

Date: September 9th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Seal Team (9th race)****First Race****1. Asian Matriarch****2. Dreaming of Hope****3. Petite Ange**

First post 1:30 p.m. for 11-race card. **ASIAN MATRIARCH** will be tough in this maiden-50 for 2yo fillies if she reproduces her maiden-80 third-place finish two starts back. Last out in a maiden special-weight won by G1 Del Mar Debutante contender Tamara, **ASIAN MATRIARCH** stumbled at the break, was away last, uncorked a middle move, then went flat. She worked fast since, adds blinkers, and drops for the money. First-time starter **DREAMING OF HOPE** appears to have worked well for her debut, though 2yo progeny by Mastery have won just 4 percent first time out. Nonetheless, 'HOPE lands meet-leading rider Juan Hernandez for trainer John Sadler. This \$50k claiming sprint is a logical spot for a \$30k juvenile purchase to make her debut. **PETITE ANGE** drops from an eighth-place MSW debut, and can only improve. Prior to her debut, she worked like a filly that would need a start.

Second Race**1. Tenacious Lady****2. Barbera****3. Rose Girl**

TENACIOUS LADY, claimed from a \$25k N2L sprint in which she finished third, drops a notch to \$16k N2L. The drop makes sense considering she lost by nearly five lengths. The fastest in the field on numbers, she also moves from the rail to an outside draw. **BARBERA** missed by only a neck at this level last out, and finished second at the level two back at Pleasanton. She has speed for a pressing trip. Comebacker **ROSE GIRL** is the only entrant who has never raced for a claim tag. First start since April, returning at the bottom class level for winners, she looms a front-running upset candidate.

Third Race**1. Naida****2. Madison Rae****3. Tobacco Honey**

First-time starter **NAIDA** showed speed from the gate both recent works, the 2yo filly gets a seven-pound break under apprentice rider J. G. Torrealba, and might be the one to catch. Her workmate Sept. 2 (according to XBTV.com) was \$850k colt Concord Bridge, who runs in race 4. **NAIDA** gets the call to wire these California-breds. **MADISON RAE** debuts with a decent-looking work pattern. Although maidens trained by Peter Miller tend to improve second out rather than fire first out, the presence of the meet's leading rider suggests 'RAE might be the exception. **TOBACCO HONEY** also has a solid work pattern for her debut, while **PRINCESS BELLE** looms a crazy upset candidate, a first-time starter sired by Clubhouse Ride with a bunch of slow works. She could be rolling late at a price.

Fourth Race**1. Slider****2. Utopian****3. Divino**

Sadler-trained second-time starter **SLIDER** should be tough in this 2yo maiden sprint, based on his 85-Beyer runner-up debut. He finished more than five lengths clear of third, and worked fast since. He sizzled a bullet :59.40 from the gate one week ago. Bob Baffert-trained first-time starters **UTOPIAN** and **DIVINO** figure prominently. **UTOPIAN** looked good working in company from the gate Aug. 28 (viewed online). The colt he dusted in the work was a \$1 million Quality Road colt. **DIVINO** worked in company from the gate Aug. 27 with sharp debut winner Mission Beach. **CONCORD BRIDGE**, stablemate of the top choice, appears to have trained well. But if top-choice **SLIDER** reproduces his debut, this race is history.

Fifth Race**1. Angiolleta****2. Loterie****3. Cailin Dana**

The impressive U.S. debut by **ANGIOLLETA**, in a maiden race, stamps her a proper choice in this turf mile stakes for 2yo fillies. Following a slow start, she did everything right afterward, slicing through traffic, waiting briefly into the lane, and winning by a deceptive one-length margin. She stayed in front of her main rival on the gallop-out. Logical choice. **LOTERIE** did not have a great finishing second behind the top choice while also making her U.S. debut. She broke slowly, was in heavy traffic the far turn, and finished willingly. Close call between the top pair, while **CAILIN DANA** ran well in her career debut at five furlongs. She broke slowly, launched a four-wide

move through the turn, and narrowed the gap late. She is bred to run long; this stakes has been won by maidens four times in its 11-year history.

Sixth Race

1. Jalen Journey

2. Paco's Pico

3. Oil Can Knight

JALEN JOURNEY attempts an ambitious class hike. After winning an \$8k claiming sprint last out, he jumps four levels to \$18-20k claiming. He can handle the company, possibly at a price. The field he beat by more than three lengths produced three next-out winners, and **JOURNEY** is not an ordinary low-level claiming horse. The 39-start veteran finished third in the G1 Bing Crosby at Del Mar in 2019; he also placed in graded stakes at Gulfstream Park and Laurel. Sharp back-class 8yo gets the call to upset. **PACO'S PICO** drops in class after showing speed and tiring vs. \$40k claiming sprinters. His races last winter in Florida would be fast enough. **OIL CAN KNIGHT**, whose nine career wins include three at DMR, moves up one level after a decisive pace-pressing win from an outside post. He drew well again here (post 8), and will be forwardly placed. **COLT FICTION** misfired last out; his highly rated win two back for \$32k would make him one of the favorites.

Seventh Race

1. Turnerloose

2. Oakhurst

3. Closing Remarks

Trainer Phil D'Amato could finish one-two with front-runner **TURNERLOOSE** and late-runner **OAKHURST**. The comeback by **TURNERLOOSE** was a mess. She runs best when she uses her speed, but she was rated, got keen, rank, unrelaxed, and sputtered in the lane. That was her first start in more than nine months. She is expected to use her speed in this turf race that lacks true pace. A graded winner on dirt, she could find herself on the lead. She can be gone if she can hold off the rally of stablemate **OAKHURST**. The latter uncorked a strong rally to win a N2X last out, her first start in more than five months. The win was validated when runner-up Eddie's New Dream won a Cal-bred stakes next out. **OAKHURST** will lag early, and rally late. **CLOSING REMARKS** won a G2 last month, her second graded win in her last four starts. The consistent Cal-bred ranks a notch below the division leaders, which makes her a perfect fit in this modest G2. **NEIGE BLANCHE** is a 10-for-23 multiple graded winner who wants farther than this mile and one-eighth trip. Every start but one was at a mile and one-quarter or more. She is good, her stable has had a big meet, but the distance might be short. **FREE AND HUMBLE**, a 3yo entry-level allowance winner, will be forwardly placed.

Eighth Race

1. Father Delay

2. Houndstooth

3. Mars On Fire

Lots of speed in this N2L starter allowance sprint, which is fine for **FATHER DELAY**. He won a fast maiden race rallying from an outside post early this year, he drew the outside post for his comeback in a race that sets up for a come-from-behinder. Also-eligible **HOUNDSTOOTH**, runner-up at this level last fall and third in his comeback last out in a salty \$40k claiming sprint, is dropping in class with a closing style that suits the pace. Prime contender if he scratches in. **MARS ON FIRE** returns from a layoff for high-percent layoff trainer Steve Miyadi, who also trains **HOUNDSTOOTH**. The maiden race **MARS ON FIRE** won last out, in April, produced two next-out winners and three next-out runners-up. The challenge for **FIRE** is pace. He has speed in a race loaded with speed.

Ninth Race

1. Seal Team

2. Aligato

3. Seven Wonders

SEAL TEAM wheels back in a N1X turf mile after an impressive maiden victory at a mile and one-eighth. He ran his final three furlongs in :35.35, posted two short, sharp works since, and can score right back as most probable winner on the card. He is bred to be a good one, sired by War Front and produced by a multiple graded stakes-winning mare. Comeback Cal-bred stakes winner **ALIGATO** continues to tease, in the money at low odds his last three starts at this level. This is his first start since March; his work pattern suggests he is ready. **SEVEN WONDERS** might like this shorter trip after showing speed and tiring his last three starts at shorter distances. **DOMINANT SOUL** is a front-end contender, although stretch-out sprinter **YOGI BOY** will prevent him from an easy lead.

Tenth Race

1. Chatalas

2. Tamara

3. Laurent

With 14 entered, including several speedsters, the G1 DMR Debutante looks wide open. Two well-bred fillies who won first out merit top billing. **CHATALAS** and **TAMARA** won nicely at shorter trips, both can improve at seven furlongs. **CHATALAS**, by Gun Runner and produced by a mare who won her only start in 1:09.56, was just getting warmed up at five and one-half furlongs first out. She trained well since, her connections believe she wants longer. **TAMARA**, by Bolt d'Oro and produced by Hall of Fame mare Beholder, overcame a slow start from the rail to win her debut by two and one-half. Considering her trouble, the win was more impressive than the margin or 81 Beyer

(seven points higher than CHATALAS). Even though TAMARA wheels back in just three weeks, she acts like she might be special. **LAURENT** overcame greenness and a 12-length deficit to win her debut rallying from last. She did not care for the kickback, tossed her head early, then exploded late. No dirt sprinter this meet won from as far back. The outside post (13 of 14) is a benefit for LAURENT, she can be clear of kickback. **BENEDETTA** finished an okay off-the-pace second in the G3 Sorrento. Blinkers come off, she already is learning to ration her speed. Sorrento winner **DREAMFYRE** is fast, but so are several others. The pace should be lively.

Eleventh Race

1. Spycatcher

2. Chay's Tornado

3. Dandy Man Shines

Grade 1-placed **SPYCATCHER** should be tough in this maiden turf mile. Last seen finishing second in the G1 Hollywood Derby over the DMR turf, and runner-up in the G2 DMR Derby, **SPYCATCHER** returns from an extended layoff as the class of this maiden field. The main challenge is distance; he might want more than one mile. **CHAY'S TORNADO** improved second time out, runner-up in a maiden turf mile similar to this. The horse who beat him, Watsonville, returned to win a N1X last weekend. The comebacker **DANDY MAN SHINES** ranks among the fastest finishers in the field. He ran his final quarter-mile in 23-and-change all four U.S. starts at one mile. Of course, that does not change the fact he is a seven-start maiden who lost four of his last five as the favorite.