

Date: November 10th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Dandy Man Shines (7th race)****First Race****1. Leopardess****2. Katerini****3. Violet Storm**

Opening day Del Mar autumn meet, first post 12:30. Kentucky shipper **LEOPARDESS** drops from allowance to \$25k claiming N2L. This is the first time she has run for a claim tag; every other entrant in this field has already lost for a tag. **LEOPARDESS** will be ridden by Flavien Prat, leading rider at the 2022 DMR fall meet. Prat returns for fall 2023 with a slew of live mounts opening day (top selections races 1, 3, 4, 5). **KATERINI** enters with a potential pace advantage. This field is light on speed; she could have an easy time of it on the front end. Her last three turf routes produced three runner-up finishes. One mile seems like a reach. Her stablemate **VIOLET STORM** stretches back out from a sprint and could apply pace pressure.

Second Race**1. Halo Uncle****2. Eddie's Wave****3. Thirsty Thursday**

Gradually improving 2yo **HALO UNCLE** missed by a nose last out in a similar Cal-bred maiden-50; the winner finished second next out in a \$175k stakes. 'UNCLE ran well over the DMR track in summer, and can reel them in from off the pace. First-time starter **EDDIE'S WAVE** debuts against a relatively shallow bunch. His dam produced eight runners, three won first time out. **THIRSTY THURSDAY**, runner-up here two months ago, returns as a first-time gelding for a new trainer. **FACT OR FICTION** is speed on the rail. He could vie for favoritism, and he certainly will vie for the early lead.

Third Race**1. Julias Dream****2. Thermal****3. April Vintage**

The traditional pick six (\$1 minimum) returns to Del Mar: 70-30 payoff split and no single-ticket jackpot. This allowance turf sprint for 2yo fillies is the opening leg of the sequence. **JULIAS DREAM** (Prat) returns to the DMR course on which she dazzled in summer. She won by more than five lengths with a huge figure, then cracked in a G1 on dirt. Freshened since, working well, returns to preferred footing, obvious choice. **THERMAL** put it all together in the third start of her career, switching to turf and scoring a decisive front-running victory. The light bulb went on, the highly regarded filly shortens from six furlongs to five as a top contender. **APRIL VINTAGE**, third against boys in a turf sprint stakes last out, was pre-entered in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf Sprint but did not make the cut. She is back with fillies, dropping to N1X, and drew outside her main rivals. Stakes winner **BECKY'S DREAM** adds speed.

Fourth Race**1. Coach Prime****2. Bartholdy****3. American Flyer**

COACH PRIME (Prat) and **BARTHOLDY** top this predictable race that is run once every autumn. Favorites crossed the wire first six of the last eight dirt routes for 2yo maidens at this meet. **COACH PRIME** has something his main rival does not. That is, experience around two turns. 'PRIME pressed a fast pace in his debut at a mile on turf, briefly made the lead into the lane, then got collared and finished third. Promising debut, sharp works on dirt since, the \$1.7 million colt is the one to beat. **BARTHOLDY** showed promise in his third-place debut in a sprint. He raced greenly, dropped back on the turn, then re-rallied and finished evenly. Solid debut, he should move up a ton second out. **AMERICAN FLYER** did improve in his second start; he finished third while improving his figure 25 points. He is headed the right direction, while **COLORADO CRUISER** stretches out with a pair of sprints under his belt. Upset candidate?

Fifth Race**1. Pinehurst****2. St Ignacio****3. Smooth Salute**

PINEHURST (Prat) drops from maiden special-weight to maiden-50 after a better-than -looked U.S. debut. The pace was slow, **PINEHURST** ran his final three-eighths in a strong :35.08 while making his first start in more than a year. With a class drop second start back, he can mow them down. **ST IGNACIO** is a 10-start maiden with five runner-up finishes including a pair on the DMR turf in summer. He finished three-quarters of a length in front of the top choice last out. He will roll late, also. **SMOOTH SALUTE**, gelded before his most recent start, drops for the first time into a maiden-claiming race after five futile tries vs. MSW rivals. He adds blinkers, and

figures to be positioned in front of the top pair. AUTOLINE misfired with a tough trip last out, but fits off his fourth-place finish two starts back over the DMR turf. That race was won by Dandy Man Shines, the choice to win the \$75k Let It Ride Stakes (race 7).

Sixth Race

1. Wishtheyallcouldbe

2. Bella Renella

3. Scary Fast Ride

WISHTHEYALLCOULDBE, three-time winner at this Cal-bred N1X level, looks tough again. She likes the DMR surface (two wins, two seconds), her last-out win was flattered when the third-place finisher returned to win a state-bred turf sprint. The sharp 'ALLCOULDBE goes first off the claim, in a field with pace to run at. Obvious choice, at corresponding low odds. **BELLA RENELLA** ran like she needed the start two weeks ago; she merely ran around the track and finished fifth. That was her first start in four months; her runaway wins in June at Santa Anita make her a fitting alternative to the top-choice favorite. **SCARY FAST RIDE** looked good crushing maidens by nearly five lengths; she will be on top of the speed. **LADY MARYANN** will rally late. The last time she faced the top choice over this racetrack, she missed by only a neck.

Seventh Race

1. Dandy Man Shines

2. Ah Jeez

3. Camilo

Late-developing **DANDY MAN SHINES** can win this stake for 3yo turf milers if he reproduces his smashing maiden victory over the DMR turf two months ago. He ran his final quarter in a quick 23 seconds, his fast time for the mile was 1:34.57, he earned an 87 Beyer and won clear making his first start in seven months. The win was validated when the third- and fifth-place finishers won next out. Although the maiden win by 'SHINES was his eighth start, it was not a fluke. He has been well-regarded since he was imported from Europe in 2022, running in a pair of 2yo stakes and facing good maidens that winter. He was gelded in January, took seven months off, and returned as a new horse with the impressive maiden win. He's had two months between starts, and can fire right back. **AH JEEZ** stretches out and drops after taking a shot in a G2 sprint vs. older. Although his two-turn ability is uncertain, both U.S. wins were on the DMR turf (sprints); his third in the one-mile Oceanside Stakes at DMR in summer puts him in the hunt. Lightly raced **CAMILO** is a shipper from Kentucky, up in class off a sharp comeback sprint win on synthetic. He ran well finishing second in a maiden turf route in spring; this is only his fourth start. Produced by a Group 2-winning mare, **CAMILO** has upside. **SMART MO** has been compromised by several troubled trips. He might be better than his recent starts indicate.

Eighth Race

1. Lonesome Stew

2. Nokie

3. Ze'bul

There is no guarantee **LONESOME STEW** will carry his speed two turns, but based on his 91-Beyer maiden sprint, he must be considered the one to beat in this starter allowance dirt mile. In his Cal-bred maiden-claiming comeback, he shot to the lead and ran away by more than six with a huge figure while "ridden out." The speed of the speed, they will have to catch him to beat him. Sired by Grazen, 'STEW was produced by a sprint dam whose seven winning foals all are sprinters. Tepid choice, nonetheless. If the stretch-out falters, anything goes. **NOKIE** looms a potential upsetter, second start following a layoff of more than five months. He was rated early, finished willingly for sixth, and galloped out with run after the wire. The fifth- and seventh-place finishers returned to win next time out. **ZE'BUL** fits on numbers, but dirt is a question. His best races are turf. **BENDETTIJOE** stretched out crushed maiden-20s by open lengths. He has found his niche around two turns. **MIDNIGHT FURY** goes long for the first time and will influence the pace.