

Date: November 26th, 2022

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: American Cat (3rd race)

First Race

1. Hail Columbia

2. Tizzy Twister

3. Ardis

Based on her front-running debut way back in January, **HAIL COLUMBIA** is simply the fastest in this claiming sprint for 3yo fillies. Not sure what to make of her curiously low placement in a \$16k claiming race first start back, but she runs fresh and looks like the speed of the field. If the front-runner fades, **TIZZY TWISTER** could be along in time from the back of the pack. She scored an off-the-pace upset last out vs. older \$10k claiming rivals; the race was validated when the runner-up won a N3L claiming race next out. Notwithstanding the difference in claim price (\$10k to \$16k), late-runner **TWISTER** is dropping in class into an age-restricted race. **ARDIS** is quick enough to keep the top choice honest; **SANGRE AZUL** returns from a layoff for a hot barn; **BLAME IT ON ROSE** is a two-time winner over the DMR surface.

Second Race

1. Alice Marble

2. Tony Ann

3. Aqua Seaform Shame

Five furlongs may be a bit short for comebacker **ALICE MARBLE**, but the Cal-bred stakes winner runs fresh and is the class of the field in a turf allowance that can set her up for a hillside sprint stakes in January at Santa Anita. First start in six months and perhaps only prepping, **MARBLE** is nonetheless the one to beat with a forwardly placed trip. Her trainer Phil D'Amato also entered comeback allowance winner **TONY ANN**. Like her stablemate, **ANN** may want longer, but she will be running late as an off-the-pace contender. **AQUA SEAFORM SHAME** set a fast pace and tired going six and a half; she likes this five-furlong trip and is a two-time DMR turf sprint winner. **BULLETPROOF ONE** might be the speed of the speed, shortening in distance after surrendering as the even-money favorite last out (\$80k claim voided).

Third Race

1. American Cat

2. Dad Bod

3. Wagonhavagoodtime

AMERICAN CAT looks tough in this Cal-bred maiden-50 sprint, dropping in for a claim tag with the highest figures. He is drawn outside in the clear, his trainer is reliable with maiden chalk. Dean Pederson won with 6 of his last 7 favorites in maiden dirt sprints. **AMERICAN CAT** can add to the list. **DAD BOD** benefits by the shorter distance. He set the pace to deep stretch before tiring to third; the runner-up won a maiden-20 next out and the fifth-place finisher won a maiden-8 next out. **BOD** will keep the pace honest, while **WAGONHAVAGOODTIME** set the pace in an improved runner-up finish in his second start. However, he meets more speed in this shorter race. **AGADOR SPARTACUS** drops in for a tag and will rally late.

Fourth Race

1. Bali Dancer

2. Awesome Taylor

3. Secret Fix

This starter allowance sprint is a good spot to take a shot at a price with last-out maiden-20 winner **BALI DANCER**. Her first eight starts were bland, but her DMR win opening day was better than the modest figure. Hounded through fast fractions, she shook off her pace rival and won clear. Sharp win. She will attempt an ambitious hike in class to starter allowance, while facing other speed and stretching out an extra furlong to six and a half, but the speedster has never been better and just might post an upset. **AWESOME TAYLOR** is likely to improve second start back. She ran as if she needed the start last month, a distant third in her return from a nine-month layoff. Her maiden win last winter at Oaklawn ranks among the fastest performances by any in this field. **SECRET FIX** will be one of the choices based on back-to-back runner-up finishes vs. similar, but neither race was as good visually as they look in her past performances. Dubious third preference nonetheless.

Fifth Race

1. Maven

2. Barristan The Bold

3. Chaos Theory

This might be a reach, but class-drop speedster **MAVEN** gets the call to lead gate to wire in this \$25k claiming turf sprint. He dueled through fast fractions and cracked both recent starts; his front-running sprint win on this course in summer is fast enough. He should make

the lead against this easier bunch. If he weakens, **BARRISTAN THE BOLD** could be along in time. The late-runner already won four turf sprints this year including last out at this class level. **CHAOS THEORY** is a two-time DMR turf sprint winner including a G3 in 2020. He goes first off the claim by trainer Mike Puype, who is 6-for-15 f.o.c. the past three+ years. 'THEORY should fire a big shot first start in nearly three months. Puype also starts shipper **FULLY LOADED**, whose turf sprint form last year in Florida fits with this bunch.

Sixth Race

1. Spun Intended**2. Harlocap****3. Calm Sea**

A highly rated runner-up debut by **SPUN INTENDED**, with two solid works since, stamps the Hard Spun 2yo the one to beat. He broke slow first out, lost ground while wide, and narrowed the gap late. Promising debut. **HARLOCAP** is another debut runner by the outstanding first-crop sire Justify, whose progeny have won 25 percent (11-for-44) first time out. Fast works for a trainer whose debut maidens are typically ready to fire. **CALM SEA** debuts with fast works; his dam produced 2yo stakes winners Surrender Now and Red Flag. **BARNSTORMING** is a stablemate to **HARLOCAP**. The latter might be slightly better, but workouts suggest **BARNSTORMING** will run a respectable race. Fourth preference.

Seventh Race

1. Santin**2. Beyond Brilliant****3. Smooth Like Strait**

Midwest-based two-time G1 winner **SANTIN** ranks among the top turf horses in the country, with an excuse for his last-out defeat. He hopped as the gates opened, lost position, and that was that. His best races this year were with forwardly placed trips, which is likely here. Proven over the DMR turf last fall finishing second in the Hollywood Derby, **SANTIN** enters as the class of the field. However, last year's Hol Derby winner **BEYOND BRILLIANT** poses a legitimate threat dropping from a creditable eighth in the Breeders' Cup Mile. 'BRILLIANT pressed a strong pace and was still in the hunt turning for home, until the closers swept past all the speed. Good effort under the circumstances. 'BRILLIANT faces less pace in this G2, and if he avoids going head and head with the front-runner to his inside, he should get a great trip. **SMOOTH LIKE STRAIT** is the aforementioned front-runner who set the pace and tired in the BC Mile after missing his prep. Six starts by 'STRAIT on the DMR turf produced six one-two finishes, all graded stakes. **SET PIECE** will rally from the back.

Eighth Race

1. Hopkins**2. City Rage****3. Finally Here**

Last-out maiden winner **HOPKINS** is fast on numbers, his highly rated win was validated when the horse he beat by more than three lengths (Krahenbuhl) returned to crush maidens by more than seven lengths with an 88 Beyer. **CITY RAGE** rallies from behind, returning to the track on which he scored a strong N1X win in summer. He did not run well last out, but drops back to his winning level while entered for the \$40k optional claim tag. **FINALLY HERE** returns to his preferred surface. He is two-for-two on dirt. **LIBERTY FOREVER** and **GOOD VIBES** have run races that put them in the hunt.

Ninth Race

1. Bang for Your Buck**2. Aligato****3. Agatino**

Nine furlongs was out of reach for **BANG FOR YOUR BUCK**, he finished fourth by less than a length. He shortens to one mile, and returns to the DMR turf course on which he finished second in a fast race in summer. **ALIGATO** finished willingly for fourth in a sprint comeback that was his first start in nine months. He should improve second start back. **AGATINO** merely ran around the course in a modest U.S. debut that appears to have been a prep. Expect a forward move second out. **FLY TO THE SKY** is a six-time winner; **PERCOLATE** is eligible to an easier starter allowance, but ran okay finishing second on this course opening day.