DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 7/25/20
Race 9: $150K San Clemente (G2) for 3yo fillies going 8F on turf (rails at 0-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:07 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

A big field of eleven three-year-old fillies are entered to greet the starter in today's $150K San Clemente (G2), a one-mile turf affair contested with the rails set at zero-feet. There looks like there should be a fair amount of pace signed on, but there is an East Coast invader who has a slight pace advantage and will look to take them all the way. Is she good enough against the West Coast's best? Let's find out…

#1 SHE'S SO SPECIAL (5/1), the first Miller entrant, has done her best work around one-turn, so she's tough to support in here against some proven milers. That said, she does have a few positives: first off, Prat stays put; secondly, she's beaten the boys in her last two starts, so this can be considered class-relief for her. Still, her few two-turn tries aren't anything special, so she will need to do better while routing today. Look for her on the cutback next time. GRADE: X.

#2 LAZY DAISY (20/1) has pretty poor recent form, but she can hang her hat on the fact that she's a Grade 2 winner against mostly upper-level allowance horses. Still, she was eased last time at Churchill, so this seems like an ambitious spot for her return to Southern California, especially since she's making her first start on grass (and it's not like her pedigree screams "turf"). She should get a good stalking trip, if you're a believer, but I'm inclined to watch one. GRADE: X.

#3 LAURA'S LIGHT (3/1), the second Miller entrant, is a classy filly who is almost perfect when racing on turf. Her only turf defeat came last year against one of the better 2-year-olds at the time in the Jimmy Durante (G3). She has good early speed, but she doesn't need the lead, so Cedillo should be able to have her suck back and just stalk the pacesetter. Will she be too close to a quick pace, however? Either way: she's a proven commodity, and her price is likely to reflect that, making her an uninspiring contest play. GRADE: B.

#4 OVER ATTRACTED (15/1) makes her second stateside start after a decent second at 13/1 in an N1X at Santa Anita. If that was a tune-up for this, then she's certainly eligible to take a step forward today. Will that improvement be enough, however, against some quality ladies? Smith thinks so, since he rides back—and he should be able to have this girl in a very nice tracking position. She's not impossible with a projected move forward, but I prefer others. GRADE: C.

#5 CROUGHAVOUKE (IRE) (6/1) has the best late kick in the race, so you know she's going to be a top pick for me—as she has been in several of her stateside starts. Unfortunately for her (and me!), she's come up short against several of today's foes. So why will today be any different? Well, she should get a decent pace to close into; she'll be super-fit cutting back from 9-furlongs; and she won't need that much improvement to close the gap between her and both Laura's Light and Warren's Showtime. Expect her to be motoring late. GRADE: A.

#6 CHEERMEISTER (6/1), an East Coast invader, is your likely pacesetter, since she's been on the lead in every one of her route races—and she gets a very aggressive jock to boot. In fact, it seems like the only way Espinoza wins races these days is when he puts his horses on the front end. Couple that with this gal's natural speed, and you're looking at a possible wire threat. That said, Laura's Light has enough speed to keep this one honest, so for her to wire the field today, she's really going to have to earn it. GRADE: B.

#7 LITTLE BIRD (IRE) (15/1), the first Baltas charge, is not impossible here based on her solid come-home times and the fact that she had some trouble when finishing well behind Warren's Showtime last time in the China Doll. She was also handled by Laura's Light last winter, but this gal had to break from the 9-hole. Yes, she'll need a big step forward today, but you can expect Fuentes to save ground and then produce one strong late run. She's probably not good enough to win, but she's certainly usable in your exotics at a big number. GRADE: C.

#8 MIND OUT (15/1) has shown versatility by running well on turf and on synth—and while sprinting and routing. But she only has one win in four tries, so this is a tough spot for her to get victory number-two. She cost $850K, so perhaps there is room for improvement—and you have to like the fact that she's never finished off the board—but she's going to have to run a career best today. That said, I've seen way worse 15/1 shots! GRADE: C.

#9 WARREN'S SHOWTIME (7/2) is a cool Cal-bred who has earned a little more than $400K already in her brief career. Last time, she won the statebred Melair on dirt, while earlier this year, she beat open female sophomores while going a mile on turf. In other words: she's a professional racehorse. She's also pretty tractable, so Velez can put her wherever he wants and give her a good chance—so long as he doesn't try to stalk 3-wide. It's tough to ignore her consistency, but to me, it's really all about her price—and second choice in a big field doesn't really excite me. GRADE: B.

#10 GUITTY (FR) (20/1) doesn't have much early speed, so it's no surprise that she's gotten herself in trouble when trying to mount her late bid. Because of that, several of these have gotten the measure of her—and since most of her main rivals are drawn better than she is today, it's going to take a lot of doing for her to reverse that form. She also seems a slight cut below the best of the bunch in here, so perhaps she's better used underneath. GRADE: C.

#11 APPLECROSS (IRE) (12/1), the second Baltas trainee, drew the short straw in terms of post-positions, but since she's a deep closer, all her jock has to do is angle over and anchor her against the rail, waiting to unleash her stretch run in a race that should have a decent early pace. Her two stateside races don't look like anything special on paper, but she did have eventful journeys and seems capable of much better today. And it should be noted that Baltas is ridiculously good with horses coming off this kind of long layoff (39 percent according to *DRF*), so you have to expect this gal will be ready to fire her best shot off the bench. One other thing: her European connections thought enough of her to try her in a Group 2 after just her first start, so there could still be some real quality here. GRADE: A.

CONCLUSION
I'm a sucker for the best finishers in turf races—and that distinction goes to **#5 CROUGHAVOUKE (IRE)** and **#11 APPLECROSS (IRE)**. For the contest, a weighted double-win bet isn't out of the question depending on price, spending enough money on each to win equal amounts based on their odds.