

Date: November 25th, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Urban Legend (8th race)****First Race****1. Rhyme Or Reason****2. Sand to Sea****3. Satoshi**

Though she misfired on dirt last out, surface-switcher **RHYME OR REASON** gets the call to upset this Cal-bred maiden turf sprint based on her runner-up debut two back in a similar Del Mar sprint. 'REASON employs a forwardly placed style that has held the advantage this meet in turf sprints; she worked well following her dirt misfire. **SAND TO SEA**, a three-time sprint runner-up, should vie for favoritism. Both turf starts were solid, runner-up in a sprint at Santa Anita and third in a route at DMR. She is quick, and will be forwardly placed. **SATOSHI** finished behind the top pair twice this year, but she is improving gradually. First-time starter PLUM CREEK merits a longshot look based on trainer and pedigree. Antonio Garcia started two firsters this year sired by Saburo that outran their odds: McGregor Lake won at \$128.80 in June; Saburo's Gal finished second at 9-1 in March.

Second Race**1. Arham****2. Peaceful Waters****3. Good With People**

Five entered this N3X/classified sprint; all five have a look. **ARHAM** disappointed in a \$125k route stakes at Albuquerque, but now drops and returns to the DMR dirt on which he is two-for-two. His closing style could play well in a small field with enough speed; his 90-plus Beyers are sufficient for this level. **PEACEFUL WATERS** was in tough in the G1 Bing Crosby in summer. He finished 10th in his first start for new connections. Off nearly four months since, working well, facing easier, comfortably drawn outside, he can either speed to the lead or press in the clear. His allowance wins last year (Saratoga) and this spring (Keeneland) are fast enough for this class level in California. **GOOD WITH PEOPLE**, 3-for-5 over the DMR track, moves up following a N2X upset at Santa Anita; **KINGDOM HEART** is quick, and would keep the pace honest. **C Z ROCKET** is "back class," having won 12 races and more than \$2 million. He is 9-years-old, and probably lost a step, but he will be rolling late.

Third Race**1. Castleknock****2. Eddie's Last****3. Rahm**

Five furlongs on turf is shorter than preferred for **CASTLEKNOCK**, but his heavy-traffic third on this course in summer might be enough to handle this N2L starter allowance. But he must rally from behind over a layout that has been kind to speed, and the pace scenario is a bit murky. Tepid choice only. **EDDIE'S LAST**, maiden winner on this course at a mile in summer, returned from a short layoff with a solid runner-up finish at SA. He faces the same challenge as the top choice, rallying from behind in a field without much speed. Lightly raced **RAHM**, stablemate of the top choice, fits off his maiden win two back at one mile. **MARS ON FIRE** has some speed, as does last-out maiden-20 winner **HABEAS**. The truth is, this race looks wide open.

Fourth Race**1. Tahoe Secrets****2. Dual Threat****3. Tiz Tok**

First-time long, **TAHOE SECRETS** can upset this low-level N2L claiming route. He has speed for a front-running/pressing trip in a field light on pace; he did not have great trips either recent start (broke from rail last out, wide trip two back). **DUAL THREAT** wheels back eight days after finishing nowhere as a N1X longshot at Golden Gate. 'THREAT ran well both starts over the DMR track in summer (maiden win, starter allowance third). This is his first try at the bottom class for winners; it is the proper level for the gelding. **TIZ TOK** missed by a neck at this level three back; he had excuses for two recent defeats. He was overmatched two back, he stumbled at the break last out. Obvious contender.

Fifth Race**1. Summer Lake****2. Jessebear****3. Candy On Top**

A sibling to stakes winners Big Summer, Ultimate Bango and Tribalist, **SUMMER LAKE** is the choice in this turf mile for maiden Cal-bred fillies and mares based on her runner-up comeback. She missed by a neck while making her first start in a year and a half, and first around two turns. This is just her fourth start, she worked well since her comeback and will get the jump over her main rival. That is late-

runner **JESSEBEAR**, who ran her final quarter-mile in less than 23 seconds last out, but had too much to do in that speed-dominated race and finished a neck behind the top choice. One could argue **JESSEBEAR** ran better. The knock is it was the seventh start of the maiden's career. Win or lose, she will roll late. **CANDY ON TOP** is an 18-start maiden whose pressing style could play well in a field without much true speed.

Sixth Race

1. Big Pond

2. Signora Minister

3. Power Surge

The first two starts by **BIG POND** were fast sprint wins on dirt that stamp her the one to beat as she returns to preferred footing/distance after being overmatched on turf in the G1 Del Mar Oaks. She finished next to last at long odds. Sprinting on dirt seems to be her game for now, recent works are sharp, she runs well fresh and likes the DMR track. She would be tough if she reproduced either of her first two starts. **SIGNORA MINISTER** returned to form last out with a relatively fast starter allowance win at SA. 'MINISTER also ran fast over the DMR surface in summer, and from her outside post she can apply pressure to the top choice. **POWER SURGE** scratched from a Cal-bred stakes two weeks ago to wait for this allowance. Her runner-up finish on this track at this level in summer puts her in the hunt.

Seventh Race

1. Hong Kong Harry

2. Easter

3. Astronomer

HONG KONG HARRY won this G2 turf route last year; the multiple graded winner seeks a repeat following a fast turf-mile stakes win two months ago at SA. A reliable 10-for-17 gelding, 'HARRY targeted this race as his autumn objective; he carries 125 pounds, one more than his winning effort in this race last year. Plenty of pace to flatter his rally, and also the rally of stablemate **EASTER**. The latter smoked his final quarter-mile in :22.36 last time winning a restricted stakes at a mile on turf. The quirky gelding, who was transferred to trainer Phil D'Amato following his recent win, is less accomplished than the top choice, but his figures are comparable and he will fly late. **ASTRONOMER** finished a neck behind 'HARRY two back, then was overmatched and finished nowhere in the Breeders' Cup Mile. This field is in reach for **ASTRONOMER**. Since autumn racing began at DMR in 2014, a dozen horses started in this stakes after finishing off the board in a Breeders' Cup race, four of the 12 won. **BALNIKHOV** likes the DMR turf course and will rally late. **SUMTER** stretches out from a runner-up sprint, and looks like the speed of the field.

Eighth Race

1. Urban Legend

2. Cornell

3. All That Glory

Second-time starter **URBAN LEGEND** merits top billing in this 2yo maiden sprint following a runner-up debut. He lost by more than 10 lengths, but that was after being hounded by potential superstar Nysos, who returned to crush a G3. 'LEGEND worked well before and since his debut, and with a race under his belt is likely to improve. He is trained by Bob Baffert and sired by Into Mischief, same as debut stablemate **CORNELL**. The latter begins his career with a series of sharp works; his dam won her career debut by four lengths as an early-season 2yo in 2015. Baffert popped twice last month with longshot maidens ridden by Kyle Frey (\$28.60 Wynstock, \$14.80 Nysos). First-time starter **ALL THAT GLORY** debuts with fast works. Juvenile progeny of Goldencents have won a modest 10 percent first out; the dam of 'GLORY is a 1-for-8 mare who is a sibling to multiple G1-winning sprinter Rock Fall. **AIN'T NO JOKE** finished an okay third in his debut on turf. He should improve with a race under belt.

Ninth Race

1. Inner Beauty

2. In Your Face

3. Ruff Ride

Based on her better-than-looked third last out, **INNER BEAUTY** gets the call in this N3L starter allowance turf mile. She pressed fast fractions last out, shook off her pace rivals who both finished near the back, then got collared by a pair of closers. 'BEAUTY missed by less than a length. This field came up with less speed, a softer pace can allow 'BEAUTY to win with an up-front trip. **IN YOUR FACE** moves up in class following a sharp N2L claiming win at SA. 'FACE won a maiden race on DMR turf last year, and will be rolling from midpack. **RUFF RIDE** ran the best race of her career last out winning a Cal-bred N1X. However, that race was on dirt; this is turf. Either the dirt moved her up, or the light bulb went on. If the latter, she could score right back. She did win a maiden race on the DMR turf in summer.