DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/29/2019
Race 8: $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 4:04 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

We were right about Sunday's contest race being bombs-away; unfortunately, our 60/1 bomb finished third, and we were unable to sniff out the 70/1 shot who won! I doubt there will be such a high price in this race, but it is a very competitive $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6-furlongs on the main track. Nine horses are entered and quite a few of them seem capable of winning.

#1 TRUCK SALESMAN (8/1), the first O'Neill entrant, has speed and adds blinkers, so expect this one to blast out of the gate and hope for the best. There is one other runner who is just as quick, however, so it's quite likely those two will hook up. There's also the fact that this guy took a while to break his maiden, and then he needed starter foes to notch victory number-two, while his one try at this N1X level was lacking (albeit it came going shorter on turf). His best race is a fit, but he'll have to earn it with Adens Dream breathing down his neck every step of the way. GRADE: C.

#2 PARSIMONY (12/1), the second O'Neill runner, also took a while to break his maiden, but he was pitched too high in several of those races. Two back, he finally did break through with a facile maiden victory against a weak field, attending the pace and drawing off to win by a length. His first try at this level was a blah effort in a 7-furlong event. He looks like he'll end up chasing the pace and maybe picking up a minor award if several others fail to fire—but a win seems like a tough ask. GRADE: C.

#3 ROYAL TRUMP (12/1) is a grinder who will try all the way to the wire, but it should be noted that his best work has come against lesser. Last time, he went up to Fresno to beat $40K claimers because his try before that—at this level on this circuit—wasn't good enough. He should get a good tracking trip in here, hoping the speed backs up, but he'll have to prove he can get the business done at the N1X level. On the plus side, he plots really well on **OptixPLOT**. GRADE: B.

#4 ADENS DREAM (6/1) has already cleared this condition and is in for the $40K tag after a few lackluster races this summer against much tougher foes. He has an abundance of early speed when he's sharp, so if he's keen off the freshening, you can expect him to be throwing it down with Truck Salesman. It's quite possible those two end up running together all the way around the track, but I have to think they will soften up each other, setting it up for someone stalking the pace. GRADE: B.

#5 TOUCHING RAINBOWS (6/1) would be a really short price in this field if this race were a year ago, but this former stakes-placed runner has had a spotty 2019 campaign after coming off the bench and looking good in the California Cup Sprint back in January. Still, he's in for the $40K tag today, and he does make the second start of his form cycle, so if he has anything left to give, he can show it today. There is a world in which the connections are just playing poker after that blah Fresno effort, so I expect this guy to fire today. He should also get a perfect stalking trip. GRADE: A.

#6 CANDY CORNELL (8/1) has burnt a lot of my money, running a mixed bag of races and being stuck at this level for what seems like an eternity. I keep expecting a rider switch, but Shirreffs is sticking with Diaz and his 5-pound weight-break. Instead, he chooses to shake things up with an equipment change—adding blinkers today, which might help get this one over the hump. I'm willing to give him another chance because of that—and also because the barn is on fire—plus, his best races are good enough. GRADE: A.

#7 TOP BRASS (9/2) looks a lot like Royal Trump to me—a grinder who should get a good tracking trip but who will need to prove himself at this N1X level after facing much weaker company. Last time, this dude was 6/5 in a $32K claimer, had dead aim on the eventual winner, and never could grind him down. Hess took him out of that race and moves him up in class while giving Espinoza a leg up for the first time—all positives, if you're a believer. GRADE: B.

#8 STREET VISION—program scratch.

#9 SOLDIER BOY (4/1), the second Sadler entrant, is a surprisingly short 4/1 on the morning-line, since he's a 3-year-old who just broke his maiden as the even-money favorite against a weak field of four other runners. He wired them that day, but he's probably not fast enough to keep up with Truck Salesman and stablemate Adens Dream today. Maybe he'll luck into a perfect stalking trip, but I'm okay watching one in his first try versus winners. GRADE: C.

#10 MADMAN (7/2) is the tepid morning-line favorite—and he's even tougher to take than Soldier Boy is at a short price, since this guy has only run one race: his maiden-breaker back in May. After destroying MSWs at 3/1, he's been off for 208-days. I hate seeing layoffs after wins, but there are some positives here: Baltas rarely wins at first-asking, so the fact that this one did means he has ability; secondly, Prat takes the call for a trainer who is having a ridiculously good meet. Also, Baltas can bring them back ready to run. We'll see just how good this 3-year-old is today, but I have to play against from a value-perspective. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION
Both my "A's" are good prices, though I expect **#5 TOUCHING RAINBOWS (6/1)** to be shorter than his morning-line if he's really live. Still, I'll watch the board and decide between that foe and **#6 CANDY CORNELL (8/1)**, whom I'll give one more chance to!

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