

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Race 10: \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1) for 2YOs going 8F on turf (rails at 0-ft.)

Post: approx. post 5:30 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

It's Breeders' Cup Friday, a day filled with future stars and incredibly competitive racing. Today's contest race (well, one of two, anyway: you can also play R8) is the \$1 million Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1), an 8-furlong turf affair for 2-year-olds. This is a very competitive event, and you could land in several places, so let's see if our darts land on the bullseye!

#1 MODERN GAMES (IRE) (5/1), the first Appleby entrant, looks really good to me, having won two in a row in pretty convincing fashion overseas. He draws the rail, has acted on good-fast ground, and goes out for lethal European connections. I'm trying not to overthink this one! GRADE: A.

#2 ALBAHR (GB) (6/1), the second Appleby runner, has won four in a row: three overseas and one here in North America when he just captured the Summer (G1) at Woodbine on good turf. He won easily and is a major threat right back—but I've never been a fan of Euros second time in the States, so we'll see if he can top up on that effort. GRADE: B.

#3 DAKOTA GOLD (8/1) is a perfect 2-for-2, but he gets a stiff class test today after just beating overnight stakes foes at Monmouth on good going. He got a nice figure for that race, but I'm not sure how well it will transfer out here against some really classy runners. GRADE: X.

#4 TIZ THE BOMB (8/1) has won three in a row, including a recent victory in the Bourbon (G2) on good ground at Keeneland. He broke from the twelve hole and beat thirteen other animals, so it was a really nice effort. Now he gets a much better post and should trip out well. He's acted on firm turf, and he's making the third start of his form cycle, so I've got no real knocks on him. GRADE: B

#5 SLIPSTREAM (12/1) has won two in a row, but both of his wins have come sprinting, so we'll see if this recent Futurity (G3) winner can take his game around two turns. Win-rider Rosario thinks so, since he sticks around, and Clement can certainly get them to stretch out, especially when they have ability like this one does. GRADE: B.

#6 MACKINNON (8/1) has been the king of juvenile turf racing out here in California, winning three in a row and looking pretty darn stylish while doing it. That said, as much as it pains me to say it as a California guy, the turf racing out here just isn't nearly as tough as it is back East and overseas. I can't knock anyone for picking this guy; I just think he's never seen the likes of these before, so if he wins, hats off to him. GRADE: X.

#7 GREAT MAX (IRE) (20/1) has been overmatched in Group races overseas, so the connections ship him here and add blinkers—and that's not a move I like to see with European invaders because typically that's a last-gasp move to shake things up. I'll watch one. GRADE: X.

#8 GLOUNTHAUNE (IRE) (12/1) has to be considered based on the connections, since O'Brien and Moore win a lot of races. That said, this one's European form isn't anything special, and it should be noted that he was beaten by Dubawi Legend (IRE) two back. In his defense, he did stumble and had some traffic trouble in that race, which also happened to be a Group 1, so there were some salty customers in there. I do like that he rebounded and won a Group 3 in his next start. Still, he looks like he'll need a big step forward today. GRADE: B.

#9 STOLEN BASE (20/1) just missed in the Bourbon (G2), losing to Tiz the Bomb by less than a length. It was a really nice performance, but he didn't get the win, so he'll need to do better today. Also note that his two turf races have come on good ground, and he's not going to get that today. If you think he'll move up on firm, he could contend for a slice, but also note that Prat ends up elsewhere. GRADE: C.

#10 PORTFOLIO COMPANY (6/1) attracts Prat, and that has to count for something, especially if the horse is trained by Chad Brown. This one's form isn't particularly a stand-out, but I just have a feeling that Prat will fit him really well, because he has good tactical speed, and no one in California can get a horse to settle and finish like Prat can. This guy will need to show more oomph in the lane, however—though Brown horses usually come through with a strong late kick when the money is on the line. GRADE: A.

#11 GRAFTON STREET (15/1), the first of three Casse horses, just broke his maiden with a perfect trip at forty cents on the dollar in an 8.5-furlong synth race, so the waters get much deeper today. Two back, he ran second in the Summer (G1), but lost to one of today's foes, so he's got his work cut out for him. GRADE: X.

#12 CREDIBILITY (30/1), the second Casse entrant, outran his odds in the Bourbon (G2), finishing third at 45/1. That was a markedly improved performance for a horse who just looked too slow on paper. His recent race, while good, still looks too slow to have an impact against these. Plus, what kind of trip is he going to get out here from the 12-hole with Smith doing the steering? GRADE: X.

#13 COINAGE (15/1), the third Casse runner, has tactical speed and will need to use it from all the way out here, and that's sure to compromise his chances. I do like that he won the With Anticipation (G3) two back, but he got an easy lead and never had anyone threaten him, as Portfolio Company just couldn't cut into a glacial pace. He then flopped as the heavy chalk in his next start, though he did have a little trouble. I can see him in the vanguard early, but I think others will outfinish him. GRADE: X.

#14 DUBAWI LEGEND (IRE) (4/1) drew the short straw with this awful post, but he has tactical speed and is one of the more talented runners in the field, so he's a major threat. Unfortunately, he's going to need some luck or just prove much the best, since it's not easy to win from out here. That said, he just ran second in a Group 2 overseas; he's lightly raced; and he's acted on firm ground. GRADE: B.

#15 READY TO PURRFORM (20/1) (AE) is a perfect 2-for-2, but he's had perfect set-ups in each of those two victories—and I'm not sure whom he's been facing back East. He's cross-entered in a more sensible spot, so I think he'll look much better there. GRADE: X.

#16 DETROIT CITY (30/1) (AE) has sprint speed and an outside post, so I'm sure the instructions will be simple if he gets in: gun hard and hope for the best. I don't think his best will be good enough, however. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

You can make cases for so many of these, but I really like the rail horse in here, **#1 MODERN GAMES (IRE)**, though it's possible he'll be shorter than his morning-line. If that's the case, I expect **#10 PORTFOLIO COMPANY** to run a peak race.

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