

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 12/1/2018

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

Post: 3:30 PT

OVERVIEW

It's closing weekend of the Fall Festival, so we've got two days of some very nice racing on tap—and it will be a welcome return to the turf (hopefully) after two days of off-the-turf affairs. Speaking of “turf,” today's featured contest race is an awesome renewal of the \$300K Hollywood Derby (G1), a 9-furlong turf affair for 3-year-olds only. We've got a huge 14-horse field that includes some East Coast shippers, so let's see how everyone stacks up. (Also note: there are two contest races today, so if you can't sniff out the winner in here, you can play Race 3—a \$100K optional-claiming/conditional-allowance contested at 5-furlongs on the lawn.)

#1 HAVE AT IT (6/1) has done fine work back East, including a nice victory going today's distance in the Hill Prince (G2) at Belmont, where he beat his nemesis Raging Bull (Fr), who will look to turn the tables today. Last time, this guy was sent off at 4/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2) at Santa Anita, where he finished a good second, losing to River Boyne (Ire), whom he faces again today—but I think this Clement trainee will appreciate the Del Mar turf more than he did Santa Anita's. Expect Cohen to save ground in a good tracking position, making this one a legitimate threat for all the marbles. GRADE: B.

#2 KAZAN (IRE) (20/1) has a serious late kick, so you can expect him to be running on through the lane, something he did very nicely two back when finishing second to River Boyne (Ire) in the Del Mar Derby (G2). Toss last time, where he finished sixth to a few of these in the Twilight Derby (G2), since he was hooked wide and his rider lost the whip. He's capable of better and seems usable underneath in your exotics, but he's probably a slight cut below the very best in here. GRADE: C.

#3 RISKY PROPOSITION (20/1) has above-par closing times, so don't let the fact that he's a former claimer bother you too much, especially since he showed some class last time when winning the Let It Ride in powerful fashion. He looks like another great claim by the Spawr barn, which took him for \$50K, and he's not impossible for a slice at a huge number (based on those strong closing times), but there are some really salty sophomores he'll have to outfinish today. GRADE: X.

#4 RIVER BOYNE (IRE) (5/2) is your morning-line favorite based on his multiple graded-stakes wins, including a victory over this course in the 8.5-furlong La Jolla (G3) this summer. Last time, he bested several of these in the Twilight Derby (G2), producing his typical stretch run. He's a deserving favorite, but I'm having a hard time looking past his poor run at today's distance in the Del Mar Derby (G2) this summer after looking good in the La Jolla (G3). Will he be flat again today if he doesn't get a good covered up ride? GRADE: B.

#5 FIGHT ON (20/1) has shown late interest in his last two turf races going a mile, so today's added ground shouldn't be an issue for him—though the competition will be, since he's eligible for an N2X and

also just lost to Risky Proposition quite convincingly. He's always hinted at ability (he broke his maiden in a restricted stakes on dirt at Churchill as a 2-year-old), but this seems like a tough spot for a horse who has never been 9-furlongs before. GRADE: X.

#6 RAGING BULL (FR) (7/2) invades from back East after a shocking defeat to Have At It, despite going off at forty-five cents on the dollar. It was an uncharacteristically poor effort for him, but he was hooked wide while making his move, so he lacked the same punch he had shown at Saratoga this summer, when he won two graded-stakes races. He's trained by Chad Brown, so I'm sure he'll be ready to roll today, so if he gets a good off-the-pace trip, he'll be very tough. Also note that Rosario stays put, despite having other options. GRADE: A.

#7 INSTILLED REGARD (12/1), the second Chad Brown runner, tries turf for the first time, and even though he can probably handle the lawn, this seems like an ambitious start for a runner who was last seen packing it in in the Pennsylvania Derby (G1). Before that, however, he had finished fourth on a sloppy/sealed Churchill track in the Kentucky Derby (G1), and his dirt form before that was really solid—so there is a lot of talent here. It's just a matter of getting him to transfer that dirt form to the lawn, which might be tricky against this field, but at least one of the best turf trainers in the world is calling the shots if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#8 DESERT STONE (IRE) (8/1) ran a nice third against a few of these last time in the Twilight Derby (G2), but he got a good trip and still couldn't beat the top two foes, both of whom he'll have to face again today. Two back, he had some traffic issues while losing to a few of these again. He's a nice, honest racehorse, but he does seem a cut below the very best in here. GRADE: X.

#9 PLATINUM WARRIOR (IRE) (12/1) probably needs some extra ground, but there's no denying his class after a very nice fourth-place finish in the Secretariat (G1) over the summer, in his first start off the boat. Overseas, he won a Group 3 at 10-furlongs, while last time, in the Twilight Derby (G2), he got going too way late. Perhaps if Van Dyke is a bit more aggressive today, this one can contend for the win, so I'll make him my wise-guy play for the contest—but I do think he'd be at his best going longer. GRADE: A.

#10 WAY EARLY (30/1) is a New York-bred who is still eligible for his open entry-level allowance condition, so this seems like a very ambitious spot—though he has run respectably before in two graded-stakes races. He'll need to make up ground on Carrick, who is drawn to his outside, and he'll have to show a lot more oomph in the lane to get the measure on most of these. On the plus side, he looks surprisingly good on the Surface/Distance **OptixPLOT**, so he's worth some small consideration at a huge number. GRADE: C.

#11 CARRICK (8/1) is a Grade 1 winner, so that must count for something. Two back, he got up by a neck to win the Secretariat (G1) at 38/1, beating a big field of 12 other horses. Last time, he wanted no part of the soft ground or 12-furlong distance at Belmont and was never really involved in the Turf Classic Invitational (G1), which also came against older horses, so you can draw a line through it. You can expect him on the scene late—and I can't fault anyone for taking 8/1 on a Grade 1 winner—but I prefer others more. GRADE: C.

#12 PUBILIUS SYRUS (30/1) was very good against listed foes out here, but his two recent tries against graded-stakes company make him look like a decided cut below the best in here. He does have tactical

speed, so I expect Maldonado to gun hard and hope for the best, but he seems overmatched to me.
GRADE: X.

#13 PRINCE EARL (20/1) removes the hood today after a no-excuse fourth-place finish in the Let It Ride, where he lost decisively to Risky Proposition. The blinkers-off move is a good one here, since this guy does have a decent stretch run, but I wonder if 9-furlongs will be beyond his scope today since he was easily outfinished by Risky Proposition despite a perfect forwardly placed trip in a modestly paced race. GRADE: X.

#14 CALIFORNIAGOLDRUSH (12/1) is a very nice filly who has to face the boys, so even though her form is excellent with a Grade 2 win back East, she is facing a class hike today. Drysdale isn't afraid to run his girls against the boys, but this one couldn't beat her own sex in the Del Mar Oaks (G1) over the summer while going today's distance, so I'm having a hard time seeing her in the winner's circle today. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

I think the top two choices in here are very solid, and I'm always interested when Chad Brown shows up out here, so I'd be shocked if **#6 RAGING BULL (FR)** didn't run a big one today, making him my top pick. If you're looking for a sneaky bomb, however, **#9 PLATINUM WARRIOR (IRE)** has ability and should be running on strongly through the lane. He will need a pace to close into, and today's distance might be too short for him, but there is some talent here and I do think Sadler has been pointing to this race.

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