

Date: July 21st, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Exaulted (1st race)****First Race****1. Exaulted****2. Bran****3. Watsonville**

This allowance turf mile is stronger than the turf-mile Wickerr Stakes (race 9) due to the presence of Grade 1 winner **EXAULTED** and Grade 2 winner **BRAN**. The call is the class of the field making his second start back from a layoff. **EXAULTED** did not care for the Churchill Downs turf in his comeback; he struggled with the footing and finished fifth while racing for the first time in nearly 10 months. The race woke him up, mentally and physically. He trained forwardly since, has run well on the DMR turf, and should move up a ton second start back. **BRAN** returns from a layoff with a workout pattern that suggests he is fit and ready. Though he is known primarily as a turf sprinter, his only U.S. route was a creditable third in the one-mile Wickerr here in 2022. He should be forwardly placed; lightly raced **WATSONVILLE** makes his first start since he defeated 3-year-olds in a G2 turf mile in December at Santa Anita. He might need a prep race, but with only seven starts, he has a right to improve at age 4. **SUMTER** drops from graded stakes.

Second Race**1. Big Baby****2. J B Strikes Back****3. Navajo Warrior**

BIG BABY stretches out and drops to the bottom class level (maiden-20) as tepid choice in this dirt mile. The best race of the gelding's four-start career was his midpack finish on this track last summer in a Cal-bred maiden special-weight. He can improve second start back from a layoff; his trainer won with 4 of his last 10 maiden-claiming starters going sprint to dirt route. **J B STRIKES BACK**, gelded since raced, is another likely to improve. He drops in in class, goes turf to dirt, and sprint to route. He is quick enough to press the pace. **NAVAJO WARRIOR**, another first-time gelding, figures off his third-place debut two starts back. **CITADINO** finished in the money his last three starts at this maiden-20 level. **TRIPLE PASS** drops in class second start back. Lots of contenders in this maiden-claiming scramble.

Third Race**1. Sunset Glory****2. Gypsy Woman****3. Sixteen Arches**

The last-out maiden win by **SUNSET GLORY** was more impressive than the modest speed figure (72 Beyer) or narrow margin (neck). The lightly raced filly had not raced in a year and a half, she trailed the turf-route field into the stretch, blasted home while weaving through the field, and was up late. Stylish maiden win by a three-start filly who has not missed a beat in workouts since late June. She meets a modest N1X field, and can win right back rallying from behind. **GYPSY WOMAN** makes her U.S. debut in an allowance race that came up relatively soft. **WOMAN** won two of her last four starts in Ireland, she gets Lasix for her U.S. debut. Trainer Mark Glatt won with 2 of his last 3 Euro shippers (Bellstreet Bridie, Khinjani). **SIXTEEN ARCHES**, G2-placed on DMR turf two summers ago, can improve off her creditable third-place comeback. **FAYETTE FOX** switches to turf off a series of solid dirt races. She figures to set or press the pace.

Fourth Race**1. Casalu****2. Acquitted****3. Two Bar**

CASALU is training like a win-early filly for Bob Baffert; the \$775k juvenile purchase has posted a series of fast works in company with the colt Maysam. **CASALU**, by first-crop sire Caracaro, looks ready to roll first time out. **ACQUITTED** is a Richard Mandella-trained debut filly by Into Mischief whose workouts also suggest she is ready to roll first out. The dam of **ACQUITTED** is Perfect Alibi, who romped in her debut by as a 2yo and later won the G1 Spinaway for 2yo fillies at Saratoga. The point is, **ACQUITTED** is bred to win early. **TWO BAR**, Baffert-trained stablemate of the top choice, worked in company July 14 with Getaway Car, the 2yo Curlin colt listed as program favorite Saturday in race 2. A good effort by Getaway Car would flatter the "form" of **TWO BAR**. **OVETA'S HOBBY** is a well-regarded Army Mule filly whose chances took a hit at the draw. She is stuck on the rail.

Fifth Race**1. Divin Propos****2. Living Life****3. Maltese Falcon**

A sharp U.S. debut victory by **DIVIN PROPOS** gives the consistent Euro import a license to fire right back in this N2X. 'PROPOS settled just off the slow pace in his comeback, rallied strongly late, and won by two lengths. That race was a mile and one-quarter; this race is a mile and one-eighth, and there is no sharper horse in the field than 'PROPOS, who finished in the money all eight career starts. **LIVING LIFE** finished third as the favorite last out in a similar N2X, but he actually ran super. The pace was sluggish, he trailed the field, smoked his final quarter-mile in a blazing :22.87 and narrowed the gap late. He'll be rolling in the drive. **MALTESE FALCON**, G3 turf winner against 3yos here last summer, adds blinkers following a modest fourth in the race **LIVING LIFE** exits. **DEAN MARTINI** should be a pace factor. Runner-up last out at Santa Anita, the challenge for 'MARTINI is DMR turf is less speed-friendly than SA.

Sixth Race

1. Devil Among Us

2. Pop d'Oro

3. The Big Cheeseola

First-time claiming **DEVIL AMONG US** drops from Cal-bred N1X to bottom-level N2L claiming. He has speed for an up-front trip, and can be gone on the drop. **POP D'ORO** has a similar style. Third last out at this \$12.5k claiming N2L level, he gets a seven-pound weight break under apprentice Melvis Gonzalez, who won 7 races from 72 mounts this spring-summer at Gulfstream Park. **THE BIG CHEESEOLA** missed by only a half-length last out against similar company, and should be forwardly placed.

Seventh Race

1. Justique

2. Richi

3. Ag Bullet

JUSTIQUE rates top billing in this turf mile stakes for fillies and mares, despite the nagging thought she is best as a late-running sprinter. On the other hand, her turf-mile runner-up effort two back in a G3 would be good enough to win this restricted stake. Her recent seventh in a G1 can be disregarded, she is reunited with regular rider Mike Smith and should get pace to flatter her late rally. **RICHI** is a Chilean Group 1 winner who ran super in her U.S. debut in a sprint stakes and is probably the one they must catch. She dueled through a blazing pace in the sprint, hung tough late, and held best of the speed. Her best races in South America were at longer distances such as this mile, she can improve second start back. However, her front-running style is a challenge due to the presence of front-running sprinter **AG BULLET**. The latter is a stakes winner unproven at two turns, but she fits on class and should keep **RICHI** honest on the front end. **HANG THE MOON** is a better filly this year than last; her N2X comeback win was impressive; she might be this good and she will be rolling late.

Eighth Race

1. Nyce Going

2. Style Cat

3. I'm a Bad Boy

First-time starter **NYCE GOING** has trained like he can win this Cal-bred 2yo maiden race first time out. The ridgling has shown speed in the morning (viewed on XBTV.com) and is bred to win early. Juvenile progeny of Nyquist have won an above-average 17 percent first time out according to Formulator. If he runs to his works, 'GOING can be gone. **STYLE CAT** ran well in his fourth-place debut. He bobbed at the break, chased two-wide in third, cut the corner into stretch, and finished steadily on the inside. It was a promising educational run by a Curlin to Mischief gelding whose dam produced a pair of juvenile debut winners that later won stakes. **STYLE CAT** is sure to improve second time out. **I'M A BAD BOY** figures to vie for favoritism off his respectable third-place debut. He set the pace to deep stretch and missed by less than a length. Fast works since, he will keep the top choice company early. **CALI CAT** is a well-regarded Cal-bred sired by American Pharoah.

Ninth Race

1. Almendares

2. Dandy Man Shines

3. Conclude

A lively pace scenario in this turf-mile stakes benefits late-running **ALMENDARES** and **DANDY MAN SHINES**. It's a close call. **ALMENDARES** gets the nod. He is 2-for-3 on DMR turf, stretching out from a creditable third in a turf-sprint comeback. The likelihood of a contested pace favors his closing style, while the same is true for consistent late-runner **DANDY MAN SHINES**. He is 2-for-4 on DMR turf, up in class from a pair of runner-up finishes in N2X turf routes. He will sit, wait and blast home. **CONCLUDE** and **AIR FORCE RED** are speed; both graded winners are better than their recent start in the Grade 1 Shoemaker Mile. Both were foiled by strategy. **CONCLUDE** tried to take back off the pace, he was uncomfortable in traffic, and sputtered. Winner of the G2 Del Mar Derby last summer, he trained super since and could get a cozy trip positioned second behind likely pacesetter **AIR FORCE RED**. The latter also was compromised by rating tactics in the Shoemaker. He prefers to be forwardly placed. With blinkers on this race, he will use his speed. Come and catch him. **FIRST PEACE** is a consistent sprinter, though this mile distance could be a reach. **IRIDEO** won this stakes race two years ago; **ASTRONOMER** fits, but is stuck outside.

Tenth Race

1. Ultimate

2. Lansdowne

3. Giver Not a Taker

A class drop from \$50k claiming to \$20k claiming benefits **ULTIMATE**, a nine-win veteran whose third-place finish two starts back in an allowance/optional claiming race is fast enough to win at this level. He earned an 83 Beyer; par for this class level is 81. **ULTIMATE** has a pressing/stalking style that suits the pace scenario. **LANSDOWNE** won three of his last five starts including a small-field \$32k claiming sprint two back. He is aggressively placed for \$20k claiming, and like the top choice has numbers fast enough for this class. **GIVER NOT A TAKER** is a horse for course, 2-for-4 at DMR including a Cal-bred stakes win two summers ago. He has never raced at this low level. **LEYAS CANDY** is a dropper with speed, as is **SMUGGLER'S RUN**.

Eleventh Race

1. Promissio

2. Moonlit Sonata

3. El Rey Rey

A wide-open N1X turf route for 3yos ends the week; **PROMISSIO** gets the call. He improved dramatically after switching to grass four starts back, winning twice. He missed by only a neck last out vs. similar. The challenge is pace. **PROMISSIO** is a closer, and the pace scenario looks murky. **MOONLIT SONATA** figures off his runner-up finishes two and three starts back, while **EL REY REY** will be rolling late. **RASTAMAN VIBE** did not have a good trip last out. His only win was on this turf course in December.