Date: July 18th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar PRINT

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Journalism (8th race)

First Race

1. Comedy Town	2. Otto the Conqueror	3. Gypsy Tears

COMEDY TOWN is the most likely winner of this $25k claiming sprint, based on his runner-up finish two starts back in a highly rated N1X. But he is likely to be over-bet dropping off a subpar fourth-place finish as the favorite. The positives are he is the fastest in the field, likely to set the pace, and George Papaprodromou-trained favorites are reliable in claiming dirt sprints for winners: 25-for-47 (53 percent) the past five years per Formulator. Midwest shipper **OTTO THE CONQUEROR** will be breathing down the pacesetter's neck as he returns to dirt after he set a fast pace and tired on turf in Kentucky. If the top choice falters, 'CONQUEROR would be the first to attack. If both top choices weaken, late-runner **GYPSY TEARS** could be along for the upset. His most recent start was his first in nearly three months, 'TEARS won 2 of his 4 Del Mar starts last year. Off-the-pace surprise?

Second Race

1. Take Revenge	2. Thirsty Caitlin	3. Tashie

A seemingly wide-open field of Cal-bred maiden 2yo fillies sprint five furlongs; first-time starter **TAKE REVENGE** is the tepid choice. Full sister to DEL Mar stakes winner Curlin's Kaos, 'REVENGE has worked fairly well, though Craig Lewis-trained maidens typically race into condition rather than fire first out. Tepid choice only. **THIRSTY CAITLIN** would be a "safe" selection based on in-the-money finishes all three starts in spring at Santa Anita. Debut runner-up by a head, she squandered a two-length lead second time out and missed by a nose, then faltered on the lead last time and finished third when she stretched to this five-furlong trip. She will be involved in the pace scenario. Stablemates **TASHIE** and PAVULAR have worked fairly well, in company from the gate June 28. Both are by a sire who gets a high percent of 2yo debut winners Pavel 2yo progeny have won first out at a 19 percent clip (7-for-36) according to Formulator. TASHIE is a sibling to multiple stakes-placed Cashed; PAVULAR was produced by a dam who won her career debut. This race is a scramble.

Third Race

1. Zip Me Up	2. Berry Valley	3. Pavel Is Appealing

A solid maiden win gives **ZIP ME UP** a license to win right back in this allowance turf sprint for Cal-bred fillies and mares. ZIP ME UP, sired by Om and produced by outstanding turf sprinter Unzip Me (10 stakes wins), has speed for a pressing trip over a five-furlong course that was kind to speed last year with the turf rails down. Seven rails-at-zero turf sprints produced two gate-to-wire winners and two winners that pressed from second position. That is where ZIP ME UP should be positioned.

BERRY VALLEY ran well in her comeback following a one-year layoff, runner-up on dirt at Los Alamitos. The late-running, five-win veteran probably wants farther than five furlongs, but she will be rolling late and is proven on turf. **PAVEL IS APPEALING** is rounding into form, third start back following an extended layoff. Six and one-half furlongs last out was slightly out of reach; she finished second. Five furlongs is just right for the pace-presser.

Fourth Race

1. Holmby	2. Quattro Passi	3. Janie Not Jeanie

A pair of Bob Baffert trainees merit top billing in this maiden sprint for 2yo fillies. **HOLMBY** and **QUATTRO PASSI** have worked very well in company, with little separation. HOLMBY is by first-crop sire Corniche, whose debut 2yos are 3-for-11. QUATTRO PASSI is by Girvin, whose 2yo progeny have won at a 19 percent clip first time out. Close call between two talented stablemates; Baffert runners typically come out firing. **JANIE NOT JEANIE** has an experience advantage, having finished a creditable second in her debut at SA. The race already produced a next-out winner (Blockade). Also-eligible VINO VINO VINO is believed to be precocious; DASH worked a sharp half-mile from the gate last weekend and is ready to fire; HONKY TONK GIRL is a second-time starter from a stable that is deadly with second-start maidens.

Fifth Race

1. Ya'll Come	2. B Grayson	3. Kid Dynasty

YA'LL COME is the horse to beat in this $16k claiming N3L sprint based on his better-than-looked fourth as the favorite last out. He had to wait for room into the stretch, got stalled behind runners, switched outside and was running late to miss by only a length. That race already produced two next-out winners, Y'ALL COME gets a rider switch to Armando Ayuso and ran well over the DMR track last fall. **B GRAYSON** is back doing what he does best, which is sprint on dirt. He was overmatched last out in a N1X route; he scored decisive victories his last two claiming dirt sprints. **KID DYNASTY** enters off a dominating comeback win at Los Alamitos that earned the highest last-start figure in this field. That was his first start in two months. But can he run two alike? He usually regresses second start back. If he reproduces his LRC win, he could win again. It's just that he has never run good ones back to back. Third preference, regardless.

Sixth Race

1. Net Par	2. Golden Club	3. Dick Ira Bong

A troubled third-place debut by **NET PAR** stamps him the horse to beat in this maiden sprint for Cal-bred 2yos. Full sibling to stakes winner Madison Rae, NET PAR was favored to win his debut, but things went wrong at the break. He hopped, was bumped, and off slow. He rushed forward to chase, and held third in a creditable effort that was validated when runner-up Fumano's Fire won his next start. NET PAR only needs a clean break to score second out. **GOLDEN CLUB** is a Clubhouse Ride firster with a pair of sharp recent gate works including a July 2 drill in which he reportedly was best over race-2 starter Take Revenge. **DICK IRA BONG**, named after the renowned Air Force pilot from World War II, is probably just prepping, as are most firsters from this stable. He is worth a look at a

big price, however. First-time starter FREEDOM SINGS has a bunch of short, fast works that suggest he might have speed. The truth is, top choice NET PAR looks tough.

Seventh Race

1. Centrodelantero	2. Packs a Wahlop	3. Midnight Strike

Close call in this N1X turf mile between **CENTRODELANTERO** and **PACKS A WAHLOP**, a pair of 6yo veterans entered for the $50k optional claim tag. CENTRODELANTERO drops from a series of N2X races that included third-place finishes two and three back. He won his only DMR start last fall. PACKS A WAHLOP also is proven over the DMR turf, he is a two-time winner here. Freshened two months after a close third vs. similar at SA, 'WAHLOP has more tactical speed than his main rival and could get a great trip positioned second behind the likely pacesetter directly to his inside. **MIDNIGHT STRIKE**, back-to-back runner-up at this level, will be rolling late. HACKING IT UP is the aforementioned likely pacesetter. During the 2025 summer meet, only 2 of the 19 rails-at-zero turf miles were won by the pacesetter.

Eighth Race

1. Journalism	2. Full Serrano	3. Shea Brennan

JOURNALISM should be favored for all the right reasons (class, speed, condition), though 2024 BC Dirt Mile winner **FULL SERRANO** will test him in the G2 San Diego Handicap at a mile and a sixteenth. This is a drop in class for JOURNALISM, who has been banging heads and running well against the country's top older horses. A three-time G1 winner last year, in the money all three Triple Crown races, he meets easier after highly rated third-place finishes in the Met Mile and Oaklawn Handicap. He looked strong working a sharp five furlongs last weekend at SA, there is pace in this race for him to run at, and if he avoids trouble while reunited with jockey Umberto Rispoli, JOURNALISM can deliver at a short price. On paper, he is simply the best horse in the field. And it's really not close. FULL SERRANO, 3-for-5 over the DMR main track, is no slouch. He was best when he finished fourth in the G3 Oaklawn Mile last out (stumbled, big middle move); his campaign was interrupted with a foot issue. Recent works are strong, he likes the DMR track, runs well fresh, and should be involved in the pace scenario. Cal-bred stakes winner **SHEA BRENNAN** is a candidate to outrun his odds. His comeback stakes win last month was decisive, he trained forwardly since, and at age 4 is poised for the best season of his career. MC VAY has a longshot look off his fast N1X win two back; MIRAHMADI finished second in this race last July, but this is his first start since then. THE GOAT, G1 winner in Chile, surprisingly set the pace in his U.S. before he tired. He can improve second start back. IRON MAN CAL, gelded prior to his N2X turf win last out, has worked very well on dirt and is a longshot possibility in a race that figures to be won by the favorite.

Ninth Race

1. Raiding Party	2. Lookin At Diamond	3. Marjoram

Lightly raced Kentucky shipper **RAIDING PARTY** can win the G2 San Clemente Handicap, a turf mile for 3yo fillies, based on her ridiculous allowance victory last out at Churchill Downs. Making just her third start and breaking from the outside post at one mile, 'PARTY was parked five-wide on the first turn, four-wide the far turn, yet still came away to win by more than two lengths. Incredible

win, actually. She ships to California for trainer Brendan Walsh, drew the inside post where she can save ground, and looks like a special filly. San Clemente favoritism is uncertain, but FWIW, favorites won six of the last seven. Locally based **LOOKIN AT DIAMOND** ran better than the line looks last out, third with a wide trip in a $100k stakes at a mile on turf at Santa Anita. Impressive maiden winner two back, 'DIAMOND raced three- and four-wide midfield last time, was passively ridden into the lane, then kicked late to miss by only a length and a half. It was only the third start of her career; she has improved each start. She gets a beneficial rider switch to Rispoli. **MARJORAM** misfired last out on dirt, with an excuse. She had missed a work, and also may prefer turf. G3 turf sprint winner two back on the hill at SA, she is bred to handle a mile. Back on preferred footing, expect a return to form. GROUND SUPPORT, in from Kentucky, won a G2 last year as a 2yo, and finished third over the DMR turf course in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf. Her recent comeback was her first start in nearly eight months; she should improve second start back.

Tenth Race

1. Faran	2. Magnify	3. Pure Madness

FARAN must improve off his modest debut sprint victory to win this N1X route. Expectations are that he will do just that. A $3.4 million yearling by Not This Time, FARAN reportedly needed his debut, which he won with a low 72 Beyer Speed Figure. Two turns should be up his alley, and this field did not come up particularly strong. Tab for an improved effort second time out. **MAGNIFY** is the field's fastest two-turn horse, runner-up with 90-plus figures two of his last three. He has tactical speed and likes DMR. The last time he raced here, in fall 2024, he won a maiden race by six lengths. **PURE MADNESS** is speed, stretching out from a solid runner-up sprint comeback that was validated when winner The Old Nine wheeled back to win again. 'MADNESS has routed once on dirt, a Cal-bred allowance he crushed by more than six.

Eleventh Race

1. Yep	2. Conquer We Must	3. Koekkoek

The locals in this maiden turf mile are just so-so. It's a good spot for European import **YEP**. The five-start gelding (in the money three times) has worked well for his U.S. debut for a trainer who wins often with this type. Phil D'Amato is 9-for-37 with turf-route maidens making their U.S. debut the past five years. **CONQUER WE MUST** showed ability in his promising runner-up debut three months ago in a maiden turf sprint at SA. He stretches out to a mile, with room to improve second time out. **KOEKKOEK** misfired last out in a sprint, but his first two starts in the U.S. were creditable runner-up finishes in routes. He is a stablemate of top choice YEP. FLAMBOYANT is a first-time gelding for a high-percent trainer-jockey combo.