

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter [@ScatoniSureShot](#)

www.FrankScatoni.com

www.OptixEQ.com

Date: 8/25/23

Race 5: \$40K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies & mares going 5-furlongs on turf (rails at 24-ft.)

Post: approx. post 4:59 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We've got two contest races on this eight-race Friday card, so that means double the fun! Note that first post today and every remaining Friday is 3:00 p.m. PDT, so keep that in mind.

Today's first contest race is a very tough \$40K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going 5-furlongs on turf with the rails at 24-feet. It drew an oversubscribed field of 13 ladies, but only nine will greet the starter because of the rail setting. I had a very hard time with this race because all of the decent speed horses are stuck on the AE list, so it remains to be seen which jocks will be aggressive. NOTE: if one of the speedy AEs gets in, upgrade her to an "A" (if she's a "B"). If two of them get in, keep them both as "B's," as the speedsters are likely to cancel each other out!

#1 SHE'S GOT A WAY (3/1) goes out for the white-hot Eurton, but this gal looks in a bit tough today, moving up in class and having to break from the rail in a full field while lacking the early speed to get good position. I can see her rallying up the wood late, but will she have enough room and oomph to get there? GRADE: C.

#2 GEM MINE (15/1) was 9/1 at this level back in October when she put in a mild late bid to finish sixth going 6.5-furlongs down the hill at Santa Anita. She hasn't been seen since, so we'll see if this gal is ready to fire to launch her late-season 4-year-old campaign. I'm tempted to watch one, as I think this might be a prep for something longer. GRADE: C.

#3 REAL FIRE (6/1) has done good work against starter foes, so we'll see if she can make the leap against entry-level allowance types today. I'm a little skeptical, but she should get a good tracking trip if you're a believer. Note that Albayaader (IRE) has her on form ever since she left the Sadler barn. GRADE: C.

#4 QUEENZY (5/2) hasn't been seen since November 2022, when she finished fourth in a mile race against her own age group when she was trained by Mullins. She now switches barns and makes her 3-year-old debut, so we'll see how she does facing older foes for the first time today. I expect her to run well for two reasons: first off, Miller is deadly in these spots; secondly, Hernandez takes the call, and he should utilize this gal's early speed to potentially wire them in a paceless race. GRADE: A.

#5 RUFA RED KNOT (15/1) has Los Al dirt speed, so you can expect her to be carving out the early splits. Is she good enough to wire them? Tough to say, but I'm going to side against, since she doesn't exactly look like a turf horse. Know her early, then we'll see about late. GRADE: C.

#6 ALVINA (FR) (6/1) is a 3-year-old who faces elders for the first time, so she'll have to show she can beat more mature animals—but I'm not too worried. She makes her third start in the U.S., and I like that

she's cutting back after tiring in an 8.5-furlong race last time. I like the way she finished up in a 6-furlong turf sprint in her first start in the country, so I can see her flying home late. Will she get up in time? GRADE: B.

#7 SWALL (15/1) looks interesting to me, since I can draw a line through her two route races where she was in a good spot but spit the bit when the real running started. Three back, she looked sharp breaking her maiden up at Golden Gate in wire fashion, so if she can run back to that, she could prove very tough. That said, this 3-year-old will have to show she can replicate that Golden Gate form on this circuit. Expect Ricky to send hard and hope for the best in a race that lacks decent early speed. GRADE: A.

#8 MAGIC LIGHT (20/1) exits route races, so she'll need an aggressive ride. Still, she's a lightly raced 4-year-old, so there is still some upside here, and I think it's very interesting that Berrios takes the call. She might be too far back early, but if the race falls apart, you can expect her to be running on late. GRADE: B.

#9 ALBAYAADER (IRE) (3/1) has done good work against starter foes, but she now has to face proper allowance runners today. She was 7/2 at this level last time in a downhill race at Santa Anita, but she ran half a race with some early trouble. I think she can do better today, but she's likely looking at a wide stalking journey, so that could take its toll late. That said, the weight-break can't hurt. GRADE: B.

#10 JUST NAILS (4/1) (AE) was sharp breaking her maiden last time, and she figures to run another good one today even though this is her first try versus winners. She has plenty of early zip, so if she gets in, you know what Kent is doing to do. GRADE: B.

#11 HALFWAY TO NOWHERE (12/1) (AE) wired them in her debut at Golden Gate, but she regressed a little bit in her first try versus winners here on the dirt at Del Mar. She's bred for the lawn, so it wouldn't shock me if she ran back to her big Tapeta debut—and the 7-pound weight-break can't hurt—but she'll need to be hustled from out here if she gets in. GRADE: B.

#12 DENIM IN GOLD (6/1) (AE) ran a good second at this level and distance last time, and she figures to run another good one if she gets in. She has tactical speed and an aggressive jock, and that's all you need in these turf sprints. GRADE: B.

#13 HAYLEY LEVADE (8/1) (AE) was a top pick for me last time at this level and distance, and she ran a good third at 13/1—but she left herself with too much to do. She was well off the pace, swung very wide, and flew home late. Unfortunately, she's going to have another bad trip in a paceless race. She needs a quick early pace and a better post next time. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

I had a really hard time with this race, as is evidenced by so many "B's." That said, I have an "A" who is 15/1, so I'll take my chances with **#7 SWALL (15/1)**, who should get a good forwardly placed trip in a race filled with off-the-pace types. She might not be good enough off that Golden Gate form, but I'll pay to find out.

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Date: 8/25/23

Race 7: \$150K Solana Beach for Cal-bred fillies & mares going 8-furlongs on turf (rails at 24-ft.)

Post: approx. post 5:59 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Two for the price of one on this Friday's card, as we've got this second contest race to play, which is the \$150K Solana Beach Stakes for Cal-bred fillies and mares going a mile on the lawn with the rails at 24-feet. Note that this was originally scheduled for Sunday, but Hurricane Hilary had other plans, so here we are today. I've always had a soft spot for this race because Solana Beach was my neighborhood for the last fifteen years up until about a few weeks ago, but the sleepy little beach town still holds a place in my heart (and I'm only a few miles down the 5, so I can visit any time!).

#1 CHANCERY WAY (6/1) has sprint speed, so you can expect her to be leading the charge as far as she can—but can she wire them? I'm a little skeptical, but she is in the best form of her life, and even though she's winless on turf, she has run well. I'm going to side against, but she's a pace player's dream: a lone-F who should be lengths clear as they leave the backstretch. GRADE: C.

#2 MADIHA (15/1) looked good beating Cal-bred N1X foes at today's distance three back, but I expected her to run well that day, despite her going off at nearly 6/1. The race set up for her, and she had the benefit of a 7-pound weight-break. You can toss her dirt races since then and focus on that one good turf effort—but will it be good enough against these types? Probably not. GRADE: X.

#3 EDDIE'S NEW DREAM (2/1) is a very cool 5-year-old race mare who was won more than \$600K by finishing in the money 19 out of her 25 career starts (with seven victories to her credit). I like that she's versatile and can adapt to any pace. The only slight concern is that she's 1-for-6 here at Del Mar and 1-for-6 at today's distance, so perhaps she's a tiny bit vulnerable today. Still, she's a likely winner. GRADE: A.

#4 ULTIMATE HY (3/1) is another very cool Cal-bred who loves this mile distance—in fact, she's coming off a very nice win against open N1X foes going a mile here over this course, despite having to break from the 9-hole. She should get a good tracking trip, and I expect her to be right there at the wire as well. GRADE: A.

#5 HARPER'S GALLOP (15/1) is yet another cool lady—she's a 7-year-old race mare who is still in pretty good form. Two back, she beat Cal-bred N1X types going a mile at Santa Anita, and last time, she ran a decent fifth with a lot of trouble against open \$40K claimers. That said, these are much tougher ladies, so this gal will need a big step forward today to get the W. Do note that she is switching barns, so we'll see if new trainer Jesus Uranga can get this old gal to the winner's circle. GRADE: X.

#6 GLORIOUS SPRING (10/1) is a lightly raced 4-year-old who has won two in a row, including a win against open N1X foes back in July. All that's well and good, but both of those races were on dirt, so

we'll see if she can transfer her dirt form to the turf. It's hard to know how this gal will act on the lawn because she's only been on the green stuff once before, and that was in her debut, so you can't hold her accountable for that poor effort. I like that she's making the second start of her form cycle, but I'm fine watching one against these types of proven turfers. GRADE: X.

#7 SUNSHINE BABE (12/1) is an honest gal who has a decent late kick, so you can expect her to be running on through the lane. I don't think it will be good enough to beat the top few in here, but I do think she's capable of sneaking into the exotics if one of the big three doesn't fire. She loves the mile distance, but do note that she's 0-for-6 at Del Mar. GRADE: B.

#8 ROSE MADDOX (5/2) is very versatile with wins on dirt and turf and going short and long. I love horses like this, and I think Miyadi has done a really good job with her. Two back, she just missed against Eddie's New Dream gong a mile at Santa Anita, so she's not far off that one at all, so you can expect her to be right around the wire again today. Note that Berrios bails for Ultimate Hy, but you get Hernandez in the exchange, so no great loss there. Still, this horse likes to stalk, and doing that from the outside post means a likely wide journey. GRADE: A.

CONCLUSION

To me, this is a three-horse race between **#3 EDDIE'S NEW DREAM (2/1)**, **#4 ULTIMATE HY (3/1)**, and **#8 ROSE MADDOX (5/2)**. I just can't see anyone beating my "A's" in here. I would use them all in my multi-race wagers, but for contest purposes, you'll just have to play the board.

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