

Date: November 24th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Fast Draw Munnings (8th race)****First Race****1. Acclaimed Preacher****2. Highlands****3. Sakura Blossom**

Improving 2yo filly **ACCLAIMED PREACHER** enters this starter allowance turf mile off a decisive maiden route win on synthetic at Golden Gate. The filly ran well two previous turf tries including a third over the Del Mar course in summer. Each start better than the start before, no reason she cannot win right back. **HIGHLANDS** trounced maiden-40s on turf at Indiana Grand, then was sold privately after not meeting a \$65k reserve at an autumn sale. **HIGHLANDS** won her only start by more than eight lengths, the knock is the 2-3-4-5 finishers ran back and did not hit the board. Last-out maiden-claiming sprint winner **SAKURA BLOSSOM** is the speed of the field, first-time long and potentially loose on the lead. Speed has not been great this season at a mile on turf. Through Sunday, only one of 17 turf miles was won by the pacesetter. **SAKURA BLOSSOM** merits respect nonetheless.

Second Race**1. Cool Papa G****2. Storm the Night****3. Princip**

Overmatched in recent N1Xs, **COOL PAPA G** drops to \$40k claiming N2L and returns to preferred distance/footing. The two best races of his career were dirt sprints including a relatively fast midpack finish two back at Los Alamitos. Blinkers on, the route-to-sprint class-drop gelding can rally for the win. **STORM THE NIGHT** figures among the favorites off his fast maiden-50 win on the DMR track in August. He subsequently cracked against a strong starter allowance field, but now drops in for a tag and meets less speed. Front-runner 'NIGHT probably is the one to catch. **PRINCIP** was compromised by a wide trip last out. He was caught four- and five-wide through the turn and flattened out late. This field is slightly easier. **BRACE FOR IMPACT** adds speed.

Third Race**1. Mega Moon****2. Sanger****3. Goldeneye**

Runner-up both recent starts against similar N2L starter allowance turf milers, **MEGA MOON** is the logical choice. His runner-up finish last out was validated when winner Beef Winslow returned to win (via dq) his next start. Minor pedigree note: **MEGA MOON** is a sibling to G1-winning juvenile Locked, who ranks among the early 2024 Derby candidates. **SANGER** stretches out following an okay fourth in a starter allowance turf sprint. A sibling to multiple graded winner Closing Remarks, this mile trip should be within range. **GOLDENEYE**, off two months, returns to the turf course/class level at which he finished second in summer. **DISCRETIONARY DAY** drops slightly from Calbred N1X, and **ST IGNACIO** put it all together here opening weekend with a 23.06-second final quarter maiden win. The light bulb finally went on in the 11th start of his career. He is a contender right back against winners.

Fourth Race**1. Big Buzz****2. Settecento****3. Good Juju**

Runner-up with a wide trip last out at SA, **BIG BUZZ** moves up one level and returns to the DMR dirt track on which he has won 2 of 4. The challenge is pace. 'BUZZ rallies from behind, the pace scenario is uncertain. **SETTECENTO** has speed, he had an awkward trip last time finishing fourth in the race the top choice exits. **SETTECENTO** broke first but was rated, he checked and steadied on the backstretch, re-challenged two-wide, dueled and cracked at the eighth pole. The uneasy trip provides a legit alibi. If he uses his speed and gets comfortable while racing in the clear, he fits perfect. **GOOD JUJU** was the beaten favorite in the same race as the top pair. He set the pace and cracked. Claimed off the third-place finish, he might be the one to catch.

Fifth Race**1. Stagger Lee****2. Smiling Jojo****3. Fact Or Fiction**

STAGGER LEE is likely to improve off a better-than-looked sixth-place debut in a similar turf sprint for 2yo Cal-breds. He was steadied and hard-held in traffic early on the backstretch, blocked into and through the stretch, and finished with run. His effort was much better than his finish position indicates. A full brother to stakes winners Connie Swingle, S Y Sky and Grazen Sky, **STAGGER LEE** should improve second time out. **SMILING JOJO** was a well-bet debut disappointment finishing last in the same race. But he worked well since,

and is quick enough to set or press the pace over a turf-sprint course that was kind to speed the first two weeks of the meet. **FACT OR FICTION** is first-time turf, with speed to make his presence felt. **DON'T HIT ME BASH** finished an improved third, in front of the top pair, last out in his second start.

Sixth Race

1. Chaos Reigns

2. My Partner Glen

3. Barton Strong

CHAOS REIGNS stretches to a route for the first time in a soft maiden-20. Bred to run long, with a bad-trip alibi for finishing fourth as the favorite last out, the gelding can handle this group with a front-running/pace-pressing trip in the eighth start of his career. **MY PARTNER GLEN** is uncertain on dirt, dropping from a series of Cal-bred maiden special-weight races on turf. **BARTON STRONG** stretches out from a pair of even-paced sprints. His running style suggests two turns will be his deal. **TOKAMAK** might be listed too low, his 82-Beyer runner-up finish last out at SA would be fast enough to win this.

Seventh Race

1. Speaking Scout

2. Francesco Clemente

3. Balladeer

East Coast-based **SPEAKING SCOUT** returns to the DMR course on which he won the G1 Hollywood Derby last year; the late-running gelding can win this G2 at a mile and one-half. He has never tried a marathon distance, but returned to top form this season and meets modest California locals. The last-out third by 'SCOUT in a SA G2 was better than it looks. The course was unusually speed-biased Oct 1, 'SCOUT was the only closer to make an impression. He rallied from far back to miss by less than two in a race dominated by speed. If he can stay this 12-furlong trip, 'SCOUT can rally for the win. **FRANCESCO CLEMENTE** will attempt an ambitious class hike following a N1X victory at a mile and three-eighths at Aqueduct in his second U.S. start. The lightly raced colt has won four of seven; he ran his final three furlongs last out in a quick :34.35. The knock is six runners he defeated ran back, none hit the board. 'CLEMENTE should handle this distance based on his finishing kick at a furlong shorter. **BALLADEER** is likely to set the pace, he could get brave. He wired a G2 two starts back while propelled by the bias; he was overmatched in the BC Turf last out. Come catch him. **PLANETARIO**, G1 winner in South America and G3 winner in the U.S. at a mile and three-quarters, wants every bit of this mile and one-half trip.

Eighth Race

1. Fast Draw Munnings

2. Full Screen

3. Perfect Flight

FAST DRAW MUNNINGS can win this N2X dirt mile after scratching from a Calbred stakes last week won by The Chosen Vron. Both recent starts by 'MUNNINGS were fast: highly rated N1X win two back, runner-up last out behind streaking Kings River Knight. 'MUNNINGS has tactical speed to press the pace, and enters as the best horse in the field and most probable winner on the card. New York shipper **FULL SCREEN** arrives off a pair of fast in-the-money finishes at Aqueduct. He improved switching to dirt two starts back; the front-runner might be the one they have to catch. **PERFECT FLIGHT** scored a highly rated win at this N2X level over this track in summer, then was overmatched his next two starts. He returns to the DMR surface on which he won, entered for the optional \$80k claim tag. **HEYWOODS BEACH** is a multiple a graded stakes winner at marathon distances; one mile is shorter than he prefers but he will be rolling late. He also is in for the optional claim tag. **TAHOE SUNRISE** adds speed, and will keep **FULL SCREEN** honest up front.

Ninth Race

1. Song of Shadows

2. Queen of Pompeii

3. Don't Ju Forget

SONG OF SHADOWS could get the same trip in this Cal-bred N1X turf sprint she got winning a starter allowance turf sprint over this five-furlong course in summer. That is, saving ground tucked right behind the speed. 'SHADOWS finished a creditable third last out going six and a half on the SA hill; she drew the rail this time while shortening in distance. Cozy trip expected. **QUEEN OF POMPEII** is a deep closer who missed by a neck and a nose both recent Cal-bred N1X turf starts at SA. The likelihood of a contested pace benefits her late-running style. **DON'T JU FORGET** dominated a dirt sprint last out, she also can run on turf. Front-runners include **YO YO MAMA**, **UNWRITTEN CODE** and **COCKTAIL PRINCESS**.