

Date: August 8th, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Little Lady Lou (4th race)****First Race****1. McLaren Vale****2. Hardmoneymuchachos****3. Arrogates Spirit**

First-time gelding, first-time claiming **MCLAREN VALE** is simply faster than his rivals in this N3L claiming mile. 'VALE has not won a race in nearly two years, but he has been competing in second-level allowances and graded stakes while finishing in the money five of his last seven. The class drop is reasonable at this stage of his career. **HARDMONEYMUCHACHOS** moves up to N3L after winning a N2L claiming route while benefitting from a slow pace. The fractions are likely to be quicker this time, but from the outside post he could get a good trip pressing the stretch-out sprinter in post 2. **ARROGATES SPIRIT** already defeated **HARDMONEYMUCHACHOS** twice this year. 'SPIRIT missed by a neck at this N3L claiming level last out in another improved effort. He will be rolling late. **AMERICAN CAT** is the aforementioned post-2 sprinter who is quick enough to make the lead if wants.

Second Race**1. Ima Joker****2. Den of Iniquity****3. In Your Life**

Eight-start maiden **IMA JOKER**, in the money five of his last six, finally may have found a field he can handle as he drops from maiden special-weight to \$62.5k maiden-claiming. He is fastest on figures; the challenge is to work out a trip from the back of the pack in a race without much obvious pace other than a stretch-out sprinter in post 3. **DEN OF INIQUITY** returns from a two and half-month break, while also dropping to MCL for the first time. He runs well fresh, he ran well finishing second over the Del Mar turf course in his U.S. debut last summer. 'INIQUITY also will rally from behind. **IN YOUR LIFE** is the aforementioned post-3 speedster, stretching out from a fifth-place finish in a maiden-30 dirt sprint. Not sure if two turns will be his friend, or if he will handle turf, but he is quick enough to make the lead in a race that is short on true speed. The lack of pace may compromise the top pair.

Third Race**1. Violet Storm****2. Dramatizer****3. Sweet Hello**

VIOLET STORM drops to the bottom unrestricted claiming level (\$8k) for her first start in more than three months. Her N2L claiming win three back, which was the last time she ran long on dirt, would be fast enough to defeat this field. She has tactical speed to be forwardly placed. **DRAMATIZER** wheels back a week and a half after a compromising trip finishing fourth for \$16k. She was caught wide throughout, in last place, in a race dominated by speed. But her previous dirt route, a runaway win four back for \$12.5k claiming, was faster than the top choice. The uncertainty is **DRAMATIZER** seems to be tailing off since her top form in spring. **SWEET HELLO** is speed on the rail. She will take them as far as she can, but stretch-out sprinter **DANCE KID** is drawn directly to her outside and could apply pressure. **JUBILANT JOANIE** will be well-backed off her Midwest form although her last-out win was against a suspect field. The two-three finishers ran back and finished nowhere. This is the first route try for 'JOANIE.

Fourth Race**1. Little Lady Lou****2. Ace Ace Baby****3. Recalcitrant**

LITTLE LADY LOU, an improved Northern California shipper, looks solid in this five and one-half furlong dash for 3yo claiming fillies. She arrives off a fast N2L win vs. older; the race was validated when the two-three finishers returned to win next out and another returned to finish second. 'LOU has a pressing style that should lead to a good trip just off the speed. With a sharp recent work over the DMR track, she appears to have settled in comfortably to her new surroundings; the honest filly can score her first SoCal win. **ACE ACE BABY** drilled a Los Alamitos maiden-20 as the odds-on favorite, and now faces winners first off the claim. She will be involved early, while class-drop front-runner **RECALCITRANT** returns from a two-month break with speed to duel. She gets a seven-pound weight break under apprentice Welfin (Ruany) Orantes. **PRINCESS IS OLIVIA** figures as a contender off her fast maiden-claiming win two back at Churchill Downs.

Fifth Race**1. Nell's Legacy****2. On Time Tam****3. Grazen Gator**

Lots of questions in this turf sprint for Cal-bred maiden 2yo fillies. **NELL'S LEGACY** debuts with a long series of works capped by a sharp half-mile gate move Saturday morning at LRC. Trainer Phil D'Amato can pop with first-time starters; the Ghostzapper filly could come out running. **ON TIME TAM** broke slowly and finished sixth in her debut; she also had broken slowly in morning gate work. She did show some run first out, missing by five lengths. If she breaks cleanly second out, she should be right there. **GRAZEN GATOR** has worked well; her dam was a speedster who won the first four starts of her career and 8 of 12 overall. 'GATOR is trained by Peter Miller, who also entered **TAPATIA LEAH**, who also is bred to win early. First-time starter **ORANGE THUNDER** is a Clubhouse Ride sibling to multiple graded winner Closing Remarks, who won her career debut as a 2yo in a DMR turf sprint in 2020. Maidens from this stable typically race into condition rather than fire first out; expectations are that 'THUNDER will improve as she gains experience and stretches to a longer distance than five furlongs.

Sixth Race

1. It's My World

2. Bart Sip Some

3. Be Punctual

Lightly raced 3yo **IT'S MY WORLD** gets top billing in this Cal-bred maiden mile, based on his runner-up finish last out in a similar dirt route. He tried to enter a turf race July 28, but landed on the also-eligible list. No problem. Although bred for turf, his runner-up finish last out was on dirt. **BART SIP SOME** looms the upsetter, stretching to a mile after an odds-beating third-place finish in a dirt sprint. He is quick enough to make the lead if he wants, and could take them a long way. **BE PUNCTUAL** returns from a layoff of more than five months; his races early this year make him a contender rallying from off the pace although his dirt form is uncertain. But with a pair of stretch-out sprinters in the field to insure an honest pace, 'PUNCTUAL could get there in time if he handles the footing. **VODKA VOKDA** wheels back on short notice after a creditable fourth-place comeback in a Cal-bred maiden turf mile.

Seventh Race

1. Baby Kristen

2. Whimsical Heir

3. Wishtheyallcouldbe

With 10 wins from 24 starts, and speed to make the lead, **BABY KRISTEN** is the one to beat in this allowance dirt sprint for Cal-bred fillies and mares. She scored a front-running win two weeks ago over the DMR turf; her career record on dirt is 7-for-10. They will have to catch her to beat her. **WHIMSICAL HEIR** is drawn outside and figures for a pressing trip in the clear. Her improving form includes an okay third last out at this level; she crushed \$16k claiming rivals two back by more than six lengths. Her figures continue to ascend; she has speed to keep the top choice in her sights. **WISHTHEYALLCOULDBE** is a veteran gray with 11 one-two finishes from 23 starts and in-the-money finishes her last three starts at this Cal-bred NIX level. Lightly raced **SHARP RIDE**, full sister to good Cal-bred Thorne House, scored a sharp starter allowance/optional claiming win last out and will rally late.

Eighth Race

1. Capital Outlay

2. Mining District

3. Red On Sunday

Distance-challenged six-start maiden **CAPITAL OUTLAY** is a lukewarm choice in this Cal-bred maiden turf sprint. He lost his punch in deep stretch all six starts, finishing third in four of those including his most-recent start two weeks ago over this course. His third-place finish was actually not bad. He chased a longshot pacesetter who finished nowhere, he got the best of the pace-pressing favorite, then got swallowed by one-two finishers that rallied from behind. It was a respectable effort that was arguably the best of his career. Perhaps he will hold on this time. First-time starter **MINING DISTRICT**, sibling to five-time winners Hail Freedom and Coast of Roan, debuts with fast workouts and a top gate rider. The gelding by Accelerate (just 7 percent debut winners) is likely to show speed. **RED ON SUNDAY**, stablemate of the top choice, switches to turf after showing speed and tiring in his comeback on dirt. He ran like he needed a prep. With that race under his belt, he should hold on farther. 'SUNDAY and stablemate **CAPITAL OUTLAY** have similar styles; both have speed.