

**Date:** July 23rd, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Comradery (11th race)****First Race****1. She's Resilient****2. Just a Little Luck****3. Silver Lightning**

Evenly matched **SHE'S RESILIENT** and **JUST A LITTLE LUCK** drop in class, with similar front-running styles. The call is **SHE'S RESILIENT**, whose three-race win streak ended last time when she stumbled, dueled, and tired against older. She drops into an age-restricted claiming sprint, is drawn outside her main rival, and can win with a front-running/pace-pressing trip in the clear. **JUST A LITTLE LUCK** is speed on the rail. Third last out in a minor stakes at Pleasanton, she ran well over the Del Mar track last summer. Uncertain what type trip she will get from the inside post, however. She has speed, but will be hounded from the outside. **SILVER LIGHTNING** returns from a long layoff to the track on which she won her debut by more than eight lengths last summer. She can rally from behind, her trainer can fire with comebackers. Doug O'Neill won with five of his last 14 dirt sprinters off six months or more.

**Second Race****1. Straighten Up****2. Colonel Vargo****3. Midnight Lightning**

**STRAIGHTEN UP** lost all chance in his comeback two weeks ago. He was bumped and steadied early in traffic, unable to establish position, got shuffled and finished last as the favorite. It was a throwout race. While the class plunge to \$20k claiming 3yos in just his second start back is not an optimistic placement, he picks up the circuit's leading rider Juan Hernandez. His runner-up finishes in Cal-bred 2yo stakes last summer show he likes the DMR surface. **COLONEL VARGO** earned the highest last-out figure in the field finishing second in a PLN claiming race against older. Sharp form, early speed, logical contender. **MIDNIGHT LIGHTNING** faces easier after finishing last against older Cal-bred allowance foes. Midwest shipper **TOO MUCH INFO** is in for a claim tag for the first time.

**Third Race****1. Eddie's New Dream****2. Oakhurst****3. Seisai**

Third in a similar N2X turf route last out, **EDDIE'S NEW DREAM** drew an inside post and figures for a ground-saving trip forwardly placed in a mile and one-eighth turf route likely to unfold at a tepid pace. She will get first run, and can win if she holds off closer **OAKHURST**. The latter returns from a five-month layoff while dropping from graded stakes. **SEISAI** looms an upset candidate. She is rounding into form based on her closing third last out when she added Lasix. It was her best race from three U.S. starts; she benefits by the stretch-out from a mile, to a mile and one-eighth. **PARIS PEACOCK** scratched from the Osunitas Handicap on Saturday to go in this N2X. **INFINITE DIAMOND** scratched from the G2 San Clemente on Saturday to go here.

**Fourth Race****1. Cowboy Mike****2. Dont Fight the Fed****3. Ship and Scam**

**COWBOY MIKE** stretches to a mile, adds blinkers, and could be long gone in this Cal-bred maiden race. He ran below expectations his first three starts, all sprints, but runs as if he may prefer the slower tempo of this two-turn dirt route. **DONT FIGHT THE FED** stretches out from a better-than-looked debut. He hopped at the break, was shuffled between horses, rallied wide and hung to finish fourth. Not bad. Improvement likely second out. **SHIP AND SCAM** is an 11-start maiden whose most recent start was the best of his career. Running long on dirt for the first time, he missed by a half-length, finished nine lengths clear of third, and earned a field-high 79 Beyer. He found his niche long on dirt, and will be tough if he runs two alike.

**Fifth Race****1. Kissed by Fire****2. Just Nails****3. Sultry Kitten**

**KISSED BY FIRE** should win this MSW turf sprint at a short price. Her runner-up comeback was super; she set the pace and got worn down by Spicybug, who returned to win an allowance. The third-place finisher from the race (North East Star) was scheduled to start favored Friday in race 3. **FIRE** trained super since her comeback, adds Lasix, and may benefit by the shorter five-furlong trip. Seems like a low-odds standout with an up-front trip. **JUST NAILS**, runner-up her only start last summer at Los Alamitos, is bred for turf. Sired by Twirling Candy, she has speed and will keep the top choice company. **SULTRY KITTEN** raced evenly to finish third in her debut. Not

sure if this abbreviated distance will be to her liking; she might want two turns. On the other hand, she is likely to improve with a race under her belt. Third preference, either way. First-time starter SPARROW looks sneaky. Her dam Belleski was a graded stakes-winning turf sprinter who produced graded stakes winner Keri Belle. Sired by Into Mischief, SPARROW debuts with fast works and a top jockey.

### Sixth Race

#### 1. Kiss Today Goodbye

#### 2. Bye Bye Bobby

#### 3. Azul Coast

**KISS TODAY GOODBYE** is rounding into form and facing easier in this G3 dirt marathon than recent G1-G2s at Santa Anita. Though no match for Defunded either race, 'GOODBYE ran well to finish third and fourth. The veteran has not won since late 2020, but his recent starts are creditable and he has won on Del Mar dirt. A mile and one-half is a challenge for him, and the entire field. Upset candidate **BYE BYE BOBBY** moves up from a dominating win in a \$75k stakes at SunRay Park in New Mexico. The grey faces a steep class test outside his home circuit in the Southwest, but he enters in career-best form with a front-running/pressing style that should play well in a long-distance race likely to unfold at a tepid pace. **AZUL COAST** is arguably the "best horse" in the field, a G3 winner at DMR returning from a long layoff. Off since November, his works look only okay. **RIMPROTECTOR** switches to dirt after a creditable third to Planetario in the G3 San Juan Capistrano at a mile and three-quarters on turf. Planetario exited the San Juan to enter as program favorite Saturday in a G1 at Monmouth.

### Seventh Race

#### 1. Smart Code

#### 2. Horace Mann

#### 3. X J Rascal

**SMART CODE** would have won his comeback sprint had he run straight rather than lug in late. He got collared by stablemate Agency, a contender Friday in the Oceanside Stakes. As for SMART CODE, his comeback served its purpose, now he stretches to the mile distance at which he won a maiden race in December over Escape Artist, program favorite Friday in the Oceanside Stakes. **HORACE MANN** also stretches out from the same turf sprint as the top choice. His raced evenly and finished third, now stretches to the mile trip at which he ran so well last year as a 2yo. **X J RASCAL** is a three-time winner from Europe, eligible to this N1X for 3yos due to small purses overseas. Sharp works for his return suggests he is well-meant first start back. **BOLT SUPREMACY** is quick enough to impact the pace scenario.

### Eighth Race

#### 1. Pony Express

#### 2. Mirahmadi

#### 3. Miracle Mark

First-time starter **PONY EXPRESS** and second-timer **MIRAHMADI** are the principals in a deep sprint for MSW 2yos. John Sadler-trained PONY EXPRESS has worked exceptionally well including a dynamite team gate drill a week ago. He is bred to run farther than five furlongs, but has natural speed. The flashy chestnut might be a good one. **MIRAHAMDI** chased and tired in his runner-up debut in a stakes. It was a decent debut, the million-dollar colt should improve second out. **MIRACLE MARK** was no match for PONY EXPRESS in the aforementioned team drill last weekend, but 'MARK may not have played all his cards in the morning. He is a sibling to a horse who paid \$33.60 when he romped in his career debut as a 2yo. That sibling turned out to be champion sprinter and \$4.5 million earner Whitmore. **TALL PAUL**, stablemate of MIRAHAMDI, debuts with decent works. **EXPRESS LINE** might want longer; he is a full brother to G1 winner Express Train.

### Ninth Race

#### 1. Cathkin Peak

#### 2. Whatmakessammyrun

#### 3. Du Jour

Deep field of turf milers entered the Wickerr Stakes; comebacker **CATHKIN PEAK** gets the call first start since autumn. The multiple graded stakes-placed gelding runs well fresh; two of his three wins were first start back from a layoff. A deep closer, 'PEAK is at the mercy of the pace scenario. **WHATMAKESSAMMYRUN** is a pure sprinter, but in his current sharp form he might stay a mile around two turns. A G2 turf sprint winner last fall, listed stakes winner this winter, he stretches out after missing by a length at five and a half. He could get a cozy trip forwardly placed right behind the likely pacesetter drawn directly to his outside. **DU JOUR** drops off a tough-trip sixth in a G1; during the winter-spring meet at Santa Anita he finished second in photo-finishes in a G1 and G3. **LAMPLIGHTER JACK** is the aforementioned front-runner who will take them as far as he can. In a race without much speed, a front-running upset is not impossible.

### Tenth Race

#### 1. Zoe's Pride

#### 2. Miss Obey

#### 3. Turquoise Bikini

**ZOE'S PRIDE** ships from Northern California with the top figures in this Cal-bred maiden-50 sprint, while making her first start for a claim tag. She is improving each start for Northern California-based trainer Tim McCanna, who has had success at DMR. His veteran Terrys Tom Cat won races at DMR four successive years from 2015-2018. Not much here for ZOE'S PRIDE to beat. **MISS OBEY** has an upset chance. She split the field her only start here last fall vs. special-weight Cal-breds, and now returns for a claim tag, adds Lasix and

has sharp workouts that suggest she is a better filly at age 3. The most recent DMR win by veteran trainer Sam Scolamieri was Nov. 11, 2017 with the mare Obey, the dam of MISS OBEY. **TURQUOISE BIKINI** is a nine-start maiden who finished second her last two starts on dirt. This field looks soft.

### Eleventh Race

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#### 1. Comradery

#### 2. Overdue

#### 3. Give Me the Lute

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Opening week of the summer meet ends with a rock-solid contender. **COMRADERY** ran too good to lose last time, runner-up by a head in a race that saw the 1-3-4 finishers rally from the back. **COMRADERY** was the only front-runner to stick around; he missed by a head.

The veteran is in career-best form this year, runs well on the DMR turf, and should get a comfortable trip right behind the speed.

**OVERDUE** finished behind the top choice last out; he finished in front of the top choice twice last year. A deep closer with three wins over the DMR turf, **OVERDUE** will roll late second start following a brief layoff. **MO THEM DOWN**, 2-for-2 on DMR turf, is speed shortening in distance. Six-time winner **GIVE ME THE LUTE** returns from a freshening for winning connections. **LIGHT FURY** is a six-time winner in from Florida with decent figures in winter and spring.