

**Date:** July 27th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free*****BEST BET: Ceiling Crusher (7th race)*****First Race****1. Man On the Moon****2. City Legend****3. Secret Touch**

**MAN ON THE MOON** appears to have targeted this race ever since trainer Bob Hess re-claimed him from a win at this \$8k level in March and protected him from being claimed two subsequent starts. That is, he ran in starter allowance races from which he could not be claimed. This low-level claiming race is his spot. A five-time winner including a Del Mar route for Hess in 2021, 'MOON has speed to be forwardly placed and might simply be the best horse in the field. Midwest shipper **CITY LEGEND** drops in class after showing speed and tiring in a comeback vs. better. His speed figures in winter and spring on wet surfaces at Oaklawn Park compare well to this field. Uncertain if he will be as effective on "fast." Second preference, regardless. Horse-for-course **SECRET TOUCH** returns from an 11-month layoff to his favorite racetrack. The 9yo gelding won has won five races at DMR (2017, 2018, two in 2020, and 2021).

**Second Race****1. Miss Pixy Stix****2. Outer Sunset****3. Capo Sorella**

Maiden filly **MISS PIXY STIX** could give Hess and jockey Edwin Maldonado the early double if she improves dropping in class second time out. The 2yo was "reluctant" and "fractious" at the gate first out vs. special-weight maidens in Florida; the video replay looks a little better than her past-performance running line. She drops to maiden-32, adds blinkers, and appears to have trained well since her debut. **OUTER SUNSET** also ran okay first out, finishing an even-paced fifth vs. MSW rivals at Pleasanton. Class drop second out, forward move expected. First-time starter **CAPO SORELLA** is the first runner from a dam that won her career debut. Her trainer-jockey combo of Tim Yakteen and Ramon Vazquez is 8-for-18 since last fall.

**Third Race****1. Lady T****2. Anywho****3. Doris Mae**

Grade 3 winner **LADY T** returns from a layoff as the class of this N2X filly-mare sprint. Off nearly six months, she runs well fresh and has a solid recent work pattern. She has run well on the DMR track, has tactical speed to stay within range of the likely pacesetter to her inside, and **LADY T** has a seasoning advantage over her main rival. That opponent is lightly raced **ANYWHO**, a 3yo who lost a ton of ground finishing fourth last out in an age-restricted G2 route. It was a toss race. Her maiden sprint win two back vs. 3yo allowance fillies was fast, she is two-for-two sprinting. Tall order facing older fillies and mares, and **ANYWHO** also is stuck on the rail. The outside lanes were best on the main track opening week. **DORIS MAE** is the aforementioned likely pacesetter. Up in class off a front-running N1X win at Santa Anita, she will lead as far as she can. **MY DESTINY** is a nine-time winner facing tougher than she beat last time at Los Alamitos; **TAMING THE TIGRESS** is a seven-time winner including three at DMR.

**Fourth Race****1. Musical Rhapsody****2. Zeyaraat****3. Unfaithful Ways**

European import **MUSICAL RHAPSODY**, a long-distance specialist who won three races in Ireland, looks obvious in this N1X filly-mare turf marathon. Despite multiple wins, 'RHAPSODY remains eligible to the first condition due to small purses overseas. She is repeatedly proven over a distance of ground, and faces modest rivals. Phil D'Amato trains the filly, who gets Lasix for her U.S. debut. **ZEYARAAT** drops from a pair of long-distance Santa Anita stakes in which she finished fourth, down to first-level allowance while running for the optional \$40k claim tag. **UNFAITHFUL WAYS** moves up the ladder off a sharp win last out at one mile. **EYLARA** is a comeback mare making her first start in California and first for D'Amato.

**Fifth Race****1. Big Gun****2. U R Pressed****3. Warrior Road**

Class-drop comebacker **BIG GUN**, a first-time gelding making his first start since October, figures to fire his best shot first start back. He is not particularly quick, but speed was not required opening week in sprints over the DMR main track. **U R PRESSED** will be forwardly placed, first start since December. He finished second over this track at this maiden-20 level in his most recent start, and popped a bullet

gate work here one week ago. **WARRIOR ROAD** takes a dubious class drop after misfiring in a maiden-62.5k turf sprint. His in-the-money finishes at the maiden-50 level two and three starts back would be fast enough for this maiden-20 bunch. **ANTHONY'S BEST** drops in class, adds blinkers and goes route to sprint. Obvious contender.

### Sixth Race

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#### 1. Devil Moon

#### 2. Lansdowne

#### 3. Raka Raka Cruz

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**DEVIL MOON** drew the rail in this turf sprint, with speed to be forwardly placed saving ground, shortening to five furlongs after dueling and tiring in a dirt sprint at six and a half. Runaway maiden turf winner two back, the front-runner/presser should get an advantageous inside trip in the leading flight. **LANSDOWNE** lost all three comeback starts as the favorite, but ran well finishing second both recent. He ranks among the fastest in the field on numbers, the challenge is distance. Five furlongs is shorter than he prefers. Second preference anyway, rallying from behind. **RAKA RAKA CRUZ** is a crazy upset candidate, shipping from Florida despite finishing last in his most recent start. He is quick enough to engage early, and turf should be okay. His dam ran okay her only turf start; progeny of Dialed In are okay short on turf. Bombs away on the front end? Maybe. It might depend on comeback speedster **PAPA TIGER**, who has worked fast for his first in three months, and must use his natural speed from the outside post.

### Seventh Race

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#### 1. Ceiling Crusher

#### 2. Tom's Regret

#### 3. Chismosa

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The fastest in this Cal-bred sprint for 3yo fillies is undefeated **CEILING CRUSHER**, who enters off a successive stakes romps by double-digit margins. Her 94 sprint Beyer two back and 92 route fig last out are the highest by a 3yo filly this year in California. 'CRUSHER has won all four starts, she has speed for position, trained well since her last start two months ago, and can win another if she avoids a duel with the speedy maiden winner in post 6. Stakes winner **TOM'S REGRET** has been thwarted twice by the top choice, but 'REGRET fires every start: three wins, four seconds and a third from eight starts. Her closing style means she can stay out of the favorite's way, and try to pick her off late. Easier said than done. **CHISMOSA** had a tough trip when she missed by a neck last out in a G2 sprint. She broke slowly, lost ground, but finished steadily with a career-best 91. Inside post is no bargain, but she did go three-for-three at DMR last summer including a pair of 2yo stakes, and she will rally. **BIG POND** is the aforementioned maiden winner in post 6; she pressed a fast pace first out and ran away to win clear. She probably will be positioned closest to favorite **CEILING CRUSHER**.

### Eighth Race

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#### 1. Ruff Ride

#### 2. Idessia

#### 3. Strange Addiction

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**RUFF RIDE** is badly compromised by post, the stretch-out filly drew post 11 in this turf mile for Cal-bred maidens. The turf rails are set at 24 feet this card, which has minimal influence on course profile, but the outside draw/potential ground loss is tough to overcome. Nonetheless, 'RIDE is the tepid choice stretching out with two comeback sprints under her belt. She finished willingly in both, fourth and third, and should relish two turns. Progeny of sire Clubhouse Ride certainly run long; full sibling Avalon Ride is a three-time route winner. If the outside draw is too much, **IDESSIA** can win. She finished in front of the top choice last out in the sprint, and a close third her previous route. **IDESSIA** is likely to vie for favoritism in what looks like a wide-open maiden mile. **STRANGE ADDICTION** stretches out from a pair of third-place sprints, one on turf and another on dirt. Sired by Good Magic, she runs like a filly that will relish two turns. **CANDY ON TOP** is a 14-start maiden with eight in-the-money finishes. Someday, maybe.