

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot

Date: 7/28/22

Race 6: \$40K optional-claiming/N1X contested for fillies & mares going 11-furlongs on turf

Post: approx. post 4:30 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

What a great opening week we had! Full fields and plenty of great payoffs. We've got another full field in today's contest race, a \$40K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going 11-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 24-feet.

#1 ALMOST A FACTOR (8/1) is clearly sitting on a peak effort, making the second start of her form cycle and stretching out—but will her peak effort be good enough? She was *meh* at this level last year before hitting the shelf, so unless you think this 5-year-old Cal-bred can put forth a fast enough effort against open-allowance foes, then she's probably looking at a minor award as the ceiling. GRADE: X.

#2 WITCH MOON (12/1) has very solid come-home times going a mile, so that should translate well at this much longer distance, but she will have to turn the tables on two ladies her just beat her fairly easily. That said, she was gaining ground and running on through the lane, so maybe she can vie for a slice while trying this tougher level for the first time. GRADE: X.

#3 OCTANE (BRZ) (12/1) couldn't beat N1X foes this past spring while racing up at the Gate, so Drysdale dropped her in for a tag, but she was a voided-claim out of that \$32K race. She's now coming off a freshening, and I'm sure the Hall of Famer wouldn't be running her here if she wasn't right—but will she be good enough? As a 5-year-old mare, there isn't much upside. GRADE: X.

#4 DRAMATIZER (12/1) has a very solid stretch run, so even though she's had her chances, I think she can finally break through today while running this longer distance for the first time. She is at the mercy of pace and trip, but at least you know she'll be finishing up strongly. GRADE: A.

#5 UNFAITHFUL WAYS (8/1) looked good beating weaker \$50K optional-claiming/SAL runners while going 9-furlongs. This 3-year-old tracked from off the pace and powered home to beat six other runners. She now has to face much tougher company while coming off a May freshening. There is still upside here, but she will need a career-best. GRADE: C.

#6 SCARABEA (3/1) looks like the one to beat, a tactically inclined runner who did good work against tough foes back East and who is coming off a good second-place finish against overnight-stakes foes here in California. There isn't much pace in the race, so this one can sit wherever she wants. GRADE: A.

#7 DUVET DAY (5/1) is a 3-year-old filly who just broke her maiden in her fifth start in the country. She tracked from well off the pace and ran on through the lane to win fairly easily. That was at today's distance, so you know this gal doesn't have any issues going this far. She can certainly continue to improve, but note that win-rider Geroux ends up on a different 3-year-old filly. GRADE: C.

#8 TARANTA (IRE) (20/1) is a 5-year-old mare who just lost a \$5K/N3L conditional-claimer at Turf Paradise, so this seems like a very ambitious spot. That said, Dollase is a shrewd trainer, and it should be noted that this gal is a pretty honest turf horse—but does she fit at this level on this circuit? GRADE: X.

#9 QUEEN OF THE TEMPLE (4/1) looks pretty good in here, sporting a very strong closing kick, so she'll have every chance to get the W, especially with a major jock upgrade to Rispoli today. She did just lose at 4/5, but she left herself with too much to do, and she still came home in 11-and-one. GRADE: A.

#10 WITH THIS VOW (4/1) has a pace advantage as the only confirmed front-runner in the race, so don't be surprised when Hernandez has this gal all alone on an easy, comfortable lead. That said, her best work has come against starter foes, so we'll see how she stacks up against better company. We'll also see if she can stay a route of ground. I'm a little dubious, but Hernandez had options in here, and he stuck with this one. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION

I think both **#6 SCARABEA (3/1)** and **#9 QUEEN OF THE TEMPLE (4/1)** are worthy win candidates, but I also think they are going to be bet below their morning-line odds. If you want a sneaky horse, **#4 DRAMATIZER (12/1)** could shake things up as a strong finisher getting more ground to play with today.

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