

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Race 8: \$100K restricted Oceanside Stakes for 3yos going 8F on the turf with the rails at 0-feet.

Post: approx. post 5:38 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Do you want to know how old I am? Well, I remember the days when the Oceanside drew so many horses that it was split into two divisions! That being said, I know that times have changed, so I'm perfectly happy with a solid field of 14 entered to greet the starter in today's competitive restricted race, which is for 3-year-olds only who are non-winners of a sweepstakes of \$50K at one mile or over in 2023. What a heck of a race! Hats off to the racing office for starting the meet in grand style.

Before we dig into the horse-by-horse analysis, I have some housekeeping business I'd like to talk to you about. First off, always check my Twitter feed [@ScatoniSureShot](https://twitter.com/ScatoniSureShot) for up-to-the-minute info—but more importantly, check out www.FrankScatoni.com on the regular to see what I've been up to all week! You'll find links to my "In the Money Players' Podcast" appearances, other media interactions, and also some unique content and handicapping analysis that you won't find anywhere else. I'll also link up to the daily notebook I'll be doing exclusively for In the Money Media—called "Frankly Speaking"—to keep readers apprised of all things Del Mar this summer! So I hope you'll stop by for a visit. I think you'll like it.

Okay, enough of that! Without further ado, I present to you the 2023 Oceanside Stakes field:

#1 CLASSICAL CAT (4/1) came out of the gate with guns a-blazing! He stalked and pounced and easily broke his maiden in a 5.5-furlong race, which isn't something you often see from the patient D'Amato. Start number-two is a toss race, so don't even look at it. And then...the Cat hopped on turf, and he reeled off two victories in a row, including a stakes win. Both of those came at Santa Anita, but he came home in fast enough time to be a very tough customer today, assuming he can work out a trip from the rail in this big full field. If he's 3/1 or so, he's good value. GRADE: A.

#2 MAS RAPIDO (GB) (20/1) is pretty experienced with nine races under his belt, but all but one have come sprinting—and that's a problem against some decent milers. I respect his form in turf sprints, but this is a whole new ballgame. GRADE: X.

#3 ZALAMO (FR) (8/1) has decent form overseas, but both of his wins have come going 9-furlongs, so perhaps this is a leg-stretcher for the La Jolla (G3) or Del Mar Derby (G2) later in

the meet. I'm not one to throw the baby out with the bath water, however, so I would use him for a tiny bit—especially since Powell has really come into his own the last few years. GRADE: B.

#4 EL ORO (FR) (30/1) broke his maiden two back in a turf sprint, and then he came right back to beat starter foes. Hats off to him—but this runner has yet to go two turns on turf against this kind of company. I would use him more for underneath, if at all. GRADE: X.

#5 AH JEEZ (30/1) is well-traveled, and he's run some solid races throughout his young career, but what you see is what you get—unless you think the removal of the hood will help. I don't know: maybe you can use him for a slice, but he's not giving off win vibes to me. GRADE: C.

#6 MR FISK (8/1) certainly has speed figures from his main-track races that would make him very tough against this group—but this *ain't* dirt; it's on turf. You can go poor betting decent Baffert horses trying turf for the first time. Don't get me wrong: they can win once in a blue moon—but not with my money! GRADE: X.

#7 AGENCY (15/1) looks very live to me, since I have to think that Glatt was probably just prepping this horse in that turf sprint while coming off a long layoff. Typically, I really like Glatt horses off a long layoff, but I also like his runners second off the bench! We'll see if this guy can go two turns, but he came home in race-horse time in his sprint victory, so why not? GRADE: A.

#8 KID AZTECA (12/1) has pretty solid turf-sprint form, but his two-turn form isn't half-bad either, so he figures to be competitive here. The issue is that while he's run well going two turns, he's never won routing, and he's been the favorite quite a few times. He should get a good trip, but he'll need to show a bit more oomph when the real running starts. GRADE: C.

#9 CONCLUDE (6/1) is another with solid turf-sprint form, but can this D'Amato trainee transfer his short game to a route? I don't know. This guy looks like he needs the lead, and there are other speed horses in here. GRADE: X.

#10 ESCAPE ARTIST (7/2) is a very nice animal who has never finished off the board in five tries, so I'm expecting that trend to continue—but can he get a win? This is a tough post, and his best races have come in stalking positions—and that's going to be the kiss of death from out here. He's still usable, but probably more for underneath. GRADE: B

#11 PANIC ALARM (IRE) (5/1) will probably be a decent runner someday, but this 3-year-old import has done his best work in 7-furlong turf sprints overseas, so this is a different ballgame. I really do like when Sadler brings in an import, but I like them a lot more with a few starts under their belts. GRADE: C.

#12 EVER A REBEL (20/1) broke his maiden in fine fashion, but this D'Amato trainee had to do it against restricted maidens, so that's a downgrade to me. He also seems to like to stalk the

pace, so it's no surprise that his best races have come on dirt. His breeding suggests that turf won't be so bad for him, but I think he gets a bum trip.

#13 GAME TIME (8/1), the second Sadler entrant, looked sharp winning the Alcatraz up north, but he made the lead and never looked back. He's going to have to really work for it today. His prior form is decent enough, but he couldn't get a win against Classical Cat, so he'll need to do better today. Maybe you can use for your tris, but I expect him to get inhaled late. GRADE: X.

#14 ZE'BUL (30/1) was terrific when breaking his maiden going 6-furlongs on the turf. He sat way off the pace and launched a nice rally to get the nod. Since then, however, he's had a tough go of it. He'll now remove the hood to see if that shakes things up. I'm not so sure that will help all that much. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

A whopping 14 horses to choose from in this incredible version of the Oceanside makes things very interesting, so demand value. I do think that **#1 CLASSICAL CAT (4/1)** is the one to beat, so a simple win bet on him in real life is the way to go if he holds to his morning-line—but I'm not sure 4/1 will do you any real favors in the contest. If you're looking for a price, **#7 AGENCY** at 15/1 sure does fit the bill.

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