

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Race 7: \$50K starter-allowance for fillies & mares contested at 8-furlongs on turf (w/rails at 12-feet)

Post: approx. post 5:09 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Ten fillies and mares are entered to greet the starter in this \$50K starter-allowance contested at one mile on the lawn with the rails at 12-feet. **OptixPLOT** is projecting a fairly quick pace, so I'll play the race accordingly.

#1 MELA JONES (6/1) needed \$12K maidens at Los Al going 870-yards to graduate two back, but then this 5-year-old tried similar starter foes as today's going a mile on turf, and she responded with a very good second-place finish. She chased a hot pace, briefly took the lead, and was overtaken late. Cedillo will likely go from the rail (even with the blinkers off), but will another quick pace soften up this gal late? I'd have to think so. GRADE: C.

#2 LAVENDER (IRE) (7/2) looks very solid in here. She has decent come-home times against much tougher entry-level allowance foes, and she now faces the softest field of her career. It's interesting that Chew dangled her for \$40K last time (no one bit), which now makes her eligible for this starter spot, where she squares off against much weaker company. If she runs her best race, she's the winner. GRADE: A.

#3 DANCEFORMUNNY (6/1), the first Baltas runner, managed a good trip despite breaking from the 10-hole last time when beating \$40K maiden-claimers going a mile on the lawn. It was a very professional effort for this 3-year-old—but now she has to face winners for the first time, so we'll see if she can move forward against better animals. Win-rider Prat stays put, and that's a good sign—and there should be a pace to run at for this gal. GRADE: B.

#4 GOODTINGSCOMINPINK (6/1) was 7/2 at a similar level last time, and she ran an okay third, putting in a late mild bid in a race that had a fast early pace but over a Santa Anita course that was not kind to closers. She couldn't get by Mela Jones, who attended that quick pace, so this gal will have to do better today—but on a more fair course, that's certainly possible. Her come-home times are consistently under 24-seconds, meaning she'll be running on late and should be right there at the end. GRADE: A.

#5 SOLITAIRE (20/1) was nearly 5/1 in her debut against \$20K maiden-claimers, and she looked good, coming from off the pace to run them all down easily in that 6.5-furlong main-track affair. Now this 3-year-old has to face winners for the first time while also going long on turf. The dam was solid on turf, and she's done good work in the breeding shed with turf runners, so it wouldn't shock me if this one stepped up and moved forward while getting on the lawn for the first time. Still, there are some hurdles to overcome, so maybe let's watch one today. GRADE: C.

#6 QUEENSBECCAANDJANE (10/1), another 3-year-old, has done decent work sprinting, so we'll see if she can carry her tactical speed a route of ground while going two turns for the first time. Last time, she ran a decent second against tougher Cal-bred allowance types while going 5-furlongs on turf. She'll be in

the vanguard early—but will she have enough stamina to stay on late as a stretch-out sprinter? GRADE: C.

#7 Y NOT SIZZLE (12/1) isn't the worst 12/1 shot you'll ever see. It did take her a while to finally break her maiden, but she always puts in a decent late run, and she should be primed and ready to run a good one today coming off a March layoff. A quick pace would certainly help her chances, and you know Rispoli will give her every chance to show her best stuff while facing winners for the first time. I definitely think Lavender (Ire) is a better animal, but this one could surprise at a nice price. GRADE: B.

#8 BLAZING CHARM (20/1) was claimed for \$50K by an old-school trainer who hasn't dipped into the claim-box too often the last several years—so he must have really seen something he liked in this one's first two races, both of which came on dirt. Now Bell puts this 3-year-old on turf and stretches her out. None of her siblings have run on turf, so we'll see if this is an "in it to win it" situation or if Bell is going to cut her back next time and put her back on dirt. It's hard to know how she'll act on turf, but her dirt races were both fairly solid, so maybe there is upside here if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#9 FREEDOM LASS (4/1) is a 3-year-old with early speed, so she'll have to go from out here while angling over to attend what should be a quick pace—and that will likely soften her up late. That said, you have to respect the "ship and win" angle here, since this gal was last seen breaking her maiden for \$32K at Tampa, and now she shows up here for Little Red Feather, an outfit that has done fine work with these kinds of acquisitions for Del Mar. She's a contender, but I'm not sure how much value she'll offer. GRADE: B.

#10 ZUCCHERA (5/1), the second Baltas entrant, exhibited a very nice rally last time when flying late to just miss against \$25K/N2L foes. This is a better group, but there's no denying this gal's come-home time in that race, which was under 24-seconds, making her one of the better closers in the field. She'll get a pace to run at, which should help her cause—but Van Dyke will have to work out a trip from this tough post. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION

I think #2 LAVENDER (IRE) (7/2) is the horse to beat, but if she's much shorter than 3/1 or so, I might look elsewhere. #4 GOODTINGSCOMINPINK consistently rattles off solid final quarters, so I expect her to be right there at the wire, especially with an anticipated quick pace.

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