Date: November 17th, 2023   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Man O Rose (2nd race)

First Race

1. Vulin	2. Exclusive Joni	3. Boginskaya

Runner-up twice at this maiden-20 level, **VULIN** returns to the Del Mar surface on which she produced both runner-up finishes. She was overmatched last out in a higher-level turf route; she is back at her proper level and can wear them down from off the pace. **EXCLUSIVE JONI** finished second, more than eight lengths clear of third, last out in her first route try at this low level. She benefitted by slow fractions, but this field is light on speed also. **BOGINSKAYA** has a smidge of ability, but she is no higher than third choice in what essentially looks like a two-horse race. For what it's worth, favorites opening week of the DMR autumn meet went 15 for 26.

Second Race

1. Man O Rose	2. Antonsen	3. Grand Tiger

The shorter distance of this five-furlong maiden turf sprint benefits front-runner/pace-presser **MAN O ROSE**, runner-up both recent starts at Santa Anita at longer distances. He led into the stretch both turf sprints before tiring to second. Now he shortens to five furlongs, removes blinkers, and is drawn outside his pace rivals. 'ROSE should be tough at a short price. All three turf sprints opening week were won by odds-on favorites. **ANTONSEN** was not disgraced in his career debut against open company on this course in summer. He pressed, tired and split the field. Off since, he drops into a Cal-bred maiden race and is quick enough to be forwardly placed outside **GRAND TIGER**. The latter is a five-start maiden who ran the best race of his career his only try over the DMR turf. Win or lose, he will be a pace factor.

Third Race

1. La Paloma Blanca	2. American Heights	3. Sweet Mother Mary

The highly rated maiden-20 win two starts back by **LA PALOMA BLANCA**, over the DMR track, would be fast enough to handle this $32k claiming N2L field. 'BLANCA misfired last out after breaking from the rail, but drew a cozy post here (4 of 5) and figures for a pressing trip. She is trained by Peter Miller, who also entered **AMERICAN HEIGHTS**. The latter takes a huge drop from open claiming to N2L, and benefits by a five-pound apprentice. Armando Aguilar rode both Miller trainees last out; he rides 'HEIGHTS. A class drop also benefits **SWEET MOTHER MARY**, who broke her maiden over the DMR track in summer. BLONDE BOMBSHELL has run races thats put her in the hunt.

Fourth Race

1. Quaria Thunder	2. Rose Barton	3. Unfaithful Ways

Only six entered this $25k claiming turf mile; a case can be made for most in the field. **QUARIA THUNDER** gets the call based on her third-place finish at this level on this course in August. She runs best rallying from off the pace, this field has sufficient speed to flatter her late kick. **ROSE BARTON** is speed, dropping in class, and returning to the course on which she scored a front-running win during the summer meet. The challenge for 'BARTON is dealing with the stretch-out sprinter to her outside. **UNFAITHFUL WAYS** returns to the claiming ranks; her fast runner-up effort for $40k claiming here in summer would probably be enough for this $25k claiming field. KATERINI wheels back one week after a runner-up finish in a N2L claiming mile. ON PURPOSE is the aforementioned stretch-out sprinter; ISSA COURT is a trouble-prone mare who missed by only a length at this level during the summer meet. Lot of chances in this field.

Fifth Race

1. Bad Sneakers	2. Excel Calculator	3. Pioneer Prince

Each start by **BAD SNEAKERS** is better than the start before, including a highly rated runner-up finish last out in his first try around two turns. Third start back from an extended layoff, this race should be his best. **EXCEL CALCULATOR** was compromised by wide trips both recent starts under similar MSW dirt-route conditions; he finished fourth in both. Rail draw this time after outside posts both recent.

PIONEER PRINCE stretches out with speed to make the lead if he wants. MIXTO will be closing late; MAUNA KEA BOUND ran the best race of his five-start career the only time he ran long on DMR dirt.

Sixth Race

1. Clements Ride	2. Shady Tiger	3. Curlin's Kaos

This turf sprint for Cal-bred maiden 2yos is a scramble. **CLEMENTS RIDE** gets the call based on a solid workout pattern at Los Alamitos. The Clubhouse Ride filly is trained by John Sadler and will be ridden by Flavien Prat. The most recent debut winner for the Sadler-Prat-Hronis Racing combo was April 2021 with a first-time starter named Flightline. **SHADY TIGER** is a Smiling Tiger first with apparently sharp works for trainer Phil D'Amato, who won with three of his last six first-time starters. **CURLIN'S KAOS** has worked fast for his debut, while ANNAN finished fifth with trouble in his debut. He can improve.

Seventh Race

1. Fort Bragg	2. Sir Atticus	3. Classic Car Wash

FORT BRAGG would be a deserving favorite in this N2X sprint based on his last-out third in a G2 sprint and G3 victory three back in a one-turn mile at Belmont Park. 'BRAGG missed by only a length and a quarter last out, worked fast since, and adds Lasix. He has enough speed to keep the front-runners in his sights. Those include **SIR ATTICUS**, who dueled and tired to finish a respectable fourth in the same stakes the top choice exits. From the inside post, SIR ATTICUS is likely to use his speed. If he does make the lead, he could steal it. His most recent allowance (N1X) start at DMR, 'ATTICUS won by more than four lengths. **CLASSIC CAR WASH**, a 3yo who placed in a pair of Derby preps early this year before being sidelined, ships to California off a sharp comeback at Gulfstream Park. His win was the best race of his career, perhaps he found his niche around one turn. POSITIVITY moves up a notch seeking his third straight. He is a bona fide horse for course: eight starts at DMR produced a half-dozen one-two finishes. C Z ROCKET is the "back class," a 12-time winner of more than $2 million. He is entered for the optional $80k claim tag.

Eighth Race

1. Bigofromfresno	2. Fore Flag	3. Super Chief

Lightly raced **BIGOFROMFRESNO** gets the call in this Cal-bred allowance turf mile, as he moves up in class from a sharp maiden win. Although he set the pace in his maiden victory, he proved two back he can rally from behind when he finished a better-than-looked fifth against open maidens (not Calbred-restricted). 'FRESNO could employ a similar off-the-pace strategy here, because this field looks loaded with pace. 'FRESNO ran his final quarter in less than :23.60 both turf miles. **FORE FLAG** returns to the DMR turf on which he ran the best race of his career two back, runner-up in a similar Cal-bred turf route. The versatile gelding did not have a great trip last time finishing fourth; the off-the-pace style he has used would be effective in this race. **SUPER CHIEF** goes long for the first time, turf for the first time. One-two all five dirt sprints, he might be the speed of the speed. BIG COUPE is likely to improve off a creditable fifth-place comeback.