Date: August 8th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Throwthefirstpunch (10th race)

First Race

1. Character	2. Another Warrior	3. High Pronto

Peter Miller-trained first-time starters **CHARACTER** and **ANOTHER WARRIOR** both appear ready to fire in this auction race for 2yo maidens (horses sold or RNA for $150k or less/optional $150k claiming). Miller's win rate with debut 2yos is trending up; he won with a firster last week (Off in the Corner) and is 3-for-16 this year with debut 2yos. CHARACTER has worked well including a :49 half-mile on Sunday. The colt was kept under a hold, and wanted to do more. He is by first-crop sire Cyberknife, whose 2yo progeny are 4-for-21 first out. ANOTHER WARRIOR also wanted to do more in his final work, a :48.40 half. 'WARRIOR is by first-crop sire Jackie's Warrior, whose 2yo progeny are just 2-for-28. Regardless, both Miller trainees look "live." **HIGH PRONTO** set the pace and tired in his maiden special-weight debut. That race was won by Hughes, a top contender in the G3 Best Pal Stakes (race 3). 'PRONTO takes a subtle class drop; he should move forward with a race under his belt. BILLY GOAT and BOSS MAN BOLT finished fourth and second, respectively, last out in a similar auction race. But the figure was modest, and the top four finishers were bunched at the wire.

Second Race

1. Hannah Buckle	2. Eternal Reign	3. Nikolina

HANNAH BUCKLE gets class relief dropping into a N3L starter/optional $50k claiming turf mile after being repeatedly foiled against allowance and stakes company. She does like the Del Mar turf, where she scored both wins. The speed figures she earned recently against better company are high enough to win at this level. 'BUCKLE runs well fresh, likes the course, and should fire first start in two months. **ETERNAL REIGN** missed by a head at this N3L starter level last out, when favored at odds-on. She ran well in that Santa Anita race, she also ran well both starts last year at DMR, and she has more tactical speed than the top choice. She is trained by Phil D'Amato, who also entered sprint-to-route **NIKOLINA**. The latter is quick enough to make the lead in the first route of her career, although route front-runner WILDFIRE PRINCESS also has speed and will not be far away.

Third Race

1. Kennyten	2. Hughes	3. He Is No Lie

Impressive debut winners **KENNYTEN** and **HUGHES** face stakes-placed **HE IS NO LIE** in the G3 Best Pal Stakes. Close call, three good colts. KENNYTEN crushed by more than seven lengths two months ago at Santa Anita; his 92 Beyer Speed Figure is the highest this season by a 2yo. KENNYTEN worked well since including a sharp team drill last weekend at DMR in :59.60 that was the day's fastest five furlongs. He worked in company, rallied outside, and ran past his workmate. Good drill. Drawn outside where he can apply pressure, Vladimir Cerin-trained KENNYTEN gets the call over Bob Baffert-trained HUGHES. The latter won his debut by six lengths at Los Alamitos, and reportedly progressed since. Baffert has won this 2yo stakes 12 times including the last four. HE IS NO LIE followed his runaway debut at SA with an impressive runner-up finish in a stakes at Churchill Downs. 'LIE sped to the lead, put away his pace rival, opened up in the stretch, then got collared late. Super try by the speedster, who drew post 2 and must use his gas. Come and catch him. FWIW, favorites are 6-for-11 in this race since dirt was reinstalled in 2015.

Fourth Race

1. Agency	2. Code Duello	3. Tigerhon

Comeback dropper **AGENCY** can win this $25k claiming turf sprint, his first start since last August. He has run well fresh, his trainer does well with layoff runners, and AGENCY has never raced at a claiming level this low. Five furlongs is a bit short, but AGENCY should fire first start back. **CODE DUELLO** did everything but win last out, runner-up for a $40k claim tag after battling for the lead all the way to the wire. Dropping slightly in class, 'DUELLO should vie for favoritism and is an obvious contender with an up-front trip. **TIGERHON** is a three-time winner over the DMR turf, making his first start in two months. He will rally late, while REGAL PATRIOT is a two-time DMR turf sprint winner, dropping from N2X for his first start since November.

Fifth Race

1. Ima Track Star	2. Chapter One	3. Desert Kat

Class droppers **IMA TRACK STAR** and **CHAPTER ONE** are tough to separate in this $12.5k claiming N2L sprint. Both scored fast maiden-claiming wins two back, both were then overmatched vs. winners in starter allowance races. IMA TRACK STAR ran better last out; he dueled to deep stretch before tiring to fourth. Good try vs. tougher than these. He'll have to use his speed, because CHAPTER ONE will be breathing down his neck from the outside post. Both top choices have the same style, something must give. If they compromise each other on the front end, **DESERT KAT** could be sitting on the catbird seat. He outran his odds to finish second at this class level three weeks ago, and figures for a similar trip positioned right behind the leaders.

Sixth Race

1. Hazaka	2. Path To Power	3. Constitution Andi

This maiden turf route is a good spot to take a shot with D'Amato-trained Europeans making their second U.S. start. **HAZAKA** and **PATH TO POWER** both could offer wagering value; both were off the board in their local debuts. HAZAKA was keen and unrelaxed; he flattened out in the stretch. The colt has more speed than he was allowed to show, and this mile and one-eighth turf race came up light on pace. If HAZAKA uses his speed, he could find himself on top of easy splits. PATH TO POWER merely ran around the track in his U.S. debut in the same race as his stablemate. One mile was too short. His only start overseas was a runner-up finish at a mile and one-quarter. He stretches out to a mile and one-eighth, and was gelded since raced. Both stablemates are candidates to outrun their odds. **CONSTITUTION ANDI**, third in a dirt stakes last out, returns to turf and maiden ranks. His third-place finishes on turf this spring at SA compare favorably to these. CONQUER WE MUST might be ranked too low. Runner-up both starts including her first route three weeks ago, 'MUST enters without a knock other than low odds. He is a definite contender.

Seventh Race

1. Just Work It Out	2. Take Revenge	3. Big Blast

JUST WORK IT OUT, a California-bred by Kentucky stallion Justify, has trained like a filly with quality. She was much best in her final team workout last weekend. Based on pedigree, 'WORK IT OUT might be the class of the field. Her trainer John Sadler is 2-for-4 this season with debut 2yos. **TAKE REVENGE** was only prepping in her debut three weeks ago. She was not quick, raced midpack, rallied wide and finished evenly in a good schooling run. Maidens trained by Craig Lewis typically improve with racing. **BIG BLAST** has been working in company with unraced stablemate Big Twist, a contender Friday in race 5. A good effort by Big Twist would flatter the workout form of BIG BLAST.

Eighth Race

1. Take A Breath	2. Whiskey Decision	3. Innovative

The absence of filly-mare turf division leader Thought Process (foot issue, works interrupted) from the G2 Yellow Ribbon Stakes makes it a competitive race. Locally based **TAKE A BREATH** and East-to-West transplant **WHISKEY DECISION** merit top billing. TAKE A BREATH rose through the ranks in winter/spring at SA, where every start by the Mark Glatt trainee was better than the start before. That includes a pair of G3 wins and a solid third behind Thought Process in the G1 Gamely. 'BREATH has been off two months, she ran well on the DMR course last summer, and can mow then down late. WHISKEY DECISION makes her first California start since 2024, when sixth as the favorite in the Del Mar Oaks. Her last-out runner-up in a G3 at Monmouth was flattered when winner Gimme a Nother returned to win the G2 Beverly D. at Colonial Downs. 'DECISION is now trained in California by Michael McCarthy; the mare has slightly more speed than the top choice. **INNOVATIVE** is rounding into form, making only her third start back from a winter break. Runner-up last out in an ungraded stakes race at SA, she is a better filly at age 4, with a license to improve in her third start of the season. East Coast shipper WARMING paired career-best figures her recent starts, G3 win and stakes third. Her last-start third was a mile and one-eighth; she might prefer this shorter mile and a sixteenth trip.

Ninth Race

1. Matt At Five	2. Brunchandcrunch	3. Supernal

In a deep field of Cal-bred allowance sprinters, **MATT AT FIVE** can make amends. He did not have a fair shot last out finishing second vs. similar as the even-money favorite. A speed horse, he did not use his best weapon (speed). He raced inside behind the slow pace, and merely went one-paced. He worked a bullet half-mile since raced, moves to the outside post, switches riders, and with an aggressive strategy shortening one-half furlong to six, he might be the one to catch. The comebacker **BRUNCHANDCRUNCH** makes his first start of the year; he defeated maidens here last summer, runs well fresh and likes the DMR track. His maiden win was more impressive than the modest figure indicates, now he returns from a similar layoff. He should fire first start back. **SUPERNAL** and BOB'S BLUE MOON are veterans who might be ranked too low. SUPERNAL is a multiple winner at this Cal-bred level, entered for the $20k optional claim tag after being claimed for the same price from a decisive win at Los Alamitos. BOB'S BLUE MOON missed by a nose last out; he worked a bullet :59 over the DMR track since raced. He will fire.

Tenth Race

1. Throwthefirstpunch	2. Dr. Filkins	3. Heroic Dose

THROWTHEFIRSTPUNCH "won" a maiden race on dirt last out (disqualified for interference), but his fastest races are on turf. The gelding returns to preferred footing for this Cal-bred maiden-50, his previous three turf routes vs. Cal-bred MSW rivals in spring at SA would be fast enough. His versatile style should allow him to tuck right behind the speed; he can wear them down from slightly off the pace while dropping in for a tag. **DR. FILKINS** has a similar running style, from slightly off. He finished a creditable third both springtime starts at SA at this level; he and the top choice figure to be positioned in similar spots just off the pace. **HEROIC DOSE** looms an upset candidate, changing riders after a tough-trip seventh his most recent start. This is only the third career start for 'DOSE. LUCKY SNIPER returns from a short layoff as a first-time gelding/first-time maiden-claiming. NON DOMICILE, sprint-to-route ROXIIESBADBOY and SAGUNTO will vie for the lead.