Date: August 18th, 2023   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Unfaithful Ways (5th race)

First Race

1. Hudson Ridge	2. Lottery Pick	3. Birth of Cool

Friday twilight racing, first post 3:30 p.m. **HUDSON RIDGE** enters this starter allowance as one of the most probable winners on the card following a runner-up finish at this N3L level. The horse he lost to (Nineeleventurbo) validated the race when he returned to win a N1X. HUDSON RIDGE has produced more speed this year since blinkers went back on, he should be forwardly placed in a race expected to unfold at a tepid pace. **LOTTERY PICK** encourted trouble but flew late to miss by less than a length in an entry-level allowance last out. This starter allowance is a drop for 'PICK, who switches riders to Umberto Rispoli. **BIRTH OF COOL** took a shot in a G3 marathon, but finished last. His N2L starter victory two races back puts him in the hunt. The improving 3yo TWO RIVERS OVER looked good winning on dirt.

Second Race

1. Allocate	2. Tiff With Jimmy	3. Encolpion

This maiden-50 sprint drew a modest field. It is a good spot to gamble on comebacker **ALLOCATE**, making her first start since April 2022. Claimed from that race at Keeneland, she subsequently shipped to trainer Phil D'Amato in California. The filly returns with a series of solid works, and is entered with the "no claim" waiver. That typically signals optimism. ALLOCATE faces a modest field of locals, and gets a seven-pound weight break under apprentice Abdul Alsagoor. Tab for a minor upset. **TIFF WITH JIMMY** missed by a half-length in a five-runner field at Los Alamitos. She adds blinkers and switches to leading rider Juan Hernandez while dropping in for a claim tag. **ENCOLPION** drops in class and shortens back to a sprint. The challenge is surface. Her first three starts were on turf. She is trained by Peter Eurton, who also entered dropper YOLO CALLS. SWEET MOTHER MARY might be ranked too low. She improved second time out, but is now buried on the rail.

Third Race

1. Candy On Top	2. Idessia	3. Warren's Paradice

The 15-start maiden **CANDY ON TOP** gets the call in this turf route for Cal-bred maiden fillies and mares. She has been knocking on the door virtually her entire career, finishing in the money nine times. The longtime maiden is difficult to trust, but this may be her easiest chance yet after a runner-up finish opening weekend under similar circumstances. **IDESSIA** finished only a head behind the top choice last out, while maintaining her solid form. In the money her last three starts, she has started only five times in her career and as a 3yo facing older gets a five-pound weight break over the top choice. Also-eligible **WARREN'S PARADICE** finished a creditable fourth in her return from a layoff of nearly one year. She pressed the pace to deep stretch and tired to fourth. That race should move her up. JERSEY SUNSET adds Lasix and will keep the pace honest. If they leave her alone out front, she could spring an upset.

Fourth Race

1. Economical	2. Touchdown Brown	3. Heir

Last-out N2L claiming winner **ECONOMICAL** moves up a notch to N3L claiming, and it is fair to say he improved since being claimed this spring by Doug O'Neill. Both recent dirt sprints were creditable including his fourth against open $18-20k claiming sprinters three back. Although he may have benefitted from a pro-outside bias last last time, he does have enough speed to make his own trip. Bottom line: the sharp gelding can win right back. **TOUCHDOWN BROWN** drops to claiming after he pressed and faded against allowance foes in his return from a 16-month layoff. With a comeback under his belt and drop in class, the gray should move up. Last-out runner-up **HEIR** will contest the pace; SANTOS TO WILSON had a tough trip last out and finished seventh as the favorite. He was claimed, and moves from the inside post to an outside draw. Potential improvement.

Fifth Race

1. Unfaithful Ways	2. Shared Future	3. Kleen Karma

UNFAITHFUL WAYS returns to the claiming ranks after a creditable fourth in a N1X; she also shortens from 11 furlongs to one mile. She enters this $40k claiming turf as the most probable winner on the card. Her starter allowance win two back against similar would be plenty fast enough. 'WAYS won four of her last eight starts. **SHARED FUTURE** finished only a half-length behind the top choice two back, then was in too tough in a N2X here opening weekend. Back with claiming fillies and mares, she has more tactical speed than the top choice and will get first run. **KLEEN KARMA** stretches back out to a mile, and returns to the DMR turf on which she has two wins. Northern California shipper NAUGHTY NADINE has run races that put her in the hunt.

Sixth Race

1. Rookie Mistake	2. Tetsu	3. Jamming Eddy

ROOKIE MISTAKE meets easier in this $16k claiming sprint than the $32k claiming sprinters he dueled to a fifth-place finish last out. In addition to the class drop, he also benefits from a softer pace scenario. This sprint is relatively light on speed; he is drawn outside his main pace rival. With five-pound apprentice rider Armando Aguilar aboard, 'MISTAKE could be long gone with a pace-setting or pace-pressing trip. **TETSU** finished last in his California debut opening weekend, but he had an alibi. The track was decidedly anti-inside, he stayed on the rail all the way around. Claimed off the eighth-place finish, down a notch in class, the veteran figures as a contender off his spring form in the Midwest. **JAMMING EDDY** is a dropper with speed, exiting the same race as the top choice. 'EDDY is drawn inside the top choice, and will keep the pace honest. SOL DEL SUR goes route to sprint, third start back, as a potential come-from-behind upsetter.

Seventh Race

1. Neige Blanche	2. Oakhurst	3. Eylara

NEIGE BLANCHE, 10-for-22 multiple graded winner and class of the field, seeks her second victory in this $100k turf marathon. She won the CTT & TOC Stakes two years ago, and returned to form this spring at Santa Anita with a game stakes victory at Santa Anita. 'BLANCHE has a versatile running style and could find herself setting an easy pace in a race short on true speed. **OAKHURST** moves up in class after a N2X win in her first try over the DMR turf. The lightly raced filly (3-for-11) has run well at a mile and one-quarter; her pedigree hints she can stay this mile and three-eighths trip. **EYLARA** returned from a layoff with a decisive N1X victory, in addition to proven form last year at this marathon distance. Sharp mare moving up the ladder might be this good. SYMPHONY PERFECT finished willingly in a restricted stakes last out. Her turf-mile races in spring at SA (one win, and a wide-trip seventh) make her a fit. QUEEN OFTHE TEMPLE might be ranked too low; she finished only a neck behind the top choice last out. East Coast-based SISTER OTOOLE won this race last year, but did not finish close three subsequent starts.

Eighth Race

1. Midnight Fury	2. Brazen Bull	3. U R Pressed

MIDNIGHT FURY drops dramatically, from maiden special-weight to maiden-20, with speed to set or press the pace. The class plunge and corresponding low odds make him difficult to back with confidence. He is merely the horse to catch. **BRAZEN BULL** also drops, from maiden-50, while making his first start since changing stables. He will be forwardly placed. **U R PRESSED** has a prep under his belt, third by less than a length. He runs back at the same level, and adds blinkers. HABEAS set a wicked pace at a mile last time, and faded. He drops and shortens up. If the top-choice favorite misfires, this race is wide open.