

**Date:** August 31st, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Hope Road (4th race)****First Race****1. Margarita Girl****2. Non Compliant****3. Magale**

First-time starter **MARGARITA GIRL** is training like a 2yo filly who could be special. A \$575k juvenile purchase, the Twirling Candy filly has posted fast work times including a :59.60 bullet gate work two weeks ago and another :59.60 gate five days ago. She looks tough to beat as the likely favorite; 2yo progeny of her sire have won 18 percent first out. **NON COMPLIANT** is by a sire whose 2yo debut progeny have won just 8 percent, but the filly's work pattern is fine and her trainer sends them fit. **MAGALE** is a firster by the red-hot first-crop sire Vekoma, whose progeny have won 29 percent (12 for 41) first out. **MAGALE** also has sharp works. **USHA** is a speedy stopper who tired both starts as the odds-on favorite. Her 21-and-change speed puts her on the lead again while stretching to six furlongs.

**Second Race****1. Magic Account****2. Pat's Paddock Pick****3. Jonas' Dream**

Lots of contenders in this bottom-level N2L claiming sprint. **MAGIC ACCOUNT** returns from a three-month layoff with a series of sharp works. His runaway maiden-20 win in May at Santa Anita would probably be fast enough; last-out maiden-claiming winners are effective at this low level. **PAT'S PADDOCK PICK** perked up last time with a runner-up finish in a relatively fast race over the track. His three Del Mar starts produced a win and two seconds. **JONAS' DREAM** is speed, shortening to six furlongs after a front-running maiden-20 win at seven furlongs. **MR. BIG HEART** drops to the bottom, first time in a claiming race and first try on dirt.

**Third Race****1. Spycatcher****2. Joyrider****3. Broheim**

**SPYCATCHER**, a 5yo maiden comebacker making his first start in nearly a year, is simply the best horse in the field. A first-time gelding, he missed by less than a length in the G1 Hollywood Derby in late 2022; he also placed in two other stakes. Mark Glatt can train horses to win first start back from layoffs, and though **SPYCATCHER** might want farther than a mile, he is the "class" of this maiden field. **JOYRIDER** flew from last to finish fourth by less than a length in a strong second career start. He is getting better, and a legit off-the-pace threat. **BROHEIM** stretched to a mile and missed by only a head last out, while **NATION** might have needed the start last time. He finished third as the odds-on favorite, in his first start since last fall.

**Fourth Race****1. Hope Road****2. Nothing Like You****3. Grand Slam Smile**

The speed of the field, stretching out from blowout sprint wins vs. maidens and allowance company, **HOPE ROAD** can be long gone in this G3 dirt mile for 3yo fillies. Sired by Quality Road and produced by multiple graded stakes-winning sprinter Marley's Freedom, **HOPE ROAD** can run them off their feet based on her 93-Beyer allowance sprint. Favorites won this stakes 10 of the last 15 years. **ROAD** is trained by Bob Baffert, who also entered two-time G2 route winner **NOTHING LIKE YOU**. The latter makes her first start in nearly three months. Unlike her stablemate, **'YOU** already is proven at two turns (two G2 route wins). She also won a sprint stakes over the DMR track last fall. **GRAND SLAM SMILE**, whose 8 starts produced 5 wins and 3 seconds, stretches out from a creditable runner-up finish behind nemesis Pushiness. Two turns is fine for **'SMILE**, who is 2-for-2 in routes.

**Fifth Race****1. Gold Phoenix****2. Dicey Mo Chara****3. Rockemperor**

**GOLD PHOENIX** seeks his third consecutive G2 Del Mar Handicap; his seventh-place finish last out in a G2 was much better than it looks. Racing a shorter-than-preferred nine furlongs, he was blocked most of the final quarter-mile, never found room, but finished with run and galloped out alongside the winner after the wire. It was a good performance by a veteran gelding who benefits by this longer mile and three-eighths distance. He would be the first three-time winner of this stake. **DICEY MO CHARA** may offer wagering value after a 76-1 runner-up finish in the same race the top choice exits. **'CHARA** lost ground, and was caught four-wide on the far turn. He still finished willingly in a strong effort. He benefits by a rider switch to Hector Berrios and more distance, and has an upset chance if he saves ground.

**ROCKEMPEROR** ran well both starts this season at SA including a runner-up finish last out behind recently retired Planetario. **THERE GOES HARVARD**, cross-entered in the Pacific Classic on dirt, is eligible to improve second start back.

### Sixth Race

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#### 1. I'm a Bad Boy

#### 2. Sir Tom

#### 3. Gozer

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**I'M A BAD BOY** is due for a maiden victory in his fourth start. In the money against maidens his first two, he finished a creditable third last out in a \$100k Cal-bred stakes. Back with maidens, speed to set or press, he could be gone. **SIR TOM** got hammered to even-money in his debut, but cracked after dueling three-wide. He posted three apparently solid works since, and based on his pre-debut training and debut betting action, he is probably better than his first start suggests. Improvement likely. **GOZER** had an uncomfortable trip in his debut. He was bumped hard at the break, got keen while rated, then sputtered to sixth. Not a great debut, but he did have an uneasy trip and Peter Miller-trained second-start maidens have won at a 25 percent clip the past five years. Also-eligible **SPEEDY WILSON** finished well along the inside in a better-than-looked third-place debut. He has upside.

### Seventh Race

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#### 1. Dont Fight the Fed

#### 2. Pure Madness

#### 3. Stylishlyacclaimed

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**DONT FIGHT THE FED** is obvious in this Cal-bred allowance turf route. It is the class and distance at which he finished second early this month, and in spring at SA. He finished four lengths clear of third last time despite losing a shoe. His pressing style allows him to create his own forwardly placed trip. Lightly raced **PURE MADNESS** finished second last out in a highly rated dirt sprint stakes; he won his debut on turf two starts back. Two turns is new for 'MADNESS, but his dam was a two-turn mare who produced at least two route winners. Lasix-on is a benefit. **STYLISHLYACCLAIMED** returned from a layoff of more than a year to score a strong maiden victory in just his second career start. The knock on his maiden win is that runner-up Glorious Life returned to finish sixth at even-money. **MCGREGOR LAKE** wheels back in six days and stretches to two turns after a better-than-looked sprint. Upset candidate, perhaps.

### Eighth Race

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#### 1. Fast Draw Munnings

#### 2. Dual Threat

#### 3. Better Than Gold

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Though unraced since September, **FAST DRAW MUNNINGS** is the call to win this N1X/optional claiming dirt mile. He won a similar race here last summer returning from a long layoff, his pressing style suits the speed-friendly track profile. He can come back firing again. **DUAL THREAT** was overmatched and finished far back last out in a G3 dirt marathon, but his highly rated starter allowance win two starts ago at SA ranks among the fastest in this field. **BETTER THAN GOLD** rallied into the teeth of a speed bias to finish second in a promising comeback behind Pacific Classic entrant Full Serrano. **GOLD** obviously likes the DMR main track (win and second from two starts). He will rally late. Lightly raced **ULTRA POWER** returns from a layoff adding Lasix and with speed to make the lead. This race looks fairly deep.

### Ninth Race

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#### 1. Motorious

#### 2. Turn On The Jets

#### 3. Connie Swingle

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Trainer Phil D'Amato has a stranglehold on this G3 turf sprint with four "live" entrants. The race is loaded with speed, which is ideal for late-runner **MOTORIOUS**. Winner of this stakes last summer, he was compromised by circumstances finishing off the board both starts this year: a brutal trip in Kentucky, up against a pro-speed race-shape at SA. However, **MOTORIOUS** is 2-for-2 in DMR turf sprints, with a closing style that suits the pace. **TURN ON THE JETS** was freshened specifically to aim for this. A three-time turf-sprint winner at DMR including a listed stake, he has more speed than his top-choice stablemate, and could tuck into cozy trip tucked right behind the speed. 'JETS will get first run. **CONNIE SWINGLE**, a mare against boys, scored a visually impressive stakes win last out while making her first start in nearly two years. She is a multiple stakes winner vs. easier, and 5-for-6 in turf sprints with one runner-up finish. The fourth D'Amato entrant is **UNCONQUERABLE KEEN**, another DMR turf specialist who figures to be involved in the pace scenario. 'KEEN misfired as the favorite last out, but it was a weird race in which the two longest shots finished one-two. If that race is disregarded, 'KEEN fits.

### Tenth Race

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#### 1. Adare Manor

#### 2. Reincarnate

#### 3. Dr. Venkman

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A mare against boys, **ADARE MANOR** inherited favoritism in a relatively soft edition of the G1 Pacific Classic. 'MANOR is the fastest on figs, with a five-pound weight break from her male rivals. Every recent race by 'MANOR vs. fillies and mares was strong including a decisive last-out victory in which the pace-presser/front-runner showed a new dimension rallying from inside and behind to win by open lengths. Basically, she is the "best horse" in this field. The challenges are first-time mile and quarter, first time vs. males, and likely low

odds. Nothing wrong with chalk in the Pacific Classic, favorites won 8 of the last 11. But stablemate **REINCARNATE**, listed 8-1 and also trained by Bob Baffert, looms an upset candidate. A distant runner-up last time in a G3 at a mile and one-half, REINCARNATE worked fast since and shortens to a mile and one-quarter. It is the same 12-furlongs-to-10-furlongs pattern Baffert used with 2009-10 Pacific Classic winner Richard's Kid. REINCARNATE finished in the money twice this year in graded races at a mile and one-quarter; his highest figs put him close to the top choice. He is likely to be on or near the lead over a DMR dirt track that has favored speed. **DR. VENKMAN** continued his ascent winning a G2 at a mile and a sixteenth last out in his first at two turns. The pace-pressing gelding should be in the hunt early. IL MIRACOLO, the lone shipper, is a G3 winner wheeling back two weeks after finishing second at Monmouth Park. KATONAH finished only a length behind DR. VENKMAN while racing for the first time in a year. If he improves second start back, KATONAH could upset.

**Eleventh Race**

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**1. Du Jour**

**2. First Peace**

**3. Astronomer**

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**DU JOUR** shortens to his preferred mile trip as most likely winner of this G2 turf mile following a so-so sixth at a mile and one-eighth. One mile is his specialty; he won this stakes by open lengths a year ago; he scored a G1 victory early this year by a similar margin. The class of the field, DU JOUR is a veteran gelding who can sit, wait and blast home for the win. However, **FIRST PEACE** will get first run. He stretched to a mile last out and delivered the best performance of his career, winning a restricted stakes in 1:33.81, fastest turf mile of summer. He figures to be forwardly placed in a race with an otherwise murky pace scenario, and could actually make the lead outright. It is a big class hike from restricted stakes to G2, but top-choice DU JOUR pulled off the Wickerr Stakes-Del Mar Mile double last summer. No surprise if FIRST PEACE makes the lead and wires the field. **ASTRONOMER** is rounding into form, runner-up last out in the restricted stakes, and a stakes winner over the DMR turf as a 2yo in 2021. IRIDEO will be running late with a shot to hit the trifecta and/or superfecta at a big price.