

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/23/2019

Race 5: \$40K claiming event for 3-year-old fillies going 8F on the lawn (rails at 18-ft.)

Post: approx. post 2:33 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Today's contest race is a very competitive \$40K claimer for 3-year-old fillies going a mile on the lawn with the rails out 18-feet. The morning-line favorite is a tepid 7/2, so there should be a decent payout in here if you can sniff out the right horse in a fairly competitive race.

#1 SWING THOUGHTS (4/1) adds blinkers in her first start for new trainer Hess, who just took her for \$32K in a dirt sprint where she was a lackluster fifth as the second choice. It was a disappointing effort because she had run so well at that level over the summer. In fact, she even won a turf race here after that at the \$50K level, so I'm not surprised that Hess has placed her in this spot. As good as her races were here this summer, however, her recent form is uninspiring, and it will take a step forward for this gal to reverse the downward trend of three blah races in a row. GRADE: C.

#2 IMPERIAL CREED (20/1) has been on turf three times and hasn't really shown much, though all three of those races came against tougher animals. Still, she's been off since April, and with her two wins coming on the main track, I have to think that this is a leg-stretcher for a dirt mile next time. That said, she gets in light with a 5-pound advantage, and trainer Michael McCarthy can have them ready to run off this kind of vacation if you think this one will be ready to roll. GRADE: C.

#3 ITALIA (SPA) (15/1) is a funny animal: she's named after Italy; she was bred in Spain; and she debuted in France. Now she tries to finally put it all together here in the States after being her own worst enemy in all of her starts. Puype adds blinkers after a slow beginning left her with no chance in a four-horse field last time against slightly better. He also decides to run this gal without the benefit of Lasix today—perhaps in an attempt to get her back to that debut form that saw her break her maiden at Saint-Cloud at first asking, without Lasix, of course. She's tough to support on paper, but maybe those two changes are enough to get this gal to move forward today. GRADE: C.

#4 SEASIDE DANCER (7/2), the first O'Neill entrant, is your tepid morning-line favorite, and rightfully so, since she is a win-machine, having won five of 11 starts—including a few at the \$50K level. She's also well-traveled, so you know she can adapt to any kind of scenario, and her tactical speed ensures she'll get a good forwardly placed trip. That said, there is a world in which she'll be just a little too close to a quick pace, and that might soften her up a little late—and maybe that's enough to want to take her on as the morning-line top choice? GRADE: B.

#5 QUERELLE (9/2) has a very nice late kick, so she should have every chance to mow them all down in a race that should have a decent early clip. She's also dropping in to this age-restricted claimer after facing tougher, older allowance foes. I suspect she'll be shorter than her morning-line, however, and I

have zero confidence in Espinoza giving her a good turf ride, but she looks pretty solid in here regardless. GRADE: A.

#6 CREATIVE ROMANCE (12/1) ran fifth against slightly better here over the summer, attending the pace and weakening. The same happened up north where she just chased the pace and weakened against starter-allowance foes. The slight class-relief should help, but her only win came going 5.5-furlongs, and her inability to carry her speed a route of ground will make things tough for her over this course. GRADE: C.

#7 CLOCKSTRIKESTWELVE (6/1) has to be considered simply because she's an East Coast runner making her first start here in SoCal, and that's usually a good thing. She should also get a pace to close into, since she likes to bide her time from off the pace before making one run. Smith's presence should not be ignored, and it seems like this gal is well-spotted today after a string of races where she was facing older horses. GRADE: A.

#8 MISS FLAWLESS (FR) (10/1) was 7/2 at a slightly tougher level here over the summer, but she ran half a race. Her starts since then weren't much better, just running evenly while sprinting on synth and turf. I don't like that she has a tendency to idle when the real running starts, but it is interesting to see Prat ride back on a filly who doesn't look like much on paper. Still, Seaside Dancer has her squarely on form, so this gal will need a big move forward today. GRADE: C.

#9 FACTOR OF TWO (10/1), the second O'Neill runner, broke her maiden two back, wiring the field in a 5.5-furlong turf sprint at Santa Anita. She then tried the same thing against allowance horses and weakened badly after some trouble. She hasn't shown an ability to rate, so I suspect she's just going to break, show speed while angling over, and then hope for the best. The fact that there should be a quick pace, along with the issue of her never having been two turns, makes her look like a pace factor only to me. That said, she is running for a tag for the first time, so there is the slight possibility that she's just classier than these. GRADE: C.

#10 POSH HOLLY (IRE) (5/1) is a very honest runner who ran a very good second when dropped in for a tag for the first time two back. Granted, she lost to Swing Thoughts, whom she'll have to face again today, but she was favored over that gal, and she did only lose by a half-length. I expect her to give a good account of herself today, since she rarely runs a bad race, but the post is no picnic, so Franco will have to make all the right moves in this big field. GRADE: A.

CONCLUSION

While I do think the favorite, #4 SEASIDE DANCER, has every chance to win, I also think this is a race with a few good places to land. Of my three "A's," I think **#10 POSH HOLLY (IRE) (5/1)** is the best runner, but I hate the post, so I would need a better price than 5/1. Because of that, I'll also give looks to **#5 QUERELLE (9/2)** and **#7 CLOCKSTRIKESTWELVE (6/1)**, seeing which one is the biggest overlay.

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