

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 8/23/2019

Race 4: \$40K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies & mares going 8F on the main track

Post: approx. post 5:28 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

What a doozy of a race for today's contest event: a 10-horse field of \$40K optional-claiming/N1X fillies and mares going a mile on the main track. There are so many places to land here, so be sure to demand value in this wide-open affair.

#1 THE SPIRAL JETTER (8/1) comes off an 83-day freshening after failing several times up north at this N1X level, where she was racing on synth and turf. The works aren't anything special, and it looks like she missed a work between August 2 and August 16, so maybe this is a leg-stretcher for when Mathis ships this gal back up north, assuming she doesn't get claimed for the \$40K tag today. GRADE: C.

#2 PRIDE'S GOLD (6/1) has shown very little early speed in two route races while racing on turf, so it's hard to imagine she's going to trip out in here over a main track that has been very hard to close on. On the plus side, this turf and synth runner has the breeding to be just fine on dirt, and you can expect a career-best effort while making the third start of her form cycle (and in the U.S.)—but unless the race falls apart, I'm thinking the minor awards are the ceiling for her today. GRADE: C.

#3 TIZ A MASTER (12/1) is a 3-year-old who faces elders for the first time, and that's going to be an issue for her today, since she really hasn't run fast enough to be competitive against older females. It should also be noted that all three of her wins came sprinting against much weaker company—and even though she ran second in the 8.5-furlong Melair, that was an eminently weak group, as the winner was a maiden. You can never discount a Baltas filly, but this one seems in a bit deep today. GRADE: X.

#4 BOUJIE GIRL (6/1) came off a January layoff last time to attend a fast pace before weakening in a 6.5-furlong event while facing elders for the first time. This 3-year-old did run against some quality animals as a juvenile, but her best work has come sprinting, so we'll see how she handles the stretch-out today. Back in January, she set a modest pace against fellow sophomores going a mile yet was easily overtaken despite getting a 5-pound weight-break. It should also be noted that she was a chilly 6/1 in a five-horse field that day. That said, Miller has been sending out live runners all meet, so I expect this gal to move forward today second off the bench and coming into this race with some snazzy workouts (earning an **OptixWORKS** "B"). GRADE: B.

#5 MORNING DANCE (20/1) is a little bit interesting at a price, since she makes her second start after a 251-day layoff while getting some major class-relief, since her last race came against some quality N2X runners while racing on turf. Back when she was trained by D'Amato, she actually cleared this N1X hurdle going a mile at Los Al, beating eight other runners despite going off at 9/1. It was a nice effort, but she did get a pace to close into. Luckily, she should get a pace to close into today while also getting a 7-pound weight-break to help her cause as she runs on through the lane. Molly Pearson does a fine job in

Arizona, but she's having a really rough Del Mar. Will this runner help her get off the schneid? We shall see, but at the big price she'll be, why not take a shot? GRADE: A.

#6 FOOL'S PARADISE (5/1): after looking good breaking her maiden last year, she was thrown to the wolves in the Santa Anita Oaks, where she was well-beaten. She bounced back okay and cleared her N1X hurdle in facile fashion going a mile at Santa Anita. Since then, however, it's been tough sledding, partly because of the level of competition she's been facing: graded-stakes animals and upper-level allowance types. Well, the connections finally came to their senses last time and ran her where she could win: a \$35K/N1Y going a mile on turf at Santa Anita—and win she did, beating a next-out winner. She's been freshened since that June race and returns facing a tougher field—but she's shown that when spotted correctly, she can be very competitive. GRADE: A.

#7 SCARLET (5/1) looked sharp breaking her maiden last time at 3/5, setting a very quick pace and drawing off to win by 2-1/4 lengths. It was a nice effort, but she only had to beat three other foes. She'll face a big full field today, and there is other speed signed on, so this gal will have to earn it every step of the way. As a lightly raced 3-year-old, there is still room to improve, but it's quite possible she'll be taking one step back before taking one step forward against winners. GRADE: C.

#8 SHANGHAI TRUFFLES (12/1) broke her maiden two back against \$50K foes going a mile on turf. In fact, she's never raced on dirt, and her barn has been positively Arctic this meet. Van Dyke doesn't bother to ride back, which is a red flag to me on this 3-year-old, since he is usually up on Gallagher runners. Expect her late, if at all, but she's going to need a huge step forward today. GRADE: X.

#9 DR WYSONG (9/2) was 13/10 last time while sprinting against Cal-bred/N1X types, and she didn't disappoint, coming from off the pace to get up and win by a head. This sophomore now has to face winners while stretching out on dirt for the first time. Her two route tries on turf weren't anything special, but she was facing some quality 3-year-olds. There are no world-beaters in here, but 9/2 seems a little short on a runner who is trying a few new things for the first time. GRADE: B.

#10 FIRST STAR (7/2) ran a big race on debut, putting up a big number while beating seven other maidens in a 6.5-furlong sprint, despite being sent off at 27/1. As impressive as that run was, it did come against maidens while sprinting, so we'll see if this 3-year-old can replicate that performance while facing winners for the first time—while also stretching out for the first time and having to break from the far outside post. She brings the highest **OptixFIG** into this race, so her ability isn't the issue—it's just the fact that, like her inside rival, she'll be doing a few new things for the first time, and that's always a tricky thing, especially if the horse is the 7/2 morning-line favorite. GRADE: B.

#11 CATOCA—program scratch.

CONCLUSION

While certainly one of the lightly raced 3-year-olds could step up and make their presence known, I refuse to take a short number on a runner who has to answer some tough questions. Because of that, I'm going to look at two older runners: my top pick in the race, **#6 FOOL'S PARADISE (5/1)** will take the lion's share of my action, and I'll certainly nibble on **#5 MORNING DANCE (20/1)** at what should be a huge number.

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