choice) whose two best races were his only starts over this track. **DESMOND DOSS** and **FASHIONABLY FAST** are multiple stakes winning Cal-breds who might be using this allowance as a prep for a state-bred stake next month at Los Alamitos.

Ninth Race

1. Speaker's Corner

2. Defunded

3. American Theorem

SPEAKER'S CORNER faces easier after finishing behind the country's top older horses (Life Is Good, Flightline) in recent starts. 'CORNER previously won three successive graded stakes; his figures top this field. The challenge for front-runner 'CORNER is to avoid a duel with the horse to his outside. That is **DEFUNDED**, whose seventh last out was excusable considering the Del Mar track bias July 30. The outside lanes were fast, the inside lanes were deep and slow. That is where graded stakes-placed **DEFUNDED** set the pace before he surrendered. Now he moves outside, shortens to a sprint, and will press the favorite to his inside. **AMERICAN THEOREM** benefitted by the outside bias winning the G1 Bing Crosby, his second successive graded win. His previous start was a G2 win at this seven-furlong distance. Bias-flattered or not, 'THEOREM is a good horse who will be rolling late. **LAUREL RIVER** gets tested for class following a highly rated N2X comeback win at one mile. The cutback to seven furlongs is fine. **PRINCIPE CARLO** looms the upset candidate, stretching back to his preferred seven-furlong trip.

Tenth Race

1. Cono

2. Cleopatra's Strike

3. Cane Creek Road

Following a solid fourth-place comeback, **CONO** drops from \$50k claiming to \$32k claiming non-winners this year. He missed by a nose on this course and class level last summer. **CLEOPATRA'S STRIKE** is a 9yo veteran also facing easier. Since his most recent win in

autumn 2019, he has lost 17 races. The last time he ran under similar conditions, restricted claiming in spring 2021, he finished second. **CANE CREEK ROAD** drew the far outside, but is a candidate to set the pace. **BORDER TOWN** rarely wins, but is often close.