

## DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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**Date:** 8/9/25

**Race 9:** \$200K Yellow Ribbon (G2) for fillies & mares going 8.5-furlongs on turf (rails at 18-ft.)

**Post:** approx. post 6:03 p.m. PDT

### OVERVIEW

Today's contest race is one of two graded-stakes races on today's 10-race Saturday card. The Best Pal (G3), for juveniles going 6-furlongs on the main track, takes place in Race 4, while today's contest race, the \$200K Yellow Ribbon (G2) for fillies and mares going 8.5-furlongs on the lawn (with the rails at 18-feet), kicks off the first leg of the \$5 Late Double in Race 9, so you know I'm all about it because I only have eyes for one lady in here!

#1 HANG THE MOON (3/1), the first of four D'Amato runners, won two Grade Twos in a row last year, including the John C. Mabee (G2) over this course. She sat way off a fair pace and exploded to win by a half-length, smoking home with a final quarter in :22.54 seconds. If you don't know how good that is, just trust me. She came back to win the Rodeo Drive (G2) at Santa Anita in her next start, but she was overmatched in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Turf (G1) and then just ran like a tired horse in the Robert J. Frankel (G3) to close out her 4-year-old season. Obviously, she's good enough to win this, but how cranked will she be off the December layoff, and how far back will she be in a race that doesn't have much early pace? She's fired fresh before, but I can see her coming on a little too late. GRADE: B.

#2 HEREDIA (GB) (4/1) gets top honors from me, and 4/1 would be an absolute gift. She has plenty of back class, and she looks to be sitting on a peak effort, making her third start this year after coming off an October 2023 layoff (not a typo!). Her U.S. debut back in May resulted in a third-place finish, where she looked like a short horse coming off a very long break. Oh, and she only lost to Dynamic Pricing, who is a Grade One winner. She then came off a freshening to run a better-than-looked third in an overnight stakes at Saratoga, which was surely just a prep for this. She had zero pace to close into, yet she flew home in :21.21 to only lose by a half-length. I know she's 6-years-old, so there's not a lot of room for improvement, but I have to think she's sitting on a monster effort here. GRADE: A.

#3 LIGURIA (7/2) ran a decent third in the Gamely (G1) back in May, and she's been freshened up for this spot. Two back, she furiously finished the best to get up and win by a head—but she did have a very fast pace to close into. I'm not sure she's going to get the same set-up. If she does, you can expect her to be right there on the line, but I feel like she needs things to go just right for her to get the W. GRADE: B.

#4 PUBLIC ASSEMBLY (5/1), the second D'Amato, won the Royal Heroine (G3) two back, but she was no match for Liguria in the Gamely (G1) when she failed to offer a response when the real running started. She looks a bit slow on paper and a cut below the best in here, but she is a lightly raced 4-year-old, so she still has license to improve. That said, I'm fine watching this one. GRADE: X.

#5 WATCHTOWER (12/1) showed a nice late kick as a 3-year-old, and that allowed her to get up by a nose in the Autumn Miss (G3). Her subsequent try in the American Oaks (G1) and her first try against older horses at Gulfstream, however, were nothing special. That said, I won't be too harsh on her, since she is still very lightly raced, and she showed enough ability last year to suggest she can have a really good 4-year-old season. Is she good enough to win a race like this? Probably not off a January layoff, but she could spice up your exotics. GRADE: C.

#6 MISSION OF JOY (6/1) makes her first start for D'Amato, who took over training duties for Motion after a sixth-place finish in the Nassau (G2) at Woodbine a little more than a month ago. D'Amato does great work with his new acquisitions, and there is plenty of back class for this gal to build on today, but is she the same horse who just missed in the Just A Game (G1) in June 2024? I like that she won her first race back off a layoff, but she was expected to. Her two stakes tries since that allowance victory were disappointing, and the public wanted no part of her last time, sending her off at 19/1 at Woodbine—and they were right. Which gal shows up today? GRADE: C.

#7 MUSICAL RHAPSODY (IRE) (12/1), the fourth and final D'Amato, hasn't been seen since last August, and I have to think this is a leg-stretcher for her, since her best work has come going longer. Witness her good second in last fall's Red Carpet (G3) going 11-furlongs. Plus, her last two wins have come at 10- and 12-furlongs. Next time. GRADE: X.

#8 MAHINA (8/1) is a very honest mare who always shows up with a good effort. Unfortunately for her, that good effort still results in a defeat when it comes to her tries against graded-stakes foes. That said, I can spin a yarn here. First off, because of her solid stretch run, she's been running longer distances, even though her last win came at a mile. Perhaps her kick isn't as effective in longer races? Note that she actually finished ahead of Liguria four back in the Megahertz (G3), which was at a mile. My point is: there is a world in which she finally breaks through today while going this shorter 8.5-furlong distance. That's the rosy view. The reality is: she is 0-for-5 at Del Mar and 0-for-2 at today's distance...and her last win came against N1X foes. Which narrative is more believable to you? She probably won't win, but I can see her spicing up the gimmicks. GRADE: C.

## **CONCLUSION**

I looked at this race for two seconds when the PPs first came out, and I was all about #2 **HEREDIA (GB) (4/1)**. Then I did proper work on the race for the In The Money podcast, as Mike P. and I went over today's Late Pick 5. And I was still all about Heredia (GB). And here I

am, doing this race for the third time, in even more detail than the first two times, and I'm still all about Heredia (GB). I'm not saying she can't lose—this is horse racing, after all—but I am saying that I'll be very surprised if she doesn't win. (And if/when she wins, I doubt she'll be anywhere close to 4/1.)

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