DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
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Date: 8/10/25
Race 8: Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5.5-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 5:33 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Today's contest race is a tricky Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5.5-furlongs on the main track. The short distance means post positions are fairly important; same goes for early speed. Then again, the two best-looking horses in the field both like to be in front, and they are next to each other! Will speed hold, or will these two cancel each other out, setting things up for someone from off the pace? Let's find out!

#1 RUNKERRY (20/1) has been ruthlessly ignored at the windows, but he hasn't been completely disgraced—but I think the public has been right about this 8-year-old horse: he runs practically the same figure every time, and that isn't quite good enough to win at this level here. GRADE: X.

#2 SHARONA'S WILD BOY (30/1) takes off the hood in an attempt to shake things up, but I'm not sure that's the answer. He has been well-beaten three times at this level, and all at big numbers. GRADE: X.

#3 SIR ROCKET (5/1) has done fine work as a lightly raced 4-year-old, including a sharp victory last time in a 5-furlong turf sprint at this level. Yes, his turf form is pretty darn good, but can it transfer to the main track? It's so tough to know, but his two works since his win have been awfully slow. Maybe Drysdale is just trying to keep him fit. I'm surprised he isn't trying this guy against open company, but I suppose he wants to see if this horse can run on dirt since he's allowed to run back at the same condition since his win at this level was on turf—and if he takes to the dirt, that will give Drysdale plenty of options going forward. GRADE: B.

#4 MOMO'S KIDDO (30/1) looks to be in over his head, since his most recent win two back came in wire fashion against much weaker restricted $5K beaten-claimers. GRADE: X.

#5 MINISTER SHANE (6/1) is a cool old boy who should move forward today, second off the bench after a year-plus layoff. That said, this now 7-year-old has had plenty of chances at this level, and he hasn't been able to get it done. He typically likes to sit off the pace and come running late, but will he have enough time to get up in this short race? There are a couple of

speed horses drawn outside, so maybe he'll get the right set-up, but he seems like a better fit for the exotics. GRADE: B.

#6 BINGING (15/1) has decent turf form, including a win at this level earlier in the year when facing 3-year-olds only on the lawn. His dirt race at this level last time wasn't too good, but he did break his maiden on dirt, so I don't think the surface was the issue. He had a bad start, and that was it. He can be a little more tactical, so it wouldn't surprise me if he got the right trip. Can he be good enough? Probably not, but I bet he outruns his odds. GRADE: C.

#7 BRONKO NAGURSKI (10/1) knows how to stalk and pounce, and that run style is a good fit for this race shape, since a few horses outside of him should be out front, carving out some quick early splits—but does he fit class-wise? He's exiting some pretty low-level races where he was beating up on some really slow animals. Still, he did what he was supposed to do, and he deserves a chance at this level, since it looks like Mullins has got him figured out since the claim two back. He does have races on his form against tougher, so maybe he was in for $5K three back more for a physical issue than an ability concern. Tough call. GRADE: B.

#8 TITANIC THOMPSON (4/1) ran too good to lose last time when he led every step of the way until the last one. He got headed late while finishing a good second at 9/1. This horse ran against a track bias and a closer bias. Every dirt race on opening day was won from the outside. Plus, this horse is what the Plod Boys would call a "Flow" upgrade. He raced against the flow, meaning the race shape set things up for closers mainly because this guy ran too fast for his own good. The fact that he was pretty well-clear of third is impressive. He should be very tough today. They only concern is that there's a speed horse outside of him. I say, "May the best speed win!" GRADE: A.

#9 DEVIL AMONG US (7/2) is a one-way train, and that could make things very difficult for his inside neighbor—and, in fact, it's going to make things very difficult for him, because Titanic Thompson is really fast as well. The good news is: this is only 5.5-furlongs, and practically every abbreviated sprint this meet has been won on the front end. Maybe the two of them just run one-two around the track—though I prefer the inside runner. GRADE: B.

#10 LETMEIN (5/1) is a 3-year-old who couldn't beat his own age group at this level two and three back, but he faced elders last time and wasn't disgraced. He has tactical speed and knows how to sit off the pace, which means he should get a great stalking trip behind his two inside rivals—though he'll have to avoid going too wide. The race sets up nicely for him, and he looks to be a steadily improving sophomore who can get the job done. GRADE: B.

#11 NO MORE DING DONGS (12/1), the first Sean McCarthy entrant, was a top pick for me last time, but the rail draw did him no favors, and he failed to fire. Talk about an unlucky horse. His last three post positions: 1, 1, 12. Not ideal. Nor is today's 11-post at this short distance, but the price is right, and I know he is better than his last race shows. GRADE: A.

#12 CLEVER CLOVER (20/1), the second Sean McCarthy runner, looks overmatched after failing to get the job done in restricted starter races. This is a tougher level. Last time he ran at this level, he was 55/1 and finished a mile back. GRADE: X.

#13 LAST CALL LONDON (20/1) (AE) looks too slow on paper and also a bit class-compromised. He couldn't beat $12.5K foes at Los Al, and that's not a good thing. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

I don't have a strong opinion in this race, but I do think **#8 TITANIC THOMPSON (4/1)** is the one to beat—but he's going to have to earn it with the outside runner breathing down his neck. I wish **#11 NO MORE DING DONGS (12/1)** had a better post at this short distance, but I'm willing to give him another chance to show his best stuff after a bad rail draw last time.

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