DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 8/3/2019
Race 6: $40K claiming event contested at 5-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-ft.)
Post: approx. post 4:39 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got a field of 10 horses going postward for today's contest race, a $40K claiming event contested at 5-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at 12-feet. There should be a quick pace, and I think there are plenty of places to land here.

#1 ROYAL CREED (20/1) has speed and will have no choice but to go from the rail—and that's likely going to soften him up late, since he's lost lengths in the lane in every start he's made here in Southern California. Maybe he'll perk up on the Del Mar sod, but he's tough to support from a class or pace perspective. GRADE: X.

#2 R CHA CHA (20/1) has found N1X foes a bit too tough for him, but he's done nice work in the claiming ranks, including a win going 7-furlongs on the main track at this $40K level. He's a pretty versatile sort who can act on any surface—and even though he likes to be in the vanguard early, he doesn't need the lead to win. Still, he'll be up near a quick pace, and that will likely compromise his chances. On the plus side, he makes the second start of his form cycle and gets a 7-pound weight-break if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#3 CASTLE (3/1) comes off a 161-day layoff, but he earned a nice "B" **OptixWORKS** grade in preparation for this heat. Before his freshening, he was in good form, running well against allowance-types, and also capturing a $40K open claimer down the hill, so this is the right level for him. Note that he ran third in a similar race here last summer, but he had an eventful experience and still ran well, all things considered. He rejoins the Mathis barn after a few races with Puype, and Mathis is due to get rolling any day now. GRADE: A.

#4 PURE COMEDY (12/1) has wins on the lead and wins from way off the pace, so Franco will have options with him, as this horse tries this $40K level after beating $25K and $35K foes on the synth up north while going 6-furlongs. Last time, he was no match for stakes runners at this trip, but we can easily forgive that race. He rarely runs a bad race when spotted properly, so we'll see how he stacks up at this $40K level, since the few times he tried it last year, he wasn't quite good enough. I also don't like that he's 0-for-5 on turf. Maybe for your exotics? GRADE: C.

#5 DOM THE BOMB (5/2) is in very good form right now, but he's been beating up on lesser competition, running against $4K starter foes and $25K claimers. He has plenty of zip, but it's a lot easier to control the race against weaker competition, so this guy will have to earn his stripes today for a trainer who has been uncharacteristically cold. At 5/2 on the morning-line, he looks like a play against to me, despite his recent winning form. GRADE :C.

#6 ERIC THE TROJAN (7/2) is a good exotics horse because he always comes flying late but often has to settle for the minor awards. On the plus side, he's done pretty good work here at Del Mar and at this abbreviated sprint distance while facing much tougher allowance types. His best races would easily beat these, and he should get a pace to close into—but Carava has been a little chilly the last few months, so don't get too excited. Still, I've always admired this hard-trying 6-year-old, so I do hope he runs well. GRADE: B.

#7 GUTSY RULER (15/1) has finished in the trifecta in seven of his eight tries here going 5-furlongs at Del Mar—how cool is that? On the downside, he only has one win to his credit on turf, lacking that eye of the tiger—but it should be noted that he's been facing allowance types, while today he's in against open-claimers. His best races put him in the frame, and at 15/1, you should give him a long, hard look—but he's coming off a 715-day layoff, so be sure to get a good look at him in the paddock. GRADE: B.

#8 RESTLESS RAMBLER (8/1) was just claimed for $25K off Bernie Flint back at Churchill Downs, and you have to like the confidence Glatt shows by bumping him up to the $40K level for his SoCal debut. You have to go pretty far back, but there was a time when this guy was dominant while sprinting on the turf—and if you paid any attention during the Santa Anita meet, you'll know that Glatt did very well in these 5-furlong turf sprints. He's certainly cooled down after a very good Santa Anita meet, but Glatt knows what he's doing, and this horse seems a little interesting at a square price. GRADE: A.

#9 MIDNIGHT MING (8/1) has finished behind both Dom the Bomb and Pure Comedy, so he'll need to do better today. That said, he is making his second start for McCanna, who took him for $25K two back when this guy tried to go with Dom the Bomb but couldn't eat into that foe's lead. Toss the last race on dirt going a route of ground at Pleasanton and focus on his solid 5-furlong turf victory three back. The negative is that it came against $25K claimers, so he'll have to show he can be competitive against better today while turning the tables on his NorCal friends. GRADE: C.

#10 REGAL BORN (10/1) is the off-the-pace entry of the uncoupled McCanna duo, and the presence of his stablemate should ensure a quick pace to set things up for this guy's very solid stretch run. He's done nice work over this course, winning an N1X here last year after just missing by a neck in this very same $40K claiming race on August 1, 2018. Toss his last race where he had some trouble against better animals, and you're looking at a runner who could mow them all down late. The big concern, however, is the post, as Pereira will have to try and save ground before navigating stretch traffic in this 10-horse field. Still, 10/1 seems like an overlay on this honest tryer. GRADE: A.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>
I know I have three "A's" in here, but I think this is a very competitive race, and the morning-line favorite doesn't have to win. From a value perspective, **#10 REGAL BORN** seems like the play, but I really hate the post; **#8 RESTLESS RAMBLER** is a little interesting off the claim, but he's going to be part of a hot pace; **#3 CASTLE** should run a good race, but 3/1 seems a little short in this wide-open race. I'll board-watch and decide.

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