

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 8/6/2017

**Race 8:** \$150K La Jolla (G3), contested at 8.5-furlongs on turf

**Post:** 5:33 pm PDT

## OVERVIEW

Today's contest race is a very nice renewal of the \$150K La Jolla Handicap (G3), an 8.5-furlong turf affair for 3-year-olds only, a prestigious race in its own right but also a prep for the Del Mar Derby (G1) later in the meet. The rails are at 12-feet, and there doesn't seem to be much speed in here save for the outside horse and perhaps the stretch-out sprinter or the dirt horse adding blinkers, so it will be interesting to see how this race unfolds.

**#1 FASHION BUSINESS (GB) (8/1)**, a son of the great Frankel (GB), has been extremely unlucky in all of his U.S. starts. In his first race off the boat, he ran into a roadblock and never had a chance; in start number-two, he came on too late for the run, losing to a loose-on-the-lead winner (who returns here); in the Rainbow, he had a wide journey and failed to punch home against two of today's foes; last time, he furiously rallied, losing by a head. His come-home times in his last three races—all at 9-furlongs—have been ridiculously fast, so you know he'll be flying through the lane. I actually think today's slight cutback will help his cause, so long as he gets some kind of pace to close into—but losing Prat to his neighbor is a concern. GRADE: B.

**#2 COLONIST (7/2)** adds blinkers and steps on turf for the first time while retaining the services of Prat, who rode him to a fourth-place finish in the Los Alamitos Derby (G3). In fact, this guy's dirt form is rock-solid, and his tactical speed (while also adding blinkers) ensures he'll get a great forwardly placed trip. The big concern is if he can handle a surface switch for a trainer whose first-turf numbers are just average. I can't fault anyone for backing him based on his dirt form, but I'll let him answer the lawn question first before getting on board (especially since Hollendorfer has been positively Arctic the last few months). GRADE: C.

**#3 PLACIDO (6/1)** just broke his maiden down the hill, showing off a nice closing kick. Now we'll see if he can take his show around two turns on the turf. He did try two turns on dirt before, and it was just an even effort after a wide journey. There is plenty of upside here, but this seems like a difficult spot for a horse who will need to face proven routers for the first time. Note that win-rider Prat sticks with Colonist, and that's not a vote of confidence. That said, you get Raffi if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

**#4 PIONEER LAD (6/1)** was 21/1 in the Oceanside, but he almost rewarded his backers by running second to the favorite in that race. That was his first try on turf, so it was a very nice performance, but he did get a very good trip that day. He'll likely get another perfect trip today, but the waters do get a little deeper with some new faces in this race and with Caribou Club—a horse this guy just beat—likely to be sitting on a better effort second off the bench. GRADE: X.

#5 OFFSHORE (20/1) just lost to two of these two back, failing to mount a bid when going 9-furlongs. In fact, he's had several tries to get win number-two after he broke his maiden at first-asking going long (which is always impressive) but hasn't been able to put things together. Two positives if you want to build a case: he prepped for this race against older horses on July 28, and his come-home time was respectable in that race; and Drysdale has been on fire this meet. Sure, this guy will need a lot of improvement, but he could spice up the exotics at a huge number based on those last two points—but he is tough to support on the win end. GRADE: X.

~~#6 CARIBOU CLUB (12/1) had to deal with a tough 10 post in the Oceanside, where he just kind of grinded away to finish third while making his first start since May. Surely, this Laurel Futurity winner can improve off that performance, especially since Proctor is calling the shots. He's not impossible here at 12/1, but I do like others just a smidge more. GRADE: B.~~

#7 SHARP SAMURAI (5/2) needed \$75K maidens to graduate back in February when he was racing on dirt, but once Glatt switched him to turf, he turned into a much classier animal, looking terrific when winning the Rainbow going 9-furlongs at Santa Anita, beating a few of today's foes in the process. I like that Glatt freshened him up after that race in order to point to this graded-stakes affair. I also expect him to get a great stalking trip with Stevens, who is still a master of the turf. The only knock here is the price. GRADE: A.

#8 DOUBLE TOUCH (GB) (8/1) looked sharp beating age-restricted N1X foes last time, coming from off the pace and closing strongly to win by a half-length. He should be able to build off that performance, but he will have to make up a few lengths on Sharp Samurai—and note that win-rider Stevens rightfully sticks with that foe. On the plus side, Kent takes the call, and this guy's finishing times are good enough to have a say in the outcome today. GRADE: B.

#9 MONSTER MAN (9/2) has plenty of speed, so Gonzalez will have options from this outside post, but if he doesn't want to get hooked wide, he should just gun hard and hope for the best. He tried to wire them in the Rainbow at 9-furlongs, but Sharp Samurai easily rolled by him. Maybe the slight cutback will help his cause, but he'll need to do better while under some adversity today since his two wins came with absolute perfect trips. On the plus side, he likes Del Mar if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

## CONCLUSION

I think the favorite, #12 SHARP SAMURAI, looks legit here, so I'll need to tie him together with some price horses in the exacta—and #1 FASHION BUSINESS (GB) and #8 DOUBLE TOUCH (GB) fit the bill for me.