

**Date:** September 2nd, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Faiza (8th race)****First Race****1. North East Star****2. Bolt's Broad****3. Thirty Carats**

Pacific Classic day, first post 1:30 p.m. **NORTH EAST STAR** deserves another chance in this maiden turf mile following a nightmare trip last out. She steadied at the quarter pole, was blocked with nowhere to go in the lane, and finished fifth. It was her second straight bad trip; she just needs clear sailing. **BOLT'S BROAD** is a nine-start maiden who finished second last out in the race the top choice exits. Flavien Prat returns to ride the Del Mar card including 'BROAD, who will rally late. **THIRTY CARATS** raced evenly in her sprint comeback; she is bred to run long and should be forwardly placed in a race without much pace. First-time starter **STAR OF THE NIGHT** makes her debut for trainer Mark Glatt, who pops occasionally with firsters in routes (Mi Hermano Ramon, Striking a Pose).

**Second Race****1. Group Hug****2. Frost Alert****3. Clooney**

This low-level N2L claiming route is a scramble; 1-for-23 **GROUP HUG** gets the call based on a pair of recent thirds in sprints. His speed figures are appropriate for this level; he should be forwardly placed saving ground. **FROST ALERT** returns from a short break while dropping to the bottom level for winners. His recent starts have been on turf; he won a maiden-20 the last time he raced on dirt. **CLOONEY** plummets in class, and could vie for favoritism based on his maiden win three back, and his starter allowance third two back. Tough outside post, however (post 10).

**Third Race****1. D' Oro Dash****2. Stay Hot****3. Beneficial**

This maiden special-weight for 2yos looks relatively wide open; first-time starter **D' ORO DASH** is ready to fire based on a fast solo gate work one week ago. He smoked a bullet five furlongs in 59-flat. He is by a sire (Bolt d'Oro) who gets 19 percent juvenile debut winners; Glatt won with five of his last 20 maiden firsters including two this meet (3yo Dr. Venkman, 2yo Chatalas). **STAY HOT** showed determination finishing a respectable third in his debut after taking dirt and rallying inside a stubborn rival to "win" the race for third. With a debut under his belt, improvement possible. First-time starters **BENEFICIAL** and **WINE ME UP** run for a stable deep with 2yos. **BENEFICIAL** is by Malibu Moon, whose 2yo debut progeny have won an average 12-percent; **WINE ME UP** is by Vino Rosso, whose 2yo debut progeny have won at a below-average 7 percent. Both colts are trained by Bob Baffert.

**Fourth Race****1. Petesoldfashioned****2. Special Club****3. Freight Train Baby**

Second-start maiden **PETESOLDFASHIONED** ranks as the one to beat after a promising runner-up debut validated by the winner and third-place finisher. The winner returned to finish a close third in a stakes; the third-place finisher won a maiden race. 'OLDFASHIONED trained well out of his debut, and drew comfortably near the outside. Also-eligible **SPECIAL CLUB** ran better in his debut than his fourth-place finish and low figure suggest. He broke slowly, unleashed a middle move on the turn, weaved through traffic, finished well inside, and galloped out with run. He is a "must use" if he draws in. **FREIGHT TRAIN BABY** appears to have worked well for his debut; trainer Jeff Bonde is 4-for-8 this year with debut 2yos. **RED ON SUNDAY** gets a top rider for his debut; Prat and trainer Peter Miller won with 7 of their last 20 debut 2yos.

**Fifth Race****1. Donner Lake****2. Talklessworkmore****3. Worse Read Sanchez**

Comebacker **DONNER LAKE** can win this Cal-bred turf mile, first start since January. He runs well fresh, the figures he earned in maiden turf races late last year compared favorably to this modest field. **TALKLESSWORKMORE** may vie for favoritism off back-to-back seconds in which he led to deep stretch while facing the same class he meets here. He is a front-end threat. **WORSE READ SANCHEZ** is a 1-for-19 grinder who will pick them up late, while lightly raced **CALIFORNIA BAY** had a compromising trip in his first against winners.

He lost a ton of ground extremely wide through the far turn. He is a sibling to a handful of stakes winners, and likely to improve with experience. This is only his fourth start.

### Sixth Race

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**1. Dr. Venkman**

**2. Navy Man**

**3. Divine Armor**

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Mandatory payout in the 20-cent pick six; this N1X sprint is the opening leg. **DR. VENKMAN** did not have much behind him in his debut, but he downright dominated as if he can win right back. He ran fast (91 Beyer), won by more than five lengths, and worked fast since. The way he finished his debut at six and one-half furlongs suggests this seven-furlong trip is ideal. **NAVY MAN** has been off two months but runs well fresh and has earned virtually the same figures as the top choice. **DIVINE ARMOR** won this allowance condition two starts back; he entered for the optional \$40k claim tag. **HOT ROD RUMBLE** was only prepping when far back in a comeback turf sprint last out; his best races last year were on dirt.

### Seventh Race

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**1. Exaulted**

**2. Count Again**

**3. Du Jour**

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**EXAULTED** emerged this year as California's top turf miler by winning four straight including a G1 his most recent start in May. Based on workouts for this race that he targeted all summer, he can pick up where he left off. **EXAULTED** has tactical speed for a pressing trip, he routinely runs his final quarter-mile in 23-and-change. Ready to fire. **COUNT AGAIN** is likely to improve off his solid fourth-place comeback, a race in which he ran his final three-eighths in :34.73, faster than the first three finishers. An 8yo who won a pair of G1s last year, **COUNT AGAIN** will fly late. G1-placed **DU JOUR** was outrun twice by **EXAULTED** at Santa Anita, but **DU JOUR** returned to form with a sharp DMR victory last out in a restricted turf stake. He will rally late. **I'M A GAMBLER** looms the upsetter, second start back after an excellent comeback third in which he pressed the pace, and hung tough to deep stretch before missing by a length.

### Eighth Race

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**1. Faiza**

**2. Ceiling Crusher**

**3. Anywho**

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Five-for-five in California, **FAIZA** shortens to a mile after she tired to third racing a mile and one-eighth at Pimlico. The field's only graded winner (four graded wins), **FAIZA** is the class of the field with workouts that say she will return to form facing easier at a shorter trip. Cal-bred stakes winner **CEILING CRUSHER** is the only entrant who has exceeded 90 Beyer; she did it twice vs. state-breds. Her odds-on third last out is excusable. She was buried in traffic, uncomfortable inside and behind horses, and sputtered. She was four-for-four going in. She drew post 10 of 10, but is quick enough to tuck in before losing much ground. **ANYWHO** had tough trips both recent losses, in traffic last out and wide in a G2 route before that. Lightly raced filly looms an upset candidate. **JUSTIQUE** needed her last, fourth against older while racing for the first time five months. Two turns is an uncertainty, but both wins were on the DMR track.

### Ninth Race

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**1. Motorious**

**2. Bran**

**3. Beer Can Man**

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This G3 turf sprint has plenty of speed to set up a late-runner. G3 winner **MOTORIOUS** gets the call, first start in four months. He has won over the DMR course at this five-furlong trip, worked well for his return, and will fly late. **BRAN** is the 124-pound highweight, first start since last year when he won a pair of graded stakes. He is dead fit off a long series of works, the challenge is five furlongs might be too short. He is a beast at six furlongs and beyond. Second preference, regardless. Stakes winners **BEER CAN MAN** and **TURN ON THE JETS** finished two-one last out in an allowance prep for this stakes. Comebacker **LANE WAY** finished second in this race last year; his last seven starts produced three wins and four seconds. The front-runners are **FAST BUCK**, **KID CORLEONE**, **NOBLE REFELCTION** and **BUS BUZZ**.

### Tenth Race

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**1. Geaux Rocket Ride**

**2. Skinner**

**3. Arabian Knight**

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A trio of 3yos take center stage in the Pacific Classic. Lightly raced **GEAUX ROCKET RIDE** can knock off older following a decisive G1 Haskell victory in just his fourth start. A pace-presser with speed to establish position from the rail, and versatility to press from just off, **RIDE** finished his mile and one-eighth last time as if a mile and a quarter is in reach. Also, 3yos are 5-for-16 in this race (Best Pal, General Challenge, Came Home, Dullahan, Shared Belief). Late-running 3yo **SKINNER** looms the knockout in a race that should unfold at a legit pace. His runner-up comeback was okay; it was his first start in three months. G1-placed **SKINNER** should relish a mile and a quarter; at double-digit odds he would be an appealing gamble. **ARABIAN KNIGHT** will try to steal it. His third in the Haskell was not bad considering it was his first start in six months; he is expected to set the pace while trying to become the first horse to win the Pacific

Classic in just the fourth start of his career. STILLETTO BOY misfired last out on an unusually hot day at Ellis Park; he won a mile and a quarter G1 in March. DEFUNDED is a G1 winner at the distance, trying to rebound from an uncharacteristic misfire last out.

### Eleventh Race

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#### 1. Gold Phoenix

#### 2. Planetario

#### 3. Offlee Naughty

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**GOLD PHOENIX** won this G2 turf marathon a year ago; he returned to top form last time out with a come-from-behind G2 victory at a mile and one-eighth. No reason he cannot fire right back for trainer Phil D'Amato, who won this race seven times in the past nine years.

**PLANETARIO** found the competition a bit tough in a G1 at Monmouth; he split the field. But his G3 romp two back puts him in the hunt.

**OFFLEE NAUGHTY** won a pair of graded turf marathons in spring, then regressed in the G3 won by PLANETARIO. Off two and a half months, 'NAUGHTY runs well fresh. MISSED THE CUT should be forwardly placed in a race likely to unfold at a tepid pace.