DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
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Date: 11/19/21
Race 6: $25K claiming event contested at 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 18-feet)
Post: approx. post 3:03 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Week three of this four-week Bing Crosby meet gets underway today with an 8-race card, featuring a nice mix of races. Today's contest race is a competitive $25K claimer contested at one-mile on the lawn with the rails set at 18-feet. We've got several hard-knockers in here.

#1 DR. TROUTMAN (8/1) has speed and draws the rail for an aggressive jock who is likely to send hard and hope for the best, which is exactly what he did last time when this guy tried to wire Cal-bred $20K/N1X foes but ended up finishing third. He should be tighter after that effort, since he was coming off a three-month layoff, but there is other speed in here, and I think that will make things difficult for this one. GRADE: C.

#2 FLY TO MARS (3/1) should get a perfect stalking trip, sucking back and just waiting on the speed to start to slow down. What you see is what you get here: and that's a hard-trying 7-year-old who always shows up, especially when racing at today's distance. GRADE: A.

#3 VIA EGNATIA (7/2) came off a February layoff back on September 3, and he reeled off two wins in a row, including one at this level while racing down the hill. You can toss his last try against tougher and just focus on those two previous races. He should get a good forwardly placed trip pushing the pace and keeping Dr. Troutman honest, but I am anticipating a quick pace, and that will probably soften him up late. That said, he's in good form right now. GRADE: B.

#4 BLAMELESS (5/1) should also be forwardly placed, attending the pace while trying to turn the tables on two foes who beat him two and three back. Last time, this guy tried to steal a $25K starter at Santa Anita, but he was nipped late at 8/1. It was a nice effort, but he got away with a glacial pace and still couldn't win. He's in good form and always tries, but I prefer others. GRADE: C.

#5 FRENCH GETAWAY (6/1) is a cool 8-year-old who has been a steady check earner throughout his career, but this old boy may have lost a step or two, since he hasn't won in a long time. In his defense, he has been saddled with a jock who hasn't always given him the best of rides. He now gets a new jock while making his second start for the Mulhall barn, which took him for $25K two back. He should be right there at the sixteenth, then we'll see if Gonzalez can coax some extra oomph out of him. GRADE: B.

#6 MOVE OVER (GB) (10/1) has a really nice late kick, but talk about a horse who hasn't won in a long time (and I should know, because I've backed him plenty)! In fact, he hasn't found the winner's circle since 2018, so he's very tough to support for the top spot, but do note that he just missed by a neck last time against better, and that was the first time Hernandez rode him in a while, so maybe that jock can finally get this guy a picture. Expect him on the scene late, which makes him better suited for underneath to me. GRADE: C.

#7 SEEKING REFUGE (15/1) looks to be rounding into form, and he does have some races that fit nicely against these, but he's been handled by a few of these recently, and he hasn't won since around this time last year, when he needed conditional-claimers to do it. GRADE: X.

#8 ABSOLUTE UNIT (8/1) gets the reluctant nod in here, since he's kind of the new face in the crowd, and a lot of these competitors have been squaring off against each other. This guy is a 4-year-old who was claimed by Maker two back for $32K, where he gutted out a head victory over this course and at this distance. It wasn't the most exciting of victories, but he got the job done. Maker freshened him up and tried him against much tougher, where he ran half a race. He now drops him to a level at which he can win—and Rispoli hops on board. GRADE: A.

#9 STIRLING DRIVE (6/1) drops to this low level for the first time, so that must be considered, but what kind of trip is he going to get parked out here? If he shows tactical speed, he's looking at a wide journey; if he tries to suck back, save ground, and make one big run, he'll need some luck, since the logical contenders all have tactical speed. I do think his best is good enough; I just don't think he'll be able to show his best stuff today. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION
I think **#2 FLY TO MARS** is the most likely winner of the race, but I doubt he'll offer any value; so I'll look to **#8 ABSOLUTE UNIT** as the value play, since he's a 4-year-old with some upside while all of the others have been beating up on each other over the last few years.

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