Date: August 29th, 2025   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Empress Ellie (1st race)

First Race

1. Empress Ellie	2. Ro Town	3. Super Ellie

First post Friday, 3 p.m. Consistent mare **EMPRESS ELLIE** looks solid in this $25k claiming turf mile, having won her last three starts at this level including two wins on the Del Mar course. The pace-pressing mare scored as the favorite early this month, she was claimed by trainer Jeff Mullins, and runs back at the same level. Obvious favorite should be tough to beat. Front-runner **RO TOWN** ran well finishing second to the top choice last out. 'TOWN set the pace, put away her early rival, and got worn down. Good try by 'TOWN. She was claimed by Ron Ellis, who won with 3 of his last 5 first-off-the-claim starters. 'TOWN could sit second behind the likely pacesetter on the rail. **SUPER ELLIE** will rally late, while MADEIRA WINE is the aforementioned rail-drawn front-runner who looks like the speed. Nearly one-third of the turf miles this summer were won by the pacesetter (various rail settings).

Second Race

1. My Hero	2. Grinnell	3. Unique Power

Maiden-40 runner-up at Los Alamitos last out, **MY HERO** drops a notch to maiden-32 while shortening from a route to a sprint. A late-runner in sprints, 'HERO must try to win this five and one-half furlong race rallying from behind. That is okay. Through last weekend, 10 of the 25 summer races at this distance were won from the middle or back of the field. FWIW, 'HERO was a vet scratch from a maiden-20 on Aug. 15. **GRINNELL** is the high-figure entrant based on a 72 Beyer his most recent start nearly four months ago against a higher class of maidens. That race produced three next-out winners; GRINNELL is dropping to his lowest level yet and figures among the favorites. First-time gelding **UNIQUE POWER**, sired by Into Mischief and produced by multiple G1 winner Unique Bella, drops from MSW and cuts back to a sprint. SPRINGS also is first-time maiden-claiming. SEATTLE SURF has speed, and moves up in class after a maiden-20 runner-up comeback.

Third Race

1. Sunglow	2. Helga Brandt	3. Double Bay

SUNGLOW and **HELGA BRANDT**, two-three last out in a similar maiden turf sprint, are the uncreative choices. SUNGLOW ran well. She put away her pace rivals, then got collared by a rival who rallied from the back. Good try by six-start maiden SUNGLOW, who might win with a pressing trip. She is no slam dunk, however. Seven-start maiden HELGA BRANDT chased from third and basically stayed there. It was her first start since last fall, it proved she can sprint in the U.S. She has a right to improve second start back. **DOUBLE BAY** shortens to five furlongs after leading to deep stretch in a MSW turf mile dominated by late-runners. DOUBLE BAY held second, the one-three finishers rallied from next-to-last and last. Good try against the "race shape" by 'BAY, who was making her first stat in more than a year. She worked fast since, and might like the shorter five-furlong distance. JUDICIOUS dueled and cracked as the favorite in her comeback. She can improve second start back.

Fourth Race

1. Sprint Out Pass	2. Hard to Figure	3. Spun Not Stirred

This $25k claiming N2L mile is a good spot to take a shot at a price. **SPRINT OUT PASS** can score an upset returning to dirt and dropping in class. His dirt races this spring in Kentucky were actually okay; he ran in starter allowances both starts since being claimed, and now drops back in for a claim tag. A closer, he faces a problematic pace scenario because this race does not have all that much speed. But 'PASS is back at a level where he fits, his odds should be generous, and he might be able to wear down the speed. Class dropper **HARD TO FIGURE** is likely to start favored and likely to set the pace as he runs for the first time in a claiming race. First start in three months, his easiest chance yet, 'FIGURE is the one to catch as the likely favrorite. **SPUN NOT STIRRED** figures as a contender off his runner-up finish two starts back at Santa Anita. He sputtered last out at LRC, but this group is easier. MIGHTY KAI returns to his preferred surface (dirt), while Los Al-based stretch-out DON'T GET ME WRONG is the main pace rival for likely favorite HARD TO FIGURE. BIGREDSANDRIBEYES might be ranked too low. He crushed maiden-20s with a sky-figh speed figure at LRC. He can win if he runs two alike.

Fifth Race

| **1. No Joke Antares** | **2. Doing Time** | **3. Unrivaled Time** |

NO JOKE ANTARES is ready to stretch out and win this turf mile for maiden 2yos bred in California. 'ANTARES raced evenly both sprints, third and sixth. The race he exits already produced at least two next-out winners; 'ANTARES has a pedigree and running style that suggests he wants to run long. Sired by Practical Joke, his dam was a multiple route stakes winner on turf and synthetic. With two sprint preps under her belt, two turns should be right up his alley. **DOING TIME** improved last out when he stretched to a mile on turf; he finished third at long odds. He is headed in the right direction. First-time starter **UNRIVALED TIME**, sibling to three winners, is a Cal-bred by Kentucky stallion Not This Time. Chances are he needs a prep, but this field did not come up particularly tough. First-time starter THIRD BEER is a sibling to Don'tthinkjustdoit, who romped in his career debut in a turf mile at DMR on Aug. 11, 2022.

Sixth Race

| **1. Ballyvaughan Gig** | **2. El Diablo Rojo** | **3. So I'm Told** |

Front-runner **BALLYVAUGHAN GIG** and late-runner **EL DIABLO ROJO** top this $16k claiming starter. 'GIG wired a Cal-bred allowance turf sprint two weeks ago; he also handles dirt. Although he faces other speed, he might be the speed of the speed. Come and catch him. If the pace gets hot, EL DIABLO ROJO could be along in time. A deep closer, 'ROJO meets a field with plenty of speed to flatter his rally. His last-out fourth was okay; the race was won by the pacesetter. **SO I'M TOLD**, one-two nearly half his 21 dirt starts, has speed but also is versatile. He shortens to a sprint after a creditable third in a turf mile; he wired claiming dirt rivals two back at LRC. ATOMIC DROP adds speed; his starter allowance dirt win two back at LRC puts him in the hunt. NATION will rally late in a race that looks wide open.

Seventh Race

| **1. Uncorked** | **2. Home Game** | **3. The Wild Grazer** |

Runner-up by a nose last out in a stakes, **UNCORKED** is the choice dropping into an allowance turf sprint. UNCORKED ran well in the stakes, but pacesetter Pushiness had the speed-friendly profile in her favor and wired the field. UNCORKED finished strongly, worked twice since, and benefits by a changing course profile. Turf sprints were dominated by speed the first month of the meet, but the profile changed and is now fair to all styles. UNCORKED is trained by Phil D'Amato, who also starts first-time turf, first-time California **HOME GAME**. The latter is making her first start since changing trainers, her pedigree is okay for the switch to turf. Street Sense progeny can run on grass; the dam of HOME GAME was a graded winner on turf. 'GAME runs well fresh, her workouts at Los Alamitos have been fast, she could be an improved filly for her new trainer. Late runner **THE WILD GRAZER** returns from an extended layoff. The stakes-placed filly runs well fresh, and has won over the DMR course. She entered a N2X allowance on Thursday (entered for optional $50k tag), but was stuck on the the also-eligible list. BARBARA T and IMABOUTAGO have speed.

Eighth Race

| **1. Twilight Empire** | **2. Gray Frost** | **3. Ole Silver** |

The outside post (10 of 10) is a challenge for **TWILIGHT EMPIRE** in this dirt mile, but she looked good winning for $8k three weeks ago and is up just one level to $10k. If she can avoid losing too much ground from the outside, she can make it two straight with another pressing trip. **GRAY FROST**, one-two in 12 of 20, returns to California for her first start since early May. She has speed, her two races this spring in Kentucky were solId. Win or lose, she will be involved early. **OLE SILVER** tossed in a clunker last out when favored for $16k claiming. Her runaway win two back for $8k claiming puts her the hunt. She has won at DMR, but her favorite surface seems to be SA. ILLHAVEANOTHERKISS plummets in class from $25k. Her dirt races have not been great, however.