DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot

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Date: 8/25/2019
Race 7: $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5F on turf (rails at 12-ft.)
Post: approx. post 5:13 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We close out Week 6 with a wide-open 5-furlong turf sprint for $40K optional-claiming/N1X animals. There should be an honest pace with several early types and presser types signed on.

Also, as a reminder: be sure to attend my Sunday Handicapping Seminar with guest Greg Lawlor, who specializes in trainer angles and equine body language: 12:45 at Seaside Terrace on-track or live on my Twitter feed @ScatoniSureShot.

#1 CARAY (20/1) tries turf for the first time and has to break from the rail while coming off an October layoff. He does have speed, so he can flee the fence, but that just means he'll likely be softened up late—and that's assuming he even takes to the lawn. GRADE: X.

#2 STOP THE VIOLENCE (8/1) was 2/1 at this level and distance last time when coming off an August 2018 layoff. He got a wide journey and ran like a short horse. He should be much tighter today for a trainer who wins an inordinate amount of turf-sprints. The morning-line seems a bit high on this runner. GRADE: A.

#3 GENERAL INTEREST (6/1) came off a September 2017 (not a typo!) layoff last time to win impressively in a 5-furlong turf sprint against Cal-bred allowance types—beating a next-out winner in the process. It was a really nice effort, tracking the pace before powering home, but I'm inclined to watch one today, since there is a real chance he regresses off the layoff, especially since he's stepping up to face open foes. GRADE: C.

#4 PSYCHO DAR (5/1) has done very nice work at this 5-furlong turf-sprint distance, carving out a niche for himself and sporting a 4: 1-2-0 record. Last time, he was nearly 6/1 at this level and distance, and he led the whole way except for when it mattered most, losing by a dirty nose. He's too sharp to ignore, but there is other speed in here, so this guy will have to earn it every step of the way today. GRADE: B.

#5 WILDMAN JACK (6/1) was 8/5 in his debut, and he did what he was supposed to do, winning easily against seven other maidens, dueling inside before drawing away to win comfortably in a game effort. He can certainly continue to improve, but he will face some adversity today as a 3-year-old facing elders and with other early speed signed on. Perhaps the biggest negative, however, is the fact that win-rider Van Dyke defects. Tip your cap if he wins. GRADE: C.

#6 ESKIMO ROSES—program scratch.

#7 MUSAWAAT (GB) (15/1) makes his first U.S. start after facing some quality animals overseas, while running on all surfaces and at all manner of distances. That said, this is likely a prep race for something

longer down the line, since he's been racing mostly at a mile and on dirt. Puype takes off the hood and returns this one a new gelding for his stateside debut—and as much as I respect the Puype/Gryder combo, I'm taking a wait-and-see approach today. GRADE: C.

#8 LIL MILO (5/2) has looked very good in victory, beating up on lesser animals: Cal-bred $50K maidens; starter-allowance foes; Cal-bred N1X types. He now comes off a March layoff and has to face open company for the first time. He also has to show he can excel at this abbreviated sprint distance, since all of his wins came when controlling the pace at 6.5-furlongs (on dirt and turf). The early speed in these 5-furlong sprints is much faster, so he'll have to show a new dimension while stalking the pace (and quite possibly from a wide spot). Win-rider Prat sticks around, however, so you can't entirely dismiss this morning-line favorite, but I'm inclined to play against. GRADE: C.

#9 FACTORIAL (6/1) attracts Van Dyke, and that should be taken into consideration because on paper, this one seems in a little tough, having lost twice already at this N1X condition while going a mile. His one win came at a mile three back when he set the pace over a speed-favoring Santa Anita turf course, and won at 7/10. Against winners, however, he was easily overtaken, so Baltas looks to shorten him up today. Back East, he ran a really nice closing second at 5.5-furlongs, just missing by a nose, so you can expect this speedy cut-back horse to be flying home late—but is 5-furlongs too short? I'm a little dubious, but the price is right, and I think he gets the right set-up in here. Definitely use him in your exotics if you're not sold on the win-end. GRADE: A.

#10 CASTLE (9/2) came off a February layoff to win easily against $40K claimers. He got a perfect stalking trip and cleared late, easily dusting the favorite that day. It looked like a nice performance, but do note that the favorite he beat came back to run a dud at the very same level just a few days ago. A repeat of this guy's last win would certainly put him in the frame, but it's also quite possible he'll regress based on that last effort and stepping up in class. GRADE: C.

#11 HARDCORE TROUBADOR (10/1) is one fast hombre—fast enough to beat Quarter Horses going 870-yards at Los Al. He's also done fine work going 5-furlongs on dirt, as a horse who has traveled well West of the Mississippi. He's currently 0-for-3 on turf, but he's shown that he can handle the green stuff. Cedillo will have to gun hard early so this one can clear—and he's fast enough to do so—but will that soften him up late? Regardless, I'll be rooting hard for this old pro, especially since I think his trainer does an excellent job with all of his stock. GRADE: B.

#12 RESTLESS RAMBLER (6/1) (AE) will need a defection to get in, and then we'll see who Prat's first call is, since he's also named on Lil Milo. This guy was claimed for $25K back East in late June after wiring five other claimers while going 6-furlongs on dirt. Glatt clearly had a plan, however, since this one is proven on turf as well, and you have to like the confidence he shows by moving this 16-time winner up the class ladder here. The post is no picnic, but he has plenty of speed to at least try to get a good forward position. Also note that Glatt kills it in these turf sprints. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION
I think **#2 STOP THE VIOLENCE (8/1)** is sitting on a peak race. I won't complicate the issue by looking elsewhere—unless, of course, he gets hammered, then I'll price-shop with **#9 FACTORIAL (6/1)** and the "B" contenders.

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