Date: September 2nd, 2022   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Leggs Galore (8th race)

First Race

1. Secret Fix	2. M Is for Magic	3. Tiger Spice

Friday first post 3 p.m. The opener is a close call between **SECRET FIX** and **M IS FOR MAGIC**. The call is SECRET FIX, claimed for $40k from a sharp maiden win and working well since. She has speed for a front-running/pace-pressing trip from the outside in her first vs. winners. Her main rival already won at this starter allowance level. M IS FOR MAGIC was a maiden when she scored a decisive win last out at this level, therefore she retains "non-winners of two races" eligibility. 'MAGIC should get a trip similar to her win, positioned fourth behind the speed and rallying wide stretching to six and one-half furlongs from six. **TIGER SPICE** overcame a rocky trip to win her debut more impressively than the figure. A late-runner, she fits with winners. CRIMSON ROSE and DARLING DONNA are speed.

Second Race

1. Funkhouser	2. Controlled Fire	3. Modera

FUNKHOUSER drops to maiden-claiming after chasing quality 2yo fillies in maiden special-weights. First-time tag, speed to set or press, logical choice on the drop. Trainer Doug O'Neill won with 7 of his last 13 juvenile favorites dropping from MSW to MCL. First-time starter **CONTROLLED FIRE** looms the upset candidate. Sired by Straight Fire (21 percent winners debut juveniles), the gray filly hails from a stable that occasionally pops with longshot firsters. **MODERA** debuts with sharp-looking workouts at San Luis Rey Downs. Although juvenile progeny of stallion Lea have won only 4 percent first out, the dam of MODERA produced five winners including a debut winner. The filly's works suggests she is live first time out.

Third Race

1. Carmelita's Man	2. Fly the Sky	3. Win the Day

CARMELITA'S MAN stretches to a mile and three-eighths on turf following a pair of Cal-bred stakes wins at shorter distances. The gelding's running style matches the closers-friendly course profile, trainer Dean Pederson entered the week 5-for-9 this meet. Three turns will be uncharted territory for 'MAN, but he is the "now" horse. **FLY THE SKY** did not have the greatest of trips finishing fifth in the same stake won by the top choice. 'SKY was blocked on the far turn and in the stretch, and missed by only two lengths. He won a mile-and-a-half turf starter allowance two back, so the marathon distance is not an issue. **WIN THE DAY** finished third by two lengths under similar conditions one month ago, while BEE CATCHER set/pressed the pace and finished second in the same race.

Fourth Race

1. Hero Status	2. Palagio	3. Encode

HERO STATUS could have won a similar maiden dirt route last out, except for a bad trip. Stretching out to two turns, he was passively ridden and failed to produce speed, lost position and was shuffled back into the far turn, rallied six-wide and missed by a head to the front-running winner. Good try by 'STATUS, who finished nearly four clear of third. With a better trip under a new rider, he should win at low odds. **PALAGIO** was making his first start in nearly three months when he finished third to the top choice. With that comeback under his belt, and a highly rated runner-up two starts ago to run back to, PALAGIO should at least narrow the gap on the top choice. **ENCODE** is one of three Bob Baffert-trained stretch-outs. ENCODE is bred to run long and has speed. Stablemate AMERICAN REFUGEE, seventh in his sprint debut, is a gelded sibling to G1 winners Hoppertunity and Executiveprivilege. WESTERN CAPE, the final Baffert, finished third both sprints. Sired by Curlin, two turns is fine.

Fifth Race

1. O'Neill's Legacy	2. Empire Pass	3. Youteyourhonor

O'NEILL'S LEGACY scratched from a turf race last weekend to go instead in this dirt sprint for claiming 3yo fillies. She looks like the speed of the field, her trainer Andy Mathis was a strong 7-for-29 into Thursday. 'LEGACY gets the call to wire the field, although six and a half furlongs is a challenge for a filly who has not raced beyond six. **EMPIRE PASS** was claimed form a runner-up finish at this level. She dueled on the lead that race, but can be effective positioned second behind the speed. Depending on the break, that might be the trip she

gets here. **YOUTEYOURHONOR** changed trainers and owners since raced; she benefits by a return to a dirt sprint. Four non-stake dirt sprints produced three wins and a second. KEEPMEINTHEMOMENT moves up from a $25k claiming win. Tough inside post with speed to her outside.

Sixth Race

1. Encroachment	2. Biarritz	3. Grit and Curiosity

Also-eligible **ENCROACHMENT** seeks his third straight since being claimed by trainer Adan Farias. His front-running win over the Del Mar turf last out for $32k claiming was validated when runner-up Inch returned to win. The class drop to $25k claiming is okay for ENCROACHMENT, the speed of the field if he draws in. **BIARRITZ** drops off a claim for $40k, a race in which he finished fourth. The drop is reasonable considering his last start. He could tuck into a cozy trip just off the speed. **GRIT AND CURIOSITY** will rally late, first start since February. He won a claiming turf sprint on this course last summer returning from a layoff, and should fire his best shot first start back. The last five Jeff Mullins trainees ridden by Juan Hernandez produced one win, and four seconds. FENESTRA figures to be forwardly placed.

Seventh Race

1. Thorne House	2. Slam Dunk Sermon	3. Quick Finish

THORNE HOUSE dominated Cal-bred maidens in front-running fashion with a good number last out. The lightly raced gelding can win right back at the Cal-bred allowance level. **SLAM DUNK SERMON** is a 10-for-26 pro claimed from a midpack finish for $32k and dropping in for the optional $20k claim tag against state-breds. It is a big drop; his $25k claiming win two back puts him in the hunt. **QUICK FINISH** broke slowly from the rail and never got going last out. He returns at the same level, drew the inside post again, but fits with a clean takeoff. LOUD MOUTH appears to have tailed off, but he drops in class and returns to a sprint. He is a nine-win veteran facing his easiest chance in some time.

Eighth Race

1. Leggs Galore	2. Connie Swingle	3. Aqua Seaform Shame

Stakes winner **LEGGS GALORE** looks tough in this allowance turf sprint as she drops from a third-place stakes finish. The speed of the field, a two-time turf-sprint winner at Del Mar two summers ago, LEGGS GALORE looms the favorite to win in front-running fashion. She is trained by Phil D'Amato, whose **CONNIE SWINGLE** could drop into a cozy trip positioned second behind her stablemate. 'SWINGLE is two-for-two on turf, she had trouble last out finishing far behind runaway winner Fun to Dream in a Cal-bred stake. If the top choice misfires, 'SWINGLE probably would get first run. **AQUA SEAFORM SHAME** returns from a layoff with a solid work pattern at San Luis Rey Downs, proven ability to fire fresh, and two sprint wins already over the DMR turf. ROYAL ADDRESS finished third to the top choice in a stakes race three months ago. This is her first start since. She figures as a contender, although five furlongs might be a bit sharp.

Ninth Race

1. Squillions	2. Acoustic Shadow	3. Very Scary

SQUILLIONS did everything but win last out, runner-up by a half-length while finishing more than six lengths clear of third in her first start at this maiden-20 level. She raced wide most of the trip, rallied from last early in the race to first on the far turn, then was out-finished late. A repeat of that effort makes her the one to beat. **ACOUSTIC SHADOW** drops to the bottom level for the first time. She is a 12-start maiden, but she finished in the money half her starts while facing better than these. **VERY SCARY** drops from MSW and adds Lasix for her first start as a 3yo.