

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.

Follow him on Twitter @johnjlies.

Sunday, August 13

RACE ONE

#1 EMPIRE RULER has one of the leading riders for his first start around two turns. He looked like he would relish more distance when he finished a better-than-looked fifth last out after waiting for room on the turn. He has finished in the money in three of five starts.

#4 HARD ARCH lost his best shot right at the start of his last race when he stumbled. It put him in the position to race wide and he never got into the race. He finished a good second two starts back against similar company. That effort shows he can run with these.

#7 RAFTER ONE tried to do some running with an impossibly wide trip in his last start but gave up in the stretch. The effort is best looked past as he is capable of better and has speed. He entered and scratched from a race a few days ago to go in this spot instead.

RACE TWO

#7 PAPA ROYALE is better than his effort here opening day makes him look. He never seemed comfortable after failing to establish position early and today takes blinkers off. He deserves another shot at this level. This is only his second start against winners.

#2 MY GOLDEN ONE picks up an excellent jockey and looks like a major player. He broke his maiden in a main track route just two starts back and was a respectable second last out in a similar spot. His lack of speed is a concern in this field at this distance.

#5 HERO TEN ALL takes a significant drop in class. It may wake up the five-year-old gelding who has not finished in the money since he was three. He was wide last out in his first start for any claiming price. This field is restricted to non-winners of two races.

RACE THREE

#5 COUNTY LINEMAN can win this if the distance is not too short for him. He enters in sharp turf form following a win in a turf route here opening week for a stable having a good summer meet. This rider does well with him and he should be rolling in the lane.

#9 PAYNES PRAIRIE is a longshot to consider. He had a noteworthy trip in his most recent race up north and may have been best while finishing third in a big effort. The race has also produced a pair of next-out winners on that circuit. He is unproven on the turf.

#4 BOTTLE ROCKET is back in seven days following a solid second-place finish here in a turf sprint similar to this one. Some of the horses he faced last out were not for sale while this is a straight claiming race. He has a win and two seconds over this turf course.

RACE FOUR

#3 GRAN FIESTA should take a step forward today in his second start. He probably gained valuable experience from his first out when he raced in behind horses from the rail and galloped out in front of a field that produced two next-out winners. He can run.

#10 SOUL STREIT is bred to win early in his career and makes his racing debut today. He drew a tough post at this distance for his debut. He is likely to be caught wide around the turn unless he shows enough early speed to either clear the field or cross over.

#6 FRENCHMEN STREET has shown promise in his morning workouts. The Florida-bred is stamped top and bottom as one that should do well early in his career. These connections are enjoying a tremendous strike rate here this meet with selective runners.

RACE FIVE

#7 RED LIGHTNING seems ready to win. He put up a good fight when second in a maiden allowance race like this here three weeks ago. He has been second or third in three of four starts including two under this rider. He is a half-brother to three winners.

#4 LITTLE JUANITO races with blinkers for the first time today. The change could make a difference and sharpen up his early speed after a third-place finish as the even-money favorite here last out. He has run faster than that before and switches riders.

#5 CATS BLAME gives his trainer two live chances in this race. He was solid in a runner-up effort last out for a high claiming price and returns to the maiden allowance level today for his seventh start. He ran well under this rider and could threaten these.

RACE SIX

#3 SKYE DIAMONDS has been an outstanding claim and is one of three evenly-matched fillies in the field that boast winning credentials at this stakes level. She has earned over a quarter of a million dollars since claimed for \$40,000 here last summer.

#2 BENDABLE is the co-high weight. She was a winner of a graded stakes race much like this one in her last and only start this year. She had been off the track since October prior to that win and always runs well fresh but never has finished out of the money.

#4 CONSTELLATION is a Grade I winner and has finished second in all three of her starts this year including her last race when she was defeated by the top selection above. The filly is very consistent and seems reliable to keep the pace lively and run her race.

RACE SEVEN

#6 TOOREEN DANCER ran better than her last past performance line might look at first glance. She made an early move while having to go very wide and made her bid but ran out of steam in the stretch. That was her U.S. debut. She picks up an excellent rider.

#3 SABURAI delivered a stronger performance than a seventh-place finish might indicate from her most recent start. She was miserably wide on both turns in that turf event and was trying to do some running down the lane. The race has been productive.

#8 SPOOKY WOODS races on turf for the first time. She merits respect as she returns to the allowance ranks following a good third-place effort in a graded stakes race on the main track even though she was disqualified. She would be tough if she likes the grass.

RACE EIGHT

#1 TRIBAL JEWEL deserves a lot of respect. He races for the optional claiming price and fits very well at this level while a horse-for-course here at Del Mar. He has earned five of his twelve lifetime wins over this track and his trainer is good with this kind.

#10 ROCKET FUEL was a better-than-looked fifth here three weeks ago in a sprint race. He broke slowly from the rail and was trying to get involved in the stretch but the winner was too tough and he finished evenly. This will be his first start around two turns.

#2 STRINGENT gets some class relief as he drops down one level in the allowance world while entered for the optional claiming price. He has already won a race at this level of competition in his career. Both of his wins have come in sprints but he can route.

RACE NINE

#2 GIA LULA stretches out and moves to the turf following two sprint races. She seems well prepared to do well in this event following a third-place finish here opening weekend. She gave the impression that she should take to both turf and the route game.

#10 DAWN TRAVELLER races in the U.S. for the first time following one start in Ireland this spring. His barn can win with fresh imports off the plane like this one and has success when pointing to this leading rider with French roots. His post is a big concern.

#7 CINNAMON TWIST is one of two entered in the race by her trainer and makes her career debut. The fact they point to this particular pilot signals positive intent and they do win together at a strong clip. All three of her winning siblings were victorious on the turf.