

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 11/26/2017

**Race 7:** \$300K Matriarch (G1) for fillies & mares going 8-furlongs on the lawn.

**Post:** 3:30 pm PST

## OVERVIEW

Parting is such sweet sorrow—but it's been a really fun Bing Crosby meet. We close things out with an excellent renewal of the \$300K Matriarch (G1), a one-mile turf affair for fillies and mares. Twelve classy ladies are entered to greet the starter, and there looks to be a fair amount of pace, so I'm going to look for the stretch-runners to have the final say in this competitive betting race.

#1 MRS MCDOUGAL (15/1) has run well enough out here in Cali after she relocated from the East Coast, but she's been a slight disappointment, having lost all four of her starts, including twice as a beaten-favorite. She has tactical speed, so I suspect Castellano will have to put her in the race early from this inside slot, and that's not a good thing since there are others in here who will surely push the pace. You can never count out a classy Mandella runner, but this 5-year-old will need a big step forward to beat some of her arch-rivals today (though do note that she had a lot of trouble in her last race, so it's not as bad as it looks on paper—and it's encouraging to see Castellano riding her back). GRADE: X.

#2 LULL (5/1) laughed in my face last time when I was vehemently against her in the Autumn Miss (G3) when she had to break from the 11-post as the 2/1 favorite. My main knock was that she seemed a little distance-compromised, since her best work had come around one-turn. But she was just much classier than that field—and she proved it, stalking a very quick pace and powering home to win very easily as the 2/1 favorite. The waters get much deeper for this 3-year-old, however, since this is a legit bunch of older runners. She expects a good forwardly placed trip under Prat, but I suspect one of the stretch-runners will outkick her late. GRADE: X.

#3 PRETTY GIRL (ARG) (20/1) has a decent late run, so it's no surprise that she's picked up some checks, rallying from off the pace against Grade Two foes. Her one try at the Grade One level saw her mount a mild late bid but finish off the board while going 9-furlongs. Two back, she was only a half-length to Cambodia, who will be a much shorter price, so if you like that foe, you might want to consider using this gal for a penny in your exotics—but she is a 6-year-old mare, so what you see is what you get: and that's a late runner who will need everything to go her way to get the win. GRADE: X.

#4 BELVOIR BAY (GB) (20/1) will be part of the early pace, along with the two inside horses, since she likes to do her best work attending the pace. She's coming off a very sharp win the Senator Ken Maddy (G3) here at Del Mar, when she dusted nine other gals going 5-furlongs on the lawn. This is a whole different ballgame, however, since if you look at her recent two-turn races, you'll see that she's run well, but that someone is always stronger in the lane. Also note that win-rider Prat sticks with the 3-year-old Lull. GRADE: X.

#5 INSTA ERMA (12/1) ran a troubled fourth two back in the Mabee (G2), when she lost to Cambodia, but she was able to show off her talent in her next start, when she got a clean trip to beat seven other gals in a restricted-stakes at Santa Anita. She's been freshened for this much tougher spot, so she should show up with a good effort—will it be good enough? As a lightly raced 4-year-old, she definitely has license to improve, but she seems like a slight cut below the very best in here. GRADE: C.

#6 THUNDERING SKY (20/1) came off an August layoff to run a decent second in the Goldikova (G2) on Breeders' Cup Saturday, losing to Kitten's Roar. She was a bit compromised that day, as she had to close into a paceless race, yet she still managed to run well enough to garner second-place honors. Still, she's going to have to outkick the gal who just beat her, and also note that a few others (Cambodia and Off Limits) have her on form as well. That said, she's drawn favorably, and she should get something to run at today while tracking the pace. GRADE: B.

#7 CAMBODIA (3/1) has really blossomed this year as a 5-year-old race-mare. It just goes to show you what a horse can achieve when in the good hands of an excellent (and patient) trainer like Tom Proctor. This gal always showed ability, but she's really poured it on lately, looking terrific over the summer, beating Grade Two foes here at Del Mar going 8.5- and 9-furlongs. She then followed those excellent races up with a solid third-place finish in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf (G1), losing to two very good European horses but proving she was the best American in the race. She's a very classy gal who figures to run her race, but there is a reason why Proctor has been running her beyond a mile, so we'll see if she can put forth the same effort while running shorter today. GRADE: B.

**#8 OFF LIMITS (IRE) (5/1)** took a while to clear her N2X hurdle—which is unlike a Chad Brown horse—but once she did, she made the best of it, rattling off three wins in a row, including two Grade Three victories in New York, one which was very easy and the other where she had to fight for the victory. The easy victory came at a mile, while the tough one came at 8.5-furlongs, so I suspect this gal will really appreciate cutting back today. Her come-home times—like most Chad Brown runners—are exceptional, so she definitely fits here even though this is the toughest test of her career. GRADE: A.

**#9 RUBILINDA (10/1)**, the second Chad Brown runner, is a 3-year-old daughter of the great Frankel (GB), so it's no surprise that she's won three of her four starts, always firing and running her race. She's been favored in all four of her starts, but she should be an okay price today, since she's facing older graded-stakes foes for the very first time. This is by no means an easy spot, especially since this gal has been a bit green in her recent races, but I have to think that we have yet to see the best of this one—and I wonder if Brown has had this race circled on his calendar for a while now. She'll definitely need to step things up here, but she's in good hands, and I'm excited to see what she can do in this Grade One. GRADE: A.

#10 HAWKSMOOR (IRE) (8/1) has done her best work on or near the lead, including wins at the Grade Two and Grade Three levels at Belmont. That said, those wire jobs came while going longer, and, in fact, when she tried to wire the field at Keeneland going a mile in the First Lady (G1), she was easily overtaken, despite setting a slow pace. There are other speed horses to her inside, so it will be interesting to see if Leparoux guns hard and tries to clear or if he will try to settle her a bit today and rate. Either way, the race shape just doesn't seem to set up all that well for her. On the plus side, she is capable of running some big races—and she does have contender Kitten's Roar on form—so I can't fault anyone for trying to “build” a case for her. GRADE: C.

#11 MISS JULIA STAR (FR) (20/1) has been doing decent work in her native France, but she hasn't really been facing the toughest competition overseas, so it will be interesting to see how she stacks up in a Grade One here in America. She's also a 3-year-old who is facing elders for the first time—another negative. On the plus side, she's in good hands with Drysdale, and you have to like the fact that her French jockey bothered to make the trip. French horses typically acclimate pretty well here at Del Mar, but this does seem like a tough spot for a gal whose European form—while good—isn't extraordinary. GRADE: C.

#12 KITTEN'S ROAR (7/2) looked very strong powering home to take the Goldikova (G2) on Breeders' Cup Saturday. She tracked a slow pace and then just exploded to win pretty easily. I was a little concerned that she might not appreciate that mile distance, since she had been plying her trade going much longer—but it didn't matter, as she looked very sharp in that one-mile effort. She'll get a pace to close into today, so she'll have every chance from a race-flow perspective—unfortunately, she'll need to sort out a good trip from this tricky outside post. At least Johnny V. returns, so if he can work out the right trip, this gal should be in the thick of things late (even though she'll have to turn the tables on Hawksmoor [Ire], who beat her back in June while setting a modest pace). GRADE: B.

### CONCLUSION

It's Chad Brown's world, we just live in it. Even though his two runners don't look all that great on paper, I do think they'll both run well. I don't typically like to bet 3-year-old fillies against older runners (even this late in the year), but #9 **RUBILINDA** is cut out to be the real deal, so I'm excited to see what she can do while facing the sternest test of her young career. If she gets overbet, I'll look to **OFF LIMITS (IRE)** instead.