

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Date: 8/5/23

Race 9: \$150K California Dreamin' for Cal-breds going 8.5-furlongs on the turf (rails at 18-feet)

Post: approx. post 6:11 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

What a fine renewal of the \$150K California Dreamin', an 8.5-furlong turf affair for Cal-breds with the rails at 18-feet. There is a lot of speed in the race, including the morning-line favorite, so I'm going to look for horses who can come from off the pace.

#1 ROYAL 'N RANDO (15/1) is a closer, so I'm giving him a shot, even though his recent wins have come on dirt and synth (when he beat today's morning-line favorite). I know he hasn't won on turf in a long time, but his come-home time in the Turf Classic at Santa Anita back in January was legit. Don't sell this one too short. GRADE: B.

#2 HACKING IT UP (15/1) is a 3-year-old who is facing some pretty good older foes. I've always thought this one had ability, so it wouldn't shock me if he ran well, but I'm having a hard time seeing him step up enough to beat some quality older foes today. GRADE: X.

#3 **NONE ABOVE THE LAW (8/1)** hasn't won since the Del Mar Derby (G2), way back in 2021—but this guy was right there on the wire in this race last year. I think Peter Miller—who has heated up the last week—has been pointing to this race. I expect this guy to run a big one today. GRADE: A.

#4 LARRY'S LEGEND (15/1) is a stretch-out sprinter, so he should be part of the early pace—but I'm having a hard time seeing this one in the winner's circle. His last win came going 5.5-furlongs on dirt, and he's facing some legit Cal-bred turf horses. GRADE: X.

#5 CARMELITA'S MAN (4/1) is my top pick. He won this race last year, and I expect him to get a similar set-up today with so many speed horses in here. This Cal-bred has legit come-home times, and trainer Dean Pederson has done a terrific job campaigning this guy. He will fire today. GRADE: A.

#6 KINGS RIVER KNIGHT (9/5) has a Beyer Speed Figure advantage, but as we all know, the race doesn't always go to the swiftest. This guy likes to wing it on the lead, but there are speed horses to his outside, so I don't like the race shape for him at all. He could win...but at 9/5? Not with my money. GRADE: X.

#7 JIMMY BLUE JEANS (8/1) is a cool horse who has danced a lot of dances, but he likes to be on the lead, and that means he and Kings River Knight are going to duke it out early, and that's a problem for both of them. He's certainly good enough and fast enough to win, but based on the anticipated race shape, I have to side against. GRADE: X.

#8 BALLY'S CHARM (8/1) is another one who likes to be forwardly placed, but he's not as fast as the two horses inside of him, so he's probably looking at a 3-wide stalking trip—otherwise known as the “Kiss of Death Trip.” That said, I love the way Berrios has been riding, so I can see him maybe finding the rail while stalking the pace, and if that happens, this guy would have a shot—but all of his best races have been on or near the lead, and the pace should be too swift early. GRADE: C.

#9 BANG FOR YOUR BUCK (15/1) had an eventful journey in a similar spot at Santa Anita, but he was 19/1 that day, so not much was expected. He needed some time off since that May race, and I give kudos to trainer Dan Azcarate for freshening this one up after a tough trip. He also removes the hood today, which could certainly have an impact on a horse who has nine placings compared to only two wins. Maybe you can use him underneath, but he needs a career best for the W. GRADE: X.

#10 INDIAN PEAK (5/1), the second Miller, has been an ATM machine for the owners. All this 6-year-old does is show up for work and cash a paycheck. I have a lot of respect for this runner, but it's been a year since he's run around two turns, and the post is certainly no picnic. As I mentioned, Miller is heating up, so it wouldn't shock me if this one showed up, but I have to side against. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

I do like #4 CARMELITA'S MAN (4/1) the best in here, but I have to think that #8 NONE ABOVE THE LAW (8/1) will offer the most value—and when it comes to contest play, you have to take the bigger price. If you want a really big price, #1 ROYAL 'N RANDO (15/1) should get the right set-up.

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