Date: August 29th, 2026 **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Himari (3rd race)

First Race

1. Ala Sawab	2. Emancipate	3. Riccelli

ALA SAWAB, well-regarded 2yo colt by Flightline, has shown plenty ability in his workouts. Produced by a stakes winner, 'SAWAB must overcome the rail in this six-furlong maiden race, but he has trained like the goods for John Sadler. **EMANCIPATE** ran better than the line looks in his fourth-place debut two weeks ago. He was sent hard from rail, soon checked and got shuffled back, then raced evenly thereafter in a race won by the exciting Flightline colt Inshallah. EMANCIPATE galloped out willingly after the wire, and is likely to improve with a clean trip. Two weeks does seem like a quick turnaround, however. He is trained by Bob Baffert, who also entered first-time starter **RICCELLI**. Sired by Nyquist, whose 2yos firsters have won at an above-average 18 percent clip, RICCELLI figures to come out firing. Juan Hernandez rode EMANCIPATE first out, but he goes to firster RICELLI instead. Firster GALLANT JACK is the second Sadler entrant; BID finished seventh in the Inshallah race and is likely to improve.

Second Race

1. Yautown	2. Carolina Legacy	3. Ride the Tiger

A handful of droppers are the leading contenders in this maiden-20 sprint. **YAUTOWN** gets the call shortening to a sprint after finishing far back in a maiden-50 route. YAUTOWN is not particularly quick, but there is enough suspect pace to run at in this five and one-half furlong sprint. Basically, he is the fastest dirt horse in the field based on figures. **CAROLINA LEGACY** drops from a MSW debut in which he broke slowly and never really got going. He finished fourth. Off two months, huge drop in class, improvement likely second time out. **RIDE THE TIGER** is speed, drawn outside and dropping from a Cal-bred maiden-50 in which he set the pace and tired to fifth. He and ROSTRON are likely to contest the pace.

Third Race

1. Himari	2. Harmonique	3. No Cap

Based on an impressive debut sprint, the 3yo filly **HIMARI** is the call to wire this entry-level allowance dirt mile. Her pedigree is fine for a route (by Nyquist, from a Tapit mare); Baffert does well with dirt fillies who stretch out off a debut sprint win: 8 for 14 the past five years. HIMARI came out of her win in top shape based on her fast six-furlong drill 12 days ago. The speed of the field, she can be long gone. **HARMONIQUE** has something the top choice lacks. That is, experience around two turns. She scored a decisive maiden win last out at this mile trip; her best two races were her only two Del Mar routes. HARMONIQUE could get a comfortable trip positioned third, and could reel in the favorite if stretch-out sprinter **NO CAP** makes things tough for HIMARI. Two turns is probably

one too many for NO CAP, but she will influence the pace. NO CAP has routed only once, last fall at Santa Anita; she squandered an easy lead in a race won by late-runner SHARED FUTURE.

Fourth Race

1. Wizard of Westwood	2. Gold Foot	3. Druidic

Despite finishing eighth last out at this $16k claiming starter level, front-runner/pace-presser **WIZARD OF WESTWOOD** gets the call to post an upset. He had no chance last time at this turf-mile distance. 'WESTWOOD was caught wide pressing a fast pace, four- and five-wide most of the trip, and weakened. The race was dominated by off-the-pace runners, as all the front-runners fell apart. But this softer-pace field includes only one other front-runner. 'WESTWOOD figures to either set the pace or press the sprinter on the rail, he should not be more than two-wide, and can win with an up-front trip. **GOLD FOOT** finished far in front of the top choice last out, runner-up while benefitting from the fast pace. 'FOOT finished more than two lengths clear of third, and looms the main threat from off the pace. **DRUIDIC** drops in class after being foiled repeatedly in Cal-bred allowance races. The last time DRUIDIC ran at this class level on turf, he finished a close third. Trouble-prone CAISSON finished third in the common race; he also will rally late. GRANDISIMO won the common race, with a rail-skimming trip that will be difficult to repeat.

Fifth Race

1. De Facto	2. Hit the Track Jack	3. Proof He Goes

A return to a sprint and a class drop from Cal-bred MSW to Cal-bred maiden-50 gives **DE FACTO** the edge. His first two sprints (on turf) were respectable fourth-place finishes; in his most recent start long dirt, he pressed and faded. Now he faces easier, at a shorter trip on dirt, and is the tepid choice to wear them down. Looks like enough speed to flatter his rally. **HIT THE TRACK JACK** has more speed than the top choice and will lead as far as he can. His numbers are creeping up, he drops from Cal-bred MSW, and figures to be positioned one-two early. **PROOF HE GOES** missed by only a head last out in a maiden turf sprint from which the winner returned with a fast allowance win. 'GOES does have speed, and he ran well on dirt two starts back. POSITIVE TIMES also has speed. An eight-start maiden, he finished a close second his only previous start at this level, albeit on turf.

Sixth Race

1. Seamless Factor	2. Grazed in a Haze	3. Happy Heatwave

SEAMLESS FACTOR has worked well into this turf sprint for 2yo maiden fillies bred in California. She was second-best in a team work Aug. 21, but her workmate was the colt Golden Sentry, who was coming off a maiden win by nearly four lengths. SEAMLESS FACTOR will be "dropping in class" from the workout into this race for Cal-bred maiden fillies; trainer Carla Gaines started six firsters this summer at DMR: two wins, a second and third. First-time starter **GRAZED IN A HAZE** has shown run in workout replays. The Grazen filly debuts for a stable that rarely wins with firsters, but this filly's works suggest she has ability. **HAPPY HEATWAVE** and PETITE MARIE have an experience advantage. HAPPY HEATWAVE finished an even-paced fourth in her debut; PEITE MARIE finished a closing second in the same race. The third-place finisher from that race (Miss Mo Brown) was scheduled to start as a contender Friday in race 8. A good effort by Miss Mo Brown

would flatter 'HEATWAVE and 'MARIE. Regardless, both second-time starters are likely to improve with a race under their belt.

Seventh Race

1. Septembersixtyfour	2. Matt At Five	3. Roscoe's Brother

SEPTEMBERSIXTYFOUR is qualified to win this N1X dirt sprint after proving last out he can run on dirt. His first six starts were on turf; he finished second last out in a fast dirt sprint. He has tactical speed to race within striking range of the abundant speed, and he can finish. In a competitive race, 'SIXTYFOUR is the choice to reel in the pacesetters. **MATT AT FIVE** moves up a notch after he trounced Cal-breds by open lengths. The speedster faces a lot more speed in this field however, and it is his third start of the meet. Those are potential challenges; the upside is he has thrived through an enterprising campaign; seven starts since his March debut produced three wins, three seconds. **ROSCOE'S BROTHER** faces winners after a solid debut victory; he is the first horse from that Aug. 2 race to run back. HE'S A KNOCKOUT is three-for-three in sprints, including a last-out victory in the Real Good Deal for Cal-bred 3yos. His figures are light compared to his older rivals, however. MO KOKO goes route to sprint and will be rolling late in a race that should unfold at a swift pace.

Eighth Race

1. Hankering	2. Day At the Track	3. Beneficial

Lightly raced **HANKERING** can win this $12.5k claiming N2L sprint with a front-running trip while shortening from six and one-half furlongs to six. Debut winner two back, he ran well at this class level last out. He set a contested pace, put away the favorite (who finished last), then got worn down late to miss by a neck. Claimed off the effort, he benefits by the shorter trip and will be involved in the pace scenario from the outside (post 11 of 12). Comeback dropper **DAY AT THE TRACK** drops to the lowest level of his career, first start in two and a half months. His speed figures against better company compare favorably; he should be rolling from off the pace. **BENEFICIAL** dueled and cracked in his comeback, which was his first start in nine months. He should be fitter second start back, and at very least will keep top choice HANKERING honest on the front end. STANFORD DROPOUT adds speed, BAZOOKA CHARLIE drops significantly in class; MACHO MAN is better than his most recent start indicates.

Ninth Race

1. Big City Lights	2. Stronghold	3. Moonlight

A deep field entered the seven-furlong, G2 Pat O'Brien. The call is Cal-bred **BIG CITY LIGHTS**, making his first start in three months. A six-time stakes winner who runs well fresh, 'LIGHTS finished off the board only twice from 17 starts. His recent works are sharp, his top figures suit this graded stakes, he drew comfortably outside (post 8 of 10), and figures for a pressing trip on or near the lead. G1 winner **STRONGHOLD** is better than his sixth-place finish last month in the six-furlong G1 Bing Crosby. He was rated off the pace, did not establish a forward position, and finished sixth. Perhaps six furlongs was too short; this seven-furlong race was always his summer objective. While STRONGHOLD is expected to use his tactical speed to be forwardly placed, he must overcome the inside post in a big field. Not sure what type trip he can orchestrate from the rail, but if

he can establish a forward position, and somehow get a clean trip, he fits. **MOONLIGHT** rallied from last to third in the Bing Crosby; he benefits by the additional furlong of this seven-furlong race. MOONLIGHT will be rolling late. MARCH OF TIME is an allowance-caliber 5yo rounding into form in his third star following an extended layoff. DR. VENKMAN might be listed too low. He won this race last year, but neither start this year has been up to his typical high standards. Fifth last out in the six-furlong G1 Bing Crosby, 'VENKMAN does benefits by the additional furlong.

Tenth Race

1. Gold Phoenix	2. Atitlan	3. Test Score

Veteran 8yo **GOLD PHOENIX**, whose six Del Mar stakes wins is a record for the track, seeks another in the G2 Del Mar Handicap. 'PHOENIX has been here before. He won this mile and three-eighths turf stakes the last four years, and enters off a fast-closing upset in a nine-furlong G2. He prefers this longer distance. 'PHOENIX is as good as ever, continues to train well, and enters as a deserving choice. But this field includes several worth rivals. Those include upset candidate **ATITLAN**, high-class shipper **TEST SCORE** and MONDEGO. The fourth-place comeback by ATITLAN in the one-mile Wickerr Stakes was the ideal prep for a 5yo who runs best at a mile and a quarter and beyond. ATITLAN finished well in the Wickerr, only a length and a half behind next-out G2 winner King of Gosford. With a strong prep under his belt, stretching out another furlong, ATITLAN may have the best chance to upset the favorite. East Coast shipper TEST SCORE commands respect as one of the top two betting choices. G1 winner in January, G1 runner-up in June, he had no chance last time in a slow-pace G1 at Colonial Downs when his rally was negated by the pace. His even-paced running style suggests this marathon distance will be to his liking. 'SCORE ran well both previous starts at DMR (third, second in stakes); trainer Graham Motion has been unstoppable shipping to DMR in summer. Since 2022, Motion is seven-for-seven in DMR summer stakes. MONDEGO was only prepping last out; he finished seventh at a mile and one-eighth. The longer, the better for MONDEGO, who gets his marathon trip and is likely to move forward second start off a break of nearly three months.