DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
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Date: 9/8/23
Race 8: Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies & mares going 6.5F on the main track
Post: approx. post 6:39 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

One final surge! Only three more days of racing left before we put a bow on the summer meet—so let's make it count. We've got a 3:00 p.m. PDT first post today, so today's contest race, which is the nightcap on this eight-race card, will go off around 6:39 p.m., so don't get caught unawares! Today's event is a Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going 6.5-furlongs on the main track. The track still seems to tilt outside, so that's where I'm going to look for the winner—unless, of course, I notice something different (since there have been a few days where the inside has been okay).

#1 BIG NOVEL (4/1) should be fit, making the third start of her form cycle and cutting back from a one-mile route, where she just grinded along. Her juvenile form was pretty good, so she has that to build on in this spot, so she looks like a contender to me, especially with Hernandez taking the call—but the rail draw worries me. GRADE: B.

#2 SHANGHAI SUNRISE (15/1) made the lead and never looked back against $20K claimers last time when going today's distance. It was a sharp race for a trainer who is having an unreal meet, but this one will have to prove she can handle tougher company today while also working out a trip from the inside, as she's not fast enough to make the lead against some quicker outside runners. GRADE: C.

#3 CHOLLY (8/1) is pretty consistent, running around the same figure every race—but while that figure has been good enough to earn slices at various levels, it hasn't been fast enough to win. This 3-year-old will need a career-best today, but that's not too far out of the question. She makes the third start of her form cycle, goes from turf to dirt, and gets the services of Berrios. GRADE: B.

#4 FLAME MCGOON (15/1) ran some solid races on turf last year, but she also has a win on dirt, so the surface switch isn't too worrisome. She's also making the second start of her form cycle after a long layoff, so she should be ready to move forward today for a trainer who has really caught fire the last two weeks. This gal isn't impossible, but it's really hard to trust her jock if it's a dogfight in the lane. GRADE: C.

#5 BOLD CHOICE (12/1) tracked in a good spot last time when breaking her maiden at 5/1. She was game to get up by a head, but she did get the right set-up while also getting a 5-pound weight-break, which she loses today. She also has to face winners for the first time. As solid as Knapp and Pereira are together, I'm not feeling this gal today. GRADE: C.

#6 DIAMONDS DANZING (4/1) just broke her maiden going 5-furlongs on turf; she made the lead and never looked back as the 7/5 favorite. She's winless on dirt, however, even though she has run well on that surface. That said, she likes to be forwardly placed, and I'm expecting a fast pace—and it remains to be seen if this gal can carry her speed 6.5-furlongs. GRADE: C.

#7 DANZING CAT (7/2) looks pretty solid in here after just missing by a nose last time at this level in a 6-furlong affair. She got overtaken late by her stablemate, who came from the clouds, but this gal was game in defeat, and she should get a lot out of that race, since she now makes the second start of her form cycle. I can see her getting a very good tracking trip while in the clear. GRADE: A.

#8 MADIHA (8/1) is pretty versatile, with wins on turf and dirt—and victories ranging from 1,000-yards to one mile, so she should be just fine going today's 6.5-furlongs on dirt. She should also be fit, cutting back from a one-mile turf race against stakes foes, where she wasn't' disgraced. Maldonado has been hot, and I can see this gal really outrunning her morning-line today. GRADE: A.

#9 LADY MARYANN (20/1) has a few decent races at this level, but they have come on turf. She was a beaten favorite back in October when running at this level on dirt in a 6-furlong sprint, so she'll need to do better today. She's had her chances at this level, so she'll need a career best to get the W today. GRADE: C.

#10 I'M A RISQUE GIRL (6/1) looked very good when breaking her maiden as the 2/1 favorite in a 6-furlong race on King Odie Day back on August 13. She tracked the pace in a good spot and won very convincingly, but it was against Cal-bred $50K maiden-claimers, so this is a much tougher spot. She'll need a step forward, but that's not impossible for this sophomore. GRADE: C.

#11 WISHTHEYALLCOULD BE (12/1) actually won this condition a long time ago, but she's had a few physical setbacks, so when she came back this year after a long layoff, she ran for $40K, $20K, and then $8K, which is when Glatt took her out of a win last time. She should get a great tracking trip, and I love the confidence shown by a hot trainer. Don't sell her too short here. GRADE: A.

CONCLUSION
This is a very good race that should yield an okay price, since the morning-line favorite, which is one of our "A's," is a tepid 7/2. If you can take that price, go for it on **#7 DANZING CAT (7/2)**,

but I'm more interested in **#8 MADIHA (8/1)**—and if you need an even bigger price, then **#11 WISHTHEYALLCOULDBE (12/1)** should outrun her odds.

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