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Date: 11/13/26
Race 7: Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/conditional-allowance at 8F on main track
Post: approx. post 3:35 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Friday the 13th! Let's see if today will be good or bad for us and the DTL Crew. We go live at 1:30 p.m./PST (4:30 p.m./EST) for coast-to-coast action. Click here! You'll thank me later!

As for today's online contest race: we may have a short field in this Cal-bred AOC contested at one mile on the main track, but this race can play out several different ways—and I think I have the horse who will benefit the most under several of those different scenarios.

#1 THE GYPSY COWBOY (8/1) is a one-paced grinder who pretty much runs the same race every time, which means he's always going to be at the mercy of pace and trip. He's in for the $20K tag after clearing this condition at Los Alamitos, and I don't see him suddenly developing a new dimension. That said, if the speed horses get carried away up front and this race falls apart, he could be the last man standing. GRADE: B.

#2 KEITHING THUNDER (6/1) has more early speed than he's shown recently, and I suspect he's been racing himself back into shape after the layoff. This is his third start back, and he gets a much better post than he had last time, so I'd expect his rider to be aggressive and try to take this field wire to wire. The problem is that there's sprint speed immediately to his outside, and that could make things difficult. I like the idea of this guy getting involved early, but can he withstand the pressure? That said, he would be an "A" for me if it weren't for the stretch-out sprinter. Feel free to upgrade him, especially since 6/1 seems like great value in a short field. GRADE: B.

#3 PIPER'S CAUSEWAY (5/1) is taking the blinkers off, but he has plenty of sprint speed, so I still expect him to be involved in the early proceedings. He's a five-time winner with plenty of placings, which explains why he's available for the $20K tag, but the big question is whether he can carry that speed around two turns. He might be able to win the early battle, but can he win the war? I'm skeptical. GRADE: C.

#4 MAJESTIC PALISADES (2/1) figures to get a very good trip because he can stalk the pace and pass horses, which should be a valuable asset in this field. He's been knocking on the door with several seconds and thirds this year, but he needs to show a little more desire to get his picture taken. The positive jockey change certainly helps, and I can envision him sitting in the garden spot while the speed horses sort things out. He's the logical one, but I'm not thrilled about taking a short price on a horse who keeps settling for minor awards. GRADE: A.

#5 SOGNO DI VINO (5/2) is coming off a nice turf victory at this level, showing a strong stretch run, and there's no question he's in the best form of his life. He also broke his maiden at Los Alamitos going this distance, so we know he can handle a dirt route. The problem is that he hasn't been nearly as effective in several subsequent dirt attempts at

this level. If he can transfer his recent turf form to the main track, he's going to be tough, but that's a pretty important "if" at a short price. GRADE: B.

#6 KEEP DANCIN NICK (4/1) is in for the $20K tag after having cleared this condition at Los Alamitos more than a year ago. He's been running on turf ever since without making much of an impact, but his trainer does well with the surface-switch move, and I like the way this race sets up for him. He should be able to sit in the clear, away from the early pace battle, and get every opportunity to make his run. He's not exactly bringing sparkling recent form to the party, but the circumstances today might be just what he needs. GRADE: A.

CONCLUSION

I'm going to take a shot with **#6 KEEP DANCIN NICK (4/1)**, who should get a favorable outside stalking trip while the speed horses do their thing up front. The surface switch is the key, and I like that his trainer has had success with this move. **#4 MAJESTIC PALISADES (2/1)** is the obvious danger because he figures to get a similarly favorable trip, but he's had plenty of chances to win this year and isn't much of a bargain at 2/1 (and it wouldn't shock me if he went off even shorter). **#2 KEITHING THUNDER (6/1)** is a viable alternative, especially if the other speed scratches, or if he sneaks away at this price (although I expect him to be much shorter).

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