

**Date:** November 19th, 2021

**Track:** Del Mar

**By Brad Free**

**BEST BET: Town Boy (5th race)**

**First Race**

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**1. Map to My Heart**

**2. Va Va Voom**

**3. Lady Macarena**

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In a competitive turf sprint for maiden fillies and mares, comebacker **MAP TO MY HEART** looks ready to fire from a layoff of more than a year. She ran well finishing third in her debut on this course in 2020, misfired second out and was later sidelined. Her comeback work pattern is solid, she adds Lasix, trainer Brian Koriner is 4-for-13 with maidens off six months or more the past three years. **VA VA VOOM** is a 14-start maiden with seven in-the-money finishes, mostly against Cal-breds and maiden-50s. Up in class to MSW from a runner-up maiden-50, she has speed and an inside post, with numbers that are fast enough. **LADY MACARENA** returns from a six-month layoff; the best race of her three-start career was her runner-up debut. The point is, she runs well fresh. Contender despite a light work pattern. Her stablemate **VIGILANTIA** returns from an eight-month layoff after finishing nowhere in her spring debut in Florida. **MENDHAM MILL** debuts with fast workouts, though maidens from this stable typically improve second time out rather than fire first out (7 percent debut wins, 20 percent wins second-start maidens).

**Second Race**

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**1. California Kook**

**2. Ginja**

**3. Velvet Slippers**

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**CALIFORNIA KOOK** was overmatched and finished nowhere in a Grade 2 last month, but her runner-up two back in a N1X on this track would probably be enough. **KOOK** finished second by less than a length that race; the winner Samurai Charm returned to win a \$75k stake next out. Three starts on Del Mar dirt by **KOOK** produced two wins and a second. **GINJA** stretches back to two turns and is quick enough to set the pace. Not sure if two turns is her preferred trip, but speed has been effective this fall at a mile on dirt: pacesetters won five of nine. Lightly raced **VELVET SLIPPERS** was only a head behind Samurai Charm in a stakes race last out. As a point of comparison, the top choice finished three-quarters behind that rival. Splitting hairs, but based on performance against a common rival, one could argue **SLIPPERS** should be ranked ahead of **KOOK**. **SLIPPERS** was listed as a vet scratch Oct. 11; recent works suggest all is well with the lightly raced filly. The truth is, any of the top three can win.

**Third Race**

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**1. Clampett**

**2. Tizlightning**

**3. Hay Juan**

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**CLAMPETT** rallying from behind, or speedsters **TIZLIGHTNING** and **HAY JUAN** on the front end? The call is the closer. **CLAMPETT** dropped to maiden-50 last out and scored a workmanlike win, going away. He worked an easy half since that race less than three weeks ago; his style is opposite his main rivals. The speeds are legit. **TIZLIGHTNING** wired Cal-bred maiden-50s in his debut two months ago. He raced greenly late, and won with something left. His workout/racing pattern had a brief interruption (Oct. 9 to Nov. 7 without a work, scratched from Oct. 29 race), but on ability fits with these. He is drawn outside pace rival **HAY JUAN**, who also wired Cal-bred maiden-50s. He won by a length and three-quarters over the same horse **TIZLIGHTNING** defeated by three lengths. **HAY JUAN** was claimed by Doug O'Neill, whose last 11 f.o.c. starters produced five wins and three seconds. **JUAN** was listed as a vet scratch Oct. 8, but resumed a regular work pattern since including a bullet work at DMR one week ago. The front-runner is ready to fire.

**Fourth Race**

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**1. Psycho Dar**

**2. First Prez**

**3. Fight On**

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**PSYCHO DAR** benefits by the cutback to five furlongs after he dueled and cracked last out at six and a half. His runner-up finish in a DMR turf sprint two back would probably be fast enough. The challenge is two pace rivals that may prevent him from setting the pace. He has won from slightly off, and gets the call with a front-running or pace-pressing trip. **FIRST PREZ** had trouble last out, and also was racing on dirt. He prefers turf. Claimed for \$20k from that Cal-bred race, he moves up in class to open \$25k and returns to his preferred turf footing. He has speed, and probably will press from the outside. Class dropper **FIGHT ON** should vie for favoritism in a race that sets up for his closing style. Claimed for \$62.5k in July, he ran for \$50k and \$40k in October and is now in for \$25k. Dubious pattern, but arguably the "best horse" based on figures. **MR. VARGAS** and **BARRISTAN THE BOLD** are the aforementioned pace rivals that could make things tough for **PSYCHO DAR**.

**Fifth Race**

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**1. Town Boy**

**2. State of the Union**

**3. Besame Mucho**

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**TOWN BOY** should win this juvenile maiden-32 at a short price. Claimed from a runner-up finish two back, runner-up last out in a maiden-45, he returns to the level at which he was claimed and looks like the speed of the field. Come and catch him. For what it's worth, only 5 of 22 dirt sprints this meet were won by the pacesetter (2 of 6 pacesetter winners at six furlongs). **STATE OF THE UNION** did not have the greatest of trips last out finishing nowhere in a turf route, but his maiden-40 third two back on dirt puts him in the picture. First-time starter **BESAME MUCHO** is by a sire whose debut juvenile progeny have won at an above-average 16 percent clip. Furthermore, **MUCHO** is a sibling to Mulligan, a 25-1 debut winner (turf) for trainer Richard Baltas and owner-breeder Bruce Chandler in September 2020. Same connections. **RIVIERA CHAMP** has improved each successive start, although all three were on turf. This is dirt, and he also drops to \$32k after being claimed for \$50k. **PINEDALE** might be ranked too low by this handicapper. He appears to be working well, although maidens from this stable generally improve with racing rather than fire first out (6 percent debut winners, 8 percent second-start maiden winners, 12 percent third-start maiden winners past five years).

## Sixth Race

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### 1. Via Egnatia

### 2. Fly to Mars

### 3. French Getaway

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Front-runner **VIA EGNATIA** faces a challenging pace scenario due to the front-runner on the rail, but 'EGNATIA has been effective pressing the pace from second. If he gets that trip while returning to the \$25k claiming level of his win two back, he can win this turf mile. **FLY TO MARS**, beaten favorite four straight vs. similar, nonetheless figures as a contender once again. An eight-time winner, his pressing/stalking style could lead to a cozy trip right behind the first flight. Regular rider Flavien Prat, who leads the meet, is off this week due to a suspension. Tyler Baze takes over on 'MARS. Late-runner **FRENCH GETAWAY** will be rolling from behind; DR. TROUTMAN is the aforementioned pace rival for the top choice. Expect 'TROUTMAN to make the lead.

## Seventh Race

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### 1. Delta Wind

### 2. Kristi's Tiger

### 3. Rain Diva

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Despite an off-the-board finish as the odds-on favorite at Santa Anita, with no visible alibi, **DELTA WIND** gets the call returning to the DMR dirt on which she scored a runaway maiden win two back. Maybe she was short last time, she missed a start following her late-August maiden win. If she runs back to her 86-Beyer maiden romp on this track, she would be tough to beat even if six and a half furlongs is a reach. If she misfires, then late-runner **KRISTI'S TIGER** has a shot from off the pace. One-two in 10 of 16 starts, 'TIGER will be outrun early and fly late in a race that could unfold perfectly for her style. **RAIN DIVA** is speed; she finished more than two lengths in front of the top choice last out. 'DIVA probably is the one to catch. CASSIE BELLE has run races that put her in the hunt, although she seems to prefer turf.

## Eighth Race

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### 1. Bonnie Brae

### 2. La Deuxieme Etoile

### 3. Warren's Queen Bee

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**BONNIE BRAE** ran better than looked in her fourth-place debut; she should improve second out stretching to a mile. She broke slowly in her sprint debut, uncorked a middle move while wide on turn, and flattened out late. Sired by Grazen and a full sibling to route stakes winner Desmond Doss, 'BRAE can move up second out. Grass is fine, considering her sire. **LA DEUXIEME ETOILE** should vie for favoritism dropping from open 2yo filly stakes to face Cal-bred maidens while also adding blinkers. Her only turf route against maidens was a runner-up finish on this course in summer. Obvious contender. **WARREN'S QUEEN BEE** stretches out for the first time, after four successive in-the-money sprints. Her pedigree is fine for two turns. CANDY ON TOP lost two straight as the favorite vs. similar Cal-bred turf route maidens, in the money in both.