

**Date:** November 18th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Neon Lights (3rd race)****First Race****1. Princess Midnight****2. Adelle****3. Inventing Anna**

Three-time runner-up **PRINCESS MIDNIGHT** looks tough in this maiden-50 turf mile; both her starts since returning from a layoff were strong. She finished behind a next-out winner over the Del Mar turf in her comeback, then did the dirty work setting the pace next out at Santa Anita only to get nailed by a deep closer. In a field with less speed, 'MIDNIGHT can win with a front-running/pressing trip. **ADELIE** is an 11-start maiden whose DMR maiden-claiming starts in summer produced a pair of closing thirds. Overmatched last out in a maiden special-weight, **ADELIE** returns to maiden-claiming and will roll late under new rider Juan Hernandez. He and trainer Phil D'Amato teamed to win 4 of their last 8 maiden turf routes. **INVENTING ANNA** makes her California debut while dropping into a maiden-claiming race for the first time in her ninth start. The uncertainty is distance; two turns is a long way for the sprinter.

**Second Race****1. Royal Slipper****2. Nothing Like You****3. Tambo**

A dominating maiden by **ROYAL SLIPPER** at Keeneland, and sharp work over the DMR surface, stamps the second-start 2yo filly a possible odds-on favorite in this sprint stakes. Full sibling to G1 winner Bast, **ROYAL SLIPPER** won her debut by nearly five lengths and trained super since including a sharp five-furlong work here last weekend. Fast filly on her game, speed of the field, likely winner, low odds. The improving **NOTHING LIKE YOU** shortens to seven furlongs off a maiden romp at a mile. Though she faced only four rivals, the win was flattered when the two-three finishers won maiden races next out. 'LIKE YOU will roll late, a style that would only be advantageous if the top choice gets unexpected pace pressure. **TAMBO**, runner-up in a similar sprint stake at SA, fired all three dirt starts. Her numbers are creeping up, she finished more than three lengths clear of third last out. **HALONE**, maiden stablemate to **NOTHING LIKE YOU**, was a late supplement. This seems an ambitious spot for a second-start maiden who lost her debut by more than 14 lengths, but she did not have a fair shot after getting banged around and losing position at the start. Upset chance second time out.

**Third Race****1. Neon Lights****2. Johnny Drama****3. Anniversaire d'Or**

**NEON LIGHTS** stands out off a solid third in a similar maiden turf sprint during the DMR summer meet and runner-up finish last out in which he was best. He was shuffled early, saved ground, was blocked into the lane, angled outside, finished fast and missed by only a length. He would have won with a clean trip. He finished in front of four of his six rivals in this race, and gets a rider switch to Flavien Prat. **JOHNNY DRAMA** merits an upset chance based on his better-than-looked tough-trip fifth on the DMR turf in summer and pace-compromised last-place finish his most recent start at SA. He pressed a blazing pace, the fractions took their toll on all the front-runners, the race was dominated by closers. **JOHNNY DRAMA** looms an upset candidate; he could start at double digits even in this small field. **ANNIVERSAIRE D'OR** is a well-bred first-time starter with a solid work pattern. Sired by Bolt d'Oro, his dam was a multiple turf stakes winner who produced turf stakes winner Master Merion. **PETCOFF** will rally from behind, first-time Umberto Rispoli.

**Fourth Race****1. Super Enticing****2. Asian Matriarch****3. She's My Niece**

Fourth against winners last out, **SUPER ENTICING** returns to maiden-claiming and to the DMR track on which she finished a creditable second in summer. Bred to run two turns, rider switch to Prat, likely winner if she can handle stablemate **ASIAN MATRIARCH**. The latter was on her way to victory last out in a maiden-32, but she ducked out in the stretch and unseated her rider. 'Matriarch was reclaimed by Peter Miller, she can stay two turns, and she ran well over the DMR track in summer. **SHE'S MY NIECE**, runner-up both previous routes, drops in for a claim tag for the first time in the eighth start of her career.

**Fifth Race****1. Kid Azteca****2. For A Laugh****3. Low Expectations**

**KID AZTECA** is the fastest and best horse in this claiming turf mile for 3yos; the first-time gelding should be tough at a short price. He ran okay while overmatched in a pair of graded races during the DMR summer meet, he was overmatched again last out in a N2X vs. older, and now drops to age-restricted claiming. His speed figures tower over the field. **FOR A LAUGH** also drops, first-time claim tag, after okay midpack N1X finishes in summer. He has no speed whatsoever, but will rally late. **LOW EXPECTATIONS** figures for a share off his okay fourth two back on turf, while **TOM AND JAZZY** is speed, stretching out from sprints. He has an upset chance if he can avoid a duel with front-runner **MARKS HIP**.

### Sixth Race

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#### 1. Jarama

#### 2. Billy Joe Shaver

#### 3. Stay On the Fence

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The runner-up debut by **JARAMA** was validated when winner Magic Spoon returned to win a stakes race. **JARAMA** pressed/set a fast pace in his debut, put away his pace rivals, opened up and got collared. He ran a winning race. He can be long gone second out with a front-running or pace-pressing trip. **BILLY JOE SHAVER** looms an upset candidate despite finishing last by more than 37 lengths in his debut. He broke slow, raced greenly and was eased. But he worked fast since, looked good in a team gate drill Nov. 6 (viewed online), and is likely to move forward second time out. **STAY ON THE FENCE** was in too tough vs. Cal-bred stakes rivals last out; he hit the board his three previous starts in maiden races.

### Seventh Race

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#### 1. Double Jab

#### 2. Gypsy Tears

#### 3. Book Smart

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Lightly raced **DOUBLE JAB** gets the call in this Cal-bred turf sprint, his first since a dominating maiden win on this course in summer. He won by more than three with a pressing trip, he figures for the same trip here. He was scheduled to run Sept. 30 in an allowance turf sprint at Santa Anita, but the turf race was moved to dirt and he scratched. This is the first start in three months for 'JAB, who runs well fresh and has upside in just the fourth start of his career. **GYPSY TEARS** missed by a neck last out to Grazed, who came right back to win a highly N1X against open company (not restricted to Cal-breds). **BOOK SMART** would crush if this race was dirt. He trounced Cal-breds on the main track six days ago with a career-high 94 Beyer. The challenge is to repeat the performance wheeling back in six days and switching surfaces.

### Eighth Race

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#### 1. The Chosen Vron

#### 2. Big City Lights

#### 3. Fast Draw Munnings

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**THE CHOSEN VRON** returns to state-bred stakes after meeting his match in the Breeders' Cup Sprint two weeks ago. He finished fifth. 'VRON previously won eight consecutive stakes including this seven-furlong Cal-bred stakes a year ago. Unless he regresses wheeling back on short notice, he should be tough. 'VRON must catch comeback stakes-winning speedster **BIG CITY LIGHTS**, who has trained well for his first start since January. A front-runner who runs fresh (debut winner, comeback stakes winner in 2020), 'LIGHTS has more tactical speed than the favorite and looms a potential upsetter. On the other hand, 'LIGHTS finished second to 'VRON all three times they met. **FAST DRAW MUNNINGS** shortens in distance following a runner-up finish in a two-turn Cal-bred stakes at Los Alamitos. This field has pace to flatter his closing kick; look for 'MUNNINGS late. **NONE ABOVE THE LAW** is a stakes winner on the DMR dirt; he won a seven-furlong stakes for Cal-bred 3yos two summers ago. Flavien Prat worked 'LAW Sunday morning, and will ride him.

### Ninth Race

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#### 1. Give Me the Lute

#### 2. Hot Box

#### 3. Silardi

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Veteran stakes winner **GIVE ME THE LUTE** seeks his third straight turf-sprint claiming win after a pair of wins at SA. The 8-for-27 'LUTE has speed but also is effective from slightly off the pace. That could be the trip he gets in this speed-filled lineup. Trainer George Papaprodromou is 10-for-19 with turf-sprint favorites the past five years according to Formulator, including both recent wins by 'LUTE. **HOT BOX** has an upset chance first start since a pair of excusable fifths during the summer meet. He broke through the gate and was wide Aug. 6; he was overmatched and had trouble Sept. 10. He drops to \$25k claiming for his first start in two months, and should be a pace factor. **SILARDI** returns from the East Coast in sharp form. A six-time winner, he wired a N1X turf sprint at DMR in autumn 2021 and adds more speed to the field. **WESTWARD LOOK** dueled and cracked both recent starts, but now moves to an outside post with a rider switch that suggests he might take back off the pace. **PERFECTIONISTIC** is rounding back into form and will be rolling late in a race likely to unfold at a fast pace.