

MORE MATRIX CONTENT FOR DEL MAR!

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Date: 11/7/26
Race 8: $100K The Chosen Vron for Cal-breds going 7F on the main track
Post: approx. post 4:03 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

What a neat renewal of the $100K The Chosen Vron for Cal-breds going 7-furlongs on the main track. The Chosen Vron was an awesome sprinter, so it's great to see his name in lights today. I know one horse who won't appreciate seeing his name—but at least he doesn't have to face The Chosen Vron in the actual race! Read on to find out who I'm talking about…

Note: Join us here for a special Saturday "Double Trouble Live" diversification/pivot show, as we get underway early in the day for us: 12:20 p.m./PST or 3:20 p.m./EST. Lots of action on tap!

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#1 MAN O ROSE (3/1) won this race last year at 4/5, and a repeat of that performance makes him a huge threat to win it again, but he's no cinch like he was in 2025. First off, the rail at 7-furlongs is always a tough assignment because of the gap, so if he doesn't break alertly, he could have his work cut out for him buried inside and behind horses. Yes, he has enough speed to be prominent from the rail with a clean break, but there are others who will press him. In other words, he's good enough to win—but he needs things to go his way early. GRADE: B.

#2 SHADY TIGER (20/1) romped last time going a mile for Mullins, who took him off D'Amato two back for $16K. Well, now it's Hess' turn, since he just claimed this guy for $20K, surely to run him in here. I like that he has tactical route speed and is cutting back, so he should be fit, but he's in a tough spot today while needing to run a career best. GRADE: X.

#3 MATT AT FIVE (12/1), a 3-year-old, was entered in the restricted Let It Ride on Friday, going a mile on the turf. He has more wins on turf than he does on dirt, but he's versatile, and I think there's a better chance for this guy to run a big one while sprinting on dirt rather than winning a two-turn turf race when he's a far better sprinter than router. In other words: I think this is the better spot for him! Three back, he ran a big fig when dominating Cal-bred N1X types in a 6-furlong dirt sprint here at Del Mar. His recent turf sprint was pretty fast as well. I don't like that he's winless beyond 6-furlongs, however—and even though he can stalk, he likes to be in the mix early, as do several of the others. GRADE: C.

#4 PURE MADNESS (6/1) is also a versatile runner who can act on any surface—and he has run well at distances up to 8.5-furlongs, so 7-panels is perfectly fine for him. He should be super-fit exiting a downhill graded-stakes race, and his two Del Mar route races before that were pretty good. He's the value play. GRADE: A.

#5 BIG CITY LIGHTS (2/1) deserves to win this race because there was a time earlier in his career when he would have been undefeated if *not* for The Chosen Vron, who beat this poor guy every single time they faced each other—and this "poor guy" has always been a very nice horse! He loves Del Mar and today's distance, and he too should be fit after a downhill affair. Two back, he ran a pretty good third to two horses who were last seen in Breeders' Cup races. Single on most tickets. GRADE: A.

#6 SPECIAL CLUB (12/1) is an honest Cal-bred who typically shows up for work and puts forth a solid effort. That said, he's been facing weaker company, and he's untested against stakes-caliber horses. I respect Papaprodromou's confidence in trying this former $25K claimer in this spot—and getting Rosario to ride—but he needs a career best to beat these. GRADE: C.

#7 LONESOME STEW (6/1) is in pretty good form for a horse who missed a year from March 2025 to April 2026. That said, his best form of late has been on turf, and the last time he tried dirt, he was no match for Big City Lights. He does have a win on the Del Mar main track, and if he can transfer his current form to the dirt, he's a solid contender—but that's a big question mark surrounding him at this point in his career. That said, I trust Glatt. GRADE: B.

#8 MR. DISRESPECTFUL (20/1) is an old pro who can do it all, so it's no surprise that he's earned more than $350K. That said, his recent form isn't his best work, and three back, Man O Rose handled him pretty easily. He likes to be prominent, but he can stalk as well, so he lucked out by drawing this outside post—is that enough to beat this bunch? Unlikely. GRADE: X.

#9 LOVESICK BLUES (5/1) is yet another Cal-bred who is incredibly versatile, and you can't overlook the fact that the best race of his life came in the 2025 edition of the Bing Crosby (G1) when he closed from way off the pace to win that 6-furlong affair. He's never been 7-furlongs on the main track, but distance won't be an issue for him. The issue here is the long layoff after getting trounced when trying blinkers in the Dubai Golden Shaheen (G1), a race he was never going to win anyway. The blinkers come off today, so you can expect this guy to come from off the pace looking to mow them down, as per his M.O. Will this 8-year-old be ready to do that today? GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION

#5 BIG CITY LIGHTS (2/1) is my top pick. He has the class, the course and distance credentials, and the right projected trip. With a few others doing the heavy lifting early, he should be sitting in a great spot when the real running starts. If you want a little more bang for your buck, **#4 PURE MADNESS (6/1)** is the interesting alternative. I'd give him a slight preference over **#1 MAN O ROSE (3/1)**, mostly because of the price and the defending winner's potentially demanding trip from the rail. **#7 LONESOME STEW (6/1)** and **#9 LOVESICK BLUES (5/1)** both have a path to the winner's circle, but each needs to answer a question about his current dirt form or readiness.

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