

Date: July 18th, 2025

Track: Del Mar

By Brad Free

**BEST BET: Iron Man Cal (8th race)**

First Race

1. Ready to Pounce

2. Joint Venture

3. Zimba Warrior

Del Mar opening day, first post 2 p.m. **READY TO POUNCE** can win this \$16k claiming route based on his creditable runner-up finish last out at Santa Anita and his runaway win over the DMR track last fall. His pressing/stalking style should play well in a race with plenty of pace; his stable has been hot. The past two months, trainer John Sadler won 16 races from just 41 starters. **JOINT VENTURE**, runner-up two of his last three starts before being overmatched last out, has speed to establish position from the outside post. Speed was effective on this track last summer at a mile on dirt: 44 percent of winners led every call; 70 percent were positioned first or second early. Horse-for-course late-runner **ZIMBA WARRIOR** is a three-time winner on DMR dirt. A 10-time winner overall, he will be finishing. Front-runners/pace-pressers **FIREMAN DAN** and **MAN CHILD** will keep **JOINT VENTURE** honest up front.

Second Race

1. Night Out

2. Blamethegoodtimes

3. Mr. Leasure

A respectable third-place comeback by **NIGHT OUT** stamps him the choice in this N2L starter turf mile. Making his first start in eight months, 'OUT saved ground, angled out, and finished willingly to miss by only two lengths in a fast race won by the pacesetter. 'OUT worked well since, and meets a field with pace to flatter his closing rally. **BLAMETHEGOODTIMES** finished fifth in the same race as the top choice. The top pair both benefit by a lively pace scenario. **MR. LEASURE** is speed, adding blinkers, with sprint figures that compare favorably to this field. Not sure about two turns however, and **MR. LEASURE** must cope with pace rivals **LET SEAMUS GO** and **TARGARYIS**. Third preference, nonetheless.

Third Race

1. Magic Account

2. Invincible

3. Jarama

**MAGIC ACCOUNT** ran too good to lose last out. He dueled on fast fractions, put away two pace rivals who finished seventh and ninth, opened up and got collared by a closer who rallied from seventh. Good runner-up try by 'ACCOUNT, who removes blinkers and does not necessarily require the lead. Shortening from six and one-half furlongs to six, he can win with a forwardly placed trp. **INVINCIBLE** was claimed from a solid runner-up finish last out on turf. He handles dirt, and will be rolling late. New trainer Jeff Mullins won with three of his last four first-off-the-claim starters. **JARAMA** is the high-figure entrant off an 81-Beyer romp vs. lesser at Los Alamitos. **JARAMA** broke his maiden at DMR last summer by four lengths. Front-runner/pace-presser **TOUGHNESS** drops in class and is expected to duel for the lead.

Fourth Race

1. Betterdaysrcoming

2. Tejon Pass

3. Kangaroo Court

Deep field of N1X turf sprinters speed five furlongs; **BETTERDAYSRCOMING** is the tepid choice based on his pace-pressing starter allowance win at six furlongs. The second- and fourth-place finishers returned to win their next start; **BETTERDAYSARECOMING** could tuck into a ground-saving trip in a race likely to unfold at a contested pace. He can win if he runs two alike. Comebacker **TEJON PASS** also will rally. He ran well on this turf-sprint layout last summer when returning from a layoff, and recent works suggest he is cranked for his first start since October. **KANGAROO COURT** is speed. He ran super last out finishing fourth in a fast-pace turf sprint at six furlongs; he benefits by the cutback to five. But he must cope with the speed of comebacker **TAHOMA** and **ITZEL**, a mare facing boys. **BAD UNCLE BARY** won a fast turf sprint last out on the SA hill, but is now stuck out in post 11. Generally speaking, inside posts are preferred in DMR turf sprints.

Fifth Race

1. Lannister

2. Brother Brother

3. Modus Bestia

First-time starter **LANNISTER** has trained well enough to win first out. He worked in company with G2 winner **Barnes** on July 11; he worked in company with stakes winner/G3-placed **Hard to Figure** on July 4. Although his workmates were best both drills, **LANNISTER** is

"dropping in class" from the workouts to face a modest field of older maidens. **BROTHER BROTHER** also debuts with okay works including a July 6 team drill from the gate in which he best. **MODUS BESTIA** looms the upsetter, first start in two and one-half months. His best race was his debut, so he runs well fresh. He had excuses for subsequent misfires (route, pace, surface). Back sprinting on dirt, he figures as a contender if he reproduces his Jan. 25 debut. VASA and LEGAL HEIR finished fourth and fifth, respectively, in a fast race two months ago.

### Sixth Race

#### 1. Genius Jimmy

#### 2. City Exile

#### 3. Elwood Blues

**GENIUS JIMMY** figures for a beneficial trip pressing the pace in a N2X turf route that is short on speed. 'JIMMY wired lesser rivals at this class level two back at SA, and missed by only a nose last out at a mile and one eighth. He cuts back to a mile and a sixteenth, and could get a cozy trip positioned second behind the stretch-out sprinter in post 10. **CITY EXILE** is a late threat, dropping from a creditable effort in a mile and one-quarter G2. The distance of this race might be shorter than preferred, but he will be rolling late. **ELWOOD BLUES** is the aforementioned stretch-out sprinter who is running long for the first time. Proven on turf, he is quick enough to set the pace in a race light on speed. He could get brave. SARWAR is a horse for course, three wins from four starts on the DMR turf; DANDY MAN SHINES is a two-time DMR turf winner.

### Seventh Race

#### 1. Mustang Knicky

#### 2. Druliner

#### 3. Cara Rose

Cal-bred 2yo fillies sprint five furlongs; first-time starter **MUSTANG KNICKY** is working like she means business. Her gate work July 11 looked good, she is bred to win early. By first-crop Knicks Go (debut progeny 2-for-14), 'KNICKY was produced by a dam who won her debut. She has produced two runners including a debut winner. Finally, trainer Steve Knapp already won with a pair of debut 2yos this season. **DRULINER** showed promise in her better-than-looked debut. She broke last, trailed the field, picked up steam and finished willingly for fourth. Maidens trained by Craig Lewis generally improve with racing; this Clubhouse Ride filly will be running late. **CARA ROSE** followed her runner-up debut with a decent third vs. open company. She is back with Cal-breds, back on dirt, and figures as one of the deserving favorites. IMNOTVANILLASKY, full sibling to race-9 contender Letmein, has shown promise in morning works but the inside post is a challenge. The past three years (summer and fall combined), the rail post at five furlongs is 0-for-26.

### Eighth Race

#### 1. Iron Man Cal

#### 2. Day and Age

#### 3. Artislas

Second start back and dropping from a respectable fifth in a G1 in Kentucky, **IRON MAN CAL** is the choice to win this restricted turf stakes for 3yos. 'CAL emerged last year as one of the country's top 2yo turf horses; he missed by only a neck in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf, then was off six months. His comeback was decent, despite discomfort with the footing. He finished sixth in a race that produced four next-out winners including now 6-for-7 Zulu Kingdom. 'CAL meets easier and will appreciate a return to firm turf and lesser foes. **DAY AND AGE** took his game to a new level when he switched surfaces. Now 2-for-2 on turf including a highly rated allowance win last out, 'AGE figures for an up-front trip. He will get the jump on the top choice. Stakes winner **ARTISLAS**, a two-time winner on DMR turf last year, returns to his stomping grounds. He defeated top choice IRON MAN CAL here last summer. CALI CAT looms the upsetter. A mile and one-eighth was slightly out of reach last out when he finished second; he cuts back to one mile and might be overlooked in the betting. Sadler has won this race five times.

### Ninth Race

#### 1. The G M

#### 2. Letmein

#### 3. Case Hit

Based on his recent runner-up finish in a similar Cal-bred N1X sprint, lightly raced **THE G M** can defeat this deeper field with a pressing trip. He was making just his third start last time, chased a fast pace, was outrun late, but ran the fastest race of his career. 'G M has speed but also is versatile, and the one to beat second start following a layoff of more than five months. **LETMEIN** finished second at this class level last out, missing by less than a length behind the odds-on winner and finishing six lengths clear of third. The challenge for LETMEIN is pace; he will be chasing fractions quicker than he has seen. Nonetheless, he figures as a contender if he can handle the heat. **CASE HIT** is pure speed, first start in nearly a year. The speedster won his debut last summer as a 2yo, finished second in a Cal-bred stakes, then was sidelined. The likely pacesetter returns with a solid work pattern and will take these as far as he can.

### Tenth Race

#### 1. Lady Chic

#### 2. Nafisa

#### 3. Auntie

**LADY CHIC** stretches to a mile on turf following an excellent runner-up comeback that was her first start in eight months. She chased a fast sprint pace, moved too soon, opened up, and got collared while finishing more than four lengths clear of third. Assuming she can stay a mile and ration her speed, **LADY CHIC** could be tough while switching to jockey Umberto Rispoli. Not sure how far she wants to run, however. **NAFISA** is a nine-start maiden with five runner-up finishes. She is proven at two turns, and merits respect despite losing five times as the favorite and with a history of surrendering in deep stretch. **AUNTIE** improved when she stretched to two turns, runner-up by less than a length. She did benefit setting a slow pace in that race; this field has more speed. But she is headed in the right direction. **AMERICAN PRIVILEGE** showed promise in her third-place debut last fall racing five furlongs. She wants two turns, just not sure if she is cranked for a top effort first start back.