DEL MAR FEATURE RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/27/20
Race 7: $200K Hollywood Turf Cup (G2) contested at 12-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-feet)
Post: approx. post 3:30 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Hope everyone had a fine Thanksgiving—and a profitable one! The racing action continues today with a solid 9-race card (first post: 12:30 p.m. PST), which includes the excellent feature—and today's contest race: the $200K Hollywood Turf Cup (G2), a 12-furlong turf affair contested with the rails out 12-feet. It drew a big, full, oversubscribed field, so it should be an exciting race.

But before we dig in, 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. Sunday's guest will be Dean Keppler, former Director of DRF Press and author of *Trainer Angles*. It streams live (and is archived) on the Del Mar Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages, but for more information, click here: https://www.dmtc.com/calendar/detail/bestbet.

#1 NORTH COUNTY GUY (15/1), the first Baltas entrant, has run some big races, but when he does, it's usually because he's been gifted the race. His two allowance victories saw him get perfect forwardly placed trips in paceless races over speed-favoring courses—he won't be given any such luxury today. Sure, he'll get another good trip while saving ground inside, but there are some quality animals in here who will have every chance to mow down a horse who has never run this far before. GRADE: X.

#2 OSCAR DOMINGUEZ (IRE) (15/1), the second Baltas runner, is a cool old boy who represents the off-the-pace element of the uncoupled Baltas entry. He's always shown a solid late kick, and he's done fine work at today's distance as the winner of this race back in 2019, when he necked out the very talented United. That said, he seems to have lost a step as a 7-year-old in the twilight of his career. You can expect him to put in his late bid, but will it be enough? Note: it is interesting to see Irad Ortiz, Jr., take the mount, however, so maybe this old boy has one more big race left in him. GRADE: C.

#3 RED KING (5/1), the first of four D'Amato horses, looked good when winning the Del Mar Handicap (G2) going 11-furlongs over this course this summer, so he'll appreciate a return to the seaside oval after he was overmatched in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1). He still ran his race there, but he was just facing the world's best turf horses. He'll run his race again, tracking off the pace and looking to make his move (which was timed to perfection by Rispoli two back when winning the Grade 2 Del Mar Handicap), but he'll have to do even better if he's going to outkick the East Coast invaders in here. GRADE: C.

#4 SAY THE WORD (5/1), the second of four D'Amato runners, makes his first start for a new barn after capturing the prestigious Northern Dancer (G1) at Woodbine while going today's distance. It was an impressive effort for a horse who had been offered up for sale for $62.5K just a few starts before. It should also be noted that that race was on "good" turf, so we'll see if he can replicate that sharp performance on "firm." He has acted on "firm" before, so it shouldn't be too much of an issue, but the fact that his best race came on "good" is something to consider. I like that Prat gets the call, and we all

know that these East Coast horses really jump up out here. Plus, he's likely to offer more value than his East Coast compatriots. GRADE: A.

#5 ARKLOW (5/2) is as honest as they come: a horse who has won more than $2.5 million throughout his career. He's coming off an okay sixth in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1), while before that, he looked really good winning a 12-furlong race at Kentucky Downs when Brad Cox added blinkers to this 6-year-old. He's always had a strong stretch run, and it's nice to see one of the best off-the-pace jocks in the world—Joel Rosario—take the call. He's your deserving favorite, but Brad Free of the *DRF* reported a few days ago that this guys has had some travel issues, so there's a chance he might not make the race. GRADE: B.

#6 GREGORIAN CHANT (GB) (20/1), the third of four D'Amato runners, is a decent horse who still has upside as a lightly raced 4-year-old, but the waters get considerably deeper for him today, making his first graded-stakes start of his career. He's also never been this far, so I'm a little skeptical of his chances. On the plus side, he is tactical, so he should be right there in the hunt turning for home. Then we'll see if he can put forth a career-best. I'm dubious, however. GRADE: X.

#7 ACCLIMATE (12/1), the fourth D'Amato entrant, should be able to dictate the running of the race, coming off a long layoff and having sharp early speed. You can expect him to be leading the way—but will he be fit enough to wire this group going 12-furlongs while coming off a year layoff? You have to consider him strictly from a pace perspective, but I have to think one of the sharp stretch-runners is going to mow him down. Still, he makes an interesting exotics horse at a price. GRADE: C.

#8 LACCARIO (GER) (3/1) is a Group 1 winner who makes his second U.S. start after firing a big shot in the Turf Classic Invitational (G1), where he ran second, coming on with a strong late run right off the plane. Does he move forward off that race or does he bounce? And even if he does bounce, is he still good enough to win? He certainly looks like the most talented runner in the race, and he's in good hands with Motion—so you have to consider him for all the marbles, especially if Arklow declares from the race. Let's hope Arklow doesn't, so maybe this guy will offer a hint of value. Wishful thinking, perhaps! GRADE: A.

#9 WARD 'N JERRY (20/1) is a cool old boy who has done good work out here in California, winning a Grade 3 at today's distance. That said, his form since that March race in the San Juan Capistrano (G3) hasn't been nearly as good, so he'll need a big form reversal to have a say in the outcome today. GRADE: X.

#10 PROUD PEDRO (FR) (20/1) can run all day, so 12-furlongs should suit him well, since you know he will keep running on through the lane. He's also a 4-year-old who still has some upside, so even though he has yet to finish in the money in a graded-stakes event, he has the potential to step up and run a career-best today, especially getting extra ground to play with. He's not as good as the East Coast shippers, but it wouldn't shock me if he outran his odds today and snuck in the exotics. GRADE: B.

#11 MARCKIE'S WATER—program scratch.

#12 ANOTHER MYSTERY (10/1) had no pace to run at in the John Henry Turf Classic (G2), yet he tried all the way to the wire to finish third. It was a pretty solid effort for a horse who was making just his second start in the McCarthy barn. That trainer does a fine job with good horses, so I have no doubt that

this one will continue to improve under McCarthy's tutelage—but what can we expect today from this post with a jock who prefers to keep horses in the clear rather than covered up? I do think 12-panels will suit this runner, and there is upside here, but he drew the short straw with this lousy post, and that will certainly compromise his chances. GRADE: C.

#13 TARTINI (30/1) scratched out of a much easier race last week to be cross-entered in two stakes races this weekend. I respect Glatt, and I have a fondness for Red Barons horses, but this seems like an ambitious move for a horse who was toiling at the starter-allowance level last year. Granted, this is his first start for Glatt, who can certainly move up a horse, so maybe he saw something he could do to turn this career nibbler into a quality stakes animal. I need to see it with my own eyes first, however. GRADE: X.

#14 FIVESTAR LYNCH (IRE) (30/1) (AE) would be the third Baltas runner if he drew into the race, but even if he did, I'm having a hard time seeing him as something other than a pace factor, since he just won his N1X while loose on the lead through slow splits. I'm not seeing it. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
The East Coast invaders seem to have the quality edge over our SoCal-based runners, and of the three, **#4 SAY THE WORD** should offer the most value, since **#5 ARKLOW** and **#8 LACCARIO (GER)** are going to take a ton of money.

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