Date: August 15th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Will Be (3rd race)

First Race

1. Wolf Hill	2. Apples Y Peaches	3. Harmonique

Career maiden **WOLF HILL** is past due. In the money eight of nine starts, she returns to the maiden ranks after a runner-up finish in the G3 Summertime Oaks at Santa Anita. The winner Mizumi subsequently won the Iowa Oaks; fourth place Daring Pursuit defeated maidens at Del Mar last weekend. The point is, WOLF HILL ran well against a good field. She faces easier, and is simply the fastest in the field. But she is a bridesmaid, with six runner-up finishes and three losses as favorite. Tough to trust, definitely the one to beat. **APPLES Y PEACHES**, who finished behind WOLF HILL both routes, adds blinkers for her first start since late May when she finished a length and a half behind the top choice. 'PEACHES might be the speed of the field, FWIW, only 4 of 17 dirt miles this meet were won by the pacesetter (through Sunday). **HARMONIQUE** has run races fast enough to win at this level. Her career-best effort was her only DMR dirt route, third last year in a fast race.

Second Race

1. Whiskey Bridge	2. Wildcatter	3. Clear and Present

A trio of second-time starters top this turf mile for 2yo maidens. The call is **WHISKEY BRIDGE**, sibling to two-turn graded stakes-placed Robusta. 'BRIDGE ran okay first out in a dirt sprint; he basically split the field. Turf is an uncertainty, but two turns should be up his alley. **WILDCATTER**, a Tapit colt produced by a G3 winner, finished a creditable fourth in his debut three weeks ago. He pressed the pace, missed by only three lengths, and is likely to step forward with that race under his belt. **CLEAR AND PRESENT** pressed and tired in his dirt-sprint debut; he trained like he has more ability than he showed first out. Trainer Phil D'Amato won with 7 of his last 21 second-start juveniles going sprint to a maiden turf route. ITINERARY, a $600,000 Quality Road colt, debuts with a string of solid workouts.

Third Race

1. Will Be	2. Vancougar	3. Lead Pipe Joe

WILL BE figures to win this N3L $20k claiming sprint based on his runaway N2L claiming sprint win last June in Kentucky. WILL BE is utilizing the "no-claim waiver" for his comeback, he has trained well, runs well fresh, and has won over the DMR track. Low odds standout? **VANCOUGAR** drops from higher-level races, with a pressing style and speed figures appropriate for this class level. **LEAD PIPE JOE**, off since May 2025 when he won his second straight, returns as a first-time gelding but with a sporadic work tab.

Fourth Race

1. Fair Question	2. A Oh Gee	3. Delaneys Dreamer

A third-place finish by **FAIR QUESTION** in a similar Cal-bred maiden turf sprint stamps him the one to beat. He did benefit by a perfect trip (saved ground, waited, rail rally), but he missed by only a head at 14-1. Two easy works since, improving pattern, logical choice. **A OH GEE** is a candidate to improve in his second start, following a third-place debut on dirt at Parx. He adds Lasix and has turf influence in his pedigree. Although progeny of Practical Joke typically prefer dirt, 'GEE was produced by a daughter of high-class turf runner Deep Impact. **DELANEYS DREAMER** is racing into condition, making his third career start as potential pacesetter. He dueled into the lane last time before tiring at five and a half. This five-furlong trip might be better for the dirt-to-turf surface switcher.

Fifth Race

1. Miss Hellfire	2. Bourbon and Spice	3. Musical Song

MISS HELLFIRE won her only start by more than 13 lengths; the race was validated when the runner-up returned to win her next start. If 'HELLFIRE reproduces her May 30 debut, she should handle this N2L starter allowance. **BOURBON AND SPICE** makes her California debut after firing all five starts in the Midwest including a N1X runner-up last out. 'SPICE has speed to be forwardly placed, and the advantageous outside post. **MUSICAL SONG** earned the fastest number of her career in her only dirt sprint two starts back. She is back in a dirt sprint here.

Sixth Race

1. Can't Sleep	2. Grand Slam Smile	3. Take Another Card

Sprint-to-route **CAN'T SLEEP** could upset **GRAND SLAM SMILE** in the $150k Solana Beach Stakes at a mile on turf. It won't be easy. CAN'T SLEEP has never routed; GRAND SLAM SMILE and LIBERATION may apply pace pressure. Nonetheless, CAN'T SLEEP looks like the speed of the speed, technically dropping in class to face Cal-breds after finishing second in an unrestricted filly-mare turf sprint stakes. Win or lose, 'SLEEP is the one to catch. GRAND SLAM SMILE, a 10-time stakes winner including the 2025 Solana Beach, is expected to go favored returning to the Cal-bred ranks. Her most recent start can be forgiven. Racing in a G2 dirt sprint, she did not break well, did not produce her typical speed, raced wide, and merely ran around the track to finish fifth behind winner Sweet Azteca. 'SMILE is back where she fits best, against state-breds, training well, and should get a cozy trip positioned second or third. She does not require the lead. **TAKE ANOTHER CARD** has lost to GRAND SLAM SMILE multiple times, but this race could unfold well for the late-runner. 'CARD will get pace to run at. LIBERATION is the aforementioned stretch-out sprinter who could make things difficult for CAN'T SLEEP. LIBERATION is by Omaha Beach; turf should be fine. QUICK KATE bled and misfired last out on dirt. She returns to preferred footing Saturday. ORANGE THUNDER is an improving late-runner up in class off a 19-1 starter allowance upset.

Seventh Race

1. Inshallah	2. Emancipate	3. Articulation

A strong field of promising 2yo maidens sprint five and one-half furlongs, the best-bred colt in the lineup is **INSHALLAH**. Sired by Flightline and produced by Breeders' Cup F&M Sprint winner Bar of Gold, INSHALLAH has worked well for his debut including a sharp half-mile Sunday in which he easily disposed of his work rival. Purchased for $2.1 million at auction this year, INSHALLAH should fire first out for trainer John Sadler. Well-bred **EMANCIPATE**, trained by Bob Baffert, is an Uncle Mo colt produced by top-class filly-mare sprinter Marley's Freedom. EMANCIPATE has worked fast including a team drill July 18 with subsequent Best Pal winner Hughes. The inside post is a potential challenge for EMANCIPATE, but he should be quick enough to establish position. **ARTICULATION** is a Quality Road colt who looked good in his final gate work one week ago (viewed online). DOMENICI has fast works; progeny of first-crop sire Early Voting are 5-for-20 first time out.

Eighth Race

1. Resolve	2. Innovative	3. Vronti

In a competitive edition of the mile-and-three-eighths CTT & TOC Stakes, turf distance specialist **RESOLVE** gets the call despite finishing sixth last out. RESOLVE had an excuse. She was unable to get cover, got rank, sped forward to press the pace, and faded. The race was a toss. RESOLVE was good enough to miss by a nose in a G3 turf stakes in spring, a race fast enough to win this non-graded stakes. RESOLVE is reunited with the last jockey she won with (Joel Rosario), and can produce an off-the-pace victory although she has just two wins and six runner-up finishes. **INNOVATIVE** finished second by a nose last out in a distance stakes at SA, the same race in which top choice RESOLVE finished fourth. INNOVATIVE scratched from the Yellow Ribbon last weekend; this long-distance stakes was always the objective. Program favorite **VRONTI** is a shipper from an East Coast stable that wins regularly in summer at DMR. Graham Motion won with his last four summer stakes runners at DMR. VRONTI finished second in a Saratoga marathon N2X last out; her speed figures rank among the highest in the field. FWIW, favorites won this stakes only twice the last 12 years. KENTUCKY GAL defeated RESOLVE by a nose last out. PULP FICTION looms the upsetter after an excusable seventh-place comeback. She broke from an impossible post (10 of 10) racing a mile, lost a shoe early in the race, and hit heavy traffic into the lane. Her six-length loss might have been better than it looks. Price play?

Ninth Race

1. Cimarron Strip	2. Captain Gabe	3. Treximo

Close call between speedster **CIMARRON STRIP** and comeback dropper **CAPTAIN GABE** in this maiden-16 at five and a half furlongs. The call is the speed. CIMARRON STRIP set honest fractions in his comeback three weeks ago, he led to deep stretch, then got worn down late and finished behind a pair of deep closers. Good try at six furlongs; he shortens to five and a half and is the one to catch. CAPTAIN GABE makes his California debut after finishing third in a maiden-50 at Churchill Downs. He finished in the money all three starts against better than these, and appears to have enough speed to establish a forward position from the rail. **TREXIMO** figures for a forwardly placed trip; he finished only a neck behind top choice CIMMARON STRIP last out. MY BOX OF LIGHT will rally late, while BATTLE SCHOOL moves from the rail to an outside post (7 of 11) and adds blinkers. He has a right to improve off his tough trip from the rail last out.

Tenth Race

1. Steak Fries	2. Lyle The Crocodile	3. Sarwar

The lightly raced and improving Cal-bred **STEAK FRIES** moves up to open N1X following a sharp N1X win vs. Cal-breds. 'FRIES was stretching out for the first time, he produced speed to chase from third, and ran his final quarter-mile in a solid :23.48 to win going away. 'FRIES still has upside in just his seventh start, and only his second route, while facing a field that includes many on the downslope of their careers. Stick with the sharp horse getting better. **LYLE THE CROCODILE** returns from a layoff of nearly six months, with a history of running well fresh and affinity for the DMR turf course (stakes-placed twice). The outside post (9 of 11) is a challenge, but 'CROCODILE looks ready to fire first start back. **SARWAR** drops to N1X after a creditable comeback in a N2X. He set the pace to deep stretch, then tired. It was a decent comeback; SARWAR meets easier this time and runs for the optional $50k claim tag. BEYOND STOKED is a Kentucky shipper who also drops from N2X for the third start of his comeback.