DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
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Date: 11/24/25
Race 9: $50K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies & mares going one mile on turf (rails at 24-feet)
Approx. Post: 4:30 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Bonus Monday racing! Due to the cancellation of Friday's races, we get to end the race-week (and start the boring work-week) with a 9-race Monday card that ends with a very tough contest race: a $50K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going one-mile on the lawn with the rails at 24-feet. There are a lot of nice ladies in this over-subscribed field, and with the rails out so far, pace and trip are of paramount of importance.

Of course, this race will close out both the $3 Late Pick 3 and the $5 Late Double, so be sure to join Ciaran Thornton and I for a special Monday edition of "Double Trouble Live." You can LIKE AND SUBSCRIBE here.

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#1 THE MIZEN QUEEN (IRE) (8/1) ran a decent third last time at 6/1 in her first try versus winners, so she can certainly build upon that, especially with Berrios sticking around, but she did lose to Ambaya on the square in an age-restricted race, and both of them now have to face elders today. GRADE: C.

#2 SOURCE (GB) (12/1) makes her first SoCal start for Michael McCarthy after failing to clear this condition back East while trained by Graham Motion. She has plenty of upside as a lightly raced 4-year-old, but she's been off since December 2024, and McCarthy doesn't usually have them breathing fire off such a long break. I'll watch one today. GRADE: C.

#3 DEFIANCE (7/2) won her debut in a turf sprint, but it's been tough sledding ever since, failing to get the job done six times at this level while racing around two turns. I'm surprised Mandella hasn't run her back in a sprint since that debut win, but who am I to question the Hall of Famer? In fact, I trust Mandella so much that I've actually backed this gal a few times before around two turns, to no avail. That said, she has excuses (bad posts; bad rides), so I'm willing to give her another shot today, especially since Demuro—who was horrendous all summer long—has turned things around and is now one of the top turf jocks on the circuit. GRADE: A.

#4 AMBAYA (5/2) is a 3-year-old who has yet to face elders, so I'm a little surprised that she's so short on the line, especially since she failed against age-restricted fillies last time at 5/1. That said, her closing time in that defeat was ridiculously fast, so I know there is quality here. In fact, she ran third in a stakes two back, so this lightly raced sophomore can easily take a big step forward today. GRADE: A.

#5 MOTET (30/1) has failed several times before at this level, so she looks like she needs lesser to shine, especially since she needed $50K maiden-claimers to graduate. GRADE: X.

#6 ETERNAL REIGN (IRE) (4/1), the first D'Amato runner, is a contender, but she's had her chances at this level, and she's disappointed at short prices, so I'd tread with caution today. On the positive side, she should be super-fit off that 10-furlong turf race last time when she had the lead late but weakened to finish fourth off a two-month layoff. She also gets a positive equipment change, as D'Amato will take off the blinkers, so perhaps that will help her summon more courage late. Still, she feels like an underlay to me. GRADE: B.

#7 RUBY CANTU (30/1) should have bottom off her last 10-furlong race, where she was grinding away late, but I think she'll have too much to do on the cutback today. She was 73/1 at this level and distance two back, and the best she could do was fifth. GRADE: X.

#8 MISS ARTOIS (12/1) was 11/1 last time in her first try versus winners in an age-restricted race, and she weakened to finish eighth after being prominent for most of the race. I won't be too harsh on her, but I'm not bullish on her chances today against tougher, older foes. Note that J.J. sides elsewhere. GRADE: X.

#9 SHE'S A JOKER (10/1) is an honest Cal-bred who rarely runs a bad race, so hats off to her. That said, I don't think she's at this level. She's tried it a few times, to no avail, and it's hard to overlook the fact that she failed as the favorite last time against state-breds. GRADE: X.

#10 TEQUILAANDTHERAPY (12/1) always seems to fire, but she's yet to win against open-company, so this 3-year-old Cal-bred seems in a bit deep today, even though I am expecting a nice run after a solid prep down the hill last time. But that's not enough for me to want to back her. GRADE: X.

#11 MADONNA OF LORETO (12/1), the second D'Amato entrant, is pretty versatile, but this 3-year-old was no match against elders last time at this level in a 6-furlong turf sprint. Before that, she was 16/1 against age-restricted sophomores, and even though she outran her odds, the best she could do was finish fourth. She needs a big step forward. GRADE: X.

#12 CANDY BAR (6/1) (AE) cleared her N1X condition back East, but this 5-year-old mare has found SoCal N2X company too tough—which is why Hess does the smart thing and runs her for the optional $50K tag today against N1X types. Is that enough to wake her up? She has tactical speed, so I can see her being prominent throughout, but can she win the battle and the war? I can make excuses for her poor-looking form, but I prefer horses on the upswing as opposed to a gal who might be on the way down. GRADE: C.

#13 RUNAMILEINMYSHOES (6/1) (AE) has been a popular claim-box item of late, and that's not a surprise because this 4-year-old filly likes to run! That said, she is a Cal-bred who has been bought for $20K the last two times, so this is a much tougher spot. She also kind of needs everything to go her way on or near the lead, and that's going to be an issue from this post. GRADE: X.

#14 TAKE ANOTHER CARD (8/1) (AE) had some trouble last time and probably needed one off the bench when running behind Ambaya. She should take a step forward, second off the bench, but this is her

first try versus elders, and what kind of trip can we expect if she gets in? Maybe for next time? GRADE: X.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>
This is typically the kind of race where I can find a nice price, but after all is said and done, I'm on the two chalks, **#4 AMBAYA (5/2)** and **#3 DEFIANCE (7/2)**. Sorry!

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