

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Date: 7/24/25

Race 6: Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on turf (Rails at 30-ft.)

Post: approx. post 4:30 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We kick off the second week of racing with an 8-race Thursday card in which all three of the turf races are 5-furlong turf sprints, including today's contest race. The rails are out 30-feet, so only eight of the ten horses entered will greet the starter in this Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X affair. It's a decent group, but run style and race flow will determine the winner.

#1 CATMANSUE (7/2) likes to track from off the pace, so he's going to need plenty of luck from both a pace and trip perspective. I trust Berrios to give him an optimal ride, but his options will be limited from the rail, and this short distance doesn't really do this horse any favors. Plus, he's had his chances at this level, so 7/2 isn't any great shakes. That said, I know I'm taking a risk by trying to beat Berrios in a turf race! GRADE: C.

#2 SHARONA'S WILD BOY (20/1) ran some decent races up north at this level and distance, but he was at the mercy of pace and trip given his late-running style in those 5-furlong turf affairs at the Gate. He should be sitting on a peak effort, third off the bench and shortening up, but no one has given him a chance at this level the last two times, and he seems like a big longshot again today. GRADE: X.

#3 MISCHIEFS CAUSEWAY (12/1) returns a new gelding off an April 2024 layoff, and I have to think this is a leg-stretcher for a longer turf race next time, since this one raced twice at a mile once Gaines moved him to the lawn. That said, he did win his debut going 5.5-furlongs on dirt, so he can fire fresh, and he can win a sprint. He has a sneaky look to him (especially with Fresu riding), but he's more likely to need a race than he is to win this. GRADE: C.

#4 SIR ROCKET (5/2) has done decent work at this level, but he's been a little unlucky. Last time, he lacked room down the hill and lost by a head. Three back, he had to break from the rail going down the hill. Two back, however, he was kind of flat on the main turf course going 6-furlongs at Santa Anita, so he'll need to show more today while shortening up in distance. He debuted over this course last fall and ran an okay fourth, putting in a mild late bid at this distance. He can win, but he'll need an aggressive ride, and 5/2 isn't all that exciting to me. GRADE: B.

#5 TRAVELIN' SHOW (5/1) has tactical speed, so he should get a decent trip, but is he good enough to win? He was 29/1 at this level and distance last summer, and he ran to those long odds. He then found his best stride against weaker starter foes, but these are tougher animals. Yes, he did win this condition last time, but it came on Los Al dirt, and this is a different ballgame. Still, he figures to trip out well. GRADE: B.

#6 TOPSTITCH (8/1) rewarded his backers last time at Los Al when he ran off the screen in a \$20K/N3L conditional-claimer, crushing the field at 47/1. It was a complete outlier of a performance for a horse who broke his maiden for \$15K and one who couldn't beat \$6,250/N3L types as the 9/5 favorite two back. I can't fault the connections for trying this spot, but he's never been on turf before nor has he ever faced this kind of SoCal competition. I'll let him prove it to me, though I wouldn't talk anyone off him either, since he should be prominent from the bell. GRADE: C.

#7 CASE HIT (4/1) gets top honors from me, even though I don't usually like to play 3-year-olds facing older horses for the first time, even this late in the year. Note that this runner scratched out of a 6-furlong dirt race on opening day to run here instead, and when Miller opts to run in a turf sprint, pay attention, since he is dominant here at Del Mar in these abbreviated races. Plus, this guy has a ton of early zip, so he should be pushing his inside foe every step of the way. That said, if he's live, we won't get anywhere near 4/1. GRADE: A.

#8 BELLY UP (5/1) should sit 3-wide, stalking off his two inside neighbors, and that's not usually the winning trip on this turf course, since there is such a thing as centrifugal force—and that's not a good thing for fast horses going wide around a turn. Still, this Koriner trainee does have form at this level and distance: he lost by a neck to finish second here last summer, posting a career best speed figure, so he's certainly a fit. GRADE: B.

#9 HOT BOX (3/1) (AE) is an old pro who enters this off a facile wire victory at this level on the Los Al dirt. He was 18/1 that day, so congrats to those who had him—but can he do it again? This 7-year-old does have turf form from back in the day, so the surface won't be an issue—but what kind of trip is he going to get if he gets in? He's looking at an even wider trip than his inside neighbor! Plus, 3/1 is way too short for me. I'm against. GRADE: X.

#10 LAST CALL LONDON (20/1) (AE) seems a bit overmatched if you consider his recent defeats against lower-level claimers, but do note that he wasn't too far off Hot Box two back, so he's not completely out of it class-wise. That said, he's winless in four turf tries, and his grinding style doesn't seem well-suited to this really short race. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

As I said above, if **#7 CASE HIT (4/1)** is live, I doubt we'll get anywhere near 4/1. I wish I had something more clever than a Peter Miller speed horse going 5-furlongs on turf, but I'm not crazy about any of the other contenders, and the only somewhat sneaky-looking horse to me is **#3 MISCHIEFS CAUSEWAY (12/1)**, but he requires a leap of faith. I know I have him listed as a "C," because that's really how I feel about his chances, but if you're looking for a price, he might be worth a nibble mostly because he's an X-factor while those with recency just look *meh*.

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