Date: July 31st, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Volcanologist (8th race)

First Race

1. Liam Smith	2. Not A Sinner	3. Decapo

If he reproduces his last-out dirt romp while switching to turf, and if he can put away multiple pace rivals, **LIAM SMITH** can win this N3L starter allowance. His two wins at Santa Anita were impressive: maiden win setting fast pace, N2L starter allowance romp setting fast pace. He is sired by Midshipman, whose runners can do turf, and it looks like slow recent workouts by LIAM SMITH are teaching him to ration his speed. He is the fastest horse in the field, but racing on unfamiliar footing. He also is one of several front-runners. A contested pace would benefit late-runner **NOT A SINNER**. The latter missed by a head at this level racing six furlongs at SA, and though this five-furlong trip is probably shorter than he prefers, he will be rolling late in a race that could set up for his style. **DECAPO** is speedy, up in class from a front-running N2L win on SA turf. BURNING RUBBER adds speed; I'M OTTER HERE also will be rolling late.

Second Race

1. Little Tinker Elle	2. Jasmina	3. Southern Anton

Gate to wire for Los Alamitos-based **LITTLE TINKER ELLE**? The speedster appears the quickest in the field, she adds Lasix and drops to $16k claiming 3yo fillies after setting the pace and fading vs. tougher at LRC. The speed of the speed, racing five and one-half furlongs, 'ELLE can be long gone. **JASMINA** is a question mark, dropping to $16k claiming after showing speed and stopping in her May comeback. A Cal-bred stakes winner last summer at Del Mar (via disqualification), this is her first start for a claim tag. She figures to be forwardly placed chasing the top choice, and would be among the first to pounce if the pacesetter falters. **SOUTHERN ANTON** returns from Washington in good form. Her third-place finish last out at Emerald Downs, vs. older fillies and mares, was flattered when the winner returned to win again. 'ANTON ran well last summer at DMR; she missed by a nose rallying from behind. She should get plenty of pace to flatter her closing kick.

Third Race

1. Her Names Charlie	2. Golden Bee	3. Vanta

Debut runner-up **HER NAMES CHARLIE** is the one to beat in this turf sprint for maiden 2yo fillies. Her first start was very good. She sped to the lead, opened up, and only got collared in deep stretch by a filly who rallied from next to last. 'CHARLIE finished more than six lengths clear of third. The challenge here is plenty of other speed. The filly directly to her outside is fast, the filly on the rail worked :46.60 from the gate, the filly on the outside worked :46.80 from the gate. The front end could be crowded. First-time starter **GOLDEN BEE** worked a solid half-mile from the gate Saturday morning, and should be dead fit based on her work pattern. However, maidens from this stable generally race into condition rather than fire first out. The same "debut prep" comment applies to **VANTA**, the aforementioned filly breaking from the outside post. She followed her speedy July 17 work with a slower drill July 24 in which she was kept under a firm hold by her rider. She may be learning to ration her speed. TAUSRET is the aforementioned rail-drawn firster who worked fast from the gate two weeks ago.

Fourth Race

1. Speedy Wilson	2. Simple Song	3. Hejazi

SPEEDY WILSON, a three-time winner over the DMR main track including two Cal-bred stakes, should get enough pace to flatter his closing rally even if six furlongs is shorter than he prefers. 'WILSON finished second last out in a Cal-bred stakes won by next-start G2 runner-up Shea Brennan. Drawn outside (post 6 of 7), 'WILSON can rally for the win over a pair of front-runners who face challenging circumstances. Those are **SIMPLE SONG** and G1-placed **HEJAZI**. The rail draw is tough for SIMPLE SONG, but his last two starts were the best of his career. He won a N1X in fast time, then finished second in a G3 sprint. 'SONG is a front-end threat, but he will be pressured by comebacker HEJAZI. The latter has not raced since he finished second last year in the G1 Bing Crosby at DMR. Runner-up all three starts over the DMR track, he will be in the hunt early. This N2X sprint is the ideal spot for a comeback by the "class" of the field, but this race is only a comeback. CAPTIVATOR wired a N1X at SA and adds speed to the field.

Fifth Race

1. Penny Worth	2. Anti Slapp	3. Blame It On Abby

Comeback class dropper **PENNY WORTH** returns from a 10-month layoff in a rock-bottom Cal-bred maiden-12.5k. She did not show any speed in four starts last year vs. Cal-bred special-weight maidens, but she finished okay all four. He work pattern at San Luis Rey Downs looks solid, she is likely to run her best race first start back. The inside post is not a major obstacle in this case. PENNY WORTH is expected to drop out early, and rally late. **ANTI SLAPP** figures to vie for favoritism off a pair of credible efforts in Cal-bred maiden-50s on turf. Her pedigree leans more toward dirt, and she is facing much softer than her first two starts (third, fourth). **BLAME IT ON ABBY** returns to a sprint after she faltered setting the pace around two turns. This is her first sprint start at this low class level, she does have some speed. SHE SPENDSALOT also has speed, and adds blinkers. The longshot is likely to be in the hunt partway at least.

Sixth Race

1. Sand Bagger	2. Tribal	3. Sogno Di Vino

If he reproduces his highly rated runner-up finish last out, **SAND BAGGER** can win this N2L claiming turf route. 'BAGGER improved each start since switching to route racing three starts back; his last was his best yet. He finished six lengths clear of third, earned a big number, and has enough natural speed to be forwardly placed saving ground on the rail. **TRIBAL** merits a chance on the front end as he finally returns to a proper class level. He raced over his head his last three starts, and now drops from N3L claiming to N2L claiming. Notwithstanding a sporadic work pattern, TRIBAL fits on class, speed and pace. **SOGNO DI VINO** drops in for a claim tag third start back; NINETEENTH HOLE drops from Cal-bred N1X. PRECISION stretches out as a pace factor along with second preference TRIBAL

Seventh Race

1. Pavlovian	2. Start the Ride	3. Lit

A deep field of Cal-bred 3yos race seven furlongs in the $150k Real Good Deal Stakes. The call is **PAVLOVIAN**, who meets state-breds after finishing last in the Kentucky Derby and next-to-last his most recent start in a G3 in Kentucky. PAVLOVIAN was good enough in spring to win a $500,000 stakes at Sunland, and finish second in the G2 Louisiana Derby. This restricted stakes is his best chance since early this year. **START THE RIDE** also drops in class and goes route to sprint following a runner-up finish in the Los Alamitos Derby. 'RIDE defeated top choice PAVLOVIAN their only meeting in the Cal Cup Derby in January. This is the first sprint start for START THE RIDE, who drew outside and meets a field with pace to flatter his rally. **LIT** won his debut more impressively than the 73 Beyer suggests, and has trained exceptionally well since. The gray gives away an experience advantage to seasoned rivals in this stakes, but LIT reportedly has improved in his works following his "geared down" maiden win. COURTSIDE ACTION moves up following a pair of runaway wins to begin his career. The two-for-two gelding must overcome the rail post, however. HE'S A KNOCKOUT cuts back to a sprint after he faded in a turf route. This is his first start on dirt, he has worked well on the footing. KING'S RIDE finished only a half-length behind START THE RIDE last out. Lots of chances in this year's Real Good Deal, favorites are 5-for-11 in the race since Del Mar returned to dirt in 2015.

Eighth Race

1. Volcanologist	2. Impressionistic	3. Helping Hand

VOLCANOLOGIST can win this Cal-bred maiden turf route, as she stretches out for the first time in the fourth start of her career. Each recent start has been better than the start before; her last was her best yet. Tucked third on the rail, she got trapped and had to wait for room into the stretch, then finished fast along the inside before she galloped out willingly after the wire. VOLCANOLOGIST ran that six-furlong race like a filly that wants this mile distance. She figures for a forwardly placed trip, if not set the pace outright. **IMPRESSIONISTIC** has something the top choice lacks. That is, experience around two turns. IMPRESSIONISTIC improved a ton second out when she stretched out. She rallied from last to third in a race won by the pacesetter. Solid effort by the Smiling Tiger sibling to Canadian Grade 1 turf-route winner Full Count Felicia. **HELPING HAND** finished a creditable fourth in her debut two months ago. That turf sprint at SA turned out super-productive, with four next-out winners. 'HAND is likely to improve second time out. MARLA HOOCH stretches out for the first time; she "won" a maiden race three back but was disqualified.