

Date: August 10th, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Nesso's Lastharrah (4th race)****First Race****1. Power Connection****2. So There She Was****3. Showers**

POWER CONNECTION and **SO THERE SHE WAS**, maiden and stakes runners-up last out, get the call over first-time starter **SHOWERS** in this sprint for maiden 2yo fillies. 'CONNECTION ran a winning race first out vs. maidens, but was worn down by sharp winner A. Z. Wildcat, who would have been a contender in the race-5 Sorrento Stakes but will miss that race due to illness. 'CONNECTION has trained regularly since her debut and was nominated to the Sorrento, but will take on maidens instead for a trainer whose second-start maidens typically improve. The past five years, Todd Fincher has won at a 31-percent clip with second-start special-weight maidens (all ages). **SO THERE SHE WAS** ran well both starts, runner-up to Sorrento entrant Night Beacon, and runner-up next out in a stakes won by Sorrento top choice Vodka With a Twist. The inside post is a potential challenge for **SO THERE SHE WAS**, however. **SHOWERS** debuts with a solid work pattern for a stable that wins often with this type. Bob Baffert is 19-for-52 (37 percent) with debut 2yo fillies in special-weight dirt sprints the past five years.

Second Race**1. Forgiving Spirit****2. My Summer Dream****3. Seismic Spirit**

FORGIVING SPIRIT returns to the claiming ranks for his first start since May. His trio of in-the-money finishes in spring at Santa Anita rank among the fastest in this field, although this five-furlong distance might be slightly shorter than he prefers. The front-runner/pace-presser is top choice regardless. **MY SUMMER DREAM** has an opposite running style; he rallies from off the pace. This is his first start since last fall; the fact he returns in a claiming race while employing the "no-claim" waiver signals optimism. He will be rolling late over a turf-sprint course that produced winners from all positions the first three weeks of the meet: speed, pressers and closers alike. **SEISMIC SPIRIT** drops in class and figures for a forwardly placed trip with his Peter Miller-trained stablemate top choice **FORGIVING SPIRIT**.

Third Race**1. For All Mankind****2. Manitowish****3. Tranche**

This N1X dirt sprint came up shallow. It is an ideal spot for surface-switcher **FOR ALL MANKIND**, who has been working fast on dirt for his first start since April 2023. He ran well fresh in France, his only U.S. start was an okay third-place finish on turf. Based on his dirt workouts and pedigree (by Into Mischief, produced by a G2 dirt winner), 'MANKIND should handle dirt and come back firing from the outside post. **MANITOWISH** is a five-time winner making his first start of the year with a series of fast workouts at Los Alamitos. He ran multiple races last year fast enough to win this condition. **TRANCHE** ran like he needed a comeback prep here three weeks ago. He set/pressed fast fractions and tired to third. That was his first start in more than nine months; he has a right to improve second start back and looks like the speed of the field. Come and catch him.

Fourth Race**1. Nesso's Lastharrah****2. Cathal****3. Promissio**

Sprinter **NESSO'S LASTHARRAH** stretches to a mile on turf in a N1X otherwise void of speed. Both recent turf sprints were solid: starter allowance win, N1X third. Now he goes long as the field's only true front-runner. One caveat: only 4 of the 21 turf miles this meet were won by the pacesetter (first three weeks of meet, all rail settings). **CATHAL** has been shopping for this N1X spot; he scratched from the La Jolla last weekend to go here. A lightly raced (four starts) colt, his last-out maiden win at a mile on turf at SA was validated when the second- and fifth-place finishers returned to win. **PROMISSIO** was compromised by the race shape last out. The one-two pacesetters dominated the race; **PROMISSIO** rallied to fourth. He could be compromised by another slow pace here, but he will be finishing.

Fifth Race**1. Vodka With a Twist****2. Nooni****3. Night Beacon**

VODKA WITH A TWIST, stakes winner in Kentucky last out, makes her California debut with sharp works over the Del Mar track. She breaks from an outside post (4 of 5) in this small-field stakes for 2yo fillies; she has a tactical edge over rail-drawn **NOONI**. All five

runners enter off gate-to-wire victories, which invites the possibility of a pace duel. But VODKA WITH A TWIST showed an off-pace style in a team work July 28. She rallied four-wide on the turn and went better than older Group 2-winning workmate Super Shine. The point is, 'TWIST may have more versatility than her front-running maiden and stakes wins suggest. NOONI, a \$1.8 million juvenile purchase by a \$5k stallion, crushed maidens by more than nine lengths two months ago at Santa Anita. She is fast, and from the inside post she must go. Inside speed dominated dirt sprints the first three weeks of the meet. **NIGHT BEACON** also is fast. She wired maidens three months ago and trained exceptionally well for her first against winners. Well-bred **WHITE SANDS** trounced maidens at Belterra Park, then won a stakes at Prairie Meadows by more than 13 lengths. Sired by Into Mischief and sibling to multiple G1 winner Jackie's Warrior, **WHITE SANDS** is nominated to the G3 Best Pal Stakes (either gender) on Sunday. **CASALU** wired maidens three weeks ago over the DMR track.

Sixth Race

1. Jack Kerouac

2. Sea of Cortez

3. Hot Legs Romolo

JACK KEROUAC moves to a turf route after an okay third in a \$16k claiming starter allowance on dirt. He won a maiden race early this year long on turf; both starts since arriving in California were respectable against better company. He is trained by Phil D'Amato, who also entered **SEA OF CORTEZ**. The latter goes long off a comeback win in a maiden-50 turf sprint. Not sure if he wants to run this far, but he stretches out in top form. **HOT LEGS ROMOLO** figures as a contender based on Feb-March-April in-the-money finishes including a maiden-50 win. He is a pace-presser, while **BELMONT BILL** is quick enough to make the lead if he wants. **CARIBBEAN KING** is a maiden who has earned figures competitive with any in this field. **NASHOBA'S JOY** will rally late. This race is perplexing.

Seventh Race

1. Winds of Freedom

2. Silverado Storm

3. Charmz Away

First-time starter **WINDS OF FREEDOM** showed speed working from the gate Aug. 4 (gate work viewed on XBTV.com video). 'FREEDOM is by a sire (Stanford) whose 2yo progeny have won at an 18 percent clip, he meets experienced runners in this field that are only okay. This is a good spot for a firster. However, an unexpected Formulator stat: the typically productive trainer-jockey combo of Doug O'Neill and Edwin Maldonado is 0-for-22 the past five years with first-time starters. Top choice nonetheless. First-time starter **SILVERADO STORM** looked good on video working in company Aug. 4. He went better than stablemate **CHARMZ AWAY**, who ran well in his runner-up debut then split the field second out. The race he exits looks "live." The runner-up won next out; winner Case Hit entered as a contender Friday in the Graduation Stakes (race 7). **STYLE CAT** finished an okay third last out against a similar Cal-bred maiden field, and figures as a contender despite the rail draw.

Eighth Race

1. Anisette

2. Uncorked

3. Bellabel

The class of the field and 126-pound high weight, **ANISETTE** is a deserving favorite in this G2 for older fillies and mares on turf. **ANISETTE** enters off back-to-back G1 wins at SA; she also likes the DMR turf. She won a G2 and the G1 Del Mar Oaks here last summer. If the pace is slow, no problem. She can be forwardly placed and still deliver a punch. Her last nine starts: 6 wins, 3 seconds. **UNCORKED** had an uncomfortable trip finishing eighth behind the top choice last out in an inconclusive effort. But her impressive California debut in late April, a G3 win, gives her an upset chance. **BELLABEL** went too quick on the lead last time and paid the price. She ran seventh in the April 27 stakes won by stablemate **UNCORKED**. The shortage of true pace in this small field means **BELLABEL** could have an easy time on the front end. And, she likes DMR. Two years ago, she won a G2 here and finished second in the G1 Del Mar Oaks. **LUCKY GIRL**, along with **UNCORKED** and **BELLABEL**, gives D'Amato three of the six entrants. 'GIRL is a notch below, but will be finishing.

Ninth Race

1. Devil Among Us

2. Goldensunrise

3. Picking It Up

DEVIL AMONG US shortens to five and one-half furlongs after he set a blazing pace and finished second at six and a half; the winner rallied from far back. Proven at this N2L claiming level, shorter distance, speed of the field, long gone. That is, unless **GOLDENSUNRISE** runs as well as he did on this track last summer. He set the pace and got worn down while earning a creditable figure. Every subsequent start was against tougher starter allowance rivals, he now drops back to the bottom and should be lapped on the top choice. If the pacesetter falters, **GOLDENSUNRISE** probably would be first to pounce. **PICKING IT UP** is racing into shape, making his third start off the bench, returning to the DMR track on which he scored a debut win here in autumn 2022. Route-to-sprint **BILLY'S BET** will rally from the back.

Tenth Race

1. Blissterinthesun**2. Not A Sinner****3. Automax**

BLISSTERINTHESUN can wire this turf sprint for maiden fillies and mares if she runs like she did in her recent dirt comeback. She broke sharply outward when the gates opened, produced blazing speed, led into the lane, and then tired. That was her first start in more than six months. Second start back, shortening to five furlongs on turf, long gone. **NOT A SINNER** finished in the money 8 of 9 starts including runner-up finishes her last four against similar. Her only off-the-board finish was her only start on DMR turf, but she did have trouble. **AUTOMAX** adds blinkers for her comeback; her career-best placing was a runner-up finish her only start on this course in autumn 2022. **WIMBERLY** showed hints of ability her two starts.