

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter [@ScatoniSureShot](https://twitter.com/ScatoniSureShot)

www.FrankScatoni.com

www.OptixEQ.com

Date: 8/3/23

Race 7: \$40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 30-feet)

Post: approx. post 5:00 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We had a nice hit to close out last weekend in the Eddie Read (G2), so let's see if we can keep it going this week, though I'm not as confident in my picks here. I thought today's contest Race 7, a \$40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at one-mile on the turf with the rails at 30-feet, was very tough.

Before we dig in, here's a reminder that every Thursday, I host the Newcomers' Seminar at 1:05 p.m. PDT by the big fountain in the Plaza de Mexico near the Stretch Run entrance. Come say hi!

#1 RED ROAD (15/1) has a couple of things to consider. First off, he's a lightly raced 4-year-old who has already cleared this N1X hurdle, so he enters this off a layoff, dropping in class while running for a tag, and showing up as a new gelding. He'll also get to save ground, so maybe he can get lucky today.

GRADE: B.

#2 TAISHAN (8/1) is another one who is in for the tag since he's long since cleared this condition. That said, what you see is what you get from this 6-year-old, who hasn't won in a long time. All three of his wins have come on the main track, while he's 0-for-7 on the turf. GRADE: C.

#3 BURNIN TURF (4/1) is also for sale, so we'll have to decide if this 7-year-old is worth \$40K at this point in his career. He's capable of running some big races, but there must be a reason why Blacker has been sprinting him for a while now, so I'm thinking this one will be part of a quick pace and then get overtaken late. That said, his best is good enough, if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#4 FLY THE SKY (12/1) makes the third start of his form cycle and stretches back out around two turns, which is how he's done his best work. That said, his best work has come going longer against weaker foes. He's lucky that there should be a decent early pace in here, so perhaps that will flatter his grinding style. GRADE: C.

#5 TIZ PLUS (3/1) removes the hood while making his second start off a layoff and stretching out. He's in for the \$40K tag because this 7-year-old has won a lot of races throughout his career, but he's winless in 2022-2023, so we'll see if he can turn back the clock today. That said, his best races are better than most of these, so he's in with a big shot, hence the morning-line favoritism. GRADE: B.

#6 SOULMATE (6/1) hasn't made a dent recently at the N1X level back East, sporting an 0-for-11 record in 2022-2023. I always look closely at the East Coast shippers, but I'm fine letting this one beat me. GRADE: X.

#7 JACK SIXPACK (4/1) has tactical speed, so he should be in the vanguard early. He risks being a little too close to a quick pace, however, especially since he's coming out of a sprint race, so Vazquez will

have to try to get him to settle early. If he does, this guy has a big shot, making the second start of his form cycle and stretching out. This Cal-bred will have to beat open company, but D'Amato knows what he's doing. GRADE: B.

#8 DANCING RINCA (12/1) is 0-for-5 at today's distance, with his one win coming against sprinters. Granted, he has run decently around two turns, but he's lacked the eye of the tiger. I can see him stalking wide here; then he'll have to show he can kick on. I'm skeptical, but Neil Drysdale has forgotten more about horses than most people learn in a lifetime! GRADE: X.

#9 EASTERN OCEAN (8/1) looks like the value play to me, as you get Hernandez at 8/1 on the morning-line. Note that he's in for the \$40K tag, since he's already an N1X winner. He has some decent form against better horses, and even though he did just lose to starter foes, he was coming off a year-plus effort, and I'm thinking that sprint was likely a prep for this. GRADE: A.

#10 SUBSIDIZE (12/1) is 0-for-3 at today's mile distance, and he's likely in a little deep today while having to break from a tough post. Four back, he was 22/1 at this level going a mile, so even though his recent sprint form isn't bad, this really isn't his best game. GRADE: X.

#11 SPIRIT MAKER (7/2) (AE) seems a little short on the line, since his good recent form has come against much weaker starter or restricted foes. That said, Berrios is riding lights out, so you have to consider any horse he's on. Still, I'm fine letting this one beat me if he gets in. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

There are a few places to land in this wide-open race, but I'll plant my flag with **#9 EASTERN OCEAN (8/1)**. He's in good hands with Glatt, and I think he's sitting on a peak effort second off the bench and stretching out. Plus, J. J. bothers to ride. That said, I wouldn't fault anyone for choosing a different contest horse, as I do think several of these can win...and at good prices.

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