

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/12/2017

Race 9: \$25K claimer contested at 8-furlongs on the turf.

Post: 4:30 pm PST

OVERVIEW

What a way to end the weekend: with a wide-open, full field of \$25K claimers going a mile on the lawn. The rails are at 24-feet, but with the presence of Silent Movies, the pace should be honest enough to set things up for a strong stretch runner, so that's where I'll focus my attention.

#1 TAIMA THE HAWK (6/1) has only been two turns once, and that was a solid effort against starter-allowance foes last November. He drops to the lowest price he's ever been, and his come-home times in turf-sprints certainly make him competitive here. He looks interesting to me. GRADE: A.

#2 COWBOY (20/1) is a bit of a grinder who has run some decent races against tougher, so it was surprising that he was sent off at 56/1 last time when trying this level for the first time. He just ran evenly. He's going to need to do much better than that today, but there was a time when he would have looked good in here. GRADE: X.

#3 SILENT MOVIES (8/1), the first Sadler entrant, has plenty of speed, but he's had good forwardly placed trips twice before and hasn't been able to get the job done, including a fifth-place finish against a few of these at this level. He should be in the vanguard again, but there are enough pressers in here to keep him honest—though the 24-foot rail setting gives him a slight advantage if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

#4 CONQUEST SABRE CAT (7/2) looked very good beating NIX types back in May at Santa Anita, but since that win, he hasn't been able to run back to that race. In fact, two starts later, Cerin was content losing him for \$40K, which means he knew this guy wasn't going to train on. Palma took the bait, freshened him up, and ran him back against \$40K types, where he was pretty blah at 7/2. He now drops to this level, which isn't a good sign—though it is a positive that Bejarano takes the call. GRADE: C.

#5 EBADAN (IRE) (6/1) has taken a lot of my money because I keep betting that he'll finally recapture some of his excellent past form. Unfortunately, he's just continued down the class ladder, running evenly and not really showing any interest in being competitive. The blinks come off today after a poor effort, so he should run better than last time, and his best races are certainly good enough. I know the day I get off him, he's going to win! GRADE: B.

#6 MITHQAAL (8/1) takes a big drop after failing to make a dent against much tougher company ever since coming to America by way of Great Britain, where he was doing decent work on synth. He must be considered because of the drop in class, and it's nice to see turf master C-Nak take the call, but he'll really need to wake up in here. GRADE: C.

#7 I'MALREADYTHERE (8/1) has very dirty form, so I'm intrigued by him in here. Back in April, he won at this level very easily at Santa Anita, where he was claimed by Machowsky. After a freshening, he ran a decent third against tougher starter-allowance runners before running two poor races over the main track. I'm fine tossing those last two starts and just focusing on the turf efforts, which fit like a glove in here. GRADE: A.

#8 SPECIAL SEASON (GB) (15/1) exits a sprint race and adds blinkers, so I'm expecting the aggressive Baze to have this guy in the race early, hopefully keeping Silent Movies honest up front. It's tough getting a form-line on this UK import because three back, he faced tougher; two-back, he raced on dirt; and last time, he had to break from the rail down the hill. Still, he was 9/1 at this level in that downhill race, so he'll need to show a lot more today. GRADE: C.

#9 BANZE NO OESTE (BRZ) (9/2) is a total pro, with wins down the hill and at today's mile distance, doing it at all different claiming levels. He fits perfectly against \$25K foes, since he won at this distance and level over the summer here. Miller is hot again, and he should have this old warrior ready to run his best race. GRADE: A.

#10 POUND PIECE (IRE) (12/1) has early zip, so we'll see if Blanc does what he's done before and puts this guy in the race. If he does, Silent Movies will make things tricky for this guy, who hasn't been able to beat lesser, including two recent defeats against restricted claimers. Back in July, he lost to Colour Me Happy (GB) at the \$20K level—so unless he just somehow makes an easy lead, he seems up against it in here. GRADE: X.

#11 COLOUR ME HAPPY (GB) (12/1), the second Sadler runner, is the off-the-pace part of the entry, giving his trainer a one-two punch from both on and off the pace. Two back, this guy was good enough to beat \$20K claimers, but before that, he struggled against tougher, including a defeat to I'malreadythere. Frey will need to make all the right moves from this tough post. GRADE: C.

#12 MALKO (IRE) (4/1) (AE) has a nice late kick for this level, so he should be mounting a late bid, as per usual—but he often leaves himself with too much to do, and note that his last win came against restricted claimers. He's usable in your exotics, however, but he does seem to lack the eye of the tiger. GRADE: C.

#13 ELEVEN ZIP—scratched.

#14 RYE PATCH (3/1) (AE) has done good work at this level, so he must be looked at—but he's a runner who likes to do his best work from on the pace, and with two other speed horses in here, that would make things tricky for him, especially from the outside post. That said, it's always tough to ignore a Baltas/Bejarano production—and this guy's work at this level has always been very good. On the down side, he's now been a void-claim in two of his last four starts, so he clearly has some physical issues. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

We've got some options in here, so I can let the board decide between **#1 TAIMA THE HAWK**, **#7 I'MALREADYTHERE**, and **#9 BANZE NO OESTE (BRZ)**—though I suspect that **I'MALREADYTHERE** will offer the most value based on his dirty form.