

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Race 9: \$25K claimer for fillies and mares going 8.5-furlongs on the turf (rails at 12-feet)

Post: approx. post 6:03 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Sunday Funday! That means two seminars hosted by yours truly. First up at 11:00 a.m. PDT: “Best Bet” livestream with Scott Shapiro. Tune in on any of the Del Mar social media channels. Then on-track at 1:00 p.m. PDT outside the Hacienda Room, join Carlos Ortega and me for a race-by-race handicapping seminar.

Now let’s get to today’s competitive contest race: a \$25K claimer for fillies and mares going 8.5-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 12-feet.

#1 ALOHA KITTEN (15/1) was 17/1 last time at this level, and she was beaten 8-lengths. In her defense, she did have to break from the 11-hole, so I won’t be so harsh on her. Still, she couldn’t win at this level three back when she was the 6/5 favorite, so she might need lesser to shine at some point. Note the blinkers come off today. GRADE: X.

#2 CINNTE WINNTE (IRE) (12/1) has a decent late kick, so don’t discount her out of hand based on that poor-looking last race at this level. She had a lot of trouble, so I won’t be too harsh on her. Two back, she ran a decent third at this level, so she is a fit here—but she will have to turn the tables on a few gals who just beat her. If the apprentice can stay inside and wait for an opening, she could easily contend for a slice and even quite possibly the W. GRADE: B.

#3 VAROMA (12/1) couldn’t make a dent against N1X foes, so she’ll try her hand against \$25K claimers while coming off an April layoff. This seems like the right spot for her, and she does have come-home times against better animals that would make her dangerous in here. GRADE: B.

#4 FEATHERS (IRE) (4/1) gets top honors from me. I liked her last time against much tougher animals, but she but she had a tough post and a wide trip and was well-beaten. Now Miller drops her in for a tag, putting her in a spot where she can reverse-form and get a win. Leading rider Hernandez takes the call, so you know it’s go-time today. GRADE: A.

#5 BESTRELLA (IRE) (5/1), the first Knapp entrant looked good beating a few of these back in June at Santa Anita, stalking the pace and overcoming some traffic trouble before getting the win at 8/1. Note that that was Pereira’s first ride back in SoCal after going back East for several months, so perhaps there was some sentimentality attached to that victory. We’ll see if she can win right back, but I’m going to side against, since I’m never fond of the 2- or 3-wide stalking trip over this turf course. GRADE: C.

#6 RECAPTIVATING (30/1), the first Rachel Keithan runner, puts the blinkers back on after a few poor efforts against allowance foes while racing on the Lone Star dirt. Her turf form from her New York days isn’t anything special, but I do think it’s interesting that a good rider like Vazquez takes the call. Still, I’m going to watch one from this 3-year-old New York-bred. GRADE: X.

#7 ABOVE ALL NAMES (4/1) might have been a little short last time when she tracked the pace, made the lead, and then flattened out at this level. I think she'll be much tighter today while making the second start of her form cycle for a hot trainer. GRADE: A.

#8 ZABAVA (12/1), the second Knapp runner, is a pro who usually shows up for work, but she hasn't won in a long time, and her races at this level seem a cut below the top few in here. GRADE: X.

#9 FLORAL ESSENCE (7/2) is your tepid morning-line favorite probably because she looks to have a pace advantage as the only confirmed frontrunner in the race. That said, after several races against restricted company, she'll now face open company, so we'll see if she's good enough. Mullins is having a good meet, so I won't throw out the baby with the bathwater here, but I'm going to pick against her for the contest. GRADE: B.

#10 XYLOPHONE (10/1), the second Rachel Keithan runner, has tactical speed and an aggressive jock, so I can see her getting a good trip just sitting off her inside neighbor. The big question is: where does she fit on this circuit? Her minor-league form is pretty solid, but I'm not sure whom she was beating. I'm tempted to watch one, but I do admire this gal's versatility. GRADE: C.

#11 KUORA (PER) (8/1) was sent off as the 5/2 favorite at this level last time, and she ran a flat fourth. Azcarate took her out of the race, and he's pretty solid with his new acquisitions, but this gal drew a tough post, and she really did have no excuse last time. At least she gets a 7-pound weight-break today to help her cause, but I'm a bit skeptical. GRADE: C.

#12 WHISTLER'S STYLE (8/1) (AE) was 37/1 at this level last time, and she ran to those long odds while having to break from the 9-hole. Interestingly, Cerin bothered to claim her, so he must have seen something he liked. He now spots her back at this \$25K level and legs up one of the best turf jocks in this colony. She'll need to run a career best, but that's not out of the question. Still, the post will be brutal if she gets in. GRADE: C.

#13 MALIBU MISTRESS (20/1) (AE) will go sprint to route, so she'll be a pace factor if she gets in. I'm not seeing a W though, since she's been well-beaten at this level a few times already. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

I wish I had something really clever in here, but I landed on the co-second choices: **#4 FEATHERS (IRE) (4/1)** and **#7 ABOVE ALL NAMES (4/1)**. I'll let the board decide which one is the contest play based on the longer odds, but I do prefer the former runner more. If you need a bomb, **#2 CINNTE WINNTE (IRE) (12/1)** or **#3 VAROMA (12/1)** aren't impossible.

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