DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
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Date: 8/12/23
Race 9: $250K Yellow Ribbon (G2) for fillies & mares going 8.5-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:15 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got an interesting renewal of the $250K Yellow Ribbon (G2), an 8.5-furlong turf affair for fillies and mares with the rails at 12-feet. D'Amato has a three-headed monster, but he doesn't saddle the morning-line favorite. Read on to find out more…

#1 CLOSING REMARKS (5/2) is a cool 5-year-old mare who rarely runs a bad race, which is why she's won more than $560K in her career. She has always had a really nice late kick, so you can expect her on the scene late. She'll need a little bit of help from a pace-perspective, but you know she'll save ground and come on with her run. She's a legit contender, but she's the morning-line favorite, so I'll look elsewhere for my contest play. GRADE: B.

#2 TURNERLOOSE (8/1), the first D'Amato trainee, doesn't have the greatest recent East Coast turf form from last year, but that rarely matters out here. She now makes her first SoCal start for a new barn that knows what to do with a horse, so I'm expecting this one to show up today—but will it be good enough? She is a Grade 2 winner on dirt, and they did think enough of her to try her in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies Turf (G1) back in 2021, but she will need a step forward from her last race (which came back in October) to have a say in here. I'm also not sure what kind of trip she'll get, since she has speed, but she also likes to stalk. I'll watch one. GRADE: C.

#3 SPIRIT AND GLORY (IRE) (6/1) seems like the right contest play at her morning-line. She invades here from back East, where she's run some decent races against some decent ladies. I also like that her best race ever came at this intermediate 8.5-furlong distance, so I can see her getting the same trip she got two back when she won a stakes at Monmouth. She should track the pace toward the inside and pounce when the real running starts. I also know that East Coast trainer Falcone has sent out live runners here in year's past, so the fact that he has Berrios on board means a lot. GRADE: A.

#4 SCHOOL DANCE (3/1), the second D'Amato runner, figures, though she will have to turn the tables on Closing Remarks, who has finished ahead of her a few times already. Granted, this gal hasn't had the best of trips, so she could easily reverse form on that foe today, especially since she's going to be forwardly placed over a course that has favored those types the past week. That said, she's likely to offer much value. GRADE: B.

#5 LUCKY GIRL (IRE) (5/1), the third and final D'Amato charge, looks in tough based on her paper form, but she is a lightly raced 4-year-old who still has some upside, if she can ever get back to her early-season sophomore form, which was terrific. She's in good hands with D'Amato, who thought enough of her to run her in the Oceanside, where she had no chance from the 14-hole. Don't be surprised if she runs much better today, second off the bench and with a better post. Will it be good enough? GRADE: C.

#6 GANADORA (6/1) will certainly ensure a good early pace, since this gal has sharp dirt speed and is moving to the turf for the first time for Baffert, who I'm sure will want this gal winging it up front. She is the only real speed in the race, so she definitely has lone-F potential, especially since the course has been a lot more speed-friendly the last two weeks. We'll see how she handles turf, but this does seem like a little bit of a desperation move to me, since this $1 million baby has never really stepped up to fulfill the expectations everyone has had of her. GRADE: C.

#7 AWAKE AT MIDNYTE (4/1) is a cool gal who is pretty versatile, so don't sell her too short in here. I do prefer others, but I do like that this runner has acted on dirt and turf, and she's run well at all manner of distances and against some pretty good horses. That said, I can see her stalking the pace while a bit wide, trying to make sure her inside foes doesn't scoot too far away, and I think that takes its toll late. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION
This is a very interesting race with several ascendant 4-year-olds going against a quality 5-year-old mare. It wouldn't shock me if anyone won, but I'll go with the East Coast invader, **#3 SPIRIT AND GLORY (IRE) (6/1)**. She's good value on her morning-line, Berrios rides, and I think she'll get a good tracking trip while down toward the inside. She's the contest play.

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