

Del Mar Bottom Line

By John Lies



John began working at Del Mar in 1993 and has provided analysis on simulcast television for over a decade. Last 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.

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RACE ONE

#6 FINALLYGOTABENTLEY lands in a good spot to turn around his most recent form. The warrior has won seven races in his career including two here last year. His trainer plays the claiming game as well as anyone and has been protecting him of late.

#2 FRAC CANDY has not raced much this year but can win this with an honest effort. His trainer knows his way to the winners' circle and seems to have this guy primed for Del Mar. He has a win and a second in two prior starts here and has run well fresh before.

#5 ROYAL F J is a ten-year-old making the 100th start of his career. He posted a win as recently as this March and is in search of his tenth lifetime win. His connections have taken care of him for quite some time and a win from him today would be momentous.

RACE TWO

#3 HONOR MAKER could be tough to catch if able to make the lead and open up on the field. This distance can be a speed-friendly one and she may not have much to beat to the front in this particular race. Such tactics led to her two very best races over the winter.

#7 ROOM ON THE BROOM should be competitive at this restricted claiming level. She recorded a second-place finish in a race two starts back that was strong enough to make her a threat today if she can duplicate that effort. At times she comes away slowly.

#6 SASSY ASHLEY is likely to finish in the money. She has finished second and third in her last two starts going a mile on the main track including once against very similar company. She has only faced winners a few times and does have some early speed.

RACE THREE

#8 R SUNDAY SURPRISE may be best on turf. The full younger sister to superstar California Chrome was twice third in five races on the main track last year but returned to the races last month with an eye-catching finish in a turf sprint. Better may be to come.

#12 SPEAKERS was second in her first and only start and may not have to improve much to earn her first career win. She broke slowly before putting in a good late run to garner place honors and it seems reasonable that she can move forward off her debut.

#11 HALO AHEAD is interesting at decent odds. The well-bred filly was claimed last out and promptly faces a restricted field of California-breds today following a good try on the turf. Her early speed should work to her advantage and her rider sticks with her.

RACE FOUR

#8 SHADOW OP looks live at first asking. His trainer has been sending out Del Mar winners for a long time and the homebred is bred to win first out despite being a four-year-old. He drew a good post for a first-time starter and doesn't have a whole lot to beat.

#3 GUMMY was claimed by his current connections last out and races as a gelding for the first time today. He improved with a drop in class to finish third when last seen and returns to face similar here. He appears to be one of the better horses in this group.

#5 CLIFTON BEACH figures to be part of the rush to make the lead and might have as much early zip as any of these. He has finished second twice in five starts in maiden claiming sprints much like this one. Expect him to be prominent early and a big threat.

RACE FIVE

#9 BUYMEABOND loves the Del Mar turf course. He seems like the kind of old pro that will wake up and show his best with the change in scenery despite being winless this year. He drops out of a tough starter handicap and picks up a very capable turf jockey.

#5 PATH OF DAVID finished well in his only start for his current trainer following a claim. It is a good sign that the same excellent rider stays aboard and this gelding did break his maiden over this course as a two-year-old. He should be closing from behind.

#4 WOODY'S FOLLY is an interesting longshot. He pulled against the rider last out in a race he figured to need for the fitness following an eight-month absence. It sets him up to improve today returning to a turf course over which he has won twice at decent odds.

RACE SIX

#5 HOLD THAT SMILE might be the fastest filly in the race. She was second best after showing good speed in her only start so far and looms large in here based on that effort. She comes from a running family as a half-sister to five winners and three stakes winners.

#7 ADRIOT drew the rail in a race here yesterday and was scratched when she got into this race instead. That could be taken as a good sign of positive intent. She is a full sister to a two-year-old stakes winner here at Del Mar and her dam won first out as a juvenile.

#3 MAMA'S KID deserves some credit for her second-place effort in her one and only start. She reared right at the break to be last away and passed a lot of horses despite never coming close to the runaway winner. She left obvious room for improvement but can run.

RACE SEVEN

#1 LAJATICO might be best at this five-furlong distance. Her only start over this layout resulted in a strong victory here last fall and she returns to this circuit following a third-place effort in Kentucky facing stakes company. She has speed to utilize her inside post.

#6 TAPPED has never raced on turf or outside her own age group before today. Her two wins have come both in her only two sprint races and the only times she was not in a stakes race. It is tough to say how she fits with these. Her rider is one of the very best.

#8 AUNTJENN might excel as a blast-off type sprinter over an abbreviated distance like this. She has always been fast and recorded her first win for her current trainer in her last start. She was a decent third in a turf sprint two starts back but this is a shorter trip.

RACE EIGHT

#2 WILLOWS BABE ran well enough when second first out to be regarded as the one to beat today. She put forth a solid effort with a willing finish in the final stages after the eventual winner had passed her around the turn. She did come away from the others late.

#8 SCAT HOME LADY is one to watch on the tote board and in the paddock. The daughter of a potent first-out juvenile sire hails from a barn that can win first out. They can also prepare a maiden to win without posting flashy and obvious bullet workouts.

#6 ACHARNEMENT might be worth another try despite having faltered in two starts so far. She was heavily backed at the windows first out and gave way last time after gunning hard to make the lead under pressure. Today she might relax early and finish much better.