

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Race 9: \$200K San Clemente (G2) for 3yo fillies going 8-furlongs on turf (rail at 0-feet).

Post: approx. post 6:05 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

My goodness, what a race! This year's renewal of the San Clemente (G2), a one-mile turf affair for 3-year-old fillies, attracted 16 runners! Yes, you read that correctly: 16 runners! One of the horses scratched out of the main body of the race, so 14 horses will run with one horse stuck on the Also Eligible list. There are some really nice ladies in here, but I believe Leonard Powell holds the aces with two European imports who look to have ability and upside.

#1 FLYING CONNECTION (20/1), the first Todd Fincher trainee, set a blazing pace in the Kentucky Oaks (G1) before tiring. She's been freshened up since then, but she's a speedball who has never been on turf before. You can expect the jock to send hard and hope for the best. She might be in front turning for home, but I think she'll get overtaken by some proven turf runners. GRADE: X.

#2 ANCIENT PEACE (12/1) also set a pretty quick pace in a dirt race—the Summer Oaks (G2)—but she at least held on for second at 15/1. It was a solid effort, but she likes to be on the lead, as her two wins came going wire to wire. The inside horse is going to go as well, so they both seem up against it from a pace perspective. GRADE: X.

#3 ANISETTE (GB) (4/1), the first Powell entrant, ran terrific in her U.S. debut, coming from dead last to get up in time against a big, full field. She also galloped out well, so you can expect her to take a big step forward today. She definitely faces a class test, but that last race was really good. Each quarter she ran was faster than the previous one. That's the sign of a quality animal. GRADE: A.

#4 DELIGHT (5/1) was 9/1 in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (G1), in a 14-horse field, so someone thought somewhat highly of her. She failed that day, but I'm not fussed about that. I thought her 3-year-old debut was really solid because it showed she could come from off the pace, even though her two prior wins came on or near the lead. I like that kind of versatility, and she definitely fits class-wise with a Grade 2 win under her belt. GRADE: A.

#5 AND TELL ME NOLIES (15/1) has some really good races on dirt, including a Grade 1 win here last year in the Del Mar Debutante (G1). I respect that kind of class, but her last two races were sub-par and she's trying turf for the first time. Granted, she did have some issues in those

two recent poor races, so I won't be too harsh on her—but my main concern is the surface switch. Can she turf? If you're a Tomlinson guy, then the answer is "probably not." I'm fine watching one. GRADE: X.

#6 SPICYBUG (6/1) has won two in a row, looking good in those 6-furlong turf sprints. She's tactical, and her come-home times in those sprints suggest she'll be okay going two turns, so I'm not overly concerned about the stretch-out, especially since Michael McCarthy is terrific at getting to the bottom of a horse—but this is a class test for her. GRADE: B.

#7 INFINITE DIAMOND—program scratch.

#8 PARIS SECRET (IRE) (6/1) adds blinkers for D'Amato, which isn't really his greatest move. I also don't like that Hernandez ends up on another, so that concerns me as well. That said, I do like the cutback from 9-furlongs to a flat mile, and according to Brad Free, she was lightly trained heading into her last race, so perhaps she needed that start. She should run better today. Will it be good enough? GRADE: C.

#9 OCEAN CLUB (15/1) has speed, so she should be attending the early pace, but she doesn't need the lead, so I'm thinking she'll get a stalking trip, which isn't really all that great in a turf race. Her one turf try was just okay, losing as the 8/5 favorite at Gulfstream Park two back. That's worrisome, especially since her two wins have come on synth. Still, in Proctor we trust, so I'll at least use on my back-up tickets. GRADE: C.

#10 OLIVIA TWIST (50/1), the second Fincher runner, is graded-stakes placed, so hats off to her—but all of her work has come on dirt, and her best work has come at Remington. I can see her stalking the pace and then failing to kick on. GRADE: X.

#11 WED (FR) (6/1), the second Powell charge, is where Hernandez ends up, so that tells me this European import is live. She has pretty solid European form, and they thought enough of her last year to run in a Grade 1 at Longchamp, so I like that Powell immediately entered her in a graded-stakes race for her U.S. debut. GRADE: A.

#12 COMANCHE COUNTRY (IRE) (6/1) is another D'Amato runner who is adding blinkers today, which isn't really his best move, so we'll see if it has any effect on a filly who had a terrific juvenile campaign, winning two races here at Del Mar and showing a nice sustained run while doing it. Her form this year hasn't really progressed, but I can make excuses for her races: not a great trip last time; perhaps hated Churchill Downs two back; was likely a short horse three back—so I can make a case. That said, I prefer others for the top slot. GRADE: B.

#13 FAST AND SHINY (20/1) certainly is fast early, so you have to think that Cedillo will just blast off and hope for the best. That strategy worked in a turf sprint three back, but her two-turn turf tries haven't been nearly as good. I think she's a pace factor only. GRADE: X.

#14 THE WILD GRAZER (IRE) (15/1) ran three really good races in a row when she first came to the States, but then she petered out a little bit and was acting a little recalcitrant before Mullins decided to freshen her up. I like that she's coming off a May layoff, and I like that she has a good tracking style, which should come in handy in this race. That said, the post stinks, so she'll need to be much the best to get the W. GRADE: C.

#15 BROADWAY GIRLS (10/1) has done her best work when forwardly placed, so I'm thinking Franco will hustle her out of the gate in order to angle her over. She looks like she's a need-the-lead type, with her two victories coming on the engine. I don't think that's going to cut it today. GRADE: X.

#16 JUSTIQUE (5/1) (AE) ran two impressive sprint races here at Del Mar last year—but on the dirt. Her two starts this year—both routes—weren't as good, so it's quite possible that this late runner is just a better closing sprinter. It's interesting to see Shirreffs move her to the turf, but she'll have to just angle over, find the rail, and then make one late run from well off the pace. I'm fine watching one if she gets in. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned, I think Leonard Powell has a great shot in this race with both of his horses, **#3 ANISETTE (GB) (4/1)** and **#11 WED (FR) (6/1)**. I like my other "A" as well, **#4 DELIGHT (5/1)**—so for contest purposes, I'll let the board decide which one to bet. The longer, the better!

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