**Date:** August 6th, 2023                              **Track:** Del Mar

## By Brad Free

### *BEST BET: California Tiger (7th race)*

### First Race

| 1. Ellie Moore | 2. Julias Dream | 3. Pacific Rose |
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European import **ELLIE MOORE** merits horse-to-beat status in this maiden turf sprint based on her noteworthy career debut in Ireland. She broke slowly but rallied to finish second in a dead heat. Turns out, the filly she lost to by a neck is very good. Porta Fortuna followed the maiden victory by winning a pair of Group 3 stakes. 'MOORE makes her U.S. debut for trainer Phil D'Amato, and can win with a clean start. First-time starter **JULIAS DREAM** has shown speed in workouts, Michael McCarthy-trained 2yos are firing. His last four debut juveniles produced two wins, two seconds. 'DREAM is likely to contest the pace. **PACIFIC ROSE** is a firster by outstanding debut sire Not This Time. His debut juveniles have won at a 21 percent rate (28 for 130) according to Formulator.

### Second Race

| 1. Handr'sdream | 2. High Press | 3. Dr. Troutman |
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**HANDR'SDREAM** drops to $8k claiming after showing speed and cracking for $20k two weeks ago. The front-running gelding meets other speed, but he has been facing tougher and does not necessarily require the lead. He has run well from off the pace. Florida shipper **HIGH PRESS** is an off-the-pace threat in his California debut after winning a $6,250 claiming sprint last out. **DR. TROUTMAN** is a 9yo pro campaigning at Del Mar for the eighth straight summer season; his first DMR start was in 2016. Although he has nine career victories, he has never won at DMR. He hit the board twice over the track. He arrives for the 2023 season in good form, runner-up in a route last out. DESOTO'S WAR figures off his romping win two back at Belterra Park.

### Third Race

| 1. Bajan Bashert | 2. Diamonds Danzing | 3. Rhyme Or Reason |
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Maiden comebacker **BAJAN BASHERT** can defeat **DIAMONDS DANZING**; the latter could go favored based on her highly rated runner-up finish last out. The surface of this turf sprint is an issue. BAJAN BASHERT finished third (with trouble) her only start on turf; her dirt figures compare favorably. 'BASHERT makes her first start in more than four months; she can save ground behind the pace and pounce in the lane. But if DIAMONDS DANZING reproduces her last-out dirt fig, this race is over. 'DANZING was making her comeback last out, she set the pace and got worn down by Big Pond, who won a stakes in her next start. 'DANZING earned a big number (80 Beyer) while finishing more than six lengths clear of third. The challenge is progeny of Danzing Candy are not known for turf prowess (6 for 99 overall according to Daily Racing Form). If this race was dirt, 'DANZING might be a slam dunk. First-time starter **RHYME OR REASON** debuts with sharp works for Karen Headley. Over the past five years, the trainer has started three first-time starters sired by Cyclotron including two debut upset winners: $26.60 Cyclometric in 2018; $42 Anna Fantastic in 2020.

### Fourth Race

| 1. Micro Share | 2. Liberal Lady | 3. Keen Lady |
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**MICRO SHARE** could get a cozy trip in this N1X dirt route, positioned just off the pace likely to be set by **LIBERAL LADY**. Although 'SHARE won a N1X last out at Pleasanton, she remains eligible to N1X because she earned only $16,200. The recently revised allowance cutoff is $18k. With a confidence builder under her belt, 'SHARE can win right back. She will have to catch LIBERAL LADY, whose ability to stay two turns is uncertain. She ran the final quarter of a mile race in 26.18 seconds last out while finishing second. The 3yo filly is lightly raced however, could improve, and she should make the lead. **KEEN LADY** misfired on turf last out, her dirt races in the Midwest give her a look. KUORA is a nine-time winner; the rest of the field has combined to win just 10 races. KUORA is a pro, she might be ranked too low.

### Fifth Race

| 1. Autumn Chill | 2. Great Forty Eight | 3. Nothing Like You |
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This maiden sprint for 2yo fillies is a good spot to take a shot at a price. Second-time starter **AUTUMN CHILL** is the call to upset. She was well-bet (third choice) in her debut, but stumbled, lacked speed, and merely ran around the track. It was an inconclusive performance.

Since then, she has trained very well including a team work July 30 with stablemate colt Next Level, a maiden contender in race 1 on Saturday. 'CHILL is likely to make a forward move second time out. First-time starter **GREAT FORTY EIGHT** has worked fast including a three-furlong gate blowout Thursday in :35.20. She is on her toes, and 2yo debut progeny by Constitution have won at an above-average 18-percent clip. **NOTHING LIKE YOU** and CHEEKY GAL have worked well for their respective debuts.

## Sixth Race

| 1. Barristan The Bold | 2. Hot Box | 3. Took Charge |
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**BARRISTAN THE BOLD** faces slightly softer in this claiming turf sprint than the starter allowance foes he faced in longer races at Santa Anita. Five furlongs is a okay for 'BOLD; three of his five U.S. wins were at this trip. He is a come-from-behind runner in a field with pace to run at. **HOT BOX** is speed, a two-time turf-sprint winner at DMR returning from a six-month layoff. **TOOK CHARGE** also adds speed, although it is uncertain if he can cope with the quicker tempo of this five-furlong trip compared to the fractions he set recently at longer distances. INCH has run races that put him in the hunt. Tough race.

## Seventh Race

| 1. California Tiger | 2. Driver's Ed | 3. Duty First |
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The inside post is a challenge for **CALIFORNIA TIGER**, but the comeback maiden otherwise looks solid based on his runner-up finish two months ago in a similar Cal-bred maiden dirt race. He was blocked inside and behind horses, had to wait and wait for room, rallied inside, and lost by a nose. That race was five and a half, he benefits by the six-furlong trip of this maiden sprint. He can win from off the pace. **DRIVER'S ED** returns from a one-year layoff as a first-time gelding/first-time Lasix. His debut on this track last summer was a strong runner-up finish, so he runs well fresh and likes the track. **DUTY FIRST**, Jeff Mullins-trained stablemate of the top choice, is making his first start since last summer and first for his new trainer. His workout pattern looks good.

## Eighth Race

| 1. Don't Ju Forget | 2. Big Sis Little Sis | 3. Queen of Pompeii |
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Based on her creditable runner-up comeback, **DON'T JU FORGET** can win this N1X turf sprint for Cal-bred fillies and mares. Her only win was on turf. **BIG SIS LITTLE SIS** drops from a pair of stakes into a first-level statebred allowance. **QUEEN OF POMPEII** has not raced since October, but she runs well fresh.

## Ninth Race

| 1. Grand Slam Smile | 2. Pushiness | 3. Putt for Dough |
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Two-for-two stakes winner **GRAND SLAM SMILE** can upset romping debut winner/possible favorite **PUSHINESS** in this stakes for Cal-bred 2yo fillies. 'SMILE followed her impressive debut victory at Golden Gate with a stakes win at Santa Anita, she has not missed a beat in morning works since, and her rally in both starts suggests she will handle the extra distance of this five and one-half furlong stake. The debut victory by PUSHINESS was outstanding and stamps her the potential favorite facing winners for the first time; she won by more than six lengths in fast time with a high figure (69 Beyer). She did miss a few days of training and a couple workouts when she came down with a temperature early last month. But she since recovered, and worked well including a fast gate work last weekend over the DMR surface. For what it's worth, CTBA Stakes favorites are just 2-for-13 since 2010. One other challenge facing PUSHINESS is it turns out she beat an ordinary field in her debut. Five she defeated ran back, producing just a single third-place finish. **PUTT FOR DOUGH**, debut winner two weeks ago, will be rolling late. She is the only filly with a race over the DMR track.

## Tenth Race

| 1. Maltese Falcon | 2. Panic Alarm | 3. Henry Q |
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This wide-open G3 turf route for 3yos is a perfect spot for stakes-placed maiden **MALTESE FALCON**. He tends to find trouble, often self-caused, but since being gelded in February he has gradually improved. His last start was his best yet, runner-up in a stakes at a mile and one-quarter. He shortens to a mile and a sixteenth, packs a dynamite stretch kick, and just might mow them down. **PANIC ALARM** scratched from the Oceanside Stakes opening day after he drew post 11; the scratch gave the European import a chance to work twice over the Del Mar turf in preparation for his U.S. debut. His overseas form is very good. In March he finished third to Paddington, who since won four Group 1s. In April, he finished third behind next-out winner Lord Massusus, and in May he finished a creditable fourth against older in a stakes race. The point is, PANIC ALARM fits on class in this modest Grade 3. Graded stakes-placed **HENRY Q** is the 122-pound high-weight switching to turf for the first time. Progeny of Blame are fine on turf, and HENRY Q could make the lead in a turf route that otherwise lacks obvious pace.

**Eleventh Race**

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**1. Mt. Zeror**                    **2. The Key Is Unity**                    **3. Snapp Daddy**

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Front-runner **MT. ZEROR** or late-running class dropper **THE KEY IS UNITY**? It is s a close call in this maiden-20 sprint. Due to his tactical advantage (speed), MT. ZEROR gets the nod based on his comeback last month at Los Alamitos. He dueled, put away two pace rivals, and got worn down while finishing three+ lengths clear of third. Now he stretches from six furlongs to seven, meets a field without much speed, and could be long gone. THE KEY IS UNITY drops to the bottom class level for the first time; his speed figures on turf are higher than the top choice. The challenge is a switch from turf to dirt, and route to sprint. 'UNITY will be outrun early and rally late. **SNAPP DADDY**, habitually off slow, has been gelded since his most recent and drops to the bottom for the first time. HARD TIME could improve second start back from a long layoff.