

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot

Date: 8/19/21

Race 7: \$62.5K optional-claiming/N2X contested at 11-furlongs on turf (rails at 24-feet)

Post: approx. post 5:00 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

All the racing has been really good this meet, but the turf racing has been exceptional. Today is no different with a wide-open \$62.5K optional-claiming/N2X contested at 11-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at 24-feet. I thought there were a few places you could land, but I do like one horse over all the others.

#1 BIG BUZZ (5/1) was a top pick for me last time when this guy ran a tough-luck third going today's distance against \$40K types. It was a good race, considering he stumbled and wasn't as close to the pace as he usually is, but he was beaten by one of today's foes, and this level is a lot tougher than that \$40K optional he ran in last time. Also note that Prat bails, and that's a big concern for me. Maybe he can pick up a slice, but he'd need a major step forward for the W. GRADE: X.

#2 PARSIMONY (15/1) attended the pace last time off a layoff while running in a 6.5-furlong dirt sprint, so this guy will be ensuring an honest pace on the stretch-out today. He does have form around two turns, with a win going 10-furlongs on the synth at Meydan, where he went to the lead and never looked back. That was a good effort, but it was his last win, and I'm not sure he's going to be able to wire this field, given the fact that he's 0-for-9 on turf, and it's not that easy wiring good turf horses with strong late kicks over this turf course. I'm tempted to watch one, but I can't fault anyone for thinking this guy is a lone-F who can wire them. GRADE: X.

#3 OCEAN ATLANTIQUE (8/1) was 6/1 at this level last time, and he ran a blah sixth, failing to show the requisite late kick to compete with our kind in his first SoCal start. In his defense, he was well off a very slow pace, so no one backed up for him—and perhaps this longer distance can help this one-paced type. Though his U.S. form is mediocre, his overseas form is pretty good, and he does have a win going 10-panels, so any extra ground should help his cause today. I think he's capable of better, but he will definitely have to show more. GRADE: B.

#4 MARGOT'S BOY (15/1) is a very honest horse who usually shows up for work and cashes a paycheck—but someone usually proves better than he is by outkicking him in the lane. He's 0-for-5 at Del Mar, and I'm not sure today's distance is going to help him at all, since he has a tendency to settle for the minor awards, and there are some solid stretch-runners in here who are more likely to win a dogfight late in the lane. That said, he should get a dream forwardly placed trip if you think he can stay on and hold off the closers. GRADE: X.

#5 WARD 'N JERRY (5/2) is your morning-line favorite, and he's an old warrior who has beaten some of the best turf marathoners out here on the West Coast throughout his vaunted 8-year career. That said, the old boy is up in age, and he is running for the optional \$62.5K tag today after two lackluster races since coming off a brief freshening from March to June. Before he hit the shelf, he was beating lesser

\$40K starter foes, so we'll see how he stacks up against better animals today. Sure, on his best day, he's the one to beat—but I'm going to try to beat him today. GRADE: B.

#6 K P ALL SYSTEMS GO (3/1) is my top pick in the race because he looks to be sitting on a massive effort, second off the bench after making a strong early move into a pacesetter race last time before flattening out. He was coming off a nine-month layoff that day, and he surely needed the race. GRADE: A.

#7 RIJEKA (IRE) (5/1) is a little interesting in here because he clearly has no problem running this far, and his come-home times back East would definitely put him in the frame out here, even though his races against N2X foes back East are nothing to write home about. Still, he's making his first SoCal start for D'Amato, who does great work with new acquisitions, and at the 5/1 morning-line, this guy seems like a good alternative to my top choice in here. GRADE: A.

#8 SEVEN CHARMS (4/1) was not on my radar last time when he looked good beating N1X types at 8/1 in a race at today's distance. He was coming off a \$50K maiden-breaker, so I thought he would be outclassed, but he proved me wrong, putting in a strong late run to get up and win by a head, beating my top choice, Big Buzz, who is back for more today. As mentioned, that was at the N1X level, so the waters get deeper today. Can this guy make it three wins in a row? I'm a little skeptical, but he is a lightly raced and steadily improving 4-year-old in the very good hands of Michael McCarthy, so a win isn't out of the question. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

I think **#6 K P ALL SYSTEMS GO** is sitting on a big race, and he's my top selection—but 3/1 might be too short for some of you to take in the contest. If you are looking for a higher-priced alternative, the new face in the crowd, **#7 RIJEKA (IRE)** is certainly capable of winning if he takes to the SoCal firm turf. And **#3 OCEAN ATLANTIQUE** is probably better than his last race indicates.

If you'd like to learn more about **OptixEQ**, visit www.optixeq.com.