

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter [@ScatoniSureShot](#)

**Date:** 12/2/22

**Race 8:** \$20K Cal-bred optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on turf (rail at 18-ft.)

**Post:** approx. post 4:00 p.m. PST

## OVERVIEW

It's closing weekend at Del Mar, so let's make it count! Today's contest race is a competitive \$20K optional-claiming/N1X for Cal-breds going 5-furlongs on the turf course with the rails at 18-feet. Several of these can win, so it's all going to come down to trip, as per usual in these mad dashes (which I'm not really a fan of!). Before we dig in though, just a reminder that my 11:35 on-track (Hacienda Room) Saturday seminar guest will be none other than Peter Thomas Fornatale of In the Media, all the way from New York! Finally, PTF has come back to Del Mar!!! Come say hi.

#1 MOOSE MITCHELL (6/1) was declared a non-starter last time, so toss the race. He'll have a chance to redeem himself today, since he has tactical speed (but doesn't need the lead) and is drawn inside with some speed-crazy horses duking it out early on his outside. He should luck into a great trip, and his best races are fast enough to get the job done. Also note that Papaprodromou saw fit to re-claim this guy. GRADE: B.

#2 LARRY'S LEGEND (12/1) nearly shocked the world last time at Santa Anita when he lost a heartbreaker by a head at 85/1 against open \$25K claimers. I have to think that field was better than this, so that was an impressive run from this Arizona Downs transplant. That said, he was going 6.5-furlongs, so he didn't have to work as hard early. He'll need to have his running shoes on to keep up with some legit 5-furlong speed horses today. GRADE: C.

**#3 FORGIVING SPIRIT (3/1)** gets top honors in this field, even though I hate picking a 3/1 shot in such a competitive race. So why is he my top choice? Well, I just think the race flow favors his stalking style. He can sit comfortably behind the speed and then power home like he did last time when he was game against starter-foes. Note that he was 19/10 at this level and distance over the summer (also with Prat riding), but he was compromised by an inside draw. He should make amends today. GRADE: A.

**#4 JACK SIXPACK (12/1)** will be the wiseguy play in here, one of two D'Amato horses, and a 3-year-old who is coming off a long layoff after spending the early part of the year mostly routing. So you'd think this was a prep, right? Well, not necessarily with D'Amato, since I've seen him do this move plenty of times, and I've been burned by it. And even if this is a prep, you know D'Amato teaches his turf horses how to finish strongly—and that's going to come in handy in a race that should have a quick early pace. GRADE: A.

#5 COWBOY CHARLIE (4/1) could be considered a horse-for-course after two dominating displays here over the summer when he beat \$50K and \$62.5K age-restricted claimers. This 3-year-old then faced elder foes at this level last time going down the hill, and he set the pace and weakened. He'll appreciate a return to this shorter configuration, but there is other speed in here, so he's going to have to really earn it today. GRADE: C.

#6 MIDNIGHT SPECIAL (8/1) is a Steve Knapp claim-back who has run some decent races at this level, but it should be noted that he's 0-for-10 this year, so he hasn't exactly shown the eye of the tiger. He should get a good stalking trip, but then we'll see if he can find the line first. GRADE: C.

#7 BEAUDACIOUS (8/1) comes off a May 2021 layoff and joins the Hanson barn, which does good work with turf sprinters. It's hard to know how this 5-year-old will fare coming off such a long vacation, but he does have two bullet works in tow, and he's shown versatility throughout his career by running well in sprints and routes. Still, I'm tempted to watch one. GRADE: C.

#8 WHO'S CANDY (5/1) ran a big fig last time, but that might have been the product of making a loose lead in a 6-furlong turf sprint at Santa Anita—and even with that loose lead, he lost. Two back, he finished behind Forgiving Spirit, so he'll need to best that foe. That said, he should trip out well with his sharp early speed and an aggressive gate jock. GRADE: B.

#9 IN VRONSKY STYLE (5/1), the second D'Amato runner, has been stuck at this level for a bit now, so he's tough to make a case for other than the fact that his trainer wins a boatload of turf races. He does have sharp early speed, so he should be able to use that to angle over and press Cowboy Charlie—but will that take its toll late? I bet yes. GRADE: C.

### **CONCLUSION**

I don't love this race, but I do think that **#3 FORGIVING SPIRIT (3/1)** will get the right tracking trip with the best jock in the colony doing the steering. If 3/1 is too short for you, why not take a shot with **#4 JACK SIXPACK (12/1)** at a big number? He might be prepping, but you know he will be finishing for a trainer who wins practically every turf race under the sun.

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