

Del Mar Bottom Line

By John Lies



John began working at Del Mar in 1993 and has provided analysis on simulcast television for nearly a decade. This year he joined Will Rogers Downs and Fair Meadows as the racing secretary, announcer and oddsmaker and has called races at all Southern California racetracks.

Follow him on Twitter @johnjlies.

Saturday, July 23

RACE ONE

#6 PAPA PAPA PAPA is one to fear of those that have raced before today. He opened up in his first start of the year last out and was narrowly defeated by a horse who came right back and defeated winners. The move back up to maiden allowance is also a plus.

#2 PATRON has a right to come out running. The German-bred colt was acquired at a popular two-year-old in training sale this spring and has one of the very best conditioners to prepare him for his racing career. His morning workout times look solid enough.

#7 EXHALE cost half a million dollars as a yearling. He races for the first time today under a Half of Fame rider for a barn not known for winning with a lot of first-time starters. He does have the pedigree to do well early in his career and drew outside.

RACE TWO

#1 EASTER FEVER returns from a stint in Northern California and looks like a top contender in this spot. She has won four races over various surfaces and has the services of one of the leading riders. She has the speed to avoid being compromised by her post.

#3 Q'VIVA should act at this level. She drops in price today after having been claimed a few starts back and picked up minor awards in turf races restricted to horses bred in California. Her last win came here on the main track last fall. She seems live in this spot.

#6 DUTCHESSA leads the field in wins with seven lifetime victories and shoots for three in a row for a winning barn. She has never raced on the main track before today. She too made the van ride back down from up north after having raced here before.

RACE THREE

#1 HOBBITS HERO has an imposing record on the turf with eight wins from fifteen starts over the lawn. His winning habit stamps him as a major contender in this spot. His leading rider knows him well and he can either set the pace or come from just behind.

#7 FUSAICHI SAMURAI has been out of the exacta only once before in seven starts on the main track with just one win. Today he moves to the turf with the breeding to suggest he will do well. One of his half siblings is a multiple graded stakes winner on the turf.

#3 FREE ROSE is worth a look. The three-year-old faces older horses for the first time but showed enough in two turf starts in Kentucky to warrant consideration. He chased home two repeaters last out including the eventual winner of the Oceanside Stakes.

RACE FOUR

#6 PRINCESS COCO has a right to move forward in her second start. Horses from this stable often do just that and she chased a hot pace in her debut before finishing fourth. The extra furlong may actually benefit her today and she represents a successful team.

#2 ADORABLE finished second in her only start as the mild favorite. The effort was strong enough to make her the likely favorite again today but she is no standout. She does have the best of connections and cost a pretty penny with her blue-blooded pedigree.

#3 TAMMY'S WINDOW scratched out of a maiden claiming event here on Thursday to go in this race instead. Some handicappers take it as a good sign when winning connections get selective about where to run. She adds blinkers and retains a top rider.

RACE FIVE

#1 METABOSS is due for some racing luck. He had none of that in three starts on the East coast this year and now lands in a very capable barn as he ships back out here. His turf and synthetic form from his three-year-old year show he is good enough to win this.

#9 CALCULATOR is a graded stakes caliber horse racing on turf for the first time today. There is no question he is good enough to win a race at this level on the main track. His turf pedigree isn't very green but it doesn't have to be for him to handle it well.

#4 ITSINTHEPOST is an obvious threat at this level. He has perked up a bit for his new barn in his last two starts with two solid efforts against similar rivals. This race did not come up easy but he figures to be in the mix again off any of his recent efforts.

RACE SIX

#8 SWISS MINISTER enters in sharp form off two runaway wins. The biggest test he faces today is probably the distance as he has yet to win beyond six furlongs. His winning record makes him a pro in this context and he drew well to show all of his natural speed.

#6 CLASSICO should be finishing well following a second-place finish at this distance in his last start. He broke his maiden here at Del Mar last fall and represents the best of connections. He is one of just three runners in the field to have beaten winners before.

#5 SORRYABOUTNOTHING is listed as a gelding for the first time today. He also races for a claiming price for the first time and is turning back in distance from two-turn events out of state. All of those changes could result in a better performance from him.

RACE SEVEN

#1 BELVOIR BAY was ultra-impressive when last seen winning a stakes race on turf over the winter. The jockey in to ride her today has developed into one of the nation's very best, especially on the turf. Her readiness to win off the bench is the main question.

#10 STAYS IN VEGAS is very honest and a major player in here. She won a graded stakes race at a mile on turf much like this one just two starts back and is undefeated at this distance on grass. That may be the key after getting beat at nine furlongs last out.

#3 BE MINE has developed rapidly after winning her first two races and finished right alongside the second selection in here in her last two starts at this level. Look for both her trainer and jockey to do well here this summer. This is another live runner for both.

RACE EIGHT

#5 ISH is more lightly-raced than most of the others in this field. This is only her second try against winners and she won by a large margin just two starts back in her only start for a claiming price before today. This also looks like a better distance for her this time.

#4 MYHEARTSINTHECITY needs to find a cure for her second and third-place habits. She has just one win from eighteen starts but continues to run well and is fast enough to win a race like this. Her rider is a new name here this summer and had a win this week.

#10 KATY DRAMA ships down from Northern California in her first start for her new connections and lands a top rider. She too is the type that finishes in the money more often than she wins. Her maiden win came here over this track via disqualification.

RACE NINE

#6 CALIFORNIA CHROME needs little introduction. The superstar is back in his native land following a win in the \$10-million Dubai World Cup in March. He won the Hollywood Derby on turf here the last time we saw him race at Del Mar in 2014.

#2 DORTMUND was last seen winning the Native Diver during the Bing Crosby season here last fall under the same Hall of Fame rider. The Santa Anita Derby winner from 2015 launches a four-year-old campaign today. He hooks a good one but is no slouch.

#7 WIN THE SPACE was a surprising second in the Gold Cup at Santa Anita last time out. The horse who defeated him is training towards a start in the \$1-million Pacific Classic here next month. He has come to hand on the main track and at this distance.

RACE TEN

#4 GEORGIA BLUE may bounce back at a decent price. She began her career with two second-place finishes under the same pilot back aboard today including one on turf. She faltered in a main track route last out. This barn has sent out a couple of winners here.

#10 SASSY ASHLEY seems ready to win. She has improved steadily and finished a willing second in her most recent start. This marks her third start of the year and off the layoff. She should be right in contention early and could be tough to deny this time.

#6 WHISTLE PRETTY makes her racing debut. Her sire is a strong turf influence and her dam was a graded stakes caliber turf mare. She has logged some lengthy morning workouts for connections that merit respect. She may not just be in for the experience.