

Date: November 15th, 2024**Track:** Del Mar**By Brad Free****BEST BET: Auditory (3rd race)****First Race****1. Venice Vibe****2. Hearts Fantasy****3. Dyin a Thirst**

VENICE VIBE is logical in this maiden-claiming sprint for 2yo fillies, based on her improved second start. She missed by a nose, finished more than three clear of third, and earned the highest figure in this field. For what it's worth, one runner who finished behind 'VIBE ran back. Sixth-place finisher Mujer de Oro wired maidens as odds-on favorite at Mountaineer Park. **HEARTS FANTASY** has improved each subsequent start, including a last-out third behind the top choice. 'FANTASY ran better than the margin suggests. She got stuck behind rivals through the turn, had nowhere to go, finally swung outside and finished evenly. She would have been closer with a better trip. There might not be as much difference between the top pair as the margin indicates. **DYIN A THIRST** is not fast on figures, but she finished in the money three of her last four. The race she exits produced two next-out winners. **BUDS N SUDS** shortens back to a sprint after finishing second at one mile. The third-place finisher won her next start with a 54 Beyer.

Second Race**1. Zalamo****2. For A Laugh****3. Bee Catcher**

Wide-trip runner-up at this N3L starter level last out, **ZALAMO** gets the call. He was three- and four-wide much of the trip last time, and got worn down late. The solid comeback was better than the margin indicates considering ground loss. Furthermore, he ran well over the Del Mar turf against better in July. **FOR A LAUGH** returns from a nine-month layoff with a history of running well fresh and speed figures that fit at this level. **BEE CATCHER** enters with arguably the best last-start performance, third vs. unrestricted \$25k claiming rivals. 'CATCHER often gets close, but rarely wins. He is 0-for-21 since his most recent win in January 2021. He finished in the money eight times during that span. **HULA CANDY** goes first off the claim by high-percent first-off-the-claim trainer Jeff Mullins. The past five years, Mullins is 29 percent f.o.c. (12 for 42).

Third Race**1. Auditory****2. Candyinthemorning****3. Affair**

AUDITORY figures to win this maiden-20 route based on her improved effort last out against tougher, and her runner-up finish at this class level and distance two starts back. She missed by less than three lengths last out in a maiden-50 turf sprint; she finished clear of third in the maiden-claiming dirt mile two back. Basically, she is simply faster than her rivals. The last seven maiden-claiming favorites trained by Steve Miyadi in Southern California produced five wins, two seconds. **CANDYINTHEMORNING** stretches out from sprints, drops from maiden-50, and switches to a five-pound apprentice. Bred to run two turns, the Candy Ride filly might be the one to catch. **AFFAIR** plummets in class, from maiden special-weight to \$20k maiden-claiming. **SHOOT FOR THE SKY** also drops to maiden-claiming for the first time.

Fourth Race**1. Inner Beauty****2. A Real Jewel****3. Champagne Camie**

Five furlongs might be shorter than preferred for **INNER BEAUTY**, but the blinkers-on mare gets the call nonetheless in a competitive \$25k claiming turf sprint. Third last out at six furlongs, she has a pressing style that should have her positioned just off the speed. Furthermore, her trainer is 8-for-24 with blinkers-on turf runners the past five years (4 for 8 in turf sprints). 'BEAUTY can win with a pressing trip. **A REAL JEWEL** finished in front of the top choice last out going six furlongs; five furlongs is fine for 'JEWEL. She missed by a nose at this distance in May. **CHAMPAGNE CAMIE** had a spot of trouble into the turn last out, finishing fourth as the favorite in the same race the top pair exits. Claimed off the three-length loss, 'CAMIE will be rolling late. **RED DIAMOND** also will rally late, though five furlongs might be shorter than she prefers.

Fifth Race**1. Grazen Sun****2. Playing Hardball****3. Soul of Midnight**

Northern California shipper **GRAZEN SUN** arrives in SoCal as the "now" horse, having won three straight at Pleasanton and Fresno. The versatile gelding has speed to press, or he can rally from behind. The \$10k claiming horse he defeated last out returned with a fast runner-up finish for \$16k in which he earned a 76 Beyer. That effort validates **GRAZEN SUN** and stamps him the one to beat in this \$8k starter/optional \$10k claiming. **PLAYING HARBALL** is speed, dropping in class and making his first start in three months. His races in summer 2023 would bury this field, but he misfired both starts this summer. He is fresh, working fast at San Luis Rey Downs, and should come back firing at five and one-half furlongs. **SOUL OF MIDNIGHT** drops from \$20k claiming; **BAG'S GOLD** also faces easier. **SUNRISE JOURNEY**, Oct. 11 vet scratch, is a 17-win veteran who might be listed too low. He returns to the class level and racing surface of his best recent race. That was a runner-up finish here in early August.

Sixth Race

1. Cullen J

2. Triple Diamonds

3. Brahms Mendelssohn

Both starts by **CULLEN J** were decent, debut fourth and second-start runner-up. Those efforts stamp him the one to beat in this turf sprint for 2yo Cal-bred maidens. He has speed to establish position before losing too much ground from his outside post. Two pace rivals he dueled and put away last time both won their next start (Its a Cinch, Whiskyginandbrandy). First-time starter **TRIPLE DIAMONDS** is the first foal produced by a dam that won her debut by seven lengths at 9-1 odds. Apparently, the dam ran better than she had trained. Although workouts by **TRIPLE DIAMONDS** appear modest, the gelding has precocity in his pedigree and could come out firing in a race that looks wide-open after the top choice. First-time starter **BRAHMS MENDELSSOHN** has some fast works including a bullet half one week ago. From the inside post, he has to be sent. **FIX IT QUICK**, a \$200k yearling by Flatter, has trained like a colt that could fire first time out.

Seventh Race

1. Tamara

2. Sandy Bottom

3. Anywho

TAMARA, daughter of Beholder and winner of the G1 Del Mar Debutante in summer 2023, makes her long-awaited comeback in a six-furlong allowance sprint. She had a splint injury coming out of the 2023 Breeders' Cup, her summer comeback was postponed with a slight setback, and postponed in fall when she got sick. The setbacks were relatively minor, her recent workouts have been strong, and if she breaks running from the inside post she could be gone. But two-for-two stakes-winning comeback filly **SANDY BOTTOM** also showed early promise. She won her career debut as a 2yo last summer, followed by a stakes win. That race in fall 2023 was her most recent start. Fast works for her comeback, outside post, and speed to keep the top choice honest. **ANYWHO** misfired in Kentucky last out, but she has bounced back from subpar efforts in the past and she ran well both previous DMR sprints. **CLIQISH** will rally late.

Eighth Race

1. Royal Charter

2. Gracelund Gray

3. Yerwanthere

ROYAL CHARTER is back where she fits, in an allowance race after chasing stakes fillies her last two. Runner-up in a similar allowance turf route at DMR in summer, 'CHARTER has the type of closing style that won most turf routes the first two weeks of the autumn meet. **GRACELUND GRAY**, a comebacker with speed, might be the one to catch. The challenge is that only one of the first 21 turf routes this meet were won by the pacesetter. 'GRAY has trained well for her first start since April and will take them as far as she can. **YERWANTHERE** is a deep closer who finished second or third her last four starts against similar. **ANG N ASH** is a sharp sprinter stretching to two turns. She will keep **GRACELUND GRAY** honest on the lead.