Date: December 1st, 2023   **Track:** Del Mar

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Llorona (1st race)

First Race

1. Llorona	2. Sultry Kitten	3. Side by Side

Sharp-working first-time starter **LLORONA**, produced by multiple graded winner Wasted Tears and therefore a sibling to G1 winner Corniche, looks formidable in this sprint for maiden fillies and mares. LLORONA debuts with a long series of works for trainer Richard Mandella, who is 5-for-10 this year with dirt-sprint firsters. **SULTRY KITTEN** is a better maiden than her last three off-the-board finishes indicate. She had trouble both recent dirt sprints: stumbled at the break last out, shuffled the race before. The best start of her career was her only start over the Del Mar main track; she can produce a higher finish with better racing luck. **SIDE BY SIDE** is a 14-start maiden who is quick enough to be forwardly placed in a race with a tepid pace scenario. 'SIDE finished in the money her last three starts, in front of SULTRY KITTEN twice in that sequence. MAKE IT SNOW has earned decent figures on turf; this is her first try in a dirt sprint.

Second Race

1. Safa	2. Fiamina	3. Quick Kate

Runner-up both recent dirt sprints for Cal-bred maiden 2yo fillies, **SAFA** switches to grass. Sired by Grazen, she should handle the change. Also, her forwardly placed running style is beneficial. Ten of 17 turf sprints this meet were won by a horse positioned first or second. With a front-running or pace-pressing trip, SAFA can win this maiden race in her fifth start. Late-runner **FIAMINA** showed promise early this year before she was sidelined; her best finish was her career debut, so she can fire fresh. The challenge is footing. Her dam was a three-time stakes winner, but unplaced her only turf start. Also, progeny of Stay Thirsty generally prefer dirt to turf. Nonetheless, this Cal-bred maiden turf sprint came up modest; FIAMINA is second preference despite her dirt pedigree. First-time starter **QUICK KATE**, scratched from races in August and October, is a Clubhouse Ride filly who is a full sister to debut winner Norah's Princess. Same trainer-jockey combo as that debut winner (Craig Lewis, Juan Hernandez).

Third Race

1. Unified A. P.	2. Misty Muppet	3. Cocktail Cutie

The decisive maiden-50 victory four months ago by **UNIFIED A. P.** gives her a license to win this starter allowance for 2yo fillies. Each start by 'A. P. this summer was better than the start before, she is likely to have improved during her layoff and has a versatile style that could lead to a cozy trip tucked just off the speed. **MISTY MUPPET** should vie for favoritism based on the figures she earned both recent starts: dominating maiden win at DMR, starter allowance runner-up last out at Santa Anita. Curiously, she shows only one published workout since her most recent start Oct. 20. Contender with a pressing trip, nonetheless. **COCKTAIL CUTIE** will be running from behind; BEAU SOLEIL is speed on the rail and will have to "go." She could steal this race, and might be listed too low. BORNTOSTAYTHIRSTY has speed and should be forwardly placed.

Fourth Race

1. Glo Glo	2. Hot Hot Hot	3. Girl of My Dreams

This turf sprint for maiden 2yo fillies is difficult. The call is **GLO GLO**, shortening from a mile to five furlongs. She improved when she switched to turf her second start; she led until midstretch before tiring to fifth. The improving filly has an experience edge over debut 2yo filly **HOT HOT HOT**. The latter is by Constitution (17 percent wins debut 2yos), and the first runner produced by a G3-winning sprint dam who won five of six including her debut. A solo gate work last week at SA (viewed online) suggests 'HOT has speed. Uncertain if she is cranked for a top performance first time out, however. **GIRL OF MY DREAMS** might be the speed of the field, first-time turf and shortening from six furlongs to five. This is her second start back following a short break, 'DREAM could take some catching while switching to a hot rider. Juan Hernandez went 11-for-28 last week (19-for-59 this meet), and enters closing week with a seven-win lead in the standings. BLISSTERINTHESUN has speed and turf influence in her female family.

Fifth Race

1. Thirsty Lov	2. Winning Big	3. Sunset Storm

The rail post is a challenge for **THIRSTY LOV**, but his maiden-32 runner-up finish from the inside post last out stamps him the one to beat even stretching from five and one-half furlongs to six. He was sent hard last out, chased the class-drop even-money winner, narrowed the gap late, and finished four lengths clear of third. They'll have to catch 'LOV to beat him. **WINNING BIG** ran fairly well splitting the field in his debut, running like a 2yo who will improve with experience. He raced greenly while climbing going into the turn, leveled off late and finished willingly in the same race the top choice exits. The extra half-furlong benefits 'BIG. First-time starter **SUNSET STORM** debuts at the bottom for winning connections. The homebred by Mitole (12 percent debut wins) is a sibling to G1 winners Overanalyze and Meadow Breeze. JUST STEP ON IT finished an okay second while racing on his wrong lead to the wire in his debut in late August. This is his second start.

Sixth Race

1. Organic	2. Hayley Levade	3. Teen Drama

ORGANIC can win this N1X turf sprint if she doles out her speed more efficiently than last out when she opened an eight-length lead in a downhill sprint before hitting a wall and finishing last. Rider switch to Flavien Prat, distance cutback to five furlongs, and she showed both wins this year she can ration her speed. ORGANIC can win with a front-running or pace-pressing trip if she holds off the rally of closer **HAYLEY LEVADE**. The latter finished second and third in a pair of N1X turf starts this summer over the DMR short course, and will be rolling from the back. **TEEN DRAMA** had a tough trip last time finishing a nose behind HAYLEY LEVADE. The previous claiming-race starts by TEEN DRAMA are fast enough to give her a look here. DENIM IN GOLD has speed, and will keep the top choice honest on the front end. Also-eligible STRESSED is a five-win veteran, 3-for-6 this year including a N2X win over this course. She entered for the optional $40k claim tag and might be listed too low.

Seventh Race

1. Miss Kaline	2. Violet Storm	3. De Joria

MISS KALINE can make amends for her fourth-place finish as the favorite last out in a similar low-level N2L claiming route. She had a legit alibi. She broke last, pulled while unrelaxed, launched a wide rally on the far turn, then tired. All things considered, she actually ran fairly well. Claimed off the effort by Bob Hess Jr., and runner-up two back at this level, she can win with a better trip. **VIOLET STORM** drops for the first time to rock bottom. She ran well her only previous dirt start. **DE JORIA** also tries the turf-to-dirt switch, and also is racing for the first time at the bottom class level for winners. ZZYZX finished second last out, in front of the top choice, but her 26.08-second final quarter hints at distance limitations.

Eighth Race

1. Drive for Show	2. Stolen Treasure	3. Kitzkaty

This turf route for Cal-bred 2yo maidens is wide open. **DRIVE FOR SHOW** gets the call while stretching out from an okay fifth-place sprint. He was void of speed, rallied three- and four-wide on the turn and into the lane, and finished evenly to miss by only two and one-quarter lengths. A sibling to route stakes winner B Squared and route graded-placed Ralis (also G1 sprint winner), DRIVE FOR SHOW has a right to stay this mile trip. Also-eligible **STOLEN TREASURE** stretches out for the first time, with a pedigree to stay the distance and speed to overcome the outside post if he draws in. **KITZKATY** scratched from a maiden turf route on Thanksgiving, but she worked two days later, and should be among the favorites off her runner-up finish last out in a similar race. HIGH KING ran okay in his debut and can improve. He broke slowly first out, hit heavy traffic in deep stretch, and finished well.