

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

#5 FALCONE has finished second in two of three starts and may be difficult to beat today if he shows further improvement. He picks up the services of a leading rider for the first time. This rider has the highest win percentage on turf of any here this meet.

#11 FENGARI is likely to improve for a sharp outfit that wins with a healthy percentage of maidens making their second starts. He took some action at the windows first time out and his jockey both rides him back and has won the most races on turf here this meet.

#8 ROCKAWAY is listed as a gelding since his last start. He shortened up to a downhill turf sprint following three starts at a mile and finished fourth last out after splitting rivals late. He showed some life with a big gallop out past the wire and may be coming around.

RACE TWO

#3 BESIDES THE POINT has won four races in a field of runners where all but one other have only a maiden win to their credit. She did not fire in her only start on the main track here this summer but has since rebounded with a winning effort against older.

#6 VELVET JONES raced on the turf for the first time last out when unveiled by new connections off a seven-month layoff and finished fourth. This barn has had a dynamite season and looks to the leading rider today while dropping back into the claiming ranks.

#8 YALISHA is a new face that has not raced outside of her native Louisiana before. She will also race without blinkers in her first start in about four months this afternoon while switching back to the main track. The presence of this rider is a plus. She may fit here.

RACE THREE

#8 TEXAS WEDGE has won two of three starts over similarly short distances and was in over his head in his only other start. He has never raced on the grass but his dam was a turf winner and he has plenty of speed to be dangerous at this abbreviated distance.

#5 COUNT ALEXANDER lost whatever chance he had in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Sprint when brutally shut off while looking for room near the eighth pole. The effort was inconclusive but he should do very well at this level as a stakes-placed turf sprint winner.

#9 FACTOROFWON flashed her speed in a downhill turf sprint over a longer distance and could not be caught in a runaway win last out. She will match her speed against males this time as she sticks to a turf sprint. She may be fast enough to threaten these.

RACE FOUR

#4 ZIPMAN seems like he will relish two turns and is ready to stretch out in his fourth start. He came with a big finish in a downhill turf sprint last out and will make only his second start on the main track today. His dam was a route winner and is a good producer.

#5 CAPTIVATE finished third in a main track sprint here over the summer and showed further progress when second in a main track route last out. He rallied and gained a short lead into the final furlong before proving second best. He retains the leading rider.

#1 MOMMA'S BABY BOY delivered a willing finish after dropping far back when third last out in his first start in about nine months. It came in a sprint race on a day when most races were being won on the front end. This barn has been winning races of late.

RACE FIVE

#9 HOLY GHOST is a good horse to take a chance on at decent odds. He lagged early per usual last out before rallying up the rail and steadying when crowded in the late stages. He galloped out strongly past the finish. One of the best riders stays with him.

#2 RIVER BOYNE merits respect as he makes his U.S. debut. He faced some very good juveniles in Ireland this summer before finishing second in one of two sprints on synthetic surfaces across the pond. He has not been in this country for very long.

#5 BIG BUZZ did everything right and had his chance but just missed in an identical maiden race here three weeks ago. A repeat of that effort should put him back in the picture but it may take even better to win it. He has been second in his last two starts.

RACE SIX

#2 SPECTRE BOND earned one of the most highly-rated maiden wins at any track in the nation this year when he won his only start this June at Belmont Park in New York. The effort was validated by what the narrow runner-up has since been able to accomplish.

#7 RED LIGHTNING has been freshened since a closing day clunker this summer. He is a threat off his best work here in July and August when he did well enough in main track sprints to give him a chance at this level. He needs to get involved in the race early.

#5 SWORD FIGHTER returns to the races for the leading barn following nearly a year on the shelf. He could be dangerous while fresh because he won big in his career debut. That effort came here at Del Mar last fall in his only main track sprint from three starts.

RACE SEVEN

#4 TEQUILA JOE is well spotted for a mild surprise. He has not had the chance to run this far yet on this circuit but won his only semi-marathon out East as a three-year-old. He gave it a big try while looking for more ground three weeks ago and likes this course.

#1 CHICAGO STYLE won both starts here this summer over this same distance around three turns. He finished fifth in his most recent start and only try at this graded stakes level over another turf course. He has won five of seven starts and runs well for this rider.

#3 FLAMBOYANT has not won in a long time but fired big when third in a race much like this one here in August. His career earnings dwarf most of his rivals in this field and he was not disgraced when third in a prestigious Grade I event in Canada last out.

RACE EIGHT

#9 SUPER DUPER COOPER might be the right horse in a soft maiden claiming event at a tricky distance. Horses that show speed going one mile like he did last out often do well when shortening up to this elongated sprint distance. He was also game in defeat.

#4 BARDSTOWN dropped to this level for the first time and finished second in a manner that suggests he will like the added distance of today's race. His fragility is obvious with only three lifetime starts at age six but he may yet have a win in him.

#11 INHIBITION is hard to back confidently because he has raced seventeen times before without ever winning. He has however finished second in two of his last three starts including one at this distance while running fast enough to win a race like this.