

## DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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**Date:** 7/30/23

**Race 9:** \$250K Eddie Read (G2) contested at 9-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-feet)

**Post:** approx. post 6:09 p.m. PDT

### OVERVIEW

What a fine renewal of the \$250K Eddie Read (G2), a 9-furlong turf affair with the rails at 12-feet. Phil D'Amato has four in here, so we'll have some guesswork to do, but at the very least, there should be enough pace to set things up for a strong stretch-runner.

#1 I'MGONNABESOMEBODY (20/1) does his best work on or near the lead, and that's going to be an issue in here with other speed signed on. If he goes hard from the rail, he's going to get cooked; if he tries to suck back, he'll have to show he can rate and pass horses. Either way, he's in tough. GRADE: X.

#2 **GOLD PHOENIX (IRE) (4/1)**, the first of four D'Amatos, is a Grade 1 winner, so there is plenty of quality here. Throw in the fact that he has a win and a show here at Del Mar—and that he's versatile, able to win at any distance—and you're looking at a strong contender. He is a bit one-paced, but that will come in handy in a race that should have a fast early pace. GRADE: A.

#3 **BALNIKHOV (IRE) (4/1)**, the second D'Amato, had a terrific 3-year-old campaign, but his form this year has been a mixed bag. He was all out to fend off a complete bomb when winning the San Francisco (G3) at Golden Gate as the 7/5 favorite, so he's going to have to do better today. That said, I've always liked this guy's stretch run, and I know he's going to get something to close into today. I think he could step up and make some noise here. GRADE: A.

#4 MASTEROFFOXHOUNDS (8/1), the third D'Amato, has speed, but he removes the hood today to try and get back to his winning ways. He should be sitting third, stalking in a good spot, but his best work has always come on an easy lead, which isn't going to happen today. GRADE: X.

#5 DICEY MO CHARA (GB) (6/1) is a very honest horse who gave Gold Phoenix (Ire) all he could handle in last year's Del Mar Handicap (G2). He figures to be competitive right back yet again, since he likes Del Mar and he is solid at today's distance. That said, he's been on the wrong end of plenty of photos, so he'll need a perfectly timed ride by Hernandez. GRADE: B.

#6 CABO SPIRIT (5/1) was terrific as a sophomore, but he hasn't been able to find a win since turning four. He's run well, exhibiting his solid stretch run, but he hasn't been able to get the job done. He does have two wins at Del Mar and one win at the distance, so he's not out of it, but he will need to run the fastest race he's ever run. GRADE: B.

#7 HANDY DANDY (12/1) loves Del Mar, but he seems a cut below the best in here from a class standpoint. A few of these have him on form, and his graded-stakes form is a little lacking. GRADE: X.

#8 MACKINNON (8/1) won three in a row as a juvenile, but he's winless since—and that includes two defeats while under Chad Brown's tutelage—so he's going to need to run the race of his life to beat this group. GRADE: X.

#9 COUNT AGAIN (3/1), the fourth D'Amato, is the lukewarm 3/1 favorite, but he's tough to back at that price, given that he's an 8-year-old who is coming off a May 2022 layoff. Don't get me wrong: I've always really liked this horse. He has an explosive kick and is a multiple Grade 1 winner, so how can you say anything bad about him. If there is one knock: it's that he's 0-for-3 at today's distance with all of his best races coming at a mile. GRADE: C.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are a few places to land here, but I'm going to let the board decide for me between **#2 GOLD PHOENIX (IRE) (4/1)** and **#3 BALNIKHOV (IRE) (4/1)**—but it wouldn't shock me if one of my “B's” won, since there is very little separating the top contenders in here.

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