Date: August 20th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Lady Ruth (2nd race)

First Race

1. Tap the Gin	2. Wiki Kane	3. Dr. My Eyes

In an evenly matched N1X turf sprint for 3yos, **TAP THE GIN** gets the call to win his first start in three months. His debut victory in May was strong; he subsequently finished third to next-out stakes winner Proletariat in a N1X. 'GIN was gelded since, he is working well, and drew outside where he can press/stalk the pace. **WIKI KANE** added Lasix in his return 19 days ago, and scored a highly rated Cal-bred N1X win with a field-high 84 Beyer. He did benefit from the fast pace, but he also won his debut in a Del Mar turf sprint last fall. If he runs two alike facing open 3yos, he could win again. **DR. MY EYES**, previously based in the Midwest, ran better than it looks in his California debut on this course. The front-runner was squeezed to last at the break, gradually rallied inside, and finished fourth by two lengths. Solid local debut by a colt who figures to be forwardly placed with a better takeoff. He is dropping in class, from N1X older to N1X 3yos.KILLOURNEY REIGNS is speed, shortening to 5f after setting the pace and tiring to fourth at 6f. CAL'S GOAL defeated WIKI KANE on this course last fall, then finished last in a stakes race. He gets Lasix for his comeback; his maiden win on this course puts him in the hunt.

Second Race

1. Lady Ruth	2. Big Whoosh	3. Dancing With Shari

LADY RUTH, the fastest horse in the race, figures to win at a short price. 'RUTH enters this Cal-bred maiden-12.5k route as a speed-figure standout. Repeatedly in the money vs. maiden-20 fillies and mares, she drops to rock-bottom Cal-bred maiden-claiming with the field's highest figures. 'RUTH will be the first favorite trainer O. J. Jauregui started this year, and likely to win rallying from behind a slow pace. **BIG WHOOSH** earned figures last year against better company that make her a contender. But she has not started since October, and changed trainers. An eight-start maiden, 'WHOOSH has enough ability to win, but the layoff creates uncertainty. **DANCING WITH SHARI** stretches out for the first time in the sixth start of her career. She should be forwardly placed in a race that could unfold at a tepid clip. DAME IT DANI also stretches back out and should be positioned relatively close to the front.

Third Race

1. Missed Fortune	2. Lying Zero	3. Baby T

Second-start 2yo **MISSED FORTUNE** stretches to a mile on turf vs. Cal-bred maidens, two weeks after a respectable fourth-place sprint that was merely a prep. Sired by hot stallion Pavel and considered by his connections to be a two-turn horse, 'FORTUNE actually ran okay first out. He was shuffled back at the start of turf sprint, and went evenly thereafter while wanting a longer distance.

He gets it in this turf mile. 'FORTUNE is a sibling to stakes-winner/multiple stakes-placed Take Another Card. The filly **LYING ZERO** disappointed twice in abbreviated dirt sprints, second and fifth at odds-on, but she could improve on the stretch-out/surface switch even facing colts and geldings. For 2yos, gender is no big deal. 'ZERO is by Kentucky stallion Nyquist, and produced by turf and dirt stakes winner How About Zero. Two turns on turf could be the right trip for 'ZERO. After the top pair, this race is wide open. **BABY T** looms an upset candidate, first-time long, first-time turf, and first-time gelding after he chased and cracked his first three starts in dirt sprints.

Fourth Race

1. Des Doigts	2. Tapalo	3. Come Out Fighting

DES DOIGTS looks like the controlling speed in this $8k claiming sprint as he drops off a decent third for $10k. A three-time winner from seven starts on DMR dirt, 'DOIGTS is likely to set the pace; he should be long gone. **TAPALO**, a stakes winner two years ago at age 3, plummets in class from starter allowance. He is fast enough based on his figures at Santa Anita, though the multiple-level class drop is cause for uncertainty. Second preference, nonetheless. **COME OUT FIGHTING** is a nine-win pro up a notch off a comeback win for $6.25k claiming. The horse he defeated by a nose was dropping off a win for $12.5k. KING APOLLO, an allowance winner in 2025, returns from a layoff of more than a year while showing up near the bottom class level. 'APOLLO should be running late. DEVIL MOON has run races that make him competitive at this level.

Fifth Race

1. Proof He's Fast	2. He's Got Fire	3. Duke of Orleans

Front-runner/class dropper **PROOF HE'S FAST** can win this Cal-bred maiden-12.5k sprint if he puts away the pace rival directly to his outside. 'FAST dueled into the stretch last time in a Cal-bred maiden-50, and now drops to the bottom as the likely pacesetter. Come and catch him. **HE'S GOT FIRE** ran well three starts at this level including a career-best over the DMR track a month ago. He dueled on the front end and only weakened late to finish third behind a pair of late-runners. Good try by the gelding, who figures for as pressing trip positioned just off the top choice. **DUKE OF ORLEANS**, a closing third and closing second at this low class level both starts since returning from an extended layoff, will be motoring late. READYTOBOARD is the aforementioned pace rival for top choice PROOF HE'S FAST. Even though READYTOBOARD has backed up all six starts, his front-running presence in this race could complicate matters for PROOF HE'S FAST.

Sixth Race

1. Vegas Del Oro	2. East Witton	3. Thirsty Eterna

Second-time starter **VEGAS DEL ORO** is the tepid choice in this Cal-bred maiden-50 sprint for 2yo fillies following an okay third-place debut. She dueled inside, hung tough into the lane, then tired to third. Not bad. With a race under her belt, she is likely to improve. First-time starter **EAST WITTON** worked a bullet half-mile from the gate last week, and looks live in her career debut. Two-year-old progeny of Bodexpress have won at an above-average 17 percent clip first time out according to Formulator; the dam of EAST WITTON produced five runners including two debut winners. **THIRSTY ETERNA** rallied from the back in her runner-up debut to finish nearly two lengths in

front of top choice VEGAS DEL ORO. Good try by 'ETERNA, whose 43 Beyer tops this field. PALO ALTO BABY makes her debut following a fast workout at San Luis Rey Downs. The filly's trainer-jockey combo is 2-for-5 with first-time starters this year.

Seventh Race

1. Fight Back	2. Silver I Am	3. Winning Patriot

Lots of ways to go in this Cal-bred N1X dirt mile. The call is last-out third **FIGHT BACK**. He took his game to a higher level when he switched to dirt three back: maiden win, claiming win, Cal-bred allowance third. 'BACK was claimed two starts ago by Andy Mathis, whose second-off-the-claim win rate is 29 percent the past five years. 'BACK gets the nod to wear them down. **SILVER I AM** finished a nose behind the top choice when they met three months ago in a claiming race at Santa Anita. Off since, SILVER I AM returns in a non-claiming race, which is optimistic placement, and has more speed than the top choice. **WINNING PATRIOT** makes his first start on dirt, and first since moving to trainer Jeff Mullins. The gelding went 2-for-6 in turf routes; he was purchased via a digital auction for $95k in June. This is his first start of the year. If he handles dirt, he figures. RODRIGOKNOWS stretches out from a pair of even-paced comeback sprints (fourth, fifth). He won this condition (Cal-bred dirt route) in 2024, and is entered for the $20k optional claim tag. PRINCE DOLCE is fast on turf, but uncertain on dirt. The mid- to upper-80s figures he earned in turf miles this spring at SA would be plenty fast enough. He has not raced on dirt since the first two starts of his career, unplaced in both.

Eighth Race

1. Green Zone	2. Suntory Time	3. Eighties

A difficult Thursday card ends with a difficult $25k claiming N2L turf route for fillies and mares. **GREEN ZONE** the pick after finishing a clear second at this level last month, her first start in two months and first since changing trainers. She can win if she runs two alike. **SUNTORY TIME** finished third in the same race, after another slow start. 'TIME ran her final quarter-mile in a solid :23.49; that race already produced at least two next-out winners. **EIGHTIES** is speed, dropping in class for her second start of summer. She will take the field as far as she can.