

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot

**Date:** 11/27/21

**Race 9:** \$400K Hollywood Derby (G1) for 3-year-olds going 9-furlongs on turf (rails at 0-feet)

**Post:** approx. post 4:30 p.m. PST

## OVERVIEW

Wow! Have we got one doozy of a renewal of the \$400K Hollywood Derby (G1), a 9-furlong turf affair for sophomores with the rails at zero-feet. Not only do we have an oversubscribed field of 15 runners, but we've also got some invaders to spice up the proceedings. Unfortunately, I do really like a logical horse, but maybe we can find a few prices to round out the exotics.

#1 DICEY MO CHARA (GB) (30/1) is a really nice horse who has been handled expertly by Leonard Powell, who just trained this guy to beat older runners in an 8.5-furlong heat here at Del Mar back on November 6. He stalked the pace and powered home nicely to get up by a head. Can he show the same oomph going longer, however? His come-home times suggest he should be just fine—but he is trying stakes foes for the first time, so we'll see how he handles the class raise today. GRADE: C.

#2 BEYOND BRILLIANT (12/1) has a ton of early zip, but I'm having a hard time seeing him wire this field—and both of his career wins came on the lead. Last time, he tried to stalk the pace, but he couldn't show the requisite oomph when the real running started, so he'll need to do a lot better today while being part of the early pace. GRADE: X.

#3 CATHKIN PEAK (IRE) (6/1) was my wise-guy play last time in the Twilight Derby (G2) when he ran a very good second at 26/1. He was no match for the winner, who was my top pick in that race and whom this guy will have to face again today—but he draws a nice inside post, attracts Prat, and has come-home times from his last two races that would make him a serious player in here. Still, is he good enough to beat the Chad Brown two-headed monster? GRADE: B.

#4 TEAM MERCHANTS (15/1) has tactical speed and exits a restricted mile race that he won fairly easily, so you can expect him to be in the vanguard early. Can he show the same tenacity going an extra furlong? I'm not so sure, especially since he'll be attending the pace while some serious stretch-runners are just getting going. GRADE: X.

#5 HUDSON RIDGE (12/1) is pretty versatile, but his best races have come while stalking the pace, so you can expect Smith to have him forwardly placed and in a good spot early, especially with the removal of the hood today. That said, his best work has come at Santa Anita, and a few of these just beat him pretty easily in the Twilight Derby (G2). Prat chooses another, and that's a big concern for me. GRADE: C.

#6 PUBLIC SECTOR (GB) (5/2), the first Chad Brown entrant, looks like the one to beat, having won three in a row—all graded-stakes—back East, and doing it in very stylish fashion, coming home in ridiculously fast times. He's a legitimate favorite, but he will have to beat 13 other animals today in this big full field, so Ortiz, Jr., will have to work out the right trip. Good thing this guy has tactical speed, so Ortiz, Jr., can pretty much put this one wherever he wants. GRADE: A.

#7 FLASHIEST (15/1), the second Powell runner, was 12/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2), and he ran a creditable race, but he wasn't able to beat a few of today's rivals, so he'll need to do a bit better. That said, he did win the Oceanside over this course, and his late run in the Del Mar Derby (G2) was good enough to win, but he just missed. Expect him on the scene late—and perhaps with a little luck, he can round out the exotics. GRADE: B.

#8 SIFTING SANDS (GB) (15/1), the second Brown invader, was 7/1 in the Hill Prince (G2) at Belmont, and he ran a blah seventh, no match for his stablemate, whom he has to face again today. You can never count out a Brown runner, but this guy will need a step forward if he's going to beat Public Sector (GB), so he seems better suited for underneath. An all-Brown exacta, perhaps? GRADE: B.

#9 IT CAN BE DONE (20/1) was 48/1 in the Hill Prince (G2), and he outran those long odds to finish third, but he did have a perfect stalking trip yet was still outfinished by two others in there, including today's likely favorite, Public Sector (GB). Before that, this guy was running well up and down the East Coast, but he was also lacking that certain *je ne sais quoi*, unable to find the wire first while picking up checks for the minor awards. I'm thinking a minor award is in the cards yet again today. GRADE: C.

#10 ZOFFARELLI (IRE) (20/1) has been very unlucky, and at some point, a jock change is probably in order because this guy has found himself in some tough situations at critical points in his last two races. When he did get a good trip three back in the La Jolla (G3), he was outfinished on the line (though he was pinballed). I do think there is ability here, and I do think this one can be right there with a perfect trip—but how likely is it he'll get a perfect trip, breaking from the 10-hole in a big, full field? GRADE: C.

#11 CAMP HOPE (5/1) has looked very good ever since adapting a more forwardly placed style, cruising to victory in his last two starts at Keeneland, including a sharp win in an overnight stakes. But I do have some concerns: first off, he's not going to get such a perfect trip in here, being forced to use some of that early speed to angle over and gain good position. Secondly, his two fastest races came on the off-going back East—something he's not bloody likely to see out here. If you're a speed-figure guy, then this guy fits nicely here—but I'm taking those numbers with a grain of salt. GRADE: C.

#12 SUBCONSCIOUS (4/1) was a strong play for me last time in the Twilight Derby (G2) at Santa Anita, but a lot of others had the same idea, betting him down to 5/2 in that 10-horse field. He stalked the pace in a perfect spot and drew off to win fairly comfortably, beating a few of these in the process. No doubt, he is a stakes-quality animal in good hands with Mandella—but he drew the two-hole that day, while today he has to break from the 12-hole. Surely, that's going to compromise his chances somewhat. GRADE: B.

#13 IN EFFECT (20/1) broke his maiden for \$75K, and since then, his trainer has not really put him in a spot where he could show his best stuff. This seems like another ambitious spot for a horse who will need to run a lot faster than he has ever before. He'll also have to do it from a near-impossible post. On the plus side, Johnny V. is somehow enticed to ride, and he does such great work any time he comes out West. Still...GRADE: X.

#14 SANTIN (10/1), a royal blue color-bearer for Godolphin, is a perfect 2-for-2 with still plenty more upside to show as a lightly raced sophomore. But the waters get deep today for a horse who has just beaten maidens and entry-level allowance foes while going a flat mile. His race last time suggests any

added ground won't be an issue, but he will have to prove he can not only get the distance...but also get it against stakes-proven animals. Oh, and he'll have to do it from the far outside post. At least he gets Rispoli to do the steering, and he's sure to find the rail at some point—and then we'll see if this son of Distorted Humor can power home in this big, full field. GRADE: C.

#15 AIRMAN (30/1) (AE) has a very nice kick, but so do plenty of others in this field—and they are all drawn better than this guy, who will need plenty of luck to not only get into the body of the race...but then to win it! Look for him next time in an N2X. He'll be tough there. GRADE: X.

### CONCLUSION

In Chad Brown we trust; all others pay cash! **#6 PUBLIC SECTOR (GB)** is not only the most accomplished runner in the field, but he should also get a great tracking trip while drawn in a good post. He's going to be very tough. But, hey, it's a big field, and anything can happen, so if you want alternatives, #3 CATHKIN PEAK (IRE) or #7 FLASHIEST look like the best of the West to me from a value-perspective (since I doubt #12 SUBCONSCIOUS will offer any value for the contest).

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