

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 11/25/21

**Race 8:** \$40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 11-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-feet)

**Post:** approx. post 2:35 p.m. PST

## OVERVIEW

I'm sure I'm not the only one who wishes this meet were longer, but alas, here we are: closing week of the 2021 Bing Crosby meeting. But we have plenty to be thankful for on this fine Thanksgiving Day, the least of which is this excellent contest race: a \$40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 11-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 12-feet. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

#1 K P ALL SYSTEMS GO (8/1) looked poised for great things last year, but it doesn't look like he's trained on, now dropping in for a \$40K tag after failing to clear his N2X hurdle. In his defense, I can make excuses for all three of his races this year, so he'll have every chance to get the job done today while saving ground from off the pace. Baze should hug the rail and look to produce this guy's late run. I don't like that Mullins is ready to give up on this one, but that could also mean that he's going to pull out all the stops for this one to get the W today, since it's likely he could get claimed. GRADE: B.

#2 CLEOPATRA'S STRIKE (7/2) is an old class horse who has gotten a bit camera-shy in his dotage as an 8-year-old. That said, his best races are certainly fast enough, and if he had a few more jumps last time, he probably would have won in that 10-furlong affair—so today's added ground should only help his cause. He's the tepid morning-line favorite at 7/2, which seems like the right price for him, since he hasn't won in a very long time. GRADE: B.

#3 TROPICAL TERROR (12/1) is a long-fused sort who can run all day—which is why Cassidy actually ran this guy against winners while still a maiden, just so he could enter him in a 10-furlong event. The trainer's faith was rewarded with a nice victory—and his races since then weren't too bad either, culminating in a recent victory against Cal-bred N1X foes going a mile over this course. He does have to face open-company foes today, and he couldn't beat them two back (including Big Buzz), so he will need a step forward today—but you can expect him to be running on late, and his come-home times in shorter races suggest he could be competitive against these (though I prefer him more for underneath). GRADE: C.

#4 MONGOLIAN WIND—program scratch.

#5 JIMMY P (6/1) is a 3-year-old who ships out here for Motion and attracts Rispoli, so that must be considered. But is this guy fast enough? His figures are pretty slow from back East, so he will need to run much faster today—but his come-home times in his 9-furlong races back East suggest he's going to really like today's added distance, which he tries for the first time today. Still, this lightly raced 3-year-old does have some improving to do. GRADE: B.

#6 OFFLEE NAUGHTY (6/1) is another 3-year-old, but his recent races fit really well against the older runners in here, especially since he has some ridiculously fast come-home times, which means you can expect him to be flying late today while getting some added ground to play with. He also gets a jock

upgrade, going from Gaffalione to Desormeaux, who is riding really well these days. I don't like that this one has zero early speed, but I'm hoping the longer distance will help mitigate that fact—plus, Kent is so good at judging pace. GRADE: A.

#7 BEROLIJEAN (FR) (15/1) is a 3-year-old who was 5/1 in his stateside debut against fellow sophomores back in September—and he ran half a race to finish seventh, with Rispoli riding. Well, that top jock bails and is replaced by recent relocater Curatolo, whom I'm sure will be trying very hard to impress one of the top trainers on this circuit. But it's called "horse racing" not "jockey racing," so I'm fine watching one today, since this guy will need to really step forward to have a say in here. Maybe the addition of blinkers will help, if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

#8 BURNIN TURF (6/1) should have a major pace advantage, since he has good early speed and can dictate the pace if he wants to. He also happens to have the best jock in the colony sitting on his back, so you know Prat will be tough to run down once he turns for home—but can this Cal-bred stay the distance? His two tries beyond a mile saw him lose position late, so he will need to show he can be as effective going farther than 8-furlongs. Still, he'll trip out perfectly, and the race shape really flatters his run style. GRADE: B.

#9 NEVER SEEN BEFORE (IRE) (30/1) is a 3-year-old who hasn't been able to make a dent here in the States against his fellow sophomores, so this seems like a really tough spot for him. If he wins, we lose. GRADE: X.

#10 LUVLUV (5/1)—program scratch.

#11 FIRST PREMIO (6/1) has a versatile run style, so we'll see what Van Dyke does from out here as this popular claim-box item makes his first start for Yakteen, who just took him for \$40K. I can see why he keeps getting claimed: he seems to try hard every time, but it should be noted that his best work has come at a mile, so we'll see if he can stay the distance while having to break from a tough post. He's fast enough to win, but he will need things to really go his way. GRADE: C.

#12 BIG BUZZ (12/1) gets some class-relief today, dropping in for the optional \$40K tag after finding N2X foes too tough for him. Over the summer, he ran a good third at this level and distance, just missing at 7/2. I liked him that day when Prat was riding, but I don't like him as much today with no Prat and a bum post. He fits well here, but he seems better suited to underneath considering the trip he's likely going to get. GRADE: C.

## CONCLUSION

I know it seems like I might have a lot of contenders in this race, but I really like #6 OFFLEE NAUGHTY to close like a freight train and get the W at a good price. If it's not him, then any of several in here can win—so at least you'll have plenty of places to land if you don't like my top selection!

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