

Date: November 13th, 2021**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Roses R Blue (1st race)****First Race****1. Roses R Blue****2. Supersonic Flyer****3. Big Strike**

ROSES R BLUE should win this Cal-bred maiden-50 at low odds based on her runner-up debut at the same level. She bobbled and quickly recovered, got keen and checked at the half-mile pole, re-rallied inside, finished on her wrong lead but was more than five clear of third. The filly that beat her returned to win a Cal-bred allowance six days later. 'BLUE is trained by Luis Mendez, whose impressive win rate with favorites the past four years is 49 percent (18-for-37). Short-price standout, it appears. **SUPERSONIC FLYER** is an eight-start maiden who finished in the money all six starts at this level. Unlike the favorite, 'FLYER has proven form over the Del Mar surface, she has speed, and first-time Flavien Prat is an added bonus. **BIG STRIKE** merits longshot consideration. Her debut on turf may have been nothing more than an educational prep. She broke slowly and merely ran around the turf course. Second time out, surface switch to dirt, improvement likely.

Second Race**1. Love My Jimmy****2. Cherubic Factor****3. Surplus**

LOVE MY JIMMY wired similar 3yo turf sprinters on this course in August, was claimed for \$50k, and returns at the same level and course first off the claim by quietly productive trainer Hector Palma. Since autumn 2018, Palma is 6-for-14 first off the claim. 'JIMMY looks like the speed of the speed, and can wire the field for the fifth win of his career. One caveat is that 'JIMMY was listed as a vet scratch Oct. 11. If the pace analysis is mistaken, late-running dropper **CHERUBIC FACTOR** looms an upset candidate. He faced tougher older rivals his last two starts, and now drops into a turf sprint restricted to 3yos while entered for a claim tag for the first time. He will rally late. **SURPLUS** drops from Cal-bred allowance vs. older to run for a tag against 3yos. He has speed, though perhaps not as much as the top choice. Expect **SURPLUS** to be positioned second or third, and pounce if the pacesetter falters.

Third Race**1. Da Kine****2. Try to Capture****3. Funkenstein**

DA KINE ran fast enough to win this maiden-20 route both starts since returning from an extended layoff. He missed by a neck on this track in September; he finished a creditable third next out in a race flattered when winner Harbor Sky wheeled back to defeat claiming winners. 'KINE has tactical speed, proven form on the DMR track, and is the choice to graduate in the 10th start of his career. **TRY TO CAPTURE** goes long for the first time and switches to seven-pound apprentice rider Diego Herrera. 'CAPTURE has sprint speed, and therefore should make the lead stretching to a mile. Come catch him. **FUNKENSTEIN** drops to the bottom level for the first time, gets Prat for the first time, and has earned figures fast enough to win at this level.

Fourth Race**1. Phantom Dance****2. Arham****3. Impossible Task**

PHANTOM DANCE has found his calling as a dirt horse. After losing his first 12 starts on turf and synthetic, he won three straight on dirt including a fast starter allowance two months ago that was validated when runner-up C Falls and sixth place Next Revolt returned to win. This N1X is the first DMR start for 'DANCE. Assuming he handles the surface, there is no reason he cannot win again. That is, unless **ARHAM** reproduces his New York figures while making his first start in California for new trainer Vladimir Cerin. **ARHAM** earned back-to-back 91 Beyers finishing second and fourth this summer at this N1X level. Sold by former owner Shadwell Stable since raced, **ARHAM** makes his local debut for California owners David and Holly Wilson. Based strictly on figures, he is the fastest in the field. **IMPOSSIBLE TASK** stretches out from a pace-pressing sprint win; he could set the pace. **GO ON** stretches out for the first time.

Fifth Race**1. Kitten's Kid****2. Big Bell****3. Austin James**

Although two turns might be a reach for **KITTEN'S KID**, she merits horse-to-beat status in this turf mile for Cal-bred maiden fillies. Both starts on turf were solid, runner-up by a length and runner-up by a nose. The challenge is two turns. Progeny of Boisterous generally prefer

to sprint; the dam of 'KID was a sprinter whose foals have preferred to sprint. The most recent start by 'KID was a hillside race at Santa Anita she lost by a nose. If she can carry her speed another furlong and a half, she might gut out a win. If not, route-proven **BIG BELL** could be the opportunistic winner first start in nearly three months. She ran well on the DMR course in summer, runner-up in what turned out to be a non-productive race (seven ran back, producing one third-place finish). But the effort by 'BELL was the best of her three-start career, and she clearly can stay the distance. She gets a weight break under apprentice Jessica Pyfer, who loses her five-pound allowance at the conclusion of this card. **AUSTIN JAMES** looms the knockout. His fifth-place debut at five furlongs was not bad. He raced evenly, finished willingly, and is bred for two turns.

Sixth Race

1. Sir London

2. Air Combat

3. Wesleyan

SIR LONDON ran well first out; the well-regarded Simon Callaghan-trained 2yo gets the call despite facing three firsters from the deepest juvenile stable in California. **SIR LONDON** broke slowly from the rail first out, chased the pace inside, finished evenly and was more than three lengths clear of third at the wire. With a clean start and logical second-start improvement, he can win. The three Bob Baffert trainees perhaps are led by **AIR COMBAT**, who worked in company with stablemate **WESLEYAN** while under pressure inside his workmate. In both recent gate works, 'COMBAT took heat working inside his workmate. The point is, he is more "seasoned" than a typical first-time starter. **WESLEYAN** worked outside his mate, and was heads-up the whole way. The truth is, the stablemates are tough to separate. The third Baffert rookie is **NEWGRANGE**, who debuts with an apparently decent work pattern. **BRON AND BROW** appears to have worked well for his debut, progeny of first-crop sire Gormley have won at a higher-than-average 17 percent first time out.

Seventh Race

1. Aligato

2. Riding With Dino

3. Psycho Dar

The second-start maiden turf-sprint win by **ALIGATO** was better than the margin of finish. He was blocked and steadied on the turn, blocked again at the quarter pole, surged late and won going away. With a clean trip, he could have won by open lengths. Up in class to Cal-bred **NIX**, but cutting back in distance from six and one-half furlongs to five, **ALIGATO** gets the call to win from off the pace. Looks like enough pace to set up his rally. He can only win if he catches front-runner/pace-presser **RIDING WITH DINO**. The latter fired all three starts since returning from a long layoff: third, third and second at this level. His last was his best yet, albeit six and a half on the hill. Not sure if he can cope with the possibly quicker pace of this five-furlong dash, but he will mix it up early and forwardly placed runners did well in opening-week turf sprints at different settings: rails at 30, and rails at zero. Also-eligible **PSYCHO DAR** drops from open claiming to Cal-bred, and would add heat if he draws in. **TOO LATE** should be positioned forwardly placed, just off the speed.

Eighth Race

1. Eda

2. Under the Stars

3. Lady T

EDA is the only front-runner in this five-runner stakes race for 2yo fillies. She won a \$79k stakes last out at Santa Anita, she missed by a head in a G2 at DMR in summer, she is the lone speed and should be gone at a short price. **UNDER THE STARS** ran first out like a filly that needed a start, and would benefit by blinkers. Both are in play second time out. Heavily favored in her debut based on strong works, she was under a drive while wide on the turn, kept grinding, hung, and finished third. Perhaps the debut woke up her up. She came back with a sharp three-furlong drill and might be closer to the lead with blinkers on. Could be another one-two finish for Baffert. Since the start of the Santa Anita winter meet on Dec. 26, Baffert started two or more runners in a single race some 73 times. He won 43 of those races, with 19 one-two finishes. **LADY T**, a maiden, ran well in her debut and ran better second time out when she had early trouble but closed from last to finish second in the stakes race won by **EDA**.

Ninth Race

1. Bud Knight

2. Ottawa Fire

3. Ox Bridge

BUD KNIGHT did not have the smoothest of journeys last out, yet still finished second in his first try at this N2L claiming level. A six-time runner-up with just one win from 19 starts, he runs back at virtually the same level and gets the call to win from off the pace. Maybe. **OTTAWA FIRE** drops from **NIX** to run for a tag for the first time in his fourth U.S. start. The mile and one-quarter distance was slightly out of reach last out; this one-mile trip against easier company should be just about right. He ran okay on this course both starts in summer. **OX BRIDGE** is the one to catch. He led to near the eighth pole last time in a race dominated by closers. The 1-2-3 finishers rallied from 7-8-9 running positions. This race is short on pace, 'BRIDGE could steal it.