

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/24/2017

Race 3: \$80K optional-claiming/N1X for 2-year-olds going 5-furlongs on turf.

Post: 1:30 pm PST

OVERVIEW

With a full field of 2-year-olds going 5-furlongs on the lawn, anything is possible—especially when you consider the fact that the favorite is exiting a rough trip at today’s very same distance. Will more of the same await that runner, and if so, who will step up? Note: the rails are at 6-feet today—and there are several fillies facing the boys.

#1 SIR VALENTINE (12/1) is a Cal-bred who makes his first start for Baltas after leaving the Mulhall barn, where he was struggling against some very tough stakes runners on dirt. The blinks come off after a failed experiment, and Bejarano will have to utilize this guy’s speed from the rail, which makes me think he’ll have some trouble sticking around late, especially when you consider the fact that he’s struggled in the latter stages of his last two races. On the plus side, maybe he’ll perk up on the lawn (for the first time), and he got a “**B**” **OptixWORKS** grade heading into this race. GRADE: C.

#2 COLONEL CASH (8/1) cost \$150K back in April, so it was a bit surprising that this Illinois-bred went off at a juicy 11/1 in his debut, where he beat a short field at LRC with a nice wide rally. He’ll now have to switch to the lawn for the first time while facing winners, so his work is cut out for him—but that debut was rather encouraging, and D’Amato knows where to spot them. GRADE: B.

#3 SUMMER SHAMAL (FR) (8/1) makes her first U.S. start for Miller after running respectably overseas until an ill-fated run in the Albany Stakes (G3). You can ex-out that race, since the competition was fierce, and note that in her two races prior to that, she did good work against the boys (including her maiden-breaker). She enters this with a bullet work over the Del Mar turf, so she should be ready to run off that June layoff—and you always have to consider a Miller sprinter. But this is no easy spot for this gal’s U.S. debut. GRADE: B.

#4 TIGER MOM—scratched.

#5 **COUNT ALEXANDER (3/1)** is unlikely to be anywhere close to his morning-line, considering he was 9/2 against 11 other horses in the Juvenile Turf Sprint on Breeders’ Cup Saturday. He tracked inside, looked loaded the whole way, and then just never found running room. He now gets class relief and another chance to show what he can really do—and considering he’s never run a poor race in his life, he’s likely to fire a big shot today, assuming he gets a trouble-free trip. GRADE: A.

#6 CONO (12/1) has been handled by a few of these, so he’s going to need to do a bit better today, but he’s training very well (according to **OptixWORKS**), and note that his best work has come going this short 5-furlong distance (albeit on dirt). The blinkers come off this Cal-bred, so he should be getting going in the lane—but he will need to step things up considerably to get the nod today. GRADE: C.

#7 CANDY CREW (12/1) wired four other maidens in his debut at LRC, graduating at first-asking as the 11/10 favorite. He then attended a wicked pace on a closer-friendly track in the Speakeasy before weakening badly. His hand was forced that day, having to break from the rail, so we'll see if he can do better while moving outside a bit and switching to turf. Offspring of Twirling Candy do well on the lawn, so it wouldn't shock me if he ran a much-improved race today, but he will have to show he can pass horses since the rail horse is likely to hustle out of there. GRADE: C.

#8 TEXAS WEDGE (5/1), the second Miller runner, has been beating up on lesser company, breaking his maiden at the \$50K level and then recently beating \$40K starter-allowance types, all on dirt. He's got the right tracking style for this race, but he is moving up in class and trying turf for the first time. That said, Miller wins a ton of turf sprints, and Prat takes the call. GRADE: B.

#9 FACTOROFWON (4/1) couldn't hold her speed on dirt, but that wasn't a problem when she hopped on turf for the first time to break her maiden going 6.5-furlongs down the hill. She was almost 6/1 that day, yet she won very easily with a frontrunning trip. There is other speed in here, so she'll have to show she can pass horses—all while facing the boys. She is working well for this (according to [OptixWORKS](#)), but 4/1 seems a little short in this field. GRADE: C.

#10 TRUSTING FRIEND (12/1) ran a decent fourth in the Laurel Futurity, coming from off the pace to finish strongly going 6-furlongs. He then was a non-factor going a mile in his first SoCal start. He should appreciate getting back to the sprint game, and it's good to see O'Neill add blinkers on a runner who hasn't shown much interest early on. Still, he'll need to step things up today—and Frey will have to work out the right trip from a tricky outside post. GRADE: C.

#11 SCHULACE (15/1) is a Cal-bred who has plenty of dirt sprint speed, so he should be attending the pace early (though it's not like Van Dyke, who takes over for Bejarano, to get caught up in a speed duel). There should be a quick enough clip, so this guy will have to show that he can pass runners, something he hasn't been able to do yet. He's also trying turf for the first time while facing open company. GRADE: X.

#12 SHOW IT N MOE IT (20/1) also has dirt sprint speed, so we'll see what she can do while facing the boys and getting on turf for the first time. She tried the boys two back and was a well-beaten fourth in the Speakeasy, so she'll need to do a lot better today. She looks like she's going to stalk the pace and get hung 5-wide from this post—and it's not like the breeding screams turf for this Cal-bred stakes winner. GRADE: X.

#13 MY SWEET EMMA (20/1) is yet another filly in this group, but her form looks the worst of the bunch, failing to make an impact against dirt stakes runners in the minor leagues. She's burdened with a tough post—and will really need to pick things up in her first try on turf. GRADE: X.

#14 MAGIC MUSKETIER—scratched.

CONCLUSION

If you can get anywhere near 3/1 on **#5 COUNT ALEXANDER**, unload! I can't imagine he'll be close to that price, however, so in that case, I'll look at **#3 SUMMER SHAMAL (FR)**. I know she's a filly, but she's already beaten the boys overseas, and Peter Miller doesn't play around when it comes to turf-sprints. Plus, she should be a better price than her very logical stablemate.