

Date: August 26th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Pequena Tormenta (3rd race)****First Race****1. Brazen Bull****2. Cupid's Crusader****3. Big Way**

Front-running dropper **BRAZEN BULL** can be long gone in this maiden-20 sprint, his first start at the lowest class level and first since changing trainers. The speed of the field, shortening from six furlongs to five and one-half, he ranks among the most probable winners on the 11-race card. Trainer Librado Barocio has a 50 percent win rate with favorites the past five years (12-for-24). **CUPID'S CRUSADER** also drops to the bottom for his first start in nearly four months. The best race of his career was his debut, so he runs well fresh. **BIG WAY** was overmatched in his California debut; he finished far back in a maiden special-weight route. But his sprint races this spring at Turf Paradise put him in the hunt. **FORDY G** will be forwardly placed and would be one of the first to pounce if the top choice happens to misfire.

Second Race**1. Rolling On****2. Devil Moon****3. Tigerhon**

A respectable fourth in his California debut makes **ROLLING ON** the choice in a wide-open turf sprint starter allowance. Last out, he finished only two noses from second while making his first start in nearly two months. Now he wheels back on short rest; his pressing style should translate to a forwardly placed trip outside the speedster on the rail. **DEVIL MOON**, last-out runner-up as the favorite, figures for a pressing trip outside. Prior to the storm last week, Del Mar turf sprints were dominated by front-runners and pressers. If the profile continues, 'MOON will be in the right spot. **TIGERHON** disappointed last out, splitting the field, but his two previous starts were respectable in-the-money finishes. **MR. DISRESPECTFUL** is the aforementioned speedster on the rail. His maiden win last out was flashy, he won by seven lengths. That was on dirt, however. Uncertain if he can reproduce the effort first-time turf.

Third Race**1. Pequena Tormenta****2. Slam Diego****3. Everlys Girl**

PEQUENA TORMENTA drops to \$20k claiming N3L as simply the fastest in the field. She was overmatched in a tough N1X last out, but either previous start would crush. **SLAM DIEGO** moves up a notch after a decisive N2L win from which she was claimed. Both career victories were over the DMR surface; she will be rolling from behind. **EVERLYS GIRL** missed by only a half-length in a Cal-bred N1X/optional claiming sprint, earning a figure that matches the highest last-out fig in this field. **GRAY FROST** makes her California debut while dropping in class from respectable efforts in the Midwest. **AWESOME TAYLOR** is worth a longshot look, second start off the claim for a stable whose five-year win rate second-off-the-claim is an outstanding 25 percent (35-for-138).

Fourth Race**1. Mirahmadi****2. Miracle Mark****3. Point Dume**

Despite losing both starts as the favorite, 2yo **MIRAHMADI** probably deserves another chance stretching to a route. His debut two back was a runner-up finish in a stake; his next-out fourth was better than it looks. He did not get away well from the rail, hit the gate, and went evenly the rest of the way. The three in front of him returned to run well: stakes-placed, maiden runner-up, maiden winner. **MIRAHMADI** is quick enough to make the lead if he chooses. **MIRACLE MARK** is better than his seventh-place debut suggests. He broke slowly, raced wide and merely went through the motions. But he returned to work well, and this two-turn maiden race was always the target following his debut. He also gets a rider switch to Diego Herrera. **POINT DUME** was only prepping in his debut, a race won by his heavily favored stablemate Pastor T. Improvement likely second time out. **FLIGHT WAY** adds blinkers and goes long after an off-slowly debut.

Fifth Race**1. Freedom Lass****2. Kitty Kitana****3. Gracelund Gray**

FREEDOM LASS proved she belongs at this N2X level when she pressed/chased the pace, made the lead in the lane, then flattened out to third. The winner rallied from far back; runner-up Eddie's New Dream was program favorite in a Cal-bred stakes on Friday. 'LASS cuts back from nine furlongs to one mile, and can win with a pressing trip. **KITTY KITANA**, favored eight of her last 10 starts while winning

just twice, benefits by the return to DMR, where she has a win and two seconds from three turf starts. Freshened two months, speed for position from the rail, she figures as a contender again. **GRACELUND GRAY** has been training well for her first start since October. She wired a turf allowance on DMR turf last summer. ARINA makes her California debut after being purchased for \$120k at a horses-of-racing-age sale this summer. She placed in a pair of N2X turf routes in spring in New York.

Sixth Race

1. My Man Bags

2. Positivity

3. Disco Ball

MY MAN BAGS is back doing what he does best, which is sprint on dirt, after he fizzled in a turf sprint. Before the misfire, his last four dirt sprints included three highly rated wins. A versatile gelding with speed to set or press the pace, a return to preferred dirt footing can get him back on track. **POSITIVITY** continues his class descent. From graded stakes, to Cal-bred stakes, to N2X, and now \$40k claiming. It is not an optimistic pattern, but his recent speed figures exceed par for this class level. He earned 87 Beyer his last three starts; par for this claiming level is 86. **DISCO BALL** drops in class, shortens to his preferred sprint trip, adds and adds blinkers. Win or lose, he should be among the pacesetters.

Seventh Race

1. Uncle Reg

2. Quintecents

3. Harry's Ontheffy

If he handles turf, **UNCLE REG** can win this maiden turf sprint. He ran super last out on dirt, pressing a blazing pace before tiring to third. That race was six and one-half furlongs, he cuts back to five furlongs and can be gone. Based on pedigree, grass is okay. Progeny of stallion Lea are fine on turf; the dam of **UNCLE REG** scored her only win in a turf sprint. **QUINTECENTS**, a seven-start maiden with five in-the-money finishes, makes his first start in nine months. He has run well fresh, although five furlongs might be shorter than he prefers. Second preference nonetheless. **HARRY'S ONTHEFLY** is a Florida shipper whose three starts produced three in-the-money finishes. His most recent start in February was a third-place finish in a race that produced three next-out maiden winners. **PETCOFF** split the field last out in his first California start, but he ran better than the finish position. He broke slowly, made a middle move to loom a threat on the turn, then flattened out. The lightly raced colt might be better than his fifth-place finish indicates.

Eighth Race

1. Arham

2. Principe Carlo

3. Howbeit

ARHAM has an excuse for his off-the-board finish at this level last out. He zoomed inside, where he got into a pace duel while pinned on the fence, and surrendered. Freshened since that race more than three months ago, he cuts back to one turn, and returns to the DMR track on which he scored his first California victory. He subsequently won a N2X sprint, and runs at the same level while entered for the optional \$80k claim tag. **PRINCIPE CARLO** ran super in his comeback. He dueled inside over a pro-outside surface, hung tough to deep stretch and tired. Now he moves outside, with a comeback race under his belt, and a fast recent workout that signals readiness. Trouble-prone **HOWBEIT** rallied to third last out in a similar N2X. Although he probably benefitted by the outside bias, the G2 winner has seven wins including a similar N2X DMR allowance two summers ago. Look for him late.

Ninth Race

1. Speed Lane

2. Yerwanthere

3. Lakota Spirit

Bombs away in this N1X turf route? The race is light on pace, which is ideal for longshot **SPEED LANE**. She is quick enough to make the lead from the rail, and if she gets loose and gets comfortable, she can post a front-running upset. Considering she finished fifth at 31-1 odds last out, her price should be double digits again. She has placed at this N1X level multiple times, and though she is 1-for-19 in her career, circumstances are ripe for a front-running upset against modest competition. **YERWANTHERE** adds Lasix for her U.S. debut, having only recently arrived from Europe where she won two of five starts. She is eligible to N1X because she earned only \$13,663 in her allowance-handicap win last year. The eligibility cutoff is \$18k. Fresh off the plane, adding Lasix, upset chance. **LAKOTA SPIRIT** is hung wide for her California debut (post 9 of 9), but her East Coast/Midwest form hints she fits with this cast.

Tenth Race

1. Brickyard Ride

2. Anarchist

3. Spirit of Makena

BRICKYARD RIDE returned to form last month finishing third in a Grade 2 route; the speedster shortens to a seven-furlong G2 as possibly the speed of the field. Although the storm last week prevented him from a final workout into this stakes, he should be fit enough shortening from two turns to one. Come and catch him. **ANARCHIST** missed by a head in the G1 Bing Crosby last out, and drops in class while stretching out another furlong. Trainer Doug O'Neill won this race in 2014 with Bing Crosby runner-up Goldencents. **ANARCHIST** is less accomplished, but the pattern is the same and he has been knocking heads with top sprinters in the East (Elite Power) and West (The

Chosen Vron, Dr. Schivel). **SPIRIT OF MAKENA** was eliminated on the turn of the Bing Crosby when traffic in front of him caused him to check sharply, steady and be virtually eased. A two-time graded winner at this seven-furlong trip before that, he is eligible to rebound. **SIR ATTICUS** moved up the ladder after an impressive N1X sprint win by more than four lengths. Class test forthcoming for a promising sprinter making just the fourth start of his career.

Eleventh Race

1. Crypto Man

2. Admiral Halsey

3. St Ignacio

CRYPTO MAN finished second at this maiden-62.5k level last out while racing for the first time in a year. He benefitted by a ground-saving trip, but that effort would probably be fast enough to handle this field. **ADMIRAL HALSEY** stretches out for the first time in his career, first start since April. In the money six of nine starts, his pedigree is fine for a mile. **ST IGNACIO** will roll late, as usual, while **RUSSELLS HUSTLE** is a trouble-prone rogue with enough ability to eventually win a race like this. He usually causes his own misfortune, however.