

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Date: 8/14/25

Race 5: Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on turf (24-ft.)

Post: approx. post 4:07 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got an over-subscribed field of 12 horses entered in this Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on the lawn, but with the rails out 24-feet, only nine will greet the starter. I think the chalk is legit, but he's got a tough post, and there are some decent runners in here as well. Will there be an upset?

Before we dig in, just a reminder: Ciaran Thornton and I will be streaming our "Double Trouble Live" show at 4:45 p.m., going over today's low-takeout \$5 Late Double (Races 7 and 8). Please subscribe and like on YouTube; you'll thank me later:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/qImrHBpbjtg?si=JIX7KTN7ZpNjCWnP>.

#1 BALLYVAUGHAN GIG (20/1) has dirt speed and the rail, so you can expect him to be part of the early pace—and that will likely make things difficult for him, as there are other speed horses outside of him. GRADE: X.

#2 **POTITO (6/1)** moves one spot off the rail after running a good second from the inside last time at this level and distance at 7/1. Carla Gaines does fine work second off the bench, so I'm expecting this lightly raced 4-year-old to show up with a peak effort. Rispoli sticks with the chalk, but Tyler Gaffalione, in town for the weekend, takes the call. GRADE: A.

#3 PIPER'S CAUSEWAY (6/1) is a very cool horse who has hit the board in 15 of 22 starts, so hats off to him and his connections—this is what a professional racehorse looks like. Part of his success comes from his tactical speed, so he's always in the race from the bell. Last time, he was 7/2 at this level and distance and was right there early but outfinished late. He'll need to show more oomph, but at least you know you'll get a run for your money, and even though I prefer others, it's not like this guy *can't* win (if you're a believer). GRADE: C.

#4 HEZASPANISHDANCER (30/1) has dirt speed and is coming out of a shorter race at Los Al, so I have to think he's going to be hustled hard to contest the early pace. He's never been on turf before, but his breeding suggests he should be fine—but can he win the battle and the war with other speed in here? I'm fine watching one, since he's been outclassed a few times before at this level (albeit on dirt). GRADE: X.

#5 MIDNITE MUSKET (8/1) just sneaks into this race even though he won an N1X at Tampa three back: the winner's share was under \$21K that day, making him eligible for this condition. Of course, that makes him look like a very good fit, plus his run style is perfect for this race because he knows how to stalk, and he has enough early speed to be in great position just waiting for the lesser speedy types to back up. Mathis is good with his new acquisitions, and he's very good off this kind of layoff. GRADE: A.

#6 TRAVELIN' SHOW (5/1) ran a good third at this level and distance last time at 7/1, and he was only a neck behind Case Hit, so if you like the chalk, you should like this guy, right? Well, this guy often finds himself on the wrong side of tight finishes, so he'll need to show a bit more late in the lane to get the W in this competitive field. GRADE: B.

#7 POKERKNIGHTATVEES (6/1) was all out to win last time at this level while going 6-furlongs on dirt. He got a perfect trip on the best part of the track, so we'll see if he can back up that career-best performance while moving to the lawn today. Three back, he attended a very fast pace going 6-furlongs on turf and predictably tired. He can stalk today, but can he transfer that sharp last race form to the lawn? GRADE: B.

#8 CULLEN J (7/2) comes off a March layoff and returns a new gelding. His races this year have been spaced apart, and that's not usually a good thing, but Baltas knows what he's doing, so I'm sure he'll have this 3-year-old ready to run a big one off the freshening—and therein lies the rub: he's a 3-year-old facing elders for the first time. A move forward puts him in the frame, but 7/2 seems a bit short against this group (even though he's taken money in every one of his starts except his debut). GRADE: B.

#9 CASE HIT (3/1) came off a very long layoff last time and ran too good to lose, finishing second to Sir Rocket, who only came back and won on Sunday, franking this 3-year-old's form. Note that Miller takes the hood off this speedster, so we'll see if he can relax just enough to get him over the hump today—but then again, what kind of trip will he get from out here if he tries to stalk the pace? Rispoli will have to work his magic at a short price. Still, you don't want to get beat by Peter Miller in a 5-furlong turf sprint at Del Mar. GRADE: A.

#10 HOT BOX (4/1) (AE) ran a big one last time when beating nine other foes at this level going 5.5-furlongs on Los Al dirt. He was 18/1 that day, so is this a case of why go to the funeral when you missed the wedding? I doubt he'll be as short as 4/1, however, since he's looking at either a very wide trip...or a trip where he has to use up too much early energy. That said, he's a cool 7-year-old who still knows how to win races, if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#11 GRAZED (5/1) (AE) makes his second start off the bench for Miller, who took over training duties from Knapp after a May 2024 layoff. His comeback race at Los Al, where he attended a very fast early pace before tiring badly in a 6.5-furlong main-track affair, was likely just a prep

for a spot like this—but he’s another one who will either have to use too much early energy or face a very wide stalking trip. GRADE: C.

#12 LAST CALL LONDON (15/1) (AE) is trying to find his level on the big-boy circuit, since his last win came going 1,000-yards at Los Al back in March. I’m not sure he’s a fit here, especially since he’s winless in four turf tries. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

This is a pretty competitive race. Don’t get me wrong, **#9 CASE HIT (3/1)** is the one to beat, but the post is a bit tricky, so I think it makes sense to look for a few decent-priced horses drawn toward the inside. **#5 MIDNITE MUSKET (8/1)** looks like he’ll trip out perfectly, and if not for a thousand bucks or so, he wouldn’t be eligible for this condition, so he could possibly have a class-advantage as well. **#2 POTITO (6/1)** is a lightly raced 4-year-old who should move forward in a big way second off the bench for a barn that has been firing on all cylinders this meet.

Be sure to check out the new “Double Trouble Live” show on YouTube @DoubleTroubleLive: <http://bit.ly/4mqfQSz>.

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