

Date: August 24th, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Emerald Bay (1st race)****First Race****1. Emerald Bay****2. Dr Ruben M****3. Game Warrior**

With a runner-up debut under his belt, 2yo **EMERALD BAY** is ready to stretch out and win at a short price. He ran okay first out, finishing five lengths clear of third at five and one-half furlongs. He is bred to run long: sired by Nyquist, produced by G1 route winner Romantic Vision. With speed and the inside post, 'BAY should be long gone as heavy favorite. **DR RUBEN M** ran super in his debut two back, then stumbled and misfired next out. That was a hot race won by subsequent stakes winner Getaway Card; runner-up Smash It returned to finish second again while improving his figure 16 points. The point is, 'RUBEN chased good rivals and should like this stretch-out to two turns. His sire is Vino Rosso, three-time G1 winner at a mile and a quarter. **GAME WARRIOR** is racing into shape, returning to dirt after an okay third in a turf mile.

Second Race**1. Jessebear****2. Court Snort****3. Sushi Sticks**

This is a mystifying Cal-bred allowance turf route. The field has no pace, and the likely favorite is a late-runner wheeling back in six days. It's a good spot for a minor "upset" by **JESSEBEAR**. Though not a true front-runner, she does have some speed and switches to front-end rider Edwin Maldonado. If she can make the lead, or press likely slow fractions, she can score an up-front upset. **COURT SNORT** is the "best horse" and likely favorite, wheeling back less than a week after a third-place finish in a stakes race on Sunday. She defeated the top choice two back, and will rally late. The challenge is lack of pace to run at, and an ambitious campaign. This is her third start of the meet. The best horse could be vulnerable at relatively low odds. Second preference, nonetheless. **SUSHI STICKS** returns from a five-month layoff. The stakes-placed filly won her career debut here last summer running long turf, so the layoff is less of a concern. But she is a late-runner in a race short on pace. **QUANTUM INNERGY** stretches back to two turns, returns to turf, and drops in class.

Third Race**1. Tahoe Sunrise****2. Cowboy Mike****3. Ready to Pounce**

TAHOE SUNRISE and **COWBOY MIKE**, droppers trained by Bob Baffert, top this \$40k claiming sprint. In a virtual coin flip, the edge goes to **TAHOE SUNRISE**. He is a proven sprinter, he is 2-for-3 over the Del Mar track, dropping from a G2, and proven fresh. First start since early June, ready to fire. But his stablemate also figures as a contender. **COWBOY MIKE** is a four-time winner, though all wins were two turns. He has an up-front style that suggests he should be able to sprint, and his speed figures (in routes) are slightly higher than 'SUNRISE. Close call between the stablemate droppers. **READY TO POUNCE** makes his California debut first off the claim by Phil D'Amato, who won with his last three f.o.c. runners. Previously based in the Midwest, 'POUNCE is not quick but will be running late. **REDLINE** goes route to sprint and also will finish.

Fourth Race**1. She'z the Law****2. Rehearsal****3. Golden Skyline**

Even though she tired in deep stretch all four turf routes, **SHE'Z THE LAW** merits top billing in this maiden turf mile. This small field is light on pace, 'LAW could be loose on the lead while going slower early than her most recent runner-up finish. Gate to wire choice. **REHEARSAL** closed from near the back to finish only a quarter-length behind the top choice last time in her first U.S. start. Although her "trouble" at the three-eighths was minimal, she ran well and finished willingly. If the top choice fades again, **REHEARSAL** could be along in time. She probably will vie for favoritism. **GOLDEN SKYLINE** ran the best race of her five-start career the only time she ran on "firm" turf early this year. DMR turf is almost always firm. 'SKYLINE has enough speed to be forwardly positioned right behind the pacesetter, and would be among the first to attack if the pace backs up.

Fifth Race**1. Slam Diego****2. Love Our Family****3. Danzing Cat**

SLAM DIEGO stretches to a mile after a better-than-looked runner-up sprint comeback. The track favored inside speed, 'DIEGO rallied wide and finished nearly two lengths clear of third. She can handle a route; she won a DMR maiden-claiming route by more than eight lengths two summers ago. **LOVE OUR FAMILY** moves up to N3L claiming after she trounced a N2L claiming race by open lengths. She has speed to drop in before losing much ground from the outside post (8 of 8). The horse to catch is **DANZING CAT**, who wired a N2L claiming sprinter last out and is likely to make the lead. Not sure how far she wants to run, and the racing surface recently seemed less speed-biased compared to early in the meet, but 'CAT should take them as far as she can. **ASIAN MATRIARCH** might be ranked too low. She won a claiming route for 3yos last out, while earning the highest last-out figure in this field.

Sixth Race

1. Mission Beach

2. Island Cruiser

3. Invincible

Claimed from a runner-up finish in a claiming sprint on dirt, **MISSION BEACH** gets the call shortening from seven furlongs to five, and moving from dirt to turf. He finished more than five clear of third last out, worked well since for new trainer John Sadler. No reason he will not handle grass. He figures for a cozy trip just off the pace. Sadler also entered dropper **ISLAND CRUISER**, who could vie for favoritism shortening to his preferred one-turn trip. He won his last two turf sprints, has speed for an up-front trip, and probably will get the jump on his stablemate while running for a claim tag for the first time. **INVINCIBLE** is likely to improve second start back from a layoff, while taking a massive drop from an allowance vs. older into a claiming race for 3yos. He could be the speed of the speed. For what it's worth, there have been seven turf sprints this summer with the rails at this 12-foot setting. None were won by the pacesetter. **LAST CALL LONDON** drops in class and will rally late.

Seventh Race

1. Uptown Preacher

2. Perkins

3. Winter Snow

UPTOWN PREACHER, a 4yo first-time starter, has worked like she can win this Cal-bred maiden-50. She has been in and out of training since May 2022, she looked good on video in her Aug. 3 workout over the DMR track, and came back with a subsequent five-furlong move 10 days ago. Sired by low-profile stallion Uptown Rhythm, she is from a dam that produced at least two debut winners. Trainer Carla Gaines won with 3 of her last 8 first-time starters. **PERKINS** is speed, dropping into a maiden-claiming race. Six furlongs could be a reach for a filly who weakened all four starts at shorter distances, but against this modest group, she could steal it. **WINTER SNOW** is a 4yo firster with works that suggest she is well-meant.

Eighth Race

1. Just Nails

2. Pushiness

3. Party On Girl

Runner-up her last four turf sprints, **JUST NAILS** is due. She lost as the favorite both recent starts, but she ran very well last out. She was shuffled slightly into the turn, had to wait behind runners on the turn, found a seam in the lane and finished with run. A closer who is always at the mercy of trips and pace, she nonetheless gets the call to wear them down. She'll have to catch **PUSHINESS**, who wired Cal-bred 3yo stakes fillies on dirt last time while benefitting from the speed-friendly track profile. Not sure if her style will be as effective on turf, particularly with pace rival **AVOIR** two stalls to her outside, but **PUSHINESS** is a two-time Cal-bred stakes winner with quality. She is by Kantharos, whose progeny do fine on turf. Also, the dam of **PUSHINESS** was a turf filly. **PARTY ON GIRL** will be rolling late in her California debut. If front-runners **PUSHINESS** and **AVOIR** hook up, this race could fall apart in favor of a closer.

Ninth Race

1. The Chosen Vron

2. Raging Torrent

3. Senior Buscador

THE CHOSEN VRON faces his toughest test since the Breeders' Cup Sprint last year, yet indications are the 19-for-24 pro can win his seventh straight stakes in this seven-furlong Grade 2. 'VRON won a six-furlong G1 at DMR last out, trained super since, and drew near the outside (post 6 of 8) where he can press the pace or go on with it. A consistent pro who creates his own trip, he is proven at this longer distance. Favorites won this race six of the nine years since DMR returned to dirt. A sharp 3yo facing older for the first time looms an upset candidate. He is **RAGING TORRENT**, up in class following two impressive wins in Kentucky at this "specialty" distance. He might be the speed of the field, his figures are close to par for this level, 3yos are 2-for-8 in this race since the turn of the century (Zensational 2009, The Factor 2011). Inside speed has been effective most of summer, 'TORRENT is a threat to wire the field. **SENIOR BUSCADOR** is the late threat in his first start since a Middle East campaign in February-March; he won the G1 Saudi Cup and finished third in the G1 Dubai World Cup. This race is only a comeback prep, but he has worked well and will be rolling late. **HAPPY JACK** misfired in the Bing Crosby. His blowout win two back in a seven-furlong G2 gives him a license to upset.

Tenth Race

1. Glorious Life

2. Ghostly Act

3. Silver N Black

GLORIOUS LIFE ran well in his second-place comeback; the lightly race 4yo should handle this Cal-bred maiden turf route. His comeback was his first in nine months; he led to deep stretch, and got worn down. Good try off the bench, he can improve second start back in a field light on true speed. **GHOSTLY ACT** is a 16-start maiden with 10 in-the-money finishes including his last two starts which he lost by a head and a neck. Someday for him. **SILVER N BLACK** adds blinkers and goes turf to dirt off a promising runner-up comeback. **HIGHPLAINSDRIFTER** looms the upsetter, also adding blinkers second start back.