

## DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 11/25/2017

**Race 7:** \$300K Hollywood Derby (G1) for 3-year-olds going 9-furlongs on turf.

**Post:** 3:30 pm PST

### OVERVIEW

We've got a nice renewal of the prestigious \$300K Hollywood Derby (G1), a 9-furlong turf affair for 3-year-olds. Several of these exit the Twilight Derby (G2), which was run closing weekend at Santa Anita—but note that the Del Mar turf course plays vastly different than Santa Anita's. Also note that there are two contest races today, so if you don't see anything you like in here, feel free to look at today's fourth race, which is an AOC for 3-year-olds and upward going 8-furlongs on the turf. It's a full field, so you should be able to find something (for what it's worth, I like #6 Air Vice Marshal the best at a morning-line of 5/1). But for now...let's look at this sweet graded-stakes event.

#1 ANN ARBOR EDDIE (20/1) was 25/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2), where he stalked a slow pace and failed to kick on when the real running started. It was his first turf try, so I suppose you can be a little forgiving, but nothing in that performance really made me think he would move forward with more turf experience. He'll need a big step forward today to turn the tables on his main rivals from that race. GRADE: X.

#2 BOWIES HERO (6/1) is a cool horse who usually puts forth a good effort—but his best efforts haven't been quite good enough against graded-stakes foes, including recent defeats against Sharp Samurai and Big Score, both of whom he'll have to face again today. He also seems to be a better animal at a mile, since he's lacked the killer instinct in all three of his 9-furlong races. I suppose if his main rivals get into trouble, this guy could make up a length or two on them, but at this point, he's shown that he's a slight cut below those foes. That said, you can't go too wrong backing D'Amato and Desormeaux if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#3 **CHANNEL MAKER (5/1)** was a top pick for me in the Twilight Derby (G2), but he really had no chance in that race given the glacial pace he was trying to close into. He was also a bit rank, wanting to run through those slow splits, but Van Dyke reined him in to try and make a big run. That didn't work out given the slow pace, so now Mott puts up Castellano to see if he can do better. Unfortunately, there won't be a hot or contentious pace for this guy again today, but his stretch run is certainly strong enough to overturn that fourth-place finish in the Twilight Derby (G2), so long as Castellano can get him moving a little bit sooner. GRADE: A.

#4 SHARP SAMURAI (5/2) is your deserving morning-line favorite by dint of his stellar four-race win streak, where he's done everything right. He easily beat several in this field as the 2/1 favorite in the Twilight Derby (G2), and note that he also has graded-stakes wins over this course—so he can handle anything. He's also a horse who is tactical, so he makes his own good trip—something he's enjoyed in all of his wins. He'll get another good trip today, and he's the horse to beat, but 5/2 does me no favors in the contest, and I do think one of the East Coast runners can threaten him today. GRADE: B.

#5 RITZY A. P. (20/1) looks a bit overmatched on paper, since he just cleared his N1X hurdle, but he's a pretty cool horse who always shows up for work, and his solid stretch run always means he's in with a fighting chance. I like that he just beat elders and is now back in amongst fellow 3-year-olds, but do note that he was 69/1 four back in the Del Mar Derby (G2), where he mounted a mild late bid to run sixth, losing to several of these in the process. Note that win-rider Prat ends up elsewhere, and that's the biggest negative. GRADE: X.

**#6 SOUPER TAPIT (12/1)** is a bit interesting in here as a new face in the crowd—and he looks to be sitting on a big race, making the third start of his form cycle after a May layoff. Two back, he had some trouble and was probably a short horse, while last time, he was facing hard-knocking older foes and had a ton of trouble on his way to a third-place finish. He should also get a perfect forwardly placed trip as one of the few in here who doesn't mind being in the vanguard early. At 12/1, I'm intrigued by this Grade 3 synth winner who looks like he should step forward big-time today for Mark Casse. GRADE: A.

#7 MO TOWN (3/1) just destroyed older N2X types at Belmont in his first try on turf. It was a monster race from a speed-figure perspective, but he did get a perfect trip against only six other foes. If he runs back to that race, he'll be very tough, but I'm often skeptical of these big-fig horses, and I'd much rather have them prove to me that they are the real deal before taking a short number. That said, there was a time when this guy was very well-regarded after winning the Remsen (G2) on dirt as a 2-year-old. His trip down the Derby trail wasn't any good, but his connections clearly thought he was Derby material. I'm very curious to see this guy run, but I'll try to beat in the contest. GRADE: B.

#8 JUST HOWARD (12/1) was 6/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2), and he too was a bit rank during a very slow early pace. That said, he saved ground and never really kicked on when the others did. Before that, he was beating up on Mid-Atlantic runners. He's probably better than his last race shows, but he'll still need to make up several lengths on the top few in here. GRADE: C.

#9 BIG SCORE (4/1) has been one of my picks to beat Sharp Samurai the last two times, but he just hasn't been able to turn the tables on that foe, who has comfortably held sway against him in both the Twilight Derby (G2) and Del Mar Derby (G2). Since that foe is drawn inside and should be forwardly placed, this guy is going to have his work cut out for him if he wants to turn the tables today. That said, I've always liked this guy, and he's certainly capable of getting the nod, but he will need a step forward today to beat his arch-rival and also fend off some serious East Coast stretch-runners. GRADE: B.

## CONCLUSION

I think **#6 SOUPER TAPIT** is going to get the right trip in this paceless race, and his price will be right at 12/1.