

Date: August 24th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Perkins (2nd race)****First Race****1. Dont Fight the Fed****2. Gianola****3. Ship and Scam**

First across the wire last out, **DONT FIGHT THE FED** looms a deserving favorite in this Cal-bred maiden dirt mile. He "won" a similar race last month, but was disqualified and placed second for alleged interference. Both starts by 'FED were promising, including a better-than-looked fourth in his debut sprint. The California-bred colt by Kentucky stallion Nyquist can wear them down from just off the pace. Second-time starter **GIANOLA** ran well in his debut two weeks ago in a turf sprint. He raced inside, finished evenly and galloped out with purpose after the wire. Solid debut by a colt who ran like he wants two turns. Also, Andy Mathis-trained maidens tend to improve second out. The past five years, his win rate with debut maidens is 9 percent; his win rate with second-start maidens is 21 percent. **SHIP AND SCAM** is a 12-start maiden who finished in the money both dirt routes. He is owned and bred by Paul Reddam, who also bred and owned the top choice.

Second Race**1. Perkins****2. Class Clown****3. Sing a Happy Song**

Second-time starter **PERKINS** is likely to improve following a creditable debut; the Mathis-trained speedster can wire this Cal-bred maiden turf sprint. First time out, she dueled into the lane and finished fourth in a race that produced three next-out winners. Fast works since, early speed, pedigree fine for turf, come and catch her. First-time starter **CLASS CLOWN** has worked well for her debut including an Aug. 13 team drill in which she was best against an overmatched stablemate. 'CLOWN is by Practical Joke, whose debut progeny (all ages) have won an above-average 17 percent (41-for-232) according to Formulator. First-time starter **SING A HAPPY SONG** will debut with a solid workout pattern; **DIAMOND BAR GAL** has a respectable fourth-place finish under her belt; also-eligible **RHYME OR REASON** finished second in her debut and might be ranked too low by this handicapper.

Third Race**1. Thirty Four Coupe****2. Conquering King****3. Telos**

Runner-up at this N2L starter level last out when he switched to dirt, **THIRTY FOUR COUPE** merits horse-to-beat status back at the same class and surface. His tactical speed allows for a pressing trip forwardly placed behind potential pacesetter **CONQUERING KING**. The latter pushed a hot pace and came away to win a maiden-40 by more than two lengths in the first route of his four-start career. The win was possibly more impressive than the margin or figure, because he pressed the fastest half-mile of the summer meet for a mile dirt race (:45.31). The sharp maiden winner is probably the one to catch. One potential knock is the 2-3-4 finishers he defeated all ran back, none ran particularly well. Second preference nonetheless. **TELOS** drops from a third-place N1X that was his first start in five months. He did benefit from a pronounced Aug. 12 speed bias, however.

Fourth Race**1. Slider****2. Andreadytorumble****3. Stick Shift**

If he draws in, also-eligible **SLIDER** would probably be long gone in this maiden turf sprint based on his runner-up debut. He set blazing fractions (:21.23 and :44.51), shook off his pace rival, but got collared by the deep-closing favorite. Solid debut by **SLIDER**, who would be the one they all must catch. If he does not draw in, first-time starters merit top billing. **ANDREADYTORUMBLE** and **STICK SHIFT** have worked well for high-profile stables. **ANDREADYTORUMBLE** is by Street Boss, with fast gate drills for trainer Peter Miller and the meet's leading jockey Juan Hernandez. **STICK SHIFT** is a Mendelssohn colt trained by Doug O'Neill; his works also are sharp. As a general rule, maiden turf sprinters trained by Miller and O'Neill tend to race into shape rather than fire first time out. Top contenders, nonetheless. **CHARGE FOR GOLD** is an Omaha Beach firster with a work pattern that suggests he is well-meant.

Fifth Race**1. Wrong Turn Cupid****2. Shout It Out****3. Wishtheyallcouldbe**

Taking a shot with rail-drawn **WRONG TURN CUPID** in this \$8k claiming sprint. She is quick enough to establish position inside or make the lead outright, and benefits from the distance cutback from six furlongs to five and a half. Trainer Sergio Morfin is 4-for-12 this summer, all four winners paid well (\$10.60, \$28.40, \$15.40 and \$14.40). If the speed stops, late-runner **SHOUT IT OUT** could be along in time. She finished only a neck behind the top choice last out, her closing style is fine for this abbreviated distance. Nearly half of the winners this summer at five and a half rallied from behind (9 of 20 races at this distance won from the back half of the field). **WISHTHEYALLCOULDBE** takes a precipitous drop, which is reasonable. She finished third by double digits last out in a \$20k claiming N3L sprint. These are easier.

Sixth Race

1. Derecho Dandy

2. Lansdowne

3. Beef Winslow

Runner-up by a neck last out in a similar restricted claiming turf mile, **DERECHO DANDY** gets the tepid call over stretch-out sprinter **LANSDOWNE** and comeback front-runner **BEEF WINSLOW**. The tactical speed of 'DANDY should lead to a forwardly placed trip right behind the speed. LANSDOWNE is running long for the first time. His turf-sprint form is decent; he finished in the money seven of eight U.S. starts. The uncertainty is distance. BEEF WINSLOW is the aforementioned front-runner, dropping in class and removing blinkers for his first start since January. He runs well fresh, and should be on top of the pace along with GIOVINAZZO and OVERRULE.

Seventh Race

1. Pleasant

2. Jensco

3. Essential Business

Lightly raced **PLEASANT** and **JENSCO**, each with two starts, are closely matched in this N1X dirt sprint. PLEASANT followed her maiden debut victory with a N1X runner-up finish behind Clearly Unhinged, who came back to finish in the money in the G1 Test Stakes her next start. PLEASANT returns from a two-month layoff with sharp works, 22-44-and-change speed, and a better post in the middle of the field than her main rival. However, JENSCO overcame the inside post last time with an emphatic maiden win in her second start. She was not quick away, rolled forward, hit the front and won "ridden out." Impressive maiden win 19 days ago. **ESSENTIAL BUSINESS** returns to a dirt sprint after misfiring in a turf route. Her claiming and Cal-bred wins two and three back are fast enough for this allowance.

Eighth Race

1. Boltage

2. Head Lad

3. Glandford

Second-time starter **BOLTAGE** is likely to improve stretching out to a two turns on turf after a sixth-place debut sprint in which he went one-paced. Two turns should be fine for the Bolt d'Oro colt produced by a Smart Strike mare. **HEAD LAD** stretches out after he chased a hot pace and tired in his sprint debut. He is quick enough to make the lead if he wants second time out. European import **GLANDFORD** finished second in a 13-horse maiden field last out in England, while first-time starter UPLIFT makes his career debut for trainer Peter Eurton, who won with his last three debut 2yos including a turf-route firster on Saturday (\$15.80 Flattery).