

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 MR. HINX will be tough to beat if he runs as well as he did last time. He was the runner-up at huge odds in a Grade I prep for the Breeders' Cup Sprint last out. He also won a stakes race here at this distance in July over a field of state-bred three-year-olds.

#1 SILENT BIRD won this same race a year ago. He has an attractive lifetime win record and does well at this sometimes tricky elongated sprint distance. He has not won since January and raced only three times this year but has shown that he can fire fresh.

#5 AMERICANIZE has early zip and been first or second in all seven of his starts on the main track. His most recent out came under this rider and resulted in his strongest win yet. He looks like a contender as he participates in a stakes race for the first time.

RACE TWO

#4 TEMPLE KEYS might be a good gamble. He has not raced since April when he was pulled up by the rider but that effort is probably best ignored. It is a good sign that he returns at this level for a sharp trainer and garners the services of an excellent turf rider.

#11 RITZY A.P. it sitting on a win at this allowance level. He has come running from behind in his last two starts under this same rider and just missed in his most recent try. The homebred may need some racing luck but seems like an obvious contender.

#9 CHEEKABOOMBOOM tuned up in a downhill turf sprint last out and may be better off over the longer distance of today's race. He defeated a field of state-bred allowance rivals over this course on opening day this summer at this same distance. He fits right in.

RACE THREE

#2 CITY OF LIGHT is a three-year-old with only three starts under his belt. It looks like he may simply be the fastest horse in the race and may be able to trump the experience of others with his raw ability. He won very impressively here in September.

#1 PRIME ISSUE hits hard at this level. He is entered for the optional claiming price while too much of a win type to be eligible for these allowance conditions. Four of his eleven lifetime wins have come here at Del Mar and he was very sharp this summer.

#9 CHIEF OF STAFF could be the knockout longshot. He takes a significant drop in class while entered to be claimed and ran some big races at a very competitive race meet in the Southwest earlier this year. He also won twice here at Del Mar once upon a time.

RACE FOUR

#6 PULPIT RIDER has come to the party and shoots for three straight wins. She posted a big win here in late August in her second lifetime start and validated that effort with a return victory in her first race with winners. This should be a good distance for her.

#3 ISMELUCKY is also in search of a hat trick and already a stakes winner. She was able to win last out despite leaving the gate slowly and showed that she can pass horses after attending the pace in her first win. Her jockey is one of the best and keeps his seat.

#8 SPICED PERFECTION was last seen posting a mild upset in a stakes race here in late summer for California-bred juvenile fillies. That victory followed a modest maiden win here on opening day this summer and showed she is moving in the right direction.

RACE FIVE

#7 HARD ACES may hold a slight edge given his local record over this marathon distance. He is a cut below the best that would go in a race like the Breeders' Cup Classic but looks like a major player in this spot. The millionaire gelding merits top billing.

#3 DESTIN has never been this distance before but seems like the type of horse that will run all day. His top-notch rider knows his very well and figures to give him every chance to win if good enough however the race shapes up. He has not raced in California before.

#4 ESTRECHADA is a mare taking on the boys with a long-fused style and solid current form. Her rider guided her to victory at this distance on the grass two starts back but she was able to win on the dirt in her native South America. She deserves respect.

RACE SIX

#11 RUSHING FALL is the American runner in this international field they all have to beat. She has been very impressive winning both of her career starts out East and hails from one of the most powerful stables in the country. Look for her to come rolling home.

#10 SEPTEMBER could be the best of the European contingency and will race with Lasix for the first time like a handful of others in here. Her conditioner brings a sparkling reputation to these championship events along with this talented and improving filly.

#7 CAPLA TEMPTRESS won her first two starts in England and her most recent start in Canada. She was flattered by two next-out stakes winners that were just behind her in her last start. It is important when a young horse shows they can find a way to win.

RACE SEVEN

#6 MOR SPIRIT has come back dynamite at age four and enters in top form though unraced since June. He has found his niche at less-than-classic distances around two turns this year and has the speed to get position into the first turn at this one-mile distance.

#3 SHARP AZTECA drew a good post for such a high caliber event at this distance on this track. He should be able to get position and his natural ability rates him highly in this field of very good horses. He has won three of five this year and his last two starts.

#2 GIANT EXPECTATIONS could be the sleeper. He ran his best race yet two starts back while earning a berth into this race going seven furlongs here in August. He was unable to keep up with top-notch sprinters last out but that race should have him sharp.

RACE EIGHT

#6 MASAR seems to be developing nicely and has shown progress over each of his four starts overseas. His most recent effort resulted in a third-place finish in Group I company in his first start over this one-mile distance. He will need a good trip in a wide open race.

#7 JAMES GARFIELD brings credentials to the table that are strong in comparison to other European imports and stamp him as a serious contender. It is difficult to predict how the imports will adapt to the course and ultimately perform but he has some quality.

#11 SNAPPER SINCLAIR is an American colt that might be better than his speed figures and overall appearance on paper suggest. The fact he won both a turf sprint at Saratoga and a longer stakes race over a tricky course shows that he is a handy sort.

RACE NINE

#2 STELLAR WIND has been perfect in three starts this year while pointed to this year-end championship race from the onset. She is also a perfect three-for-three here at Del Mar and should be able to improve upon her fourth-place effort in this race a year ago.

#5 ELATE is blossoming in this latter half of her three-year-old season. She has always shown promise but has really put things together with some top-shelf wins in her last two starts out East. She has never raced in California before but has shown she travels well.

#6 FOREVER UNBRIDLED was third in this race a year ago. She has only made two starts this year but won them both and won both times she has been ridden by the jockey aboard today. She too brings her act out West for the first time and has what it takes here.

RACE TEN

#1 SO SWEETITIZ has not raced this year but is good enough to win a stakes race of this caliber. She was a winner of her only start here over this turf distance last summer and has always shown she can fire when fresh. She has speed and a rider that knows her.

#2 BELVOIR BAY can win this with one of her better efforts. The front-runner has shown versatility in races up to a mile and was second over this short distance here just two starts back in late August. Her post will likely play in her favor under a hot rider.

#5 VIGOR may truly appreciate the fact that this turf sprint is only five furlongs. Her lone win to date came over a similarly abbreviated distance and she seems to have one way to go which is right to front and fast as she can. She ships in from the East for this.