

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Race 9: \$100K Oceanside Stakes for 3-year-olds only going 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 0-ft.)

Post: approx. post 6:00 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Well, it's been a while, but we are finally able to be back on track in some kind of capacity this summer after last summer's season was run without any attendance. In other words, I hope to see all of you there at some point this meet! Before I get into today's analysis, I just wanted to let you know that we are bringing back every Sunday our "Best Bet" seminar, where I will livestream myself and a guest going over some key plays from Sunday's card. Be sure to tune in, as this week's guest will be the inimitable Leo Vukmanovich. Follow me on Twitter @ScatoniSureShot for more details.

Okay...let's get cracking! Today's contest race is the always exciting Opening Day feature: the \$100K Oceanside Stakes, a 3-year-old turf affair contested at one mile on the lawn (with the rails at 0-foot) and restricted to 3-year-olds who have not won a sweepstakes of \$50K at a mile or over in 2021. We had 14 entered, but unfortunately two speed horses scratched, mucking up the pace a little bit and making it a 12-horse field. Still, I think we should get a fairly run race today.

#1 HARBORED MEMORIES (8/1) has never run a bad race, and he's a perfect 2-for-2 since coming off a brief freshening this May. That said, his best work has come turf-sprinting, so we'll see how he handles a two-turn turf affair for the first time today. Note that the one time he tried routing, he had the lead and was collared late in a one-mile dirt race. Expect him to get a good forwardly placed ground-saving trip; then we'll see how he does when the real running starts. GRADE: C.

#2 FIGHTING FORCE (6/1) looked good when winning a one-mile stakes race on yielding turf at Gulfstream Park, but he's not going to see yielding turf today, and his firm form from back East isn't anything special. That said, we often see mediocre East Coast turf runners come out here and shine—but even still, I'm tempted to watch this one as he races in new surroundings. Oh, and note the jock: Van Dyke is back to ride here this summer after a stint back East, so you can expect the youngblood to be aggressive and hungry all summer long. GRADE: C.

#3 CREW DRAGON (6/1) also has mediocre East Coast turf form, but this guy intrigues me a lot more than his neighbor, simply because he was privately purchased by Hronis and Sadler, indubitably with this race in mind—and when those two pick out a horse back East for a West Coast spot, they rarely miss. It's interesting that most of this guy's races under Mott were beyond a mile, but his two 8-furlong affairs sported solid come-home times, and I have to think Rispoli's presence here says this one is going to be ready to run (unless, of course, he's prepping for the longer turf series races later in the meet!). GRADE: A.

#4 BRUTTO—scratched.

#5 PETRUCHIO (12/1) has one bad race on his form, and it came on the synth to a future Preakness (G1) winner, so you can draw a line through it. He also looks like a steadily improving 3-year-old who is poised to have a good summer after running a better-than-looked second in the Singletary back in April.

He's been freshened since then, and I have no doubt that the great Richard Mandella is going to have this one ready to run some good races on turf this summer. I also like that he has some tactical speed, so Smith should be able to work out a perfect forwardly placed trip. That said, he seems like a bit of a grinder, so the longer races might suit him better. GRADE: B.

#6 DREAM SHAKE (4/1) is sure to get a lot of attention, since he's the fastest horse in the race, and he's battle-tested against really quality sophomores. That said, all of his work has come on dirt, so will he be able to take his solid form to the lawn? The breeding suggests he certainly can, but do you want to take a short price in a big field to find out? Also note that Prat sides with another, and that's a bit of a concern for me. Still, if you like him, you should at least get a really good stalking trip in here. I'm going to let him beat me, however. GRADE: C.

#7 JUNGLE CRY (20/1) got a perfect forwardly placed trip through slow early splits last time when beating age-restricted N1X types up North. He did what he needed to do as the 4/5 favorite, but the waters get much deeper today—and it should be noted that None Above the Law beat him two back on the square while going today's distance. I can't say anything bad about a horse who hasn't run a bad race since moving to the Specht barn, but he will need a step forward today to beat some better-looking animals. GRADE: X.

#8 **FLASHIEST (6/1)** is a little interesting in here, since he sports some decent come-home times, and he should be ignored on the board with Prat jumping off him to land on the Glatt—but this son of Mizzen Mast looked really good two back when winning an N1X at today's distance, sporting a really strong come-home time. In his follow-up race, he ran a better-than-looked second with some trouble in a 9-furlong race, still putting in a good late run. He should have something to close into, and the price will be right. GRADE: A.

#9 NO FOOLERY HERE (20/1) also has some really nice come-home times, so you can expect him to be rolling late—but it should be noted that he needed every bit of 9-furlongs to break his maiden, so Franco will have to time things to perfection. I expect him to run well today, but he might be a better win-candidate for the longer races in this turf series. That said, he's in good hands with Baltas, and if the pace is quick enough early, this guy can easily have a say in the outcome. I've seen worse 20/1 shots, that's for darn sure! GRADE: B.

#10 MUCHO DEL ORO—scratched.

#11 NONE ABOVE THE LAW (8/1) was dominant up north in two stakes races (one on synth and one on turf, but both at a mile) before heading back down to SoCal to run in the restricted Snow Chief, where he ran a tough-luck second as the even-money favorite in that 9-furlong affair. He was coming on late but just ran out of room. I had a feeling that would be the case, since the Santa Anita course was not always kind to closers; meanwhile, up at Golden Gate, this guy's plodding style suited him well. Del Mar plays a lot more fairer than Santa Anita does for this type of runner, so this guy will have every chance to be competitive today—but there are some hurdles here: first off, the post is no picnic; secondly, Prat, who has won with him before, bails. Plus, I think he'll be an underlay, so let's try to beat him. GRADE: C.

#12 INGEST (30/1), the first O'Neill entrant, has tactical speed and a jock who typically likes to ride from a wide stalking position, so I'm having a hard time seeing this guy getting a winning trip in this race. I do expect him to be in the hunt turning for home, but he'll then have to outkick some quality

animals, including None Above the Law, who beat him on the square three back at today's distance. GRADE: X.

#13 WHATMAKESSAMMYRUN (7/2) has won two in a row since joining the Glatt barn from back East—and both of those wins came with Prat in the irons, and SoCal's leading jock stays put. Those are the positives. But there are some negatives as well! First off, all three of this guy's wins have come sprinting, so we'll see if he can get a win around two turns—something he failed to do three times back East. Secondly, while Prat is a master at putting horses in great position, he's not a magician who can defy physics, so he's going to need some racing luck to get this stretch-out sprinter to not lose too much ground while gaining a forward stalking position. Lastly, he's the morning-line favorite, and do you really want to back the favorite in such a wide-open race? All that said, those last two sprint races were really good, and if he happens to move forward again today, he could be tough—but I'm going to bet against that (famous last words!). GRADE: C.

#14 HOCKEY DAD (20/1), the second O'Neill runner, was in terrific form heading into the Lexington (G3), but he caught a sloppy main track and failed to fire. He's been freshened since that April race, and he now comes back in a spot where he can show his best stuff (since two of his three wins have come on the lawn). That said, the post is brutal, so I'm envisioning a wide stalking journey, and that is sure to take the starch out of him late when the real running starts. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

This is an excellent race because the top-two choices have some questions to answer, meaning there should be plenty of value elsewhere. I'll focus on **#3 CREW DRAGON**, especially if he stays around his morning-line—but I expect him to take more action than that. If you're looking for a horse who should outrun his odds, **#8 FLASHIEST** fits that bill for me. Both **#5 PETRUCHIO** and **#9 NO FOOLERY HERE** should benefit from a quick pace. Good luck!

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