

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Race 9: \$150K Yellow Ribbon (G2) for fillies & mares going 8.5-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-ft.)

Post: approx. post 6:10 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

This year's renewal of the \$150K Yellow Ribbon (G2)—an 8.5-furlong turf affair for fillies and mares—was shaping up to be a showdown between two of the nicest turf ladies in the country, but unfortunately, one of them, Jolie Olympica (Brz), is a program scratch. I'm bummed because I was looking to take her on, since I didn't like the pace set-up for her nor the 8.5-furlong distance. But there's nothing we can do about that now, since she's already been declared from the race. So...can last year's defending champ repeat today?

#1 SUMMERING (12/1) is a very honest lady who is a perfect 2-for-2 over this course, notching victories when she first started her career back in 2018. Since then, however, she's been mostly plying her trade on the East Coast and running respectably against allowance types. She faces a stiff class test today, but she has tactical speed and will get to save all the ground from this cushy inside post. She'll definitely have to step things up, and I think she's better suited to underneath, but it would be nice to see Tom Proctor and Glen Hill Farm back in the Del Mar winner's circle. GRADE: C.

#2 BODHICITTA (GB) (6/1), the first Baltas entrant, has a very strong late kick, so you can expect her to be running on through the lane—something she did last time in the Gamely (G1) when she ran second to Keeper Ofthe Stars, who had a perfect forwardly placed trip. I see no reason why she won't be motoring late yet again—but will she be good enough to run down her main rival while also outkicking Beau Recall (Ire)? It's possible, but she will need her very best. GRADE: B.

#3 TONAHUTU (IRE) was an astute claim for \$32K, which I predicted back in May when Blacker dangled her for a tag despite her always showing a decent turn of foot against allowance types. New trainer O'Neill ran her against N2X types last time, and she just missed, losing to a decent horse named Maxim Rate. Her come-home times are solid enough, so I can't fault O'Neill for taking a shot here in a graded-stakes race, especially since this gal has fired over this course, but she will have to show she can handle some quality stakes runners. GRADE: C.

#4 **LADY PRANCEALOT (IRE) (5/1)**, the second Baltas runner, is a very honest type who was doing fine work against age-restricted company last year, including a terrific win in the American Oaks (G1), where she showed off her nice stretch run. Her two tries as a 4-year-old, however, haven't shown much marked improvement, being outkicked by a few of these (although she did have an eventful stretch run in the Grade 1 Gamely). She will need to do better to get the measure of the very nice Keeper Ofthe Stars, but that isn't out of the question for a girl who always shows up for business and is only making her third start as a 4-year-old. GRADE: A.

#5 HARMLESS (15/1) is the main beneficiary of the Jolie Olympica (Brz) scratch, since this gal likes to do her running on the front end—and there won't be a classier animal to her outside hounding her every step of the way. Still, this gal hasn't looked good in her few tries against stakes runners, so she will need

her very best. On the plus side, this is her first start for D'Amato, so it's quite possible he can move up this 4-year-old and have her be competitive against some really nice stakes types—but will it be enough? I suspect someone will run her down late, but she should have a nice pace advantage in here if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#6 **KEEPER OF THE STARS (7/2)** can run some monster races, but she can also run some duds. I should know, since I've been on the losing end of plenty of her duds! Two and three back, she looked sensational when winning the Gamely (G1) and Buena Vista (G2) at Santa Anita, and she's shown an ability to be competitive at any distance, so she'll have every chance to reverse the form from her most recent dud, a fifth-place finish in the Wilshire (G3). She also projects a very good stalking trip in here, so she will get the jump on Beau Recall (Ire). It should be an interesting stretch run to say the least! I'm going to make her a "B", however, since she's going to be the solid second choice, and that 0-for-3 record over this course is tough to ignore. GRADE: B.

#7 **BEAU RECALL (IRE) (3/1)** has always been very good to me, and I've always admired her turn of foot. She's the best finisher in the race, and she's battle-tested against the best turf females in America. She won this race last year after a second-place finish in the Just A Game (G1), which is the same pattern she exhibits coming into this race this year. I know she won't be any value, but she's the most likely winner of the race—though the scratch of Jolie Olympica (Brz), who was going to help ensure a solid early pace, doesn't help. GRADE: A.

#8 **JOLIE OLYMPICA (BRZ)**—program scratch.

CONCLUSION

I've always had a soft spot for #7 **BEAU RECALL (3/1)**, but she's going to be 7/5 or so in here, so unless you absolutely think she can't lose, you have to find someone to try and beat her for the contest. I'd look at #4 **LADY PRANCEALOT (IRE)** or #2 **BODHICITTA (GB)** if "Lady" is too short on the board. You know Baltas is going to have both of them ready for a big run.

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