

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Race 8: \$10K claimer contested at 5.5-furlongs on the main track

Post: approx. post 5:33 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Wow. Talk about a wide-open race! Today's eighth is a \$10K claimer contested at 5.5-furlongs on the main track. Several of these like to be up on the early pace, so things could get contentious very quickly in this abbreviated sprint—but then again, these short races are rarely won from off the pace, so something has got to give! No matter what happens though, someone is likely to get a good price on the winner with so many places to land.

#1 IN SUSPENSE (8/1) started his 4-year-old campaign by winning three races in a row in fast time going shorter at Los Al. He hit the shelf in May, and went down in flames as the even-money favorite in his comebacker. He may have needed that race, so I won't be too harsh, but my big concern is that he will have to go hard from the rail, and so many of these should be pushing the pace. I'd like him more drawn outside because I think it's going to be very hard to wire this field. That said, if the inside is favorable and this one gets out cleanly, he'll have every chance to get the W. GRADE: B.

#2 MITICO (20/1) is coming off a September layoff, and he'll likely be keen, especially since he showed sharp sprint speed all last winter. I don't think he's fast enough to make the lead, and that's going to be a problem as he chases the pace. Also, he ran for \$10K twice before, and the best he could do was third. GRADE: X.

#3 DEVIL BE ME (5/1), the first Knapp entrant, also likes to be up on the pace, so I'm willing to forgive his last race when he was forced to track from off the pace while racing very wide against better animals. He has races on his form that would make him very tough in here, but can he get back to those after two blah races in a row? I think he could wake up at this low level, second start off the bench for a shrewd claiming trainer. GRADE: B.

#4 TIZZ A GOOD THING (20/1), the second Knapp runner, needed \$8K conditional claimers at Los Al to get his third win last time. He tracked from off the pace and finished up well to get the W at 3/1. I think that run style is a good fit for this race, but based on his last few races, he doesn't seem fast enough to win this—but he could spice up your exotics. GRADE: X.

#5 MORELLO (6/1) was claimed for \$25K two back, and in his last start, he was nowhere against tough \$32K foes. He takes a precipitous drop today, which, under normal circumstances, might seem suspicious, but given the economics of the Ship-and-Win program, it makes sense to aggressively spot your claimers in spots where they can win and get claimed away. I think you have to use him based on class alone, but I suppose there is a chance that he's dropping to this level for a bad reason. GRADE: A.

#6 HALO RANDO (8/1) has early speed, but two back, he showed he could rate and pass horses. He'll need to employ that same strategy today if he's going to have a chance. Toss his last race where he was hooked very wide at Los Al—his good races before that are fast enough to win this. That said, I think this is a tougher group than the starter foes he's been facing. GRADE: B.

#7 NIGHT TIME (2/1) dominated a group of seven other \$16K claimers last time at Ellis Park. He contested the pace through soft early fractions and drew away late to win by two. That race would dust this field, but Cohen will have to avoid getting caught up in an early contested pace with so many in here having similar run styles. Last year, he showed he could stalk and pounce when beating \$40K animals, so I'll trust Cohen to judge the pace accordingly. Miller has been on fire; Cohen has done good work for Miller this meet; and the Ship-and-Win bonus makes this horse a legitimate contender on the drop, and probably the one to beat. GRADE: A.

#8 STAN FROM MALIBU (20/1) perked up two back at Los Al when beating \$6,250 claimers by coming off the pace and finishing strongly, thanks to a flattering pace set-up. His races at Santa Anita, on the big-boy circuit, weren't nearly as good. GRADE: X.

#9 GOLDENSUNRISE (12/1) came off a very long layoff in April and took shots against \$20K/N3L conditional-claimers, to no avail. He was favored in both of those races, and he couldn't ration his early speed all the way to the wire. His last win came here at Del Mar against \$12.5K/N2L runners, and he did it in wire fashion. He will be prominent from the bell. Will he be able to sustain his run through a contentious pace? I think so. Note that Mathis was able to protect him twice as a waiver-claim in his last two races. Now he can drop him in for \$10K for the money run in the third start of his form cycle. GRADE: A.

#10 CAROL'S COMIC (15/1) is a one-paced grinder. He will benefit a lot if the race falls apart, but I don't know if he'll be able to get there in time in this abbreviated sprint. Maybe you can use him underneath, but his last two races were not good, so he'll need a reversal of form as well as the perfect pace set-up. GRADE: X.

#11 SLEW'S JOY (12/1) just wired cheaper \$6,250 claimers at Los Al, going shorter in wire fashion. He was claimed out of that race, and I like the confidence Uranga is showing here by moving him up the class ladder, but he's raced at \$10K before for other trainers, and the best he could do was finish third. You can expect him to be hustled out early, but I think he'll be stuck wide while attending a contentious pace. In other words, he's up against it. Do note that he

carries five less pounds due to the apprentice weight allowance. Maybe that will help him stick around longer, if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

#12 WEGONAHAVAGOODTIME (12/1) knows how to stalk, so that's a major positive. The big concern, however, is how wide will he be with a short run into the far turn? Still, I like that he's pretty honest, and Fresu has been on a lot of live horses this meet, so his presence is very interesting. The last time he ran for \$10K, he finished a decent third at 11/1. He'll need to run a little faster to get the W, but Fresu could be a difference-maker. No offense to this guy's previous jocks, but Fresu is a decided cut above all of his previous riders. GRADE: B.

#13 EL DIABLO (4/1) (AE) is a pretty cool horse who likes to sit well off the pace before coming on late with a powerful stretch run. I can't say anything bad about a horse who has hit the board 24 times in 51 races. Hernandez is enticed to ride for a small barn, so that tells you this horse has a big shot. Unfortunately, he might leave himself with too much to do, trying to angle over to save ground while racing far back in a very short race. GRADE: B.

#14 EVENEREVENWORSE (AE)—program scratch.

CONCLUSION

I think #7 **NIGHT TIME (2/1)** is a deserving favorite in here, as a repeat of that last race against \$16K foes easily beats this group, but he does us no favors in the contest. #5 **MORELLO (6/1)** is the kind of horse who either wins or is up the track, taking a big class drop while shipping in from Churchill Downs. If he's live, he should be shorter than 6/1. That leaves us with #9 **GOLDENSUNRISE (12/1)**, who looks like he's been racing into shape against, all in an effort to have him fire a big shot today. He's the main contest play. And if you don't like these choices, there are several "B" contenders to choose from as well! Good luck.

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