

# DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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**Date:** 11/22/2019

**Race 7:** \$50K starter-allowance for fillies & mares going 7-furlongs on the main track

**Post:** approx. post 3:34 p.m. PST

## OVERVIEW

As you all know, racing was abandoned on Thursday because of a few days of rain, but fortunately, it was mostly sunny and dry as of late afternoon yesterday, so we should be good to go today—except all of the races will be off the turf. Thankfully, today's contest race is on the main track, and take note of the condition: it's a \$50K starter-allowance for fillies and mares going 7-furlongs on the dirt, but it's not your typical starter-allowance in that it's for horses who have never won *three* races (as opposed to the normal *two*).

#1 SHEZA FACTOR (8/1) is coming off a gate-to-wire victory against weaker conditioned-claimers, so we'll see how she handles better animals today while having to break from the rail at a tricky distance. She does have early speed, so I'm sure Espinoza—who is terrified of being down on the inside—will quarter-horse her out of the gate and hope for the best. I think that will take its toll on this one late. GRADE: C.

#2 VELVET QUEEN (8/1) has been plying her trade exclusively on turf, so it remains to be seen how she'll deal with a move to the main track. That said, she sports the solid old-school angles of turf-to-dirt and route-to-sprint, all while having tactical speed. The 7-furlong distance won't be an issue, and if she handles the main track, she could contend for a piece of the pie—though it should be noted that her two wins have come against fellow sophomores, and she has to face elders today. GRADE: B.

#3 CLAUDELLE (7/2) has won two in a row in dominant fashion, taking the race to her rivals early and then daring them to come chase her down. Today's race won't be any different with bug-boy Diaz likely to ask her hard from the gate. It took her a while to break her maiden, but once she did, she followed that up with a starter-allowance victory last time, proving that this is certainly the right level for her. GRADE: B.

#4 DEARBORN (5/1) gets some class-relief today after facing much tougher animals while sprinting on turf. Her main-track efforts aren't nearly as good as her turf form, but she's at least shown she can handle the dirt, making her a little interesting in here from a class-perspective, since three back she beat some decent \$40K turf-sprinters. I think 7-panels should be within her scope as well, since the few times she ran a mile, she weakened in the final furlong, so today's distance should suit her just fine. GRADE: A.

#5 WHOA NESSIE (8/1) has two wins, and they both came around two turns, so I'm not sure a return to the sprint game is what this gal wants, especially since she needed beaten-claimers to get her second career win. At least she should be fit coming out of route races, but I think she has her work cut out for her from a class-perspective. GRADE: C.

#6 SO GUCCI (12/1) is a 3-year-old who ran an even second last time against \$50K sophomores while going a mile on the lawn. The cutback should help, and this gal already has a win at this starter level, but she looks like she'll be just chasing the early pace today and hoping for the best. GRADE: C.

#7 MONGOLIAN EMPIRE (8/1) has two wins at a mile, so we'll see how she handles the one-turn game today after failing to threaten against N3L types last time. She should be fit off those recent mile races, but she'll have to mount her bid from off the pace, and she looks better for underneath as someone who is likely to pick up the pieces but will have too much to do to get up first. GRADE: C.

#8 CATOCA (5/2) gets a barn upgrade and a jock upgrade after just missing against N3L types last time while going a mile. She has races on her form against much tougher that will make her very dangerous in here, so I can't fault anyone for taking a short price on a gal who should be fit and is going to get a very good stalking trip while in the clear. GRADE: A.

#9 INCREDIBLY LUCKY (8/1) is in good form right now, but she's a Cal-bred who looks to be a cut below the very best in here, having just beaten N2L foes going 6.5-furlongs at Santa Anita with a good trip, running down the pacesetters who were getting leg weary in the final sixteenth. She should get a similar trip as the favorite, but I'm having a hard time seeing her outkick that one in the lane. GRADE: C.

### **CONCLUSION**

What a strange race with five of the nine runners priced up at 8/1 on the morning-line. Unfortunately, I'm not crazy about any of them, since I do think the favorite is legit—but perhaps #4 DEARBORN can hold to her 5/1 morning-line. At that price, I think she might offer some value in the contest.

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