

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 8/1/2019

Race 4: \$50K claimer for 3-year-old fillies going a mile on turf (rails at 30-ft.)

Post: approx. post 3:30 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got a full field of 10 sophomore fillies going a flat mile in this \$50K claimer restricted to 3-year-olds only. The rails are at 30-feet, but there figures to be an honest pace in here with some stretch-out sprinters—and the turf course has played very fair this meet.

#1 MUTHHILA (IRE) (6/1) broke her maiden overseas, beating the boys in a 6-furlong synth sprint at Wolverhampton—not exactly the path to riches here in America. She's winless since that victory, and her three races stateside—all sprints—were nothing special. I think Anna Meah has done a nice job—despite the low win-percentage—but this runner will have to show she can handle two turns, since the two times she raced at a mile, she was in over her head and was well-beaten (by double-digit lengths). She gets class-relief by running for a tag, but maybe this is a tune-up for a cutback to a 5-furlong sprint later in the meet. GRADE: C.

#2 SOCIAL GRACES (15/1) broke her maiden at 7-furlongs on heavy going at Listowel in Ireland—again, not the typical path to success here in the states. In fact, her two stateside races have been poor—stalking the pace and weakening badly against N1X types in a 9-furlong race on turf at Santa Anita and in a one-mile synth race at Golden Gate. She runs for a tag for the first time today, so the class-relief will help, but her lack of finish in each of those route races is a big concern here. GRADE: X.

#3 SOPHIE ANTOINETTE (7/2) is my top pick in the race, because I love when sophomores have run respectably against older horses and are now getting back in amongst their friends. This gal broke her maiden for \$75K at Churchill, showing a nice stretch run after a slow beginning; last time, she made a middle move before flattening out against N1X types at Ellis. She now moves to the Wong barn, and he promptly adds blinkers, which I think will help this gal. I expect her to finish strongly today. GRADE: A.

#4 D'TATWAY (30/1) took an unlikely road to get to Del Mar, coming into this race by way of Albuquerque and Sun Ray Park before that. She was running okay in dirt sprints at those minor-league tracks, but it should be noted that the one time she tried the big leagues at Oaklawn Park, she was never a factor after a slow start going a mile on dirt. She joins the Saavedra barn today, and he'll take a shot with her on turf. I like that she was facing elders in her last two starts, but it remains to be seen how this gal will stack up on this circuit while trying two turns on the turf for the first time (although the breeding suggests that shouldn't be a problem if you're a believer). GRADE: X.

#5 CREATIVE ROMANCE (8/1) has run well against some decent sophomores up north, but she's never been on the lawn, so we'll see how she acts on the green (though she should be fine). She runs for a tag today, and her tactical speed means she'll get a good trip in here—and it's good to see Bejarano take the

call for old-school Moger. I don't like that she ran second in a stakes race up north yet she's in for the \$50K tag, but that also means she's battle-tested and could certainly be in the frame today. GRADE: B.

#6 MISS FLAWLESS (FR) won three races overseas, and that's the most in this field, so that must be considered, since this gal knows how to win. They also thought enough of her to run her in stakes races to start her U.S. career. She quickly proved she didn't belong and was eventually offered for a \$50K tag twice in a row, with Eurton claiming her off Miller last time. Eurton doesn't claim many horses, so he must have seen something he liked—but it should be noted that he's running her right back at the \$50K level instead of trying to move her up. I do like the way she came home last time, but that was in a 5-furlong turf sprint; two back, when she ran a flat mile, she stalked the pace and weakened. It's concerning she couldn't win for Miller, but she seems obvious in here against these. GRADE: B.

#7 KHAIRIYA (5/2) is your morning-line favorite, coming in from Churchill where she was in good form, running well on any surface and at any level. She finished second last time against N1X types, and two back, she just missed against \$30K beaten-claimers in a field that allowed older horses. She has tactical speed, so she'll sit a trip, but it should be noted that D'Amato has been chilly to start the meet, sporting a rough 1-for-25 record as of this writing with his only win coming in a six-horse field with Bowies Hero (granted, it was in the G2 Eddie Read!). She's obvious but offers little value. GRADE: B.

#8 SMILING ROSE (20/1) removes the hood after chasing the pace in dirt sprint races. She's also a Cal-bred who hasn't made an impact against open-company. In her defense, she was stuck at the rail in those two dirt sprints at the \$50K starter-level, so maybe she can do better today with a better post—but there are questions: she's never been two turns or on turf, so she'll have to show she can handle this assignment. She should be in the vanguard early on the stretch-out, then we'll see. GRADE: X.

#9 RED BUNTING (IRE) (15/1) won at first asking in her overseas debut going a straight mile at Yarmouth. I'm sure that wasn't the stiffest competition, so it's no surprise that she failed to make an impact in her two U.S. races while facing N1X types. In fairness, she hasn't had the best starts, so maybe she can do a little better today with a clean break and some class-relief. She's been off since late May, and we've seen Ellis bring back some very live runners this meet, so I would not discount this one out of hand even though the form looks pretty wretched. GRADE: B.

#10 GORGEOUS IN GREY (10/1), the second Moger trainee, ran a better-than-looked fifth at the \$50K starter level last time, putting in a mild late bid despite racing against the course profile. She was trained by D'Amato in that race, and she now rejoins the Moger barn, which had her up north and for both of her victories. I would upgrade any closer who had zero chance at Santa Anita and certainly use this one in your exotics—but it should be noted that Van Dyke sides with Miss Flawless (FR) and that today's 10-post is no picnic. Still, it wouldn't surprise me if this gal outran her odds. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION

I like #3 **SOPHIE ANTOINETTE**, but 7/2 isn't a great contest price (but sometimes you just have to take what they give you). If you're looking for long-shot alternatives, #9 **RED BUNTING (IRE)** is an X-factor who could be a new horse given how hot the Ellis barn is, and #10 **GORGEOUS IN GREY** should appreciate this much-fairer turf course.

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