DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot

Date: 9/10/22
Race 5: $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 0-feet)
Post: approx. post 3:11 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW
Back at it this Saturday with two more contest races, the first one being a $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 8-furlongs on the turf with the rails at zero-feet. I thought this was a pretty good race, and there should be a decent pace to make it an honestly run race. Note: the second contest race is Race 10.

#1 COALINGA ROAD (5/1) finally tried going a mile on the turf last time, and he responded with a very good second-place finish, coming from way off the pace to finish up strongly. That said, the race had a ridiculously fast pace that was set by Goliad, who won the race and later tried stakes foes. Still, this guy came flying home, and maybe he's found a new home going long on the grass. GRADE: B.

#2 LI MU BAI (IRE) (10/1) is a little interesting as he makes his 4-year-old campaign after hitting the shelf last December off a fourth-place finish at this level going 9-furlongs, which may have been too far for him. Before that, he ran sixth at this level and distance, but he posted a decent come-home time, so I think there is some upside here. Miller has been a little quiet this meet, but he seems to have plenty of live runners this final weekend. GRADE: A.

#3 HOMETOWN HERO (20/1) finished up nicely last time against starter foes, but the waters get deeper today against much tougher runners. His come-home time was respectable, but he's going to be dealing with a faster pace and better animals, so he might need to expend some energy early trying to keep up, and that could mitigate his stretch run. GRADE: X.

#4 DOMINANT SOUL (8/1) does his best work on the lead, so he should be attending a decent early pace. He wired starter foes last time, but he faces much better animals today. Methinks he's a pace casualty. GRADE: X.

#5 SUBSIDIZE (8/1), the second Miller runner, doesn't look all that great on paper with only sprint wins against lesser foes while racing back East. In his first SoCal try, he did nothing on the dirt at this level, so it makes sense for him to get back on turf—but there must have been a reason why both Maker and Brown kept sprinting this guy. Which makes it all the more interesting that Prat gets the call! Still, I prefer others. GRADE: C.

#6 PRINCE ABAMA (IRE) (5/1), the first D'Amato entrant, looks pretty good to me with very strong come-home times and being a fresh horse while coming off a February layoff after finishing fourth at this level and distance with plenty of trouble. He was favored that day, and I expect him to run a big one today. GRADE: A.

#7 RELAXED ARTIST (IRE) (6/1) ran a very good downhill effort in his U.S. debut, finishing up strongly and looking like a horse who might appreciate two turns. That said, he's a 3-year-old facing

elders for the first time, and Rispoli ends up elsewhere. Those two things make me want to watch one today. GRADE: C.

#8 BANG FOR YOUR BUCK (6/1) is a cool Cal-bred who just lost a heartbreaker in the California Dreamin' against his own kind, doing all the dirty work but getting headed late. He now faces open foes, and he'll have to run a bit faster while likely stalking the pace today. GRADE: X.

#9 LIBERAL (IRE) (15/1) has done good work against lesser foes, but his last try at this level and distance resulted in a sixth-place finish behind a few of these. He's also a dead closer, so he's always at the mercy of pace and trip. GRADE: X.

#10 TROPICAL TERROR (12/1) just missed at this level last time, losing by a neck—but that was last November in an 11-furlong affair. I'm going to watch one today. GRADE: X.

#11 MIDNIGHT JOSTAR (4/1), the second D'Amato runner, was 6/5 at this level and distance last time, but he could only mount a rally that was good enough for third behind one of today's foes and the runaway winner Goliad. He drew the 9-hole that day—and he now draws the 10-hole! Who did this guy piss off in the racing office, as he's been burdened with bum posts in his last four starts? He's a legit contender, but Rispoli will have to really work his magic. GRADE: B.

#12 HOCKEY DAD (12/1) has speed and is drawn outside, so Gutierrez is going to have to use up some of that early speed to angle over and get position into the first turn, and that is surely going to soften this guy up for the stretch run. That said, I've always liked this Cal-bred, and he always seems to run a solid race, so maybe you can use him for underneath—but I think a W is a stretch under these circumstances. GRADE: X.

#13 PRODIGAL SON (12/1) (AE) closed nicely to finish fourth last time despite having no pace to close into against time-restricted $32K foes. He can move forward off that, second off the bench, but he's facing much better horses today, so he's really up against it, especially from all the way out here. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
This is a cool race, and I think you can make cases for a few of these, but my top pick is **#6 PRINCE ABAMA (IRE) (5/1)**, who should get a great trip today. If you need a bigger price for the tournament, **#2 LI MU BAI (IRE) (10/1)** fits that bill based on the maturity angle.

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Date: 9/10/22
Race 10: $40K claiming event for 3-year-olds going 6-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 5:48 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

As mentioned, we've got two contest races to choose from on today's 11-race Saturday card, and this one takes place on the main track: a $40K claimer for 3-year-olds only going 6-furlongs on the dirt. I thought this was a really tough race, and a lot of the outcome will depend on how the track is playing.

#1 STORMY PATTERN (8/1) has been plying his trade at a mile recently, so we'll see how he handles a cutback today while having to break from the rail. He can win sprinting, but he'll have to use some of his route speed to gain position early, and I think that will soften him up late. Plus, I'm not sure what level he really belongs at out here, since his best work back East came against weaker runners. GRADE: C.

#2 STREET ART (10/1), the first Miller entrant, will be the wiseguy play in here, moving from turf to dirt and running for this $40K tag for the first time. I like that he has turf sprint speed and is drawn inside, so Vazquez can blast him out of the gate and look to take them all the way. I also like the "Geroux off" angle! GRADE: A.

#3 MOOSE MITCHELL (5/2), the second Miller runner, is coming off a bang-up race against $25K foes, which he won easily and was then claimed by Miller, who promptly moves this sharp horse up the class ladder. I like that, and I like that Prat takes the call, but we'll see if he can do as well against better horses today. GRADE: B.

#4 COBRA JET (20/1) was no good against tougher last time while sprinting on the turf—and I'm not sure he'll be much better today moving to dirt since his Emerald races from last year are way too slow to get the win in here. I can see him chasing the pace and weakening. GRADE: X.

#5 TIZLIGHTNING (6/1) should be competitive here, moving from the protected Cal-bred allowance ranks to this $40K claimer against his own age group. He has tactical speed, makes the third start of his form cycle, and moves from turf to dirt. GRADE: B.

#6 MICKY FROM WEXFORD (15/1) was just claimed out of a $32K beaten-claimer, which he didn't win. Granted, there were older horses in there, but still. I do like the barn change, but I want to see one from this guy against presumably better animals, though it should be noted that he does have some decent East Coast form to run back to, and he gets a 7-pound weight-break. GRADE: C.

#7 MR. T'S THIRSTY (20/1) hasn't been on form since he won a $32K claimer back in December. Since then, he's had two barn changes and hasn't hit the board. He'll now move from turf to dirt and cut back to try and shake things up. I'm skeptical. GRADE: X.

#8 AS A MATTER OF FACT (4/1), the first Wong entrant, did good work in the allowance ranks up north, but after a failed attempt on the lawn in the Oceanside, he's now being risked for the tag, which I'm not crazy about—but Wong does a great job spotting them where they can win. This one should also get a very good forwardly placed trip. GRADE: A.

#9 HEAVEN SHINES (10/1), the second Wong runner, has tactical speed, so he should get a good stalking trip, but this guy wasn't able to win on the fair circuit, so he's really going to need to step things up today. GRADE: X.

#10 PIONEERING PAPA (10/1) hasn't been seen since getting pasted in the Affirmed (G3). We can all agree to toss that race, as he didn't belong, but what level should he be running at? He broke his maiden for $100K in wire fashion with the benefit of a slow pace. He'll have to earn it today with other speed inside of him. That said, leave Georgie P. off your tickets at your own peril! GRADE: C.

#11 TAHOE SECRETS (6/1) looks like he'll run a decent race, dropping in for a tag after a solid third against older starter-allowance foes last time. If the outside lanes are favorable, you can upgrade him even more, since he's going to be stalking 4-wide from out here. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION
This is a good race. The wiseguy play is **#2 STREET ART (10/1)**, as a horse who could blast off and wire them. The logical play is **#8 AS A MATTER OF FACT (4/1)**, who should get a great stalking trip while also getting class relief and being super-fit on the cutback.

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