DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
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Date: 7/29/23
Race 8: $300K San Diego Handicap (G2) contested at 8.5-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 5:39 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got two contest races today, so let's get right to it with the first of two very good stakes races on today's fine 11-race Saturday card: the $300K San Diego Handicap (G2) contested at 8.5-furlongs on the main track and the traditional prep race for the marquee race of the season, the $1 million Pacific Classic (G1).

#1 SLOW DOWN ANDY (5/1) is a really nice horse who is also extremely versatile with wins on dirt and turf, but he likes to be forwardly placed, and that's going to be an issue since he drew the dreaded rail, which has been like quicksand for most days of this meet. On the plus side, O'Neill has been firing big-time, and this horse is fast enough to win this race, so perhaps if he somehow finds himself off the rail, he can get the job done. GRADE: B.

#2 ROYAL SHIP (BRZ) (6/1) won this race last year at 9/1, but that race was flattered, as he drew the outside post, tracked the pace on the best part of the track, and easily got the win. His races since then haven't been nearly as good, so I'm having a hard time seeing this 7-year-old getting back to his big winning ways, especially drawn down toward the inside. GRADE: X.

#3 TRIPOLI (15/1), believe it or not, won the Pacific Classic (G1) here way back in 2021, but he's yet to replicate that performance in plenty of subsequent starts. In fact, his last win came up at Golden Gate on the Tapeta against three other upper-level allowance horses. I admire Sadler's confidence by entering him here, but if this guy wins, I lose. GRADE: X.

#4 MISSED THE CUT (5/1), the second Sadler trainee, will be the wise-guy selection in here. I know American Admiral just beat him, but this guy was making his first U.S. start on dirt, and he likely needed the race. Overseas, he was terrific at 10-furlongs, so I suppose this could be just another prep before the Pacific Classic (G1), but I feel like he's ready for a big move forward today. GRADE: A.

#5 AMERICAN ADMIRAL (6/1) is a pretty honest horse who has picked up a lot of checks in his career, but it took him a while to get his third win, and even though it came at the expense of Missed the Cut, he only had to beat three horses in that race, so I'm a little skeptical about the speed figure he earned. That said, this track favors his grinding style, so I suppose he could grind away to the wire and get a W. GRADE: B.

#6 DEFUNDED (8/5) is definitely the horse to beat given his recent terrific form—but his run in this race last year was no good. Granted, he was on the worst part of the track that year while setting the pace on the inside, and he just couldn't overcome that, so I won't be too harsh. I also like that he showed a new

dimension two back when he stumbled at the start, had to rate, and then drew off to pass horses easily in the Californian (G2). If he rates on the outside today, he'll be very tough. GRADE: A.

#7 SENOR BUSCADOR (12/1) has decent form against some quality runners, but his two races here last summer, including this one, weren't all that good. I respect Fincher, who wins a lot of races at other circuits and brings a string of horses here every summer to support our meet, but I have to let him beat me. GRADE: X.

#8 PIROLI—program scratch.

#9 TISQUANTUM (30/1) gets in at a feathery 116-pounds, but I'm not sure that weight-break will have much consequence against these types. Don't get me wrong: I like this horse, and I love that he can win on dirt or turf, but he was no match for graded-stakes foes in the spring, and if he were to win, it would be a big upset. GRADE: X.

#10 BRICKYARD RIDE (6/1) should be running in the Bing Crosby (G1) at 6-furlongs, no? I'm so confused by this placing, but at the very least, you know this speedster will ensure a very fast early pace. Can he wire them going this far when he's a crack sprinter? I know he won a Cal-bred stakes at a mile, but I still have to watch one. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
Not much doing here from a contest perspective based on the morning-line odds, but if **#6 DEFUNDED** gets way overbet, then perhaps someone will sneak away at an overlay. If that's the case, perhaps that horse will be **#4 MISSED THE CUT (5/1)**—but I would want way more than 5/1 on him.

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Date: 7/29/23
Race 10: $400K Bing Crosby (G1) contested at 6-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 6:39 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Today's second contest race is the second graded-stakes on the 11-race card: the $400K Bing Crosby (G1) contested at 6-furlongs on the main track. We have the last two winners of this race lined up to greet the starter in this terrific renewal of one of Del Mar's signature events.

#1 HOIST THE GOLD (15/1) has picked up a bunch of checks against some good horses throughout his career, but he only has three wins, and he'll have to overcome a tough rail draw. I think it's great that Dallas Stewart shipped him out here and brought one of his jocks, but he seems up against it today. GRADE: X.

#2 SPIRIT OF MAKENA (4/1), the first Papaprodromou entrant, is a head away from being undefeated, so you know there is a ton of ability here—but clearly, he has had some physical issues as a 5-year-old with only five starts under his belt. He has tactical speed and should be forwardly placed, but the inside lanes have not been kind, so we'll see if this guy can overcome an outside bias to win his third graded-stakes race in a row. GRADE: C.

#3 TODO FINO (CHI) (20/1) is another one with good speed, something he used to stalk the pace in his first U.S. start here last summer, where he beat three next-out winners at 8/1, so there is quality here. That said, the inside draw does him no favors, and we'll see if he can hang with this kind of company after running third in a Grade 3 last time. GRADE: X.

#4 THE CHOSEN VRON (4/1) is perhaps the coolest Cal-bred in training right now, and I have nothing but respect for the job Kruljac has done with this horse—but he's been facing mostly Cal-breds, and the one time he stepped out to face open foes in last year's Pat O'Brien (G2), he was overmatched, losing to one of today's foes. I think he's a better horse now, but I'm having a hard time seeing the winning trip here, as he's likely to be chasing the early pace down toward the inside. GRADE: X.

#5 KID CORLEONE (20/1), the first O'Neill charge, is a one-way train, so he too will be hustling for the early lead in this competitive race, but I suspect he's going to wilt under the pressure, since the one time he tried graded-stakes foes, he was well-beaten. That said, he is a lightly raced 4-year-old who still has plenty of upside, but the race doesn't set up all that well for him. GRADE: X.

#6 GET HER NUMBER (15/1), the first Peter Miller runner, has done fine work throughout his career, but he seems to have lost a step—though I will say that the best races of his life came here at Del Mar, so he could certainly perk up today. That said, even when he was at his best, he was no match for American Theorem in this race last year. Maybe he can surprise if the race falls apart. GRADE: X.

#7 ANARCHIST (4/1), the second O'Neill trainee, is a pretty good runner who has tactical speed and is drawn favorably, so he will have a chance to get the W. He's never raced at Del Mar, but he's well-traveled, and he has solid graded-stakes form. GRADE: B.

#8 C Z ROCKET (12/1), the second Miller runner, is a cool old boy who has earned more than $2 million throughout his illustrious career, but how many more furlongs are left in this 9-year-old's legs? He always seems to show up, and his grinding style should suit today's race flow, but I see him more for an underneath horse than a win-candidate. GRADE: X.

#9 SIBELIUS (6/1) has some big figs from last year to run back to—and it's impressive that he beat 13 other foes to win the Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1) back in March—but he's going to throw down the gauntlet early with Kid Corleone, and that's likely to take its toll late against some quality California sprinters. It's great to see a horse like this come here from back East, so even though I'm against him, it would be a cool story if he won. GRADE: C.

#10 AMERICAN THEOREM (8/1), the second Papaprodromou runner, won this race last year, and he looks to be sitting on a big move forward second off the bench in preparation for this Grade 1 event. I love his tracking run style for this track and for the way this race is going to shape up. His morning-line seems like great value to me. GRADE: A.

#11 DR. SCHIVEL (7/2) gets lukewarm favoritism in this competitive field, but it is deserving favoritism. He won this race in 2021, and he should be as fit as a fiddle cutting back from the Met Mile (G1) last time where he showed speed and weakened. He is tactical and is drawn well. I know this 5-year-old has had some physical issues the last two years, but if Glatt has him right, he's the one to beat. GRADE: A.

#12 PEACEFUL WATERS (20/1) makes his first start for Sadler, who promptly enters this guy in a Grade 1. Talk about confidence! Or perhaps he's being a bit Pollyannaish, since this guy just won an N2X in wire fashion by a neck. He's not wiring this field. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
I think **#10 AMERICAN THEOREM** (8/1) will offer the most value in this competitive race based on the morning-lines, so that's where my contest play would be—but there are so many good horses in here that I wouldn't fault anyone for taking shots elsewhere.

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