

Date: September 11th, 2022

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: National Road (11th race)

First Race

1. Shemakescents

2. Golden Halo

3. Sapadilla

Sunday is closing day at Del Mar; Los Alamitos daytime racing begins Friday. **SHEMAKESCENTS** is the tepid choice in this maiden-20 sprint based on her runner-up finish two back and an up-front running style in a field short on true speed. **GOLDEN HALO** finished a creditable second in her comeback; her 62 Beyer in December is the top dirt figure in the field. **SAPADILLA** drops to maiden-claiming, while **PEANUT BUTTER CUP** also drops while switching surfaces. If she reproduces her turf form on the main track, she could win as one of the favorites. This big field came up surprisingly soft.

Second Race

1. Holden the Lute

2. Spirit of Makena

3. Lord Dragon

HOLDEN THE LUTE, claimed from a runner-up finish for \$40k, should get a great trip positioned second behind the speed in this N1X. He finished more than four lengths clear of third last out, and earned a figure (90 Beyer) that exceeds par for this class level. **SPIRIT OF MAKENA** stretches out following a front-running upset in his debut. He probably is the one to catch, and speed has been super in dirt miles. Nine of the last 15 dirt miles (through Monday) were won by the pacesetter. **LORD DRAGON** was compromised by the race shape and track profile last out, he rallied from last to third. He is the late threat again.

Third Race

1. Reincarnate

2. Kid Azteca

3. Russells Hustle

This turf mile for maiden 2yos is a split of race 5. **REINCARNATE** makes his career debut at a mile on turf with a solid workout pattern and seemingly modest rivals. Bob Baffert won with 2 of his last 3 firsters in Del Mar summer turf routes for 2yos (Tarantino, Rayana). **KID AZTECA** stretches out from three sprints, his best races were his two on grass including a decent third last out. From the outside post, he will have to use his speed. **RUSSELLS HUSTLE** should improve off his okay runner-up debut.

Fourth Race

1. So It Would Seem

2. Midnight's Girl

3. Smiling Thunder

Steep dropper **SO IT WOULD SEEM** misfired last out, but his maiden-40 romp two back is plenty fast enough for this \$16k claiming N2L sprint. **MIDNIGHT'S GIRL** also drops, following a midpack finish against better. **SMILING THUNDER** was claimed last out by a stable that entered the week 5-for-12 this summer first off the claim.

Fifth Race

1. Game Time

2. Rexford

3. Carrizo Springs

This turf mile for maiden 2yos is a split of race 3. The racetrack was against **GAME TIME** in his debut. He raced inside on a day the outside was best. His seventh-place finish is okay, because the race was merely a prep. Now he stretches out, with turf in his pedigree. Trainer John Sadler won with 3 of his last 7 dirt-to-turf, sprint-to-route second-start maidens (Kirstenbosch, Dendera, Ellie Arroway). Also-eligible **REXFORD** missed by only a neck in a promising debut at five furlongs. If he scratches in, he might be the one to catch. **CARRIZO SPRINGS** merely ran around the course in his educational debut. He should improve second time out.

Sixth Race

1. Spicybug

2. Doinitthehardway

3. Getthemoney

SPICYBUG ran well enough in her third-place debut to merit horse-to-beat status. First time out, she had speed inside and behind runners, was kept to her task along the rail in the lane, and finished evenly to miss by only three. The filly who finished directly behind her in fourth (And Tell Me Nolies) returned to win a maiden race and was scheduled to start as a contender Saturday in the G1 DMR Debutante (race 8).

SPICYBUG, with a race under her belt, should improve likewise and benefits by the extra distance of this six and a half-furlong race. Also-eligible **DOINITTHEHARDWAY** finished second in her debut, more than four lengths in front of third. Solid debut, blinkers off, improvement likely. **GILA** has worked super since arriving from Woodbine including a quick gate drill Aug. 28 (viewed on XBTV.com). Expect her to show speed. **GETTHEMONEY** was surprisingly hammered to favoritism first out, and surrendered after a half-mile. She might improve.

Seventh Race

1. Forging Spirit

2. Atomic Drop

3. In Vronsky Style

The dirt experiment by **FORGIVING SPIRIT** was a debacle; he finished ninth. But his turf form against similar Cal-bred NIX rivals is solid, and he figures for a cozy trip saving ground just behind the speed while switching riders to Flavien Prat. **ATOMIC DROP**, runner-up three straight, showed a new dimension last out rallying from off the pace. Good comeback, his first start in five months. He is trained Phil D'Amato, who also entered **IN VRONSKY STYLE**. The latter exits the same race, he dueled to deep stretch and tired while making his first start in nearly a year. Second start back, he should carry his speed farther. **WHO'S CANDY** is a comeback first-time gelding with speed.

Eighth Race

1. Censorship

2. Princess Adaleigh

3. Karin With an I

CENSORSHIP is ready to fire first start since last fall. A two-time runner-up over the DMR track last summer, **CENSORSHIP** has trained well for her Lasix-on comeback. Her bullet work one week ago was in company with Newgate, an impressive debut winner who is a contender in the G1 DMR Futurity (race 10). **PRINCESS ADALEIGH** missed by a neck first out, earning a creditable 77 Beyer that matches par for this level. The caveat is she benefitted from a slow pace (a length behind a :22.83 quarter), while facing a field with only five runners. Now she faces a bigger field, and the pace is likely to be quicker. Second preference nonetheless. **KARIN WITH AN I**, sired by Curlin and produced by Beholder, is believed to be better than she showed finishing seventh in her off-slow-from-the-rail debut in spring. **RUNNINWITHTHEBOYZ** did not have a good trip finishing third in her debut.

Ninth Race

1. Dandy Man Shines

2. Ti Sento

3. Park City

Euro-import **DANDY MAN SHINES** gets top billing in this \$100k turf mile for 2yos based on his fourth last out against a good field in a Group 2 in England. The winner was winning his third straight; the third-place finisher won a G3 next out. 'SHINES worked a half-mile last weekend and should fire his best shot first start in the U.S. He is a maiden, but maidens won this stake in 2014 and 2018 (Daddy D T, King of Speed). **TI SENTO** also makes his U.S. debut while dropping from a Group 2 in England. He finished next to last, but won a maiden race by three his previous start in Ireland. **PARK CITY** targeted this race all summer, and shows up despite losing a maiden route last out at odds-on. Blinkers on, route under his belt, he could make amends at a bigger price. **STONE POINT** ran well with a troubled trip in his runner-up debut vs. Cal-bred maidens. **PACKS A WAHLOP** was impressive winning a maiden turf sprint. Contender if he can carry his speed two turns.

Tenth Race

1. Cave Rock

2. Skinner

3. Newgate

CAVE ROCK is the one to beat in the G1 Del Mar Futurity. He trounced maidens last out with a 101 Beyer, some 20 points higher than any in this field. He stretches out to seven furlongs, anything close to his debut would be tough to beat. Even if the favorite delivers, this race offers value with maiden second-time starter **SKINNER**. His debut was outstanding. Racing five furlongs, he trailed early, picked up steam on the turn, angled out and finished like a freight train. He galloped out super past the wire, as if this seven-furlong distance will be up his alley. The ambitious placement of a second-start maiden in a Grade 1 suggests he has trained very well since his debut. The longer, the better for the son of Curlin, a candidate to outrun his odds and complete the exacta if not score an outright upset. **NEWGATE**, stablemate of the top choice, scored a sharp debut win and has trained like a top colt since. Trainer Bob Baffert has won this race 15 times. He also entered G3 winner **HAVNAMELTDOWN**.

Eleventh Race

1. National Road

2. Flint Stroll

3. Weegee

Late-runner **NATIONAL ROAD** figures to win this starter allowance turf route based on his last-out third against similar at a shorter distance. The pace was slow, the one-two finishers were forwardly placed, 'ROAD blazed his final quarter-mile in :22.74 and missed by a neck. Super comeback following a smashing maiden-50 win in June. 'ROAD gets another half-furlong and should mow them down.

FLINT STROLL finished fourth in the same race. He did not have a good trip, always in traffic and visually uncomfortable. Uncertain if he is as effective on turf at DMR as turf at SA, but he gets a key rider switch to Prat and has more tactical speed than the top choice. **WEEGEE** had a brutal trip 10 days ago, fourth in a restricted \$32k claiming turf route. He steadied in traffic on the backstretch, was blocked badly in the lane, and never had a chance. Claimed off the effort, back on short rest, threat with clear sailing. **UNCLE JEFF** missed by a head in the same race the top pair exit. That is a wrap for Del Mar. Los Alamitos begins its two-week daytime meet on Friday.