

Date: July 27th, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Faustin (9th race)****First Race****1. Usha****2. McKechnie****3. What About Q**

First-time starter **USHA** is a \$600k juvenile purchase by first-crop stallion Tiz the Law (debut progeny just 1-for-14). The filly looks ready to roll based on three recent gate works including a five-furlong team drill over the Del Mar surface; firsters trained by Bob Baffert generally come out firing. He won twice opening week with debut 2yos. **MCKECHNIE** is an Into Mischief debut filly produced by 2yo debut winner/2yo stakes winner Mother Mother. **MCKECHNIE** is trained by Richard Mandella; the filly is a precocious type who can fire early. She worked a quick three furlongs from the gate early this week. **WHAT ABOUT Q** is the only experienced entrant. She finished an okay third in both starts, and faces a field otherwise filled with first-time starters. The race **WHAT ABOUT Q** exits was relatively fast; winner A. Z. Wildcat is an early contender for the G3 Sorrento Stakes next month. **PROUD STARLET** is a Mendelssohn (13 percent wins debut 2yos) filly; she has worked in company with older stakes winner Cast Member.

Second Race**1. Heart Headed****2. Instinct D' Oro****3. Always On Cay**

HEART HEADED slides in for a claim tag for the first time since his debut last fall, while dropping from a starter allowance against older into a \$50k claiming race for 3yos. He has run well against better than these. 'HEADED is the one to beat on the drop. **INSTINCT D' ORO** was claimed from a win for \$32k, and though he faced only three rivals, his figures continue to trend upward. He also may have a little more speed than the top choice. **ALWAYS ON CAY** lost six consecutive turf races against tougher company since his most recent win last summer. That was a maiden-70 over the DMR surface; he crushed by more than six lengths. This is his first start in nearly three months, he will be rolling late while dropping from N1X.

Third Race**1. Queen's Code****2. Phosphorescence****3. Coach Cronin**

QUEEN'S CODE is the reluctant choice in this N2L starter turf sprint. In the money all three starts at longer distances, he lost his punch late all three. He should benefit by the shorter distance of this five-furlong trip. The knock is he is a 7yo with just one win from 14 starts, and six runner-up finishes. Tepid choice with an up-front trip. **PHOSPHORESCENCE** is a class-drop comebacker with no sprint speed at all. But his figures fit against this field, and deep closers can win DMR turf sprints with the rails at this 12-foot setting. The past two summers with the rails at 12 feet, late-runners from the middle or back of the pack won 8 of 13 combined. If the course plays the same this summer, **PHOSPHORESCENCE** could be along from the back of the pack. **COACH CRONIN** switches to turf following a runner-up finish at this class level on dirt. Only limited pedigree data that neither supports nor negates the surface switch.

Fourth Race**1. Dancing Dana****2. Morning Addiction****3. Gypsy Lynn**

DANCING DANA is not particularly fast, but she got there first both recent starts at this \$10k claiming level: two Santa Anita wins with modest 60 Beyers. But this much is clear: 'DANA can be trusted to run her race. She has speed and an outside post where she has options, and she has run well over the DMR track. She broke her maiden on this track at 17-1 odds some four summers ago. **MORNING ADDICTION** tailed off this year, but she returns from a freshening of nearly three months, she is an eight-time winner with speed, and she is a true horse-for-course. Seven starts at DMR produced 3 wins, 3 thirds. She'll gun from the rail, and could be the one to catch. **GYPSY LYNN** fits off her \$12.5k claiming win four starts back; she also has won at DMR. **KEEP YOUR COIL** moves up following a decisive \$6.2k claiming win at Los Alamitos.

Fifth Race**1. Brummell****2. Legitimate****3. Show of Force**

This turf mile for maiden 2yos looks like a scramble. But the trainer of debut entrants **BRUMMELL** and **LEGITIMATE**, Michael McCarthy, won three races here last summer with similar debut 2yos long on turf. It is reason enough to give both colts a closer look first

out. BRUMMELL cost more than \$1 million as a yearling, he is by win-early sire Not This time, and the only runner produced by the colt's mare won her debut on turf (sprint). The presence of top rider Juan Hernandez suggests it is a "go." A similar comment applies to McCarthy-trained LEGITIMATE, who debuts with opening-week leading rider Umberto Rispoli, who began the meet 5-for-10 on turf. LEGITIMATE is by modest first-crop sire Authentic, the colt's dam has produced a turf winner. **SHOW OF FORCE** was well bet in his debut last month in a dirt sprint, but he went evenly while losing ground. He can improve second out, first-time long and turf. **CARDINAL SPIRIT** is by Street Boss, therefore should improve with the surface switch. He finished fourth in his debut in a fast dirt race.

Sixth Race

1. Ready to Dare

2. She's My Flame

3. Cloudy Women

READY TO DARE makes her career debut with a series of fast workouts, and though Peter Miller maidens generally race into shape these days rather than fire first out, 'DARE could be the exception. She has fast works at San Luis Rey Downs, a sharp half-mile eight days ago over the DMR surface, and an outside post. The 2yo filly purchased for \$67k can win this \$80k maiden-claiming sprint. Juvenile debut progeny by Daredevil win at a less-than-average 9 percent clip, however. **SHE'S MY FLAME** drops from MSW to maiden-claiming, and adds blinkers. Her runner-up finish behind Nooni two back makes her a contender in this easier spot; blinkers are on. **CLOUDY WOMEN** is a firster stuck on the rail, but she worked fast before the circuit moved from Santa Anita, and with Edwin Maldonado aboard she is likely to produce speed.

Seventh Race

1. Stay and Scam

2. Elm Drive

3. Runninwiththeboyz

Phil D'Amato trains three leading contenders in this five-furlong turf sprint stakes, but Doug O'Neill-trained **STAY AND SCAM** gets the call. She shortens from three solid route stakes (win, second, third) to the five-furlong DMR turf layout on which she is 2-for-2. Outside post (9 of 9) is a challenge, but she has speed to establish early position before being pushed wide on the turn. D'Amato-trained **ELM DRIVE** is the heavyweight dropping from a series of graded stakes into a non-graded stakes. She was not disgraced any recent start against tougher, she has been freshened three months and should fire first start back. **RUNNINWITHTHEBOYZ** wired N2X rivals last out in her first start of the season. She is an improved mare at age 5, and probably the speed of the field although she must cope with front-runner ITZEL. **CONNIE SWINGLE**, D'Amato's third entrant and a multiple stakes winner, makes her first start since October 2022. She is good enough, but that is a long layoff.

Eighth Race

1. Arabian Knight

2. Subsanador

3. Dr. Venkman

Although he has not raced since fall and carries top weight in a G2 that is a prep for the G1 Pacific Classic that he won last year, **ARABIAN KNIGHT** is the horse to beat. He has worked well and might be the speed of the field depending on strategy of the stretch-out sprinter to his inside. 'KNIGHT is proven at DMR and training like he is ready. **SUBSANADOR**, Group 1 winner in Argentina and runner-up by a head two back in the Grade 1 Santa Anita Handicap, should improve off his flat fourth in a G2. It was his first start since a sale and trainer change; he merely split the field. But he worked well since, his new trainer has gotten to know him, and his workouts suggest improvement second start for Mandella. **DR. VENKMAN** is the aforementioned sprinter who has never raced two turns. But he has something the others lack. That is, a fast recent race. Runner-up last out in a G2 sprint, he stretches out for the first time with speed to contest the pace if he chooses. First time long, **DR. VENKMAN** has upset potential if he and **ARABIAN KNIGHT** avoid a duel. **NEWGRANGE** underwent a throat procedure to correct a breathing issue. **NEWGRANGE** might need a prep. **EXPRESS TRAIN** has worked well since his sprint comeback three months ago.

Ninth Race

1. Faustin

2. Halfway Line

3. Smart Code

FAUSTIN looks tough in this N1X turf mile based on his runner-up finish two back on turf, and a highly rated third last out on dirt. The lightly raced (four starts) Curlin colt has speed for a pressing trip, and he can finish. **HALFWAY LINE** ran super last out, though he finished fourth in a hillside sprint at SA. He was rated, raced inside, was blocked in the stretch, split rivals late, finished well and galloped out big. Two turns is in his wheelhouse for his third U.S. start. **SMART CODE** is a first-time gelding returning from an layoff for a stable that can fire with comebackers.

Tenth Race

1. The Chosen Vron

2. Straight No Chaser

3. Happy Jack

THE CHOSEN VRON, stakes winner 13 of last 14 starts, seeks a repeat win in the G1 Bing Crosby that he won last year despite a bad trip. The consistent gelding drew perfectly (post 8 of 9) and figures for a pressing trip in the clear. 'VRON looked sharp in his half-mile blowout Sunday morning. **STRAIGHT NO CHASER**, fastest in the field off his 107 Beyer in spring 2023, has trained exceptionally well since his comeback debacle. Favored in a G3 at Aqueduct, he stumbled from the inside gate, rushed into a duel, and cracked to finish fourth. Subsequent workouts have been super, this stakes race was always his summer target, and he looks like the speed of the field. Come catch him. **HAPPY JACK** has never been better. He finished less than a length behind **THE CHOSEN VRON** two back, and last out crushed a small-field seven-furlong G2 by more than four lengths. 'JACK is a sharp veteran also can rally from behind. Lightly raced **JACKSTOWN** won both starts impressively; he will push the pace from the outside post.

Eleventh Race

1. Step It Out

2. Ashley

3. Rehearsal

Maiden fillies and mares go a mile on turf, European import **STEP IT OUT** has trained like she is ready to fire. She was best in a team work July 15 at SA, her form in Ireland is decent; she finished in the money all three starts. D'Amato has done well with this type. **ASHLEY** got run over last time in her first route, but her fourth-place finish was okay. Off two months, she has a right to continue her upward pattern. **REHEARSAL** was second-best July 15 in a work with top choice stablemate **STEP IT OUT**, but **REHEARSAL** looked best July 8 in a team work with that mate. Must consider both to be "live."