

Date: December 3rd, 2022

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Thebestisyettobe (7th race)

First Race

1. Autism Community

2. Bolt's Broad

3. Ancient Peace

This turf mile for 2yo maiden fillies is ripe for Northern California shipper **AUTISM COMMUNITY**, whose third-place debut was crazy. She broke flat-footed by at least three lengths, veered out and lost ground wide on the first turn, raced greenly in the stretch and missed by only a length and a quarter. Super try by a filly whose pedigree says turf. If she runs straight second time out, she can upset. **BOLT'S BROAD** already "won" a maiden race but was later disqualified because her rider over-used the whip. Strange rule. 'BROAD then finished third and fourth in back-to-back stakes, and now returns to a maiden race as an obvious fit. **ANCIENT PEACE** ships from Maryland for a maiden turf race in California. Sired by War Front, she was produced by a graded stakes-winning dam who won 5 of 10. TEA N CONVERSATION finished in front of the top choice last out at Golden Gate. She has improved each subsequent start.

Second Race

1. Big Brother

2. Batukhan

3. Pittsburgh

Runner-up three of four at this maiden-20 level, **BIG BROTHER** returns to his proper class after he was overmatched in a maiden-50 on turf. 'BROTHER ran well his only previous dirt route, switches riders to Kyle Frey, and can wear them down. **BATUKHAN** has never raced on dirt, nor at this low level in Southern California. The figures he earned his last three starts on turf and synthetic are among the highest in this field; rider switch to Edwin Maldonado could prove beneficial. Maldonado can put mounts "into the race" early. **PITTSBURGH** should vie for favoritism based on his runner-up finish last out on this track at this level. LA'OCH ALOYSIUS stretches back to two turns, with a 10-pound apprentice allowance. He is likely to contest the pace.

Third Race

1. Ever Smart

2. Buzz of New York

3. Thrumps Dream

EVER SMART ran well both recent starts at this N2X turf route level including a runner-up finish last out in which she got stuck in traffic on the far turn and into the lane. By the time she found room, the eventual winner had cleared. That rival flattered the race when she returned to finish second in a Grade 3. The last time 'SMART ran at Del Mar, she was compromised by a wide trip and her rider losing his stick. Pivotal switch to jockey Flavien Prat, who is making a run at meet leader Juan Hernandez. **BUZZ OF NEW YORK** scored a sharp N1X win last out under Hernandez; the filly's improving figures and red-hot stable give her a license to win right back on the one-level class bump. **THRUMPS DREAM** won this condition in April, she returns from a layoff while entered for the optional \$80k claim tag. She runs well fresh. **FREEDOM LASS** finished less than a length behind the top choice last out and tries a rider switch.

Fourth Race

1. Tecumseh Caroline

2. Whimsical Heir

3. Bold Choice

TECUMSEH CAROLINE looks odds-on in this small-field Cal-bred maiden sprint based on her recent runner-up effort in which she finished more than three lengths clear of third. Leading trainer Phil D'Amato won with his last six odds-on maidens. First-time starter **WHIMSICAL HEIR** debuts with decent-looking works including a sharp half-mile gate work Monday in which she appeared best over her rival (work viewed on XBTv). Comebacker **BOLD CHOICE** hit the board four of seven starts; A LITTLE BIT CRAZY four of six. The truth is, the top choice looks tough to beat at a short price.

Fifth Race

1. Lane Way

2. Coulthard

3. Whatmakessammyrun

LANE WAY matured into a stakes-caliber turf sprinter after being gelded in 2021. Graded-placed twice from five starts since, with two allowance wins, he is effective at this five-furlong trip and meets a stakes field with pace to flatter his rally. He finished in front of his main rival the last two times they met. That is **COULTHARD**, who has been off two months and runs fresh. **COULTHARD** defeated **LANE WAY** in summer, then regressed his next two. The freshening benefits **COULTHARD**, whose stable is hot. **WHATMAKESSAMMYRUN** wants more than five furlongs, but he will roll late and ran okay finishing second with a bad trip on this course at this distance in August.

TURN ON THE JETS might be ranked too low. He has more tactical speed than the top three, and does not require the lead for this best effort. He could get a great trip positioned right behind the speed. 'JETS is a must use.

Sixth Race

1. Crowning Gold**2. Mister Beams****3. Let Him Do**

In a messy sprint scramble for starter allowance 2yos, last-out winner **CROWNING GOLD** is the call. His relatively fast maiden-50 win was somewhat validated when the third-place finisher returned with a decisive win. 'GOLD has speed and he ran well at DMR in summer. **MISTER BEAMS** earned the field's top last-out figure, a 68 Beyer finishing second in a similar race. The difference is it was on turf. He works well on dirt, is drawn outside, and should be forwardly placed. **LET HIM DO** tries a rider switch and blinkers after disappointing as the favorite twice against winners. He can rally from behind, and may benefit by this six and one-half furlong distance. **FLAME RIDER** is speed on the rail.

Seventh Race

1. Thebestisyettobe**2. Sell the Dream****3. Decorated My Life**

The second U.S. start by **THEBESTISYETTOBE** was an improvement over her first, and sets her up for this G3 turf mile against a modest field of 2yo fillies. The Irish import finished second in the allowance last out, exited the race in top shape, and could be tough running back three weeks later on the same course. **SELL THE DREAM** returns to preferred footing after misfiring on dirt. Runner-up this fall in a pair of turf-mile stakes, she finished four lengths in front of the top choice in summer. While the top choice has improved since, **SELL THE DREAM** need only run back to her previous turf races to be competitive. European import **DECORATED MY LIFE** arrived in the U.S. three weeks ago and makes her first U.S. start over (likely) firm ground. That is a key reason she was imported, for firm ground in California. **LIGURIA** might be ranked too low. She improved second out with a decent maiden win in New York. Must respect the productive trainer-jockey combo of Chad Brown and Prat.

Eighth Race

1. Street Ruckus**2. Atomic Drop****3. Spirit of Makena**

In the money four straight N1X dirt routes, **STREET RUCKUS** is tough to trust. But his speed figures are close to par, he runs best at DMR, and he meets a field with pace to flatter his rally. **ATOMIC DROP** defeated Cal-breds with a low figure, but the performance was way better than the number. He was four- and five wide start to finish, yet stormed home to win going away. Big win by a gelding who has never been better. Lightly raced **SPIRIT OF MAKENA** should vie for favoritism based on a fast runner-up finish last out in his second career start and first around two turns. The fourth- and seventh-place finishers behind him returned to win; the winner returned to finish second in a N2X. 'MAKENA is sharp and will be involved in the pace scenario along with stretch-out sprinter **TRAEGAR**.

Ninth Race

1. Celestial City**2. Wit****3. Spycatcher**

A pair of shippers might knock off the locals in the G1 Hollywood Derby. New York-based **CELESTIAL CITY** is vastly improved since adding blinkers three back; he scored an impressive victory last out in a nine-furlong G2 by smoking his final three furlongs in :34.32. Back at the same distance, the Uncle Mo colt can mow them down. Kentucky shipper **WIT** improved this season when he moved to turf, runner-up in a pair of graded stakes sandwiched around a decisive win in a non-graded stake. Although he has never raced beyond a mile, his tactical style and ability to ration his speed suggests he can stay another furlong. **SPYCATCHER** is the bomb. A maiden who finished second in the G2 Del Mar Derby in summer, his pressing style could play well in a race that might unfold at a tepid pace. His third in a minor stake three weeks ago was designed as a prep for this race. **CABO SPIRIT** is 2-for-3 since he was gelded, including two graded wins. He will be rolling late as a logical contender.