DEL MAR FEATURE RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/21/20
Race 9: $25K claimer contested at 8.5-furlongs on the turf (rails at 30-feet)
Post: approx. post 4:24 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

We've got nine races slated for today's Saturday card with a good mix of both turf and dirt racing, including the featured Native Diver (G3) on dirt earlier in the card. Today's contest race, however, is the nightcap—and it will be on the lawn: a competitive $25K claimer contested at 8.5-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 30-feet.

Before we dig into the race, just a quick reminder: don't forget to tune in at 11:00 a.m. PST for my "Best Bet" seminar, where I go over certain sequences and wagering strategies with a special guest. This week's guest is Dylan Donnelly, current leader of the NHC Tour and recent third-place finisher in the Breeders' Cup Betting Challenge, where he won more than $250,000! We'll talk tournament strategy and discuss some of the bets that led him to such a big score. It streams on the Del Mar Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages, but for more information, click here: https://www.dmtc.com/calendar/detail/bestbet.

#1 JUSTIN'S QUEST (3/1) is a 5-year-old who has never tried turf before, so we'll see if he takes to the lawn. Prat bails, but Rispoli takes over on a horse who has run some fast dirt races but who hasn't really shown his best stuff going 8.5-furlongs, which he'll have to do today. The last time he ran for $25K, he beat conditional-claimers, so we'll see how he does at this level against open-claimers today. Last time, he ran half a race against $32K foes, so this seems like the right level for him. I hate siding against Rispoli on the turf, but I can see this one getting tagged late, and 3/1 doesn't seem like a great price in a competitive field. GRADE: C.

#2 SWAMP SOUFFLE (20/1) was re-claimed by Spawr three back, but this guy hasn't been able to recapture past glory, finishing a blah seventh at this level last time when going a mile. The added ground will surely help, since this guy can run all day, but he was just 60/1 against some of these same horses, so he'll need to really turn back the clock today to reverse form over those. GRADE: C.

#3 ACKER (4/1) is an old warrior who makes his second start after a freshening and attracts Prat, so I have to think it's go-time today for a solid stretch-runner who should enjoy an extra half-furlong here. This guy has races on his form that would make him very tough, and although he's not the same horse as he used to be, he has still shown plenty of life late in the lane, so I expect him to come running on with his very best today. GRADE: A.

#4 WORTHY TURK (5/2) just missed at this level last time when going a mile, running out of room. Well, that won't be an issue today because he gets an extra half-furlong to play with, and he's done fine work at today's distance. He also likes this course, making him the one to beat in here—though as the likely favorite, he might not help you in the contest. GRADE: A.

#5 GOLDEN DOUGHNUT (8/1) is tactical, so he should get a good stalking trip, but he'll need to show more oomph in the lane, since he's lost lengths in the lane in all of his two-turn starts this year. That said,

he is running in a claimer for the first time since June, so he gets some class-relief today after facing some solid Cal-bred N1X types. You can use him in your exotics, but he'll need to show the eye of the tiger today for the win. GRADE: C.

#6 SKY CONFIDENTIAL (30/1) invades from Emerald Downs, where he was running in dirt sprints. He's never been on turf before, and his two-turn efforts on the main track weren't anything special. He gets a 7-pound break today with bug-gal Pyfer in the irons, so I can see them just gunning hard and hoping for the best. Maybe look for this guy cutting back on dirt next time. GRADE: X.

#7 CONTAGION (15/1) was 11/1 at this level back in July, and he ran a good second, but since then, he hasn't done much (though he does have some excuses). He too gets a 7-pound apprentice allowance today, so that might help him show more stick in the lane. On the plus side, last time, he was 24/1 at this level against a few of these, but he drew the 11-hole; he gets a far better post today. I like others more, but he's usable in your exotics at a big number, especially if he can run back to that race four starts ago. GRADE: C.

#8 FRENCH GETAWAY (4/1) is a cool old boy who always shows up for business, so I'm sure today will be no different for a horse who is 2-for-3 at today's distance and 4-for-6 in-the-money here at Del Mar. He's always had a solid stretch run, so you can expect him to be running on late, but it should be noted that Worthy Turk beat him at today's distance two back, and that foe gets a better post here. GRADE: B.

#9 COLOSI (8/1) is the sneaky play in here. He was 9/1 at this level two back, and he got a terrible ride, chasing a fast pace and then weakening, despite the fact that he was always better from off the pace. He then dropped into a $12.5K/N3L conditional-claimer and did the business while going a mile on dirt. His come-home times on turf have always been really good, and you have to like the confidence that new trainer Glatt is showing by jumping him up in class off the recent claim. You can expect him to be coming on late. I don't like the post or the fact that he'll have to outkick some decent horses, but the price should be right. GRADE: A.

#10 PUSH THROUGH (15/1) (AE) is an honest Cal-bred, but he hasn't really shown a strong will to win, often settling for the minor awards. That said, he is running for a tag for the first time in a long time, so perhaps he can wake up today. Still, the post is no picnic, and I can see him getting a 3- or 4-wide stalking trip from out here. He's capable with his very best, but I think the odds stack up against him today given the post and the fact that this is a pretty decent group for the $25K level. GRADE: C.

#11 MITHQAAL (4/1) (AE) has good speed, and that tactical positioning has allowed him to run well at this level (and tougher) at good odds. The problem is: he's been beaten by a few of these already, and it's unlikely he'll be able to wire this field while going 8.5-furlongs (although he does have a fine wire victory against time-restricted claimers at today's distance). You can use him in your exotics, but I prefer others for the top slot. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION
I do think that **#3 ACKER** and **#4 WORTHY TURK** are legitimate choices—and **#8 FRENCH GETAWAY** is always in with a shot—but if you're looking for a price, **#9 COLOSI** could compete with those three on his best day and with a heady ride.

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