**Date:** August 22nd, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

***BEST BET: Kensington Lane (9th race)***

**First Race**

| 1. Born to Rock | 2. Plettenberg Bay | 3. Flamboyant |
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A decent runner-up finish by **BORN TO ROCK** makes him the choice in this maiden-50 turf mile. 'ROCK was dropping from MSW to maiden-50, ran his final five-sixteenths in a solid :29.26, and missed by only a half-length. Likely winner if he runs two alike. **PLETTENBERG BAY** finished a head behind the top choice while racing for the first time in six months. Solid comeback by 'BAY, who has a right to improve second start back. If there is a knock on the last race by the top pair, it is that heavily favored Timayyyy was badly compromised by an equipment malfunction. He finished fourth. The top pair took advantage of the favorite's misfire, both ran well. **FLAMBOYANT** drops to maiden-50 after finishing unplaced in five successive MSW races. The speed figures earned by late-runner FLAMBOYANT compare favorably to the top choices. BOGARTS BUCCHERO drops in class and stretches out as a pace factor. From the rail, 'BUCCHERO is likely to produce speed.

**Second Race**

| 1. My Girl Mia | 2. Cotta Ride | 3. Shady Stripes |
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A maiden facing winners, front-runner **MY GIRL MIA** is the choice to wire this non-winners of two $12.5k claiming sprint. 'MIA set the pace to near the eighth pole last time before she faded to fourth. That race was an auction race at six and one-half furlongs, now she cuts back to five and a half as the one to catch. Last-out maiden-16 winner **COTTA RIDE** would benefit if the speed backs up. 'RIDE won rallying from behind, she clearly likes the Del Mar surface with a win and a second from two starts here. Claimed by Mark Glatt, 'RIDE could get a favorable trip forwardly placed just off the speed, in front of the deep closers. **SHADY STRIPES** set the pace and tired last out at six and a half; she also benefits by the turnback to five and one-half. 'STRIPES is the main pace threat for the top choice. The filly who beat 'STRIPES last out (Pretty Cecy) returned to finish a second against better on Sunday.

**Third Race**

| 1. King of Dragons | 2. Trump Era | 3. Stylishlyacclaimed |
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The longshot **KING OF DRAGONS** is worth backing in this Cal-bred allowance turf route that sets up for his closing style. His last-out fifth-place finish was better than it looks. Last early, he uncorked a premature move, got hung wide while rallying on the far turn and into the stretch, then flattened out. Good race, actually. He switches jockeys after the bad trip, gets pace to flatter his closing kick, and can post a come-from-behind upset in a race with speed to run at. The front-runners include **TRUMP ERA**, who ran super when second last out. That was the same race in which 'DRAGONS finished fifth. The horse who defeated TRUMP ERA by a half-length returned Saturday to win an open N1X. The challenge for TRUMP ERA is pace; he must cope with other speeds including **STYLISHLYACCLAIMED**. The latter has not raced in more than three months (vet scratch July 25), but he runs well fresh and won a maiden race over the DMR turf two years ago returning from a layoff. 'ACCLAIMED has speed, but does not require the lead. FEELING LUCKY has speed, and so does NAFTIS. Another late-runner worth considering is SOGNO DI VINO. Wide-open race, actually.

**Fourth Race**

| 1. Motga | 2. Psalm | 3. Take a Picture |
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Two-year-old maidens at a mile on dirt; a pair of million-dollar first-time starters are the choices. **MOTGA**, purchased for $1.05 million this spring, makes his debut with a string of steady works for Bob Baffert. Tough to win a route first time out, of course. The past five years, Baffert is 5-for-28 with all two-turn first-time starters. **PSALM** was purchased as a yearling for $1.25 million and will make his debut for trainer Michael McCarthy. A full brother to G2 Remsen winner (and debut winner) Maximus Mischief, PSALM looked second-best in both recent half-mile works, but his pedigree suggests two turns will be his deal. McCarthy is 8-for-96 with two-turn first-time starters (all ages, all surfaces) the past five years. Due to their inexperience, the top two are not particularly reliable. **TAKE A PICTURE** has a race under his belt, an okay third in his debut at Ellis Park. That race has not been productive, however. Five runners from the race ran back, producing a single third-place finish. WILL DO ONE stretches out from a fifth-place sprint; FIGHT CLUB is a Flightline firster; BABE'S EMPIRE is the "other" Baffert firster, by Curlin. Tough race on which to take a stand.

**Fifth Race**

| 1. Motorious | 2. Sumter | 3. Sorrento Sky |
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**MOTORIOUS** seeks his fourth victory in the G2 Green Flash. The veteran 8yo ran well finishing second in his allowance comeback last month, which was his first start in more than six months. This stakes race was always his summer target; MOTORIOUS was using the allowance as a prep for this. He is likely to improve second start back over a turf-sprint course on which he has four wins. He will rally from behind, as will 7yo **SUMTER**, who upset the top choice last out. SUMTER has maintained excellent form all year, and is a better horse than he was a year ago when he finished eighth in this race. **SORRENTO SKY**, stablemate of MOTORIOUS, looms the upset candidate. 'SKY was a first-time gelding last out when he finished a length behind SUMTER. Although 'SKY rallied from last in the comeback, he is likely to be more forwardly placed second start back. His connections believe he has improved since he became a "G." MAN O ROSE returns from a five-month layoff with sharp recent works. He has won on turf, but probably is better on dirt. Also, this race is primarily a comeback prep for the E. B. Johnston Stakes next month at Los Alamitos. The main speeds in this race are MAN O ROSE, MONSTER and VIRAT.

**Sixth Race**

| 1. Sea's No Joke | 2. Furiosity | 3. Thebeachisback |
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**SEA'S NO JOKE** and **FURIOSITY**, 2-year-old debut fillies trained by Baffert, look ready to fire. SEA'S NO JOKE looked good on video in her final workout; juvenile progeny of Practical Joke have won at a 14 percent rate first out. FURIOSITY worked in company Aug. 2 with Miss Monica, who exited the workout to win her debut by more than five lengths with an 87 Beyer. FURIOSITY, who was second-best in the work with Miss Monica, came back with a sharp five-furlong gate drill Aug. 13. She is ready to fire; juvenile progeny of Into Mischief have won at a 15 percent rate first time out. The Baffert stablemates look evenly matched. Also-eligible **THEBEACHISBACK** ran better than the line looks in her debut in an auction race. She broke slowly, was rushed, fanned five-wide into the stretch, and finished okay. She is facing tougher here, but has an experience edge over the top two. DEAR DIARY is an Into Mischief firster with solid workouts. In her Aug. 13 work, she was a target for Pacific Classic entrant Subsanador, who was best. MISS MIDTERM is by high-percent debut sire Early Voting, but her female family and leggy physique suggest she wants two turns.

**Seventh Race**

| 1. American Hope | 2. First Peace | 3. Charlie's to Blame |
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The longshot **AMERICAN HOPE** can upset this N2X turf mile that has plenty of speed to flatter his closing rally. Since stretching back out this year, 'HOPE has improved (win, third, better-than-looked seventh). His last-start seventh in the Wickerr Stakes was better than it looks. The race was dominated by speed, 'HOPE lost ground while rallying wide, and ran his final quarter-mile in :22.39 to miss by only three lengths. This easier allowance has plenty of speed to set up his closing kick. The trainer-jockey combo of Brian Koriner and Joel Rosario is 5-for-9 this year. **FIRST PEACE** finished fifth in the same stakes the top choice exits. This is the first allowance race that FIRST PEACE has contested since 2024; he figures for a tucked-in trip right behind the speed while entered for the $100k optional claim tag and facing easier. **CHARLIE'S TO BLAME** fits off back-to-back runner-up finishes at this N2X level. However, the pace scenario is a challenge for the front-runner/pace-presser. Other front-runners include MISCHIEF RIVER, ARRAKIS, CAPTAIN CHOOCHIES and LONESOME STEW. The race actually sets up for a longshot late-runner such as AMERICAN HOPE.

**Eighth Race**

| 1. Magnify | 2. Native Land | 3. Pure Madness |
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**MAGNIFY** can make amends for finishing third as the N1X favorite last out; he gets the call to even the score against one-two finishers **NATIVE LAND** and **PURE MADNESS**. The loss by MAGNIFY last out was partly due to the race shape. The 1-2-4 finishers were forwardly placed; MAGNIFY ran against the grain. He rallied from last to finish third. This field has even more speed, which could set up his closing rally. NATIVE LAND virtually wired the race in which the top choice finished third. 'LAND dueled through a hot pace and refused to surrender. He earned the highest Beyer of his career (94), runs back at the same level while entered for the optional $50k claim tag, and will be forwardly placed again. PURE MADNESS finished second in the same race, it was only his second start of the season. The lightly raced 5yo has never run a bad race (three wins, three seconds from six starts). CLOUSEAU and SANTARENA add speed to the lineup.

**Ninth Race**

| 1. Kensington Lane | 2. Victorious Dream | 3. Raiding Party |
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**KENSINGTON LANE** enters the G1 Del Mar Oaks as the class of the field. G1 winner last month at Saratoga in her U.S. debut; she was a notch below the top 3yo fillies in Europe, where she won a G3. Transferred to California soon after her front-running win at SAR, she has trained well at DMR. Her up-front style suits this nine-furlong turf stakes that is light on pace. **VICTORIOUS DREAM** looms as an upset candidate. Vastly improved this season, each recent start has been better than the start before including an emphatic N1X win last out. It's a

big class hike to G1, but trainer Michael McCarthy upset this G1 last year with last-out N1X winner Velocity. Same pattern this year. **RAIDING PARTY** had a bad trip last month when third in the G2 San Clemente. She broke from the rail, but somehow ended up on the far outside, losing ground while rallying wide on the far turn and into the lane. She finished third in a race that was much better than it looks. She drew a tough post this time (10 of 10), but her trip cannot be any worse than last out. PEANUTBUTTERBOMBE did not have the smoothest of journeys finishing fourth in the San Clemente. GREEN CARRERA arrived last week from Europe; she ran well last out rallying from far back to finish second in a stakes. The DMR Oaks has always been the summer target for GREEN CARRERA. LOOKIN AT DIAMOND ran a sneaky-good third last out, but she subsequently got sick and scratched from the San Clemente.

**Tenth Race**

| **1. Knightsbridge** | **2. Navajo Warrior** | **3. Subsanador** |
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Lots of questions and shippers in the G1 Pacific Classic including **KNIGHTSBRIDGE** from the East Coast. He is the fastest in the field on figures (122 Beyer last out), but racing a mile and a quarter for the first time while facing a host of other speed. KNIGHTSBRIDGE has run well from off the pace, and from post 11 may have the opportunity to establish position into the first turn either setting or pressing in the clear. If the fastest horse stays the distance, it's over with a forwardly placed trip. **NAVAJO WARRIOR** also ships from the East; he moves up in class following a pair of facile G3 wins that earned triple-digit figures. Although he won both races setting the pace, he is effective rallying from just off behind. That is key, because this year's Pacific Classic is loaded with speed. **SUBSANADOR**, G1 winner two years ago, had a shoe malfunction that was partly responsible for his last-start misfire in a G2. He has worked very well for his comeback; his closing style suits the pace scenario. OM N JOY, a filly facing colts and geldings, appears to be in tough. But her off-the-pace style could be beneficial in a race with pace-collapse potential. Other front-runners include Japan shipper FINGER, who wired the field his last two starts; FORGED STEEL, a need-the-lead front-runner; and FULL SERRANO, who is always forwardly placed but might prefer slightly shorter. HIT SHOW will be rolling from behind in a race that should unfold at a strong pace. ORIGINAL SIN is another late-runner who would benefit from a strong pace; a mile and one-quarter should be ideal.

**Eleventh Race**

| **1. King of Gosford** | **2. Detain** | **3. El Potente** |
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**KING OF GOSFORD** moves back up in class into the G2 Del Mar Mile, after a confidence-building win in a restricted stake. 'GOSFORD won a G1 last year at SA, and has returned to top form this year at age 5. His versatility allows him to set the pace or rally from behind. No reason he cannot score right back. **DETAIN** also moves up, following a N2X win that was only his second start in the U.S. He was Group 1-placed in Europe and will be rolling late. **EL POTENTE** is stuck in the outside post (12 of 12), but he has been working well for his comeback. Expect him to produce speed, along with CABO SPIRIT.