DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
On Twitter @ScatoniSureShot
www.FrankScatoni.com
www.OptixEQ.com

Date: 8/13/23
Race 10: $50K starter-allowance contested at 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 12-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:44 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

The races don't get any easier here at Del Mar. We close out the week with Sunday's nightcap, a very competitive $50K starter-allowance contested at one mile on the turf with the rails at 12-feet. I talked about this race on Pete Fornatale's In the Money Players' Podcast when we went over the mandatory Pick 6 payout sequence, and I said I could go through this field and make a case for everyone…but you can't bet everyone, so read on…I'm going to plant a flag with a price.

#1 GOLDENEYE (6/1) has speed but doesn't necessarily need the lead, so Maldonado will have options from the rail for a horse who has run a mixed bag of races at this level. Note that he was bet to favoritism in a dirt race on Opening Day, and he just kind of ran around the track. He'll appreciate getting back on the lawn, and it should be noted that Eurton has been hot lately. GRADE: B.

#2 DEVELOPING THE WAY (15/1) is a 4-year-old who has only two starts, so there is room for improvement if you're willing to forgive this one's last race, which came sprinting on dirt. I can forgive it and just focus on the fact that this guy broke his maiden at first-asking going a mile on Tapeta. That's not an easy thing to do. I'm not crazy about the turf breeding, but Miyadi is no dummy, and he crushes it in all of the relevant categories. Still, the surface is a question mark. GRADE: C.

#3 CHIEFS BLANKET (12/1) makes his 4-year-old debut and his SoCal debut, after a very long vacation. Chad Brown ran him for $40K back East, where he finished seventh in his first start ever, and now O'Neill is running him against winners for his first SoCal start. I'm guessing there wasn't a race for him against maiden-claimers, so that's why he's here. I have to watch one, but it wouldn't shock me if this one ran well with the sneaky placement against winners. GRADE: C.

#4 CARDIFF CRACK (8/1) has pretty solid form at this starter level, but he hasn't been able to break through with a winning performance. He ran third at this level last time at 19/1 while racing on dirt, but his turf form is pretty solid as well, with a couple of third-place finishes against similar types. I think he's a good exotics horse, but he's hard to back on the win end after several misses. GRADE: C.

#5 NATIONAL ROAD (7/2) is the tepid morning-line favorite, but if he runs back to his two races here last summer, he's a legitimate favorite—but can he? He's been off for almost a year, but I know Glatt can bring them back ready to roll, so I'm not too worried about it—and I love that he calls on Prat to ride. Still, I'm not crazy about playing the chalk in a big, competitive field such as this. GRADE: B.

#6 GREENBOW (4/1) has run two decent races at this level, but they've come sprinting. Normally, I'd be all about a Mandella horse stretching out, but this 5-year-old has run seven times, yet he's only been

around two turns once—and never two turns on turf. That bothers me, even though I know how good Mandella is. GRADE: C.

#7 RICH GOLD (6/1) has one race that sticks out like a sore thumb, and that's his near-miss at this level last December when he came flying late to just miss and run second as the 17/10 favorite. Toss his dirt race after that—but here are two things that concern me: he hasn't been seen since January, and he's a 3-year-old facing elders for the first time. GRADE: C.

#8 GIOVANAZZO (12/1) has plenty of early speed, so you can expect him to be leading the charge, since he'll have to go from out here, otherwise he'll be hung out to dry. Toss his last race against solid allowance horses, but note that he too is a 3-year-old facing elders for the first time. Speed is his best asset, so he better use it. GRADE: C.

#9 TALLIS (5/1) was an "A" for Pete on the podcast, and I was okay with that, but I see him more as an underneath horse, simply because what you see is what you get from this 5-year-old. He's run third twice before at this level, so you can expect him to be right around the wire—but can he show the eye of the tiger today? GRADE: B.

#10 VAGABOND SHOES (12/1) is the wise-guy play. This 3-year-old looked terrific when breaking his maiden at first asking in a turf sprint back in February at 7/1. He hasn't been seen since, and I don't like that this 3-year-old is facing elders for the first time or that he has to break from a tough post, but let me tell you this: do not sleep on Rolando Quinonez horses. This guy is a very good trainer who had a terrific Del Mar last year, so he will have his horses ready to run. Is this sophomore good enough to win right back? I don't know, but I'm willing to pay to play at 12/1, especially in a field of horses who are just *meh*. Oh, and look who takes the call. Berrios! GRADE: A.

#11 CALARI BLUECAT (20/1) looks in very tough, making his first SoCal start after sprinting—and losing—against much weaker foes in Texas. That said, Blacker is a pretty good trainer, so he either thinks this guy has a shot here, or he's using this race as a conditioning race for something else down the road. I'll bet on the latter. Note he removes the hood today. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION
As you can see, there is so much ambiguity surrounding this field of mediocre starter foes that I'm willing to step out and take a 3-year-old against older horses…and breaking from the 10-hole…while facing winners for the first time…and stretching out for the first time—angles that I'm typically against. I'll go to war with **#10 VAGABOND SHOES (12/1)**. One time!

Visit www.frankscatoni.com for more content.
If you'd like to learn more about **OptixEQ**, visit www.optixeq.com.