

Date: September 3rd, 2022

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Hawker (6th race)

First Race

1. Disko Tribute

2. Wearenotbadpeople

3. Quick Intro

First post, 1 p.m. **DISKO TRIBUTE** drops to the bottom level for winners (\$16k claiming N2L) after tiring in a turf route vs. better. His maiden win two back at Los Alamitos would be fast enough for this. **WEARENOTBADPEOPLE** also drops to the bottom, for his first start in six months. Whatever he can do these days, he is likely to do first start back. **QUICK INTRO** raced wide and was disappointing last out splitting the field. But his fifth-place finish two back at a higher level makes him one of the choices. **DIVINE FEMININE** goes route to sprint and drops, while **DRAW THE FOUL** is longshot speed although six and a half furlongs might be a reach.

Second Race

1. Mamba Cool

2. Kings River Knight

3. Mobou

In a competitive Cal-bred allowance turf route, comeback closer **MAMBA COOL** gets the call based mostly on his third at this level nearly three months ago. Solid work tab, proven ability to fire fresh, the challenge is footing. He did not hit the board three previous starts over the Del Mar turf. He has improved since the last time he ran at DMR, however. **KINGS RIVER KNIGHT** took advantage of a soft pace to wire maidens last out while running his final quarter-mile in a solid :23.62. He was not stopping, and it was only his second start and first around two turns. The lightly raced gelding has upside. **MOBOU** dominated this class last time on dirt; he also runs on turf. Sharp gelding in the peak form. **BUD KNIGHT** has run races that put him in the hunt at a price.

Third Race

1. Chedda Cash

2. Cholly

3. Just a Little Luck

The rail is no bargain for **CHEDDA CASH**, but the 2yo filly merits horse-to-beat status dropping from a runner-up finish in a Cal-bred stake to face Cal-bred maidens. Third start of the meet already, but she ran well both earlier starts and acts like this longer six-furlong distance is fine. **CHOLLY** finished only a length and one-quarter behind Chimosa first out, that rival returned to defeat the top choice by more than three. One could argue **CHOLLY** is the most likely winner. She ran well first out. She set/pressed the pace, shook loose in the lane, then got collared. Good effort. That race was late July, she shows just one recorded workout since. Second preference nonetheless. **JUST A LITTLE LUCK**, third in both starts, moves to an outside post, while also-eligible **FUN MONEY** finished second both starts this meet against similar.

Fourth Race

1. Armagnac

2. High Connection

3. Il Bellator

Stablemates **ARMAGNAC** and **HIGH CONNECTION** top this main-track stake for 3yos. **ARMAGNAC** returns to preferred footing and faces easier than he met in the Preakness Stakes and Santa Anita Derby. Back on dirt, speed to make the lead or press from the outside, tepid choice. **HIGH CONNECTION** wired a stakes race at Los Alamitos last out, and meets a similar bunch here. He and the top choice both have speed, either can win. **IL BELLATOR** missed by less than a length while making his first start in more than three months. A stakes winner in spring on synthetic, this is his first start on dirt. **NEWGRANGE** is a graded winner making his first start since February.

Fifth Race

1. Man Among Men

2. Quintecents

3. Kawazaki

A creditable fourth-place debut by **MAN AMONG MEN** sets him up for a maiden win second out in this turf route. 'MEN did not have a good trip first out. He broke slowly, took up and was shuffled on the first turn, then finished willingly and galloped out with run past the wire. Solid debut. **QUINTECENTS** is speed, first start in two months and returning to the surface (turf) on which he earned his best figures. A potential pacesetter and a threat to wire the field, a challenge is carrying his speed over a DMR turf course that was not kind to speed during August. Lightly raced **KAWAZAKI** appears to have trained well at San Luis Rey Downs since his next-to-last U.S. debut. He is better than his first local start suggests.

Sixth Race

1. Hawker

2. Practical Move

3. Don Corleone

A promising runner-up debut by **HAWKER** stamps the 2yo "best bet" on the card. The well-regarded Justify colt raced greenly while climbing in his debut, lost ground wide through the turn, and finished well to miss by only a neck. The race was validated when third place Carmel Road returned to win easily. Now **HAWKER** has a race under his belt, drew outside, and gets a rider switch to Flavien Prat. **PRACTICAL MOVE** earned the second-highest figure by a 2yo this meet (89 Beyer) finishing second to Cave Rock first out. 'MOVE could go favored off the big number. **DON CORLEONE**, a \$1.2 million purchase at a 2yo sale, has been working well for his debut. A similar comment applies to **NATIONAL TREASURE**.

Seventh Race

1. Hong Kong Harry

2. Cathkin Peak

3. Goliad

Trainer Phil D'Amato holds a strong hand in this G2 turf mile with **HONG KONG HARRY** and **CATHKIN PEAK**. They ran two-three last month in a similar spot at a longer distance, both had early trouble. The call is 'HARRY, based on his runner-up last out, G3 win two back and a versatile style that allows him to press/stalk and get the jump on the closers. His early "trouble" last out was less severe than the trouble encountered by stablemate **CATHKIN PEAK**. The latter got banged around, steadied in tight quarters into the first turn, blocked in traffic the far turn, and finished only a half-length behind the top choice. Close call between the D'Amato pair. **GOLIAD** could post a front-running upset if he reproduces his last-out N1X turf mile scorcher. He sped to the lead setting wicked fractions (:44.89 and 1:08.73), and wired the field. Big class hike from N1X to G2, but the one to catch. **ASTRONAUT** is using this mile race to prep for longer; he will be rolling late.

Eighth Race

1. Redline

2. Todo Fino

3. Exaulted

Closing runner-up in a highly rated N1X at six furlongs last out, **REDLINE** gets another furlong in this seven-furlong allowance. **TODO FINO** is a 9-for-14 pro from South America making his U.S. debut for a trainer who has done well with similar. The last three times 'FINO returned from a layoff, he won by open lengths. Local works are sharp. **EXAULTED** is racing into shape, third start back from an extended layoff following a highly rated third last out. **SUNRISE JOURNEY** trounced Cal-breds last out on the front end and probably is the speed of the field.

Ninth Race

1. Cabo Spirit

2. Balnikhov

3. Mackinnon

CABO SPIRIT was a first-time gelding winning the G3 La Jolla last month; he can fire right back in the G2 Del Mar Derby while stretching out and facing tougher. 'SPIRIT relishes Del Mar turf (two wins, one third), he has tactical speed to be forwardly placed and also can finish. He should get the jump over **BALNIKHOV**, who won the Oceanside Stakes opening day and skipped the La Jolla to aim for this. A closer who smoked his final quarter-mile last out in :23.14, he is the best late threat. **MACKINNON** misfired as the Oceanside favorite, finishing fourth while returning from a five-month layoff. Maybe he needed the start, perhaps he can improve at this longer distance of a mile and one-eighth. A stakes winner and third in the BC Juvenile Turf on this course last fall, **MACKINNON** should move up second start back. **SLOW DOWN ANDY**, graded winner and one-two all six starts in California, stretches out and will influence the pace. Stakes winner **WAR AT SEA** skipped the La Jolla; this is his first start in three months.

Tenth Race

1. Flightline

2. Country Grammer

3. Royal Ship

Undefeated **FLIGHTLINE** should be tough to beat in the Pacific Classic, his first route race. He dazzled his first four starts including a pair of Grade 1s, he has learned to ration his speed, and gives every indication in works and races he can stay a mile and one quarter. Long gone, low odds. **COUNTRY GRAMMER** ran well in his comeback, runner-up while racing for the first time since winning the Dubai World Cup four months earlier. 'GRAMMER is likely to improve second start back stretching to a distance at which he won a pair of G1s. **ROYAL SHIP** finished in front of 'GRAMMER last out, scoring a decisive G2 win. He has run well at this longer trip and continues to work well over the Del Mar track. **EXTRA HOPE** merits longshot consideration. His last-out third in a dirt marathon was better than it looks; he was wide on every turn. Although he is in tough, he could hit the board with a better trip and probably only if one of the favorites misfires. G1 winner **EXPRESS TRAIN** returns from a four-month layoff with solid works. **STILLETTO BOY** has run races that put him in the hunt.

Eleventh Race

1. Master Piece**2. Heywoods Beach****3. Tizamagician**

MASTER PIECE stretches to a mile and three-eighths following a decisive G2 victory at a mile and one-eighth. Runner-up in this G2 turf marathon a year ago, 'PIECE has returned to peak form at age 6, his late-running style suits the recent closers-friendly course profile.

HEYWOODS BEACH returns to turf after a dirt marathon win last out. He was an effective turf horse early in his career.

TIZAMAGICIAN is the likely pacesetter, although turf is an uncertainty. He has been a dirt horse most of his career, he finished tenth his only start on turf. Distance is not an issue. TIZAMAGICIAN will take them as far as he can. GREGDAR moves up the ladder in sharp form; he looked good winning a N2X last out. He is 2-for-2 on the DMR course, and the turf-race class hike from N2X to graded stake is not as difficult as it once was.