DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 7/10/20
Race 9: $100K Oceanside Stakes for 3-year-olds only going 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:05 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

I'm going to skip the long preamble, but I do hope that everyone who is reading this has been healthy and safe. Maybe things will change in the next few weeks and we'll all get to have some fun on-track (health-permitting, of course), but for now, we'll have to experience Del Mar virtually. I hope to do some streaming handicapping content starting in Week 2, since I won't be able to conduct any on-track seminars—and if you want to speak with me *one-on-one* in a Del Mar–sponsored Zoom call, I'll be available all day on Opening Day to answer any handicapping/wagering questions you might have. Definitely check my Twitter feed *@ScatoniSureShot* for this and more info as things develop. As I said on Twitter: "Things are different for sure, but that doesn't mean we can't have some fun and make some $$$!"

Okay…let's get cracking! Today's contest race is the always exciting Opening Day feature: the $100K Oceanside Stakes, a 3-year-old turf affair contested at one mile on the lawn (with the rails at 12-feet) and restricted to horses who have not won a sweepstakes of $50K at a mile or over in 2020. There should be a lot of speed in here with several stretch-out sprinters, making this an honestly run race. Twelve horses are entered to greet the starter.

#1 ROOKIE MISTAKE (15/1) is one of the aforementioned stretch-out sprinters, and since he drew the rail, he'll probably have to use some of that speed in order to prevent getting buried inside by this deep field. This Cal-bred has done fine work going 5.5-furlongs, but his one try around two turns was a debacle. Granted, it was on dirt, but still…there must be a reason O'Neill has kept this guy sprinting in eight of his nine career starts. GRADE: X.

#2 EL TIGRE TERRIBLE (4/1) is an international trip horse, meaning everyone and her brother worldwide saw the mess Fuentes made of it in the Desert Code when he got this guy buried at the most crucial juncture of the race. Once he got clear though, he exploded too late to just miss in that 5.5-furlong event. It's no surprise that Miller—who trains two in here—makes the move to Prat, so you have to consider this guy based on those two factors. But can he show the same ability going two turns for the first time today? There are some nice routers this guy will have to beat, but his recent form is too tough to ignore completely, and Prat always seems to end up on the live runners despite some questions surrounding a horse's form. GRADE: C.

#3 HOWBEIT (30/1), the second O'Neill runner, has been exclusively sprinting on dirt, so this seems like a tough ask to go two turns on turf for the first time. This guy does have tactical speed and the hood comes off, so he should get a very nice stalking trip—but I'm perfectly fine watching one from this guy as he attempts to do two new things today. GRADE: X.

#4 I'M LEAVING YOU (30/1) flashed some decent come-home times in his first two starts against MSWs, but he couldn't get the job done stuck behind some slow paces. He was then dropped in class to $62.5K, and trainer Belvoir legged up the aggressive Espinoza, who put this guy on the lead and never

looked back. It was a very sharp performance, but there wasn't much behind him, and now Espinoza ends up on another. Last time was the time to have this one. GRADE: X.

#5 KANDEREL (12/1), the first Mandella entrant, had some minor excuses for his less-than-stellar performances at Santa Anita, so it was no surprise that he was bet to favoritism when he went up north to beat six other foes in the Alcatraz at 13/10. It was a professional effort, where he tracked and pounced, winning by a head. He can certainly move forward off that with another good trip, but he is facing stiffer competition and seems better suited for the exotics. GRADE: B.

#6 K P ALL SYSTEMS GO (6/1) seems like the value play in the race at 6/1, since he's got some legit come-home times and knows how to finish races. In fact, he's almost perfect since the addition of blinkers, with his only defeat coming at the hands of his talented stablemate last time in the Cinema. The only concern is that he does like to do his running from fairly off the pace, so the pressure is on Cedillo to give him a well-timed and traffic-free ride. At least you know he should get a decent clip to close into. GRADE: A.

#7 HIT THE ROAD (7/2) is tabbed as the morning-line favorite, and rightfully so: he won the Zuma Beach last fall and then wasn't disgraced in two subsequent graded-stakes when racing as a sophomore. His 3-year-old debut was very sharp, a nice N2X victory against *older* horses, showing off a strong late run. If that race was just a prep for this, look out. GRADE: A.

#8 TIZAMAGICIAN (6/1), the second Mandella runner, has dirt speed and an aggressive jock, so you can expect him to be in the vanguard early. Will he make the lead or try to stalk three-wide? Either way, those trips won't be ideal here: if he makes the lead, he'll have to earn it; if he stalks three-wide, he's going to lose some punch in the lane. And there is the fact that he's never been on turf before (although he was entered on turf once, but the race was washed off). This guy has always hinted at ability but hasn't really been able to break through. Might the surface change help his cause today? GRADE: C.

#9 AJOURNEYTOFREEDOM (15/1) was a head away from Kanderel in the Alcatraz, showing a decent late run to just miss. He can certainly move forward off that since this is the third start of his form cycle and just his second try on turf. With Danzig in his pedigree, it's no surprise he ran the best race of his life on the lawn. It wouldn't shock me if he ran a decent one today to compete for an exotics spot, but I prefer others. GRADE: C.

#10 SILARDI (8/1), the second Miller trainee, is a stretch-out sprinter who has looked very good while turf-sprinting, but can this son of City Zip carry his tactical speed a route of ground? Prat doesn't think so, since he ends up on the other Miller while Fuentes takes the call on this guy. Maybe look for him next time cutting back, since his sprint races are really good? GRADE: X.

#11 HEYWOODS BEACH (12/1) has tactical speed, but Valdivia is going to have to figure out where to put this guy from this outside post. Plus, he'll have to make up a few lengths on K P All Systems Go, who beat him fairly easily last time in the Cinema. Note that Prat bails for a stretch-out sprinter. GRADE: X.

#12 MARGOT'S BAY (8/1) is a pretty sharp Cal-bred who has a nice win against open allowance company, so I can see why trainer Craig Lewis wants to take a shot here. Unfortunately, this speedster drew the short straw today, having to break from the far outside. He's got a ton of early speed, but that means he'll need to be used to try and make the lead—and if he doesn't make the lead, he's going to be

hung out to dry. There's no denying this one's ability, but circumstances seem to be conspiring against him today. GRADE: C.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>
There's no doubt that **#7 HIT THE ROAD** is the one to beat in here, but if **#6 K P ALL SYSTEMS GO** is anywhere near his 6/1 morning-line, he's the play for me.

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