DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
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Date: 8/6/22
Race 10: $150K California Dreamin' contested at 8.5-furlongs on the lawn (rails at 18-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:34 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW
Geez! What a tough renewal of the $150K California Dreamin', an 8.5-furlong turf affair for state-breds with the rails at 18-feet. We've got an oversubscribed field, so there are plenty of places to land. Let's see if we can sniff out the winner in this really competitive race. (Note: today is a mandatory Pick 6 payout, so be sure to get involved, since they will be paying out the whole pool today!)

#1 BANG FOR YOUR BUCK (30/1) is pretty honest, but it took him a while to finally clear his entry-level Cal-bred allowance condition, which he just did last time as the 2/1 favorite. He'll get a good tracking trip from inside, but he's never been beyond a mile, and others just look better. GRADE: X.

#2 CARMELITA'S MAN (5/1) is a pretty cool horse who is coming off a freshening after just beating a few of these in the Crystal Water, going a mile, putting in a strong late kick to win as the 7/5 favorite. He should be tough right back with top-rider Hernandez sticking around, and the distance won't be an issue, since this guy has a win at today's distance and is pretty versatile. GRADE: A.

#3 IRISH HEATWAVE (12/1) is another very honest sort, but this 6-year-old hasn't won in a while, finishing behind a few of these and lacking the eye of the tiger to get to the winner's circle. That said, he should trip out, since he has tactical speed, but he's going to need to show more oomph to get his first win in eight tries here at Del Mar. GRADE: X.

#4 TOM'S SURPRISE (10/1) was just claimed for $62.5K by a very shrewd trainer in Andy Mathis, so he must have had this stakes race in mind when he dropped that claim for him up at Golden Gate. I like that vote of confidence, since this guy has been plying his trade mostly up north, and he's done excellent work there on both the turf and synth. That said, we'll see how he does against SoCal foes, and it should be noted that a few of these have him on form. GRADE: C.

#5 FREEPORT JOE (10/1) is another very cool NorCal invader who also happens to be a Grade 3 winner, but he does seem like a better synth horse than a turf horse, since he's only 1-for-7 on the lawn, while he's got six synth wins to his credit. I can see him in the hunt late, but we'll see how he does against tougher SoCal foes today. GRADE: C.

#6 FLY THE SKY (15/1) is in very good form, but he's been making a meal of $25K starter foes, and these runners are much tougher. He's also been running longer, with his best work coming at 9-furlongs or beyond. Also note that win-rider Hernandez sides with another, and that's a tell for me. GRADE: X.

#7 JIMMY BLUE JEANS (5/1), the second Mathis runner, has plenty of speed, and he should be able to dictate the pace, though he might face some heat from his far outside. Still, this turf course has played well to speed of late, so this guy will have a tactical advantage over most of the others. Is he good enough

to win? If he gets the right race shape, sure, but do note that Carmelita's Man easily ran him down last time. GRADE: B.

#8 NONE ABOVE THE LAW (4/1) has terrific 3-year-old form to build on, so I think it's interesting that Peter Miller is bringing him back off a December layoff and running him in this competitive stakes race. I like that confidence, and we all know that Miller is solid with his layoff runners. If this guy has matured at all since his sophomore campaign, he could make some noise in this division and beyond this year. GRADE: A.

#9 HOCKEY DAD (5/1) is a good horse in his own right, but he'll have to keep Jimmy Blue Jeans honest, since they both like to be attending the pace. This guy ran some good races last year against 3-year-olds, so he has that foundation to build on, and I really like that he prepped in a dirt sprint at Los Al in order to get ready for this. He'll show up today, but he'll have to show enough oomph late while chasing Jimmy Blue Jeans early. GRADE: B.

#10 THE CHOSEN VRON (7/2) is one of the more talented runners in the race, but this 4-year-old is coming off a November layoff and trying turf for the first time after dominating on the main track last year, mostly in elongated sprints (but he can also route). I have to think this is a prep race for something later in the meet. That doesn't mean he can't win based on his talent and ability, but I'm going to side with others. GRADE: C.

#11 LUVLUV (20/1) is usable in your exotics, but he's always been a grinder who just hasn't shown that extra added punch in order to win turf races. He'll also have to work out a trip from a very tough post. GRADE: X.

#12 COAST OF ROAN (8/1) (AE) was claimed for $50K last time, so Mullins must have figured he could move this guy forward enough to be competitive in Cal-bred stakes races. It's not out of the question, as this guy is capable of running some decent races, and he does have an N1X win against open company on his résumé, but he's looking at a wide stalking trip, and that's not the trip you want in here. GRADE: C.

#13 CONO (12/1) (AE) is coming off a September layoff after running second in a time-restricted claiming race—and coming out of it as a voided claim. I'm sure Michael McCarthy has him sound by now, but this guy was always more suited to underneath anyway, since he has speed but has never really shown the eye of the tiger. I can see him as a pace factor if he got in, but I'm not seeing a W. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
It wouldn't shock me if anyone won this, but I think 5/1 on **#2 CARMELITA'S MAN** is excellent value in here, since he looks like the most likely winner to me. I'll also focus on **#8 NONE ABOVE THE LAW**, but if he wins, he'll likely be overbet with "they knew" money!

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