

Date: December 3rd, 2023**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Yolo Calls (2nd race)****First Race****1. Island Cruiser****2. Tracker****3. Guy Named Joe**

Sunday is Del Mar closing day, the Los Alamitos daytime meet begins Friday, Dec. 8. The runner-up debut by **ISLAND CRUISER** gives him a license to stretch out and win this maiden turf mile. First out in a turf sprint, he broke slowly from the rail, was rated, raced greenly, rallied wide and finished well to miss by a head. Two turns should be perfect. The 2yo colt is trained by John Sadler, who also entered **TRACKER**. The latter is a Curlin colt likely to improve at this longer distance after finishing seventh in a dirt sprint won by next-out stakes winner Nysos. **GUY NAMED JOE** finished third as the favorite last out in a similar maiden turf mile, but he ran very well. The pace was slow, he rallied from the back half of the field, ran his final quarter-mile in a quick :22.55 and missed by slightly more than a length. He won't be a maiden much longer. He is trained by Doug O'Neill, who also entered **POTENTIAL SPAM**. The latter ran faster each successive quarter-mile last out; he finished third by less than a length in a similar turf mile.

Second Race**1. Yolo Calls****2. Always Smiling****3. Turquoise Bikini**

YOLO CALLS figures to win this low-level N2L claiming sprint at a short price. Her maiden win two back was relatively fast, she ran just as well last out. Her speed figure declined, but that was partly due to a wide trip. She drops from \$32k claiming N2L to the \$16k claiming N2L bottom, and enters as simply the fastest in the field. Her trainer Peter Eurton won with 7 of his last 9 favorites. **ALWAYS SMILING** scored a maiden-20 win opening week of the meet; she is realistically placed at the bottom class for winners. She moved to the Peter Miller stable since raced. **TURQUOISE BIKINI** is another last-out maiden-claiming winner who fits at this level, while comebacker **WILLAMINA** returns from a layoff of more than a year.

Third Race**1. Almdaeres****2. Irideo****3. Crosby Beach**

ALMENDARES drew a tough outside post for his first try against older winners, but two recent efforts in G2 turf races for 3yos, beaten a length in both, gives him a license to win this N2X. First-time Flavien Prat, he can tuck in, save ground, rally wide and mow them down. Maybe. He faces a good field including class-drop stakes winner **IRIDEO**. The latter is a 7yo who is just a notch below graded company. He entered for the optional \$80k claim tag, and will be rolling late. **CROSBY BEACH** was claimed from a sharp win for \$50k, and will be forwardly placed, while his Mark Glatt-trained stablemate **ALIGATO** is racing over his conditions. He is eligible to N1X, but with time running out on the DMR meet and no turf racing until Dec. 26 at Santa Anita, his connections will give him a shot in this N2X. He finished third at this level last out.

Fourth Race**1. Memes****2. The Giants Candy****3. Bring Him Home**

MEMES is a 12-start maiden with the top recent figure, and an outside post in this maiden-20 sprint. It might be tough to trust a career maiden in the first leg of the closing-day pick six (mandatory payout), but **MEMES** is the fastest in the field. The pace will be contested by class-drop comebacker **THE GIANTS CANDY**, racing at the bottom level for the first time while making his first start in more than five months. **BRING HIM HOME** drops from maiden special-weight, as does first-time gelding **QUINCY MARKET**.

Fifth Race**1. Lord Bullingdon****2. Stay Hot****3. Miracle Mark**

LORD BULLINGDON looks formidable in this G3 turf mile for 2yos based on a decisive victory in a turf-mile stakes at SA. The two-three finishers were trip-compromised, but **BULLINGDON** won by nearly four lengths. He was best. The pair who finished directly behind him (fillies Go With Gusto, Mo Fox Givin) entered the race-5 stakes Saturday at DMR. A good effort by either would further validate **BULLINGDON**, whose previous DMR turf start was a runner-up finish behind stablemate **Endlessly** in a G3. Looks like a proper favorite. **STAY HOT** is back where he belongs after being outclassed in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf. His sharp maiden victory

previously puts him in the hunt; four of the nine winners of this stakes race were dropping from BC races. **MIRACLE MARK** finally put it together when he switched to turf and wired maidens at this mile trip. He could get a cozy trip positioned right behind late supplement **INVINCIBLE**. The latter could make the lead, with a longshot chance to wire the field.

Sixth Race

1. Sharpazano

2. Bowtie Boys

3. Right in Front

SHARPAZANO drops from restricted maiden special-weight to maiden-50, with natural speed for a pressing trip and softer rivals than his first three starts. **BOWTIE BOYS** reportedly trained well into his debut in August in a maiden-100, but he retreated to finish fifth. Off nearly four months since, he returns at a lower level, with a five-pound apprentice allowance. He probably is better than his debut suggests. **RIGHT IN FRONT** figures as a contender off his runner-up debut in summer. He subsequently misfired against better than these, but returns to maiden-claiming and to the DMR surface on which he ran well in summer. Six and one-half furlongs is a good trip for the late-runner. **EXPRESS LINE** drops from MSW to maiden-50 in his second career start and first since he was gelded. A similar comment applies to **AMBIGUOUS**: first-time G, MSW-to-MCL, route-to-sprint, turf-to-dirt.

Seventh Race

1. Fluffy Socks

2. Whitebeam

3. Queen Goddess

East Coast shipper **FLUFFY SOCKS** can upset stablemate/potential favorite **WHITEBEAM** in this G1 turf mile for fillies and mares. 'SOCKS was compromised by slow fractions last out, third in a race that set up wrong for her closing style. The race was dominated by speed; the late-runners never had a chance. 'SOCKS raced twice at DMR: G3 win as a juvenile, and G1 third at age 3. She can rally for her first G1 win in a field filled with speed. **WHITEBEAM** misfired without a visible alibi last out. She saved ground in a G1 at Keeneland, had to wait for room, then offered little in deep stretch. It was a curiously subpar effort by the gray, whose G1 victory two back at Saratoga would be enough to handle this field. **QUEEN GODDESS** ran super pressing a fast pace and finishing second in her recent comeback. A G1 winner on dirt, and three-time G3 winner on turf, 'GODDESS could get a great trip positioned behind the abundant speed. This race should unfold at a fast pace; 'GODDESS will get first run if/when the pace backs up. **BEAUTE CACHEE** finished second, in front of the top choice last out. This field includes a trio of 3yos, a group that has not fared well this race. Since moving to DMR, there have been 17 Matriarch starters that were 3yos. They produced one second and one third. The front-runners are **HAMWOOD FLIER**, **GRACELUND GRAY**, **RUBY NELL** and **ELM DRIVE**.

Eighth Race

1. Bossy Bruin Gal

2. Dreaming of Hope

3. Miss World Peace

BOSSY BRUIN GAL is the proper choice in this maiden-32 for juvenile fillies based on a runner-up finish two back at this level and a creditable midpack finish over the DMR dirt track in a MSW in summer. She has a forwardly placed style, benefits by a five-pound apprentice allowance, and should be dead fit for six furlongs while shortening from a third in a maiden-50 at one mile. **DREAMING OF HOPE** is back with maidens after finding starter allowance rivals out of reach. She drew inside posts her first two starts, but now moves to an outside post (8 of 9) second off the claim. **MISS WORLD PEACE** makes her career debut for trainer Rolando Quinonez, who scored upsets with his last two maiden-claiming firsters in SoCal (\$16.20 Vagabond Shoes in fall at Santa Anita; \$27.60 Amigo G A in summer at DMR). **CONQUEST CELSIUS** is a dropper with speed, and a speed rider aboard. She might be the one they have to catch.

Ninth Race

1. Cali Bay

2. Legislator

3. Santo Dios

A deep N1X turf route ends the Del Mar autumn meet; Los Alamitos opens Friday, Dec. 8. Also-eligible **CALI BAY** moves up in class after he drilled a \$25k claiming turf mile by nearly four lengths in fast time. The gelding has never been better, the class shift to N1X is not an issue. But his post is a challenge. **CALI BAY** will start from the far outside if he draws in. He can tuck in, wait, rally wide and blast home for the win. Otherwise, **LEGISLATOR** gets the call based on his maiden win last out and N1X "win" (disqualified) at DMR in summer. All he needs is pace to run at. He should get it. Look for him late. **SANTO DIOS**, Group 1-placed in Argentina, missed by a length in a promising U.S. debut. It is reasonable to expect improvement. **MALTESE FALCON** scratched from the G1 Hollywood Derby on Saturday to go here. Good move; he has a chance here based on his runner-up finish this summer in the G2 Del Mar Derby. That is a wrap for this handicapper. December vacation beckons, returning for the Dec. 26 opener at Santa Anita.