Date: August 1st, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Sacred Sound (1st race)

First Race

1. Sacred Sound	2. Maggles McGee	3. Balaza

The speed of the field, **SACRED SOUND** should win this turf sprint for Cal-bred maidens with a front-running/pace-pressing trip outside the speedster on the rail. SACRED SOUND improved this year at age 4 including a career-best effort last out when she set fast fractions to deep stretch and tired to third. Now making her third start of the season, she can be long gone. **MAGGLES MCGEE** has an opposite style. The late-running filly returns from a three-month layoff while cutting back from two turns to one. Runner-up the first two starts of her career in longer turf sprints at Santa Anita, she will be cutting back to a five-furlong trip that might be shorter than preferred. Second preference nonetheless, rallying from behind. **BALAZA** showed ability last year as a 2yo, fourth and third in Del Mar maiden turf sprints. Lasix on for her comeback, she will be rolling late. LET IT BEGIN is the aforementioned rail-drawn pace rival for the top choice.

Second Race

1. Pop Rox	2. Oveta's Hobby	3. Miz Clubcali

Veteran win type **POP ROX**, from the Midwest, and local class dropper **OVETA'S HOBBY** top this $10k claiming sprint. The call is the shipper. POP ROX won four straight in winter in Florida, then tired to fourth last out in a starter allowance in Kentucky. Freshened two and one-half months, dropping in class for a productive stable, 'ROX is the fastest starter based on her winter form in Florida. As for East Coast trainer Jose D'Angelo, his shippers to DMR always command respect. D'Angelo is 4-for-9 overall at Del Mar. OVETA'S HOBBY is taking a curious drop in class following a runner-up finish for $20k at Los Alamitos. She added front wraps that race, and now has her claim price cut in half. It's a sketchy pattern, but if she fires, she will be right there. **MIZ CLUBCALI** fits based on her off-the-pace win two starts back; she subsequently finished third as the favorite and was claimed. She will be rolling late, she has won over the DMR track.

Third Race

1. Brockster	2. Ocean Club	3. High Ambition

Two-year-old maidens sprint five furlongs on turf, first-time starter **BROCKSTER** gets the call for trainer Luis Mendez and jockey Edwin Maldonado, who teamed last week to win a turf sprint with older first-time starter Bullwhacker. BROCKSTER has posted several bullet workouts, as if he also will fire first time out. **OCEAN CLUB** is here from Ireland, where he split the field last out in a maiden race after he "dwelt" at the start according to European commentary. 'CLUB also hesitated leaving the gate in a July 19 workout at DMR. Despite apparent gate issues, 'CLUB does have speed. He should keep the top choice honest. **HIGH AMBITION** finished a respectable third in his debut at Gulfstream Park; D'Angelo-trained maidens typically improve second time out (11 percent debut wins, 18 percent second-start maidens).

Fourth Race

1. Keepsmesane	2. Romanticon	3. Cross Fever

KEEPSMESANE, third after setting the pace as the even-money favorite last out in a Cal-bred maiden-50, drops to Cal-bred maiden-20 as the obvious choice. Doug O'Neill's trainer stats with 2yo maiden-claiming favorites is outstanding: 16-for-31 the past five years (52 percent). **ROMANTICON** basically went through the motions in his fifth-place debut in the same race the top choice exits. He benefits by a class drop second time out, and should improve with a race under his belt. First-time starter **CROSS FEVER** appears to have worked well at Los Alamitos. His trainer Vann Belvoir already scored two upsets this meet with debut 2yos in maiden-claiming races. Both winners trained at Los Al, same as CROSS FEVER.

Fifth Race

1. On the Whim	2. Old Pal	3. Mr. Disrespectful

ON THE WHIM seeks his second victory in the California Dreamin' Stakes, a Cal-bred turf route he won in 2024. Although winless since autumn 2024, his recent form is solid: runner-up in a pair of Cal-bred stakes at SA, sandwiched around a bad-trip fifth in an allowance. 'WHIM has tactical speed to keep the front-runner to his inside within striking range, 'WHIM should be the first to attack if/when the

pacesetter falters. **OLD PAL** is making his first start since November when he missed by less than a length in a Grade 3 at DMR. OLD PAL has run well off layoffs, this race was always his summer target, he will be rolling from behind. He needs speed to flatter his kick, and he might get it in the form of likely pacesetter **MR. DISRESPECTFUL**. The latter is in the best form of his career. He scored decisive victories two recent sprints at Los Alamitos, he has carried his speed two turns on turf, and he is likely to make the lead. They'll have to catch him to beat him. FWIW, favorites won this race four of the last seven years, 10 of 20 overall.

Sixth Race

1. Big Reflections	**2. D Day Sky**	**3. Forza Azzurri**

A weak $10k claiming N2L route begins the Saturday pick six. **BIG REFLECTIONS** won a relatively fast maiden-20 two back at LRC; the runner-up crushed his next start. The next start by 'REFLECTIONS was not bad; he raced wide and split the field in a $25k claiming N2L route. Now he drops to the bottom claiming N2L level for the first time. **D DAY SKY** is a 1-for-19 gelding in from the Midwest. He has faced better, he often hits the board, and could not ask for a softer spot to make his California debut. Class-drop late-runner **FORZA AZZURRI** will pick them up late.

Seventh Race

1. Princesses Phoebe	**2. Silkie Sevei**	**3. Zuraya**

This maiden-50 turf mile is a prime opportunity to take a shot at a price. The fourth-place debut by **PRINCESSES PHOEBE**, in a turf route at Belterra Park in Ohio, was much better than it looks. It gives the second-start filly a shot to spring an upset. She hopped slightly at the break in her debut, was wrangled back toward the rear of the field, picked up steam on the far turn, finished well while green, then galloped out willingly past the wire. That race already produced at least two next-out winners. 'PHOEBE is likely to start at generous odds; she can spring an upset if she improves as expected. **SILKIE SEVEI** is a seven-start maiden dropping for the first time into the maiden-claiming ranks. The speed figures she earned vs. MSW rivals in her four U.S. starts are fast enough to make her one of the favorites in this easier spot. **ZURAYA** improved last out when she dropped to maiden-50, added blinkers, and finished second in a sprint. She has found her proper level, and figures as a front-running/pace-pressing contender.

Eighth Race

1. Ghost of Midnight	**2. Uncle Chilly**	**3. San Saba**

GHOST OF MIDNIGHT returns from Oaklawn Park, where he ran well facing good rivals all winter and spring. He did not win any of his four starts at OP, but his efforts were creditable including a runner-up finish last out. A two-time winner over the DMR track early in his career, 'MIDNIGHT meets a field with speed to flatter his off-the-pace rally. He is 6-for-14 overall, already won this condition, and is entered for the optional $50k claim tag. **UNCLE CHILLY** won three straight after being claimed, then met his match last out when he stumbled at the start of a Cal-bred stakes and finished fifth. Freshened two months, working regularly, 'CHILLY should fire from slightly off the pace. **SAN SABA** is a lightly raced 4yo making just the fourth start of his career. He is fast enough to establish position from the rail and might be the one they have to catch.

Ninth Race

1. Ballyvaughan Gig	**2. Grey's Boy**	**3. Owl**

In a Cal-bred allowance turf sprint loaded with speed, the call is the speed of the speed. That might be **BALLYVAUGHAN GIG**, who shortens to five furlongs after setting the pace and finishing third in a hillside race at six and a half. His previous start, a claiming win at this five-furlong trip, was a win contesting a fast pace. 'GIG can cope with heat, he ran well over the DMR course all three starts last year. **GREY'S BOY** figures off his maiden-50 debut victory two back; he subsequently misfired in a starter allowance. Off three months, he runs well fresh (debut winner), and he showed in his win that he can rally from off the pace. He'll probably have to rally from behind in this speed-laden field. **OWL** won't get the same soft trip he benefited from in his maiden win last out, but he has started only twice. Perhaps he will learn to rally from behind like his full brother Sir Rocket, N1X runner-up in a turf sprint here Sunday. Longshot KERRY GOLD will rally from behind, second start back from a layoff, in a race that could set up for a closer.

Tenth Race

1. Majestic Oops	**2. Chasten**	**3. Om N Joy**

The local filly-mare dirt division looks ripe for a new shooter. **MAJESTIC OOPS** and **CHASTEN**. both from out of state, are top contenders in the Grade 1 Clement L. Hirsch Stakes. MAJESTIC OOPS will face slightly lesser company than recently in the Midwest (Splendora, Immersive, Nitrogen). 'OOPS was previously trained by Dan Ward; she makes her first start since transferring to California trainer Phil D'Amato. Her speed figures are appropriate for this group, she has worked well over the DMR track, and she exits a productive

stakes in Kentucky. She finished third, the one-two finishers won G2 stakes next out. CHASTEN, sibling to 2022-23 champion older mare Idiomatic, has reached top form this year as a 4yo. She crushed a soft field in fast time last out at Delaware Park, and will strike while the iron is hot in this tougher spot. She might be good enough. **OM N JOY** took advantage of an ideal pace scenario last out to win a G2 rallying from last. Although she may or may not get the same pace set-up, there is no doubt she improved as the season has unfolded. She had a huge work July 19 in :46.20, then slowed down last weekend in her final drill, by design. OM N JOY is good, and getting better. SIMPLY JOKING and SEISMIC BEAUTY did each other no favors last out when they dueled through a hot pace and weakened. SIMPLY JOKING did well to finish second, she will stick around farther if she avoids another duel. SEISMIC BEAUTY is speed, she won this race last year, and is a threat to wire the field depending on the pace scenario. FWIW, favorites are 8-for-11 in this race since DMR reinstalled dirt. Many of those winning favorites were low-odds standouts; this field does not include such a runner.

Eleventh Race

1. Fausto	2. Timayyyy	3. Born to Rock

Career maidens **FAUSTO** (11 starts) and **TIMAYYYY** (8 starts) top this maiden-50 turf route. The call is locally based FAUSTO, runner-up both starts at this class level, with a rail draw to save ground and enough finish to grind out an overdue maiden win. TIMAYYYY ships in following a better-than-looked fourth at Churchill Downs in a maiden-75. He had to wait for room briefly on the far turn, weaved through traffic into the lane, and finished well inside. That race already produced three next-out winners, TIMAYYYY is the best late threat, dropping slightly in class. **BORN TO ROCK** split the field his only start this year against MSW rivals; he drops to maiden-claiming for the first time in just his second start of the year. PLETTENBERG BAY was gelded since his seventh-place debut in a MSW sprint in January.