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

Date: 9/10/23
Race 6: Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6.5-furlongs on dirt
Post: approx. post 4:08 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

We end the meet with two contest races to choose from, so if you're in the hunt, you need to close out the meet strongly. The first contest race is Race 6, a Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6.5-furlongs on the main track—and of the two contest races, I think this one is the race to make your move in.

#1 SEATTLE BREAKOUT (20/1) will need a breakout race, since his tries at this level have been lacking. His last win was against conditional-claimers, and this is a far tougher group. He'll also need an aggressive ride from the rail. GRADE: X.

#2 LET'S ACCLIMATE (8/1) will be part of a quick early pace, since he likes to be forwardly placed, and he is adding blinkers today. He was 4/1 at this level last time, and he had a rough trip and was likely a short horse, coming off a long layoff. He's got a much better shot today—but the pace set-up isn't ideal. GRADE: B.

#3 LARRY'S LEGEND (12/1) ran some decent races against some good horses up north, but those races were on sprint and synth. He does have dirt form, however, so he should be just fine switching back to the main track after running half a race against Cal-bred stakes foes going long on turf. I can see him chasing the pace and maybe hanging on for a slice. GRADE: C.

#4 SUPER CHIEF (3/1) looks a lot like Let's Acclimate—they are both lightly raced 5-year-olds who have speed and are adding blinkers today. I can see them duking it out early and perhaps softening up each other late. GRADE: B.

#5 GYPSY TEARS (20/1) gets wise-guy consideration here, since I really liked this guy's first two races, and I think last time was just a conditioning race for this, since he's clearly a better sprinter than router. I like that he's a lightly raced 4-year-old—and I like that his trainer has had a pretty solid meet, firing at big prices. GRADE: A.

#6 TAPATIO LEO (8/1) is a 3-year-old with sharp early speed, so he should help ensure an honest pace—but that also means he'll be knocking heads with two other horses inside of him. I like that Hernandez takes the call, but I'm a little concerned about the pace scenario. GRADE: B.

#7 WINDRIBBON (5/1) is in with a shot after running a solid third at this level last time, despite having to break from the one-hole. This outside post should help him out tremendously here, since he's a horse who likes to track before running on through the lane. GRADE: A.

#8 QUICK BUCK (12/1) wasn't able to make a dent at this level when trained by Glatt, so we'll see if O'Neill can reverse form after just taking him for $32K. He has tactical speed and is drawn well, but he will need to show more class today. GRADE: C.

#9 OUBABE (4/1) has been stuck at this level for a long time now while racing on turf, so Sadler will shake things up today and see if this one can finally break through on dirt. He should be fit cutting back from a mile turf race, and I like that he always seems to fire—but he'll have to show a lot more oomph today. GRADE: C.

#10 EREBUS (30/1) needed $17K maidens at Los Al to finally graduate in start number 16. His form on the big-boy circuit isn't great, so maybe this is a prep race for next time at Los Al. GRADE: X.

#11 ROY HOBBS (20/1) has big shoes to fill with a name like that, so we'll see if he can get his second win, going from turf to dirt and adding blinkers for a trainer who is good with both of those moves. You can ex-out this 3-year-old's last two races due to troubled trips, so if he can build on his maiden-breaker three back, he could vie for a slice. GRADE: B.

#12 BELLY UP (5/1) happens to be my favorite local music venue, but this 3-year-old has been off for a while now, and he returns having to face elders for the first time. At least he gets Lasix, and Prat is enticed to ride. I can see him getting a very good tracking trip from out here, making him a secondary contender in my eyes. GRADE: B.

#13 BUCK OWENS (12/1) (AE) sang for his supper last time when beating allowance foes at Los Al in a mixed-breed race—and those races are typically better than they look. That said, this horse couldn't beat starter foes three back, and this condition is usually much tougher. GRADE: X.

#14 BAG'S GOLD (5/2) (AE) was claimed for $16K by Hess out of a dominating win. He could prove to be an astute claim, but he did set a very slow pace on a speed-favoring track, so I'll take that big-fig with a grain of salt. This is a much tougher group as well. GRADE: C.

#15 TIGER DAD (15/1) (AE) drops in half after running half a race against $40K claimers. Seems like Diodoro doesn't want to leave town with this one, despite the fact that he won some stakes races in the minor leagues. I'm not sure what this 7-year-old is worth these days, but he looks like he's going to get a very wide stalking trip if he gets in. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

As I mentioned on the "In the Money Players' Podcast," I think the race sets up really well for tracking types—and #**5 GYPSY TEARS (20/1)** is certainly worth a punt at his massive price, considering the trip he's likely to get. Same goes for **#7 WINDRIBBON (5/1)**, though his price isn't nearly as appealing in this big full field.

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By Frank R. Scatoni
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Date: 9/10/23
Race 8: $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at one mile on the main track
Post: approx. post 5:10 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

Well, this will be your last chance to seal the deal in the online contest race at Del Mar, as the curtain comes down until the fall meet. They say that in a contest, it's not necessarily who you like…it's who you need! I'll try to help you out here in this $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at one mile on the main track, but admittedly, I was not crazy about this race.

#1 MR. T'S THIRSTY (15/1) is in very good form, and he must be happy and healthy because he was claimed twice this summer. If this race were at Golden Gate, this guy would be an automatic bet for me, since Calvario crushes it up there first off the claim. The talent pool is a little deeper down here, however, so we'll see if Calvario can move this guy up in class. I'm tempted to watch one at this tougher level. GRADE: C.

#2 DEVIL BE ME (3/1) has never run a bad race, but he is a Cal-bred who now has to face open allowance foes for the first time, so he's no cinch. He does have sharp early speed, however, so he figures to have a pace advantage—and he should be in front turning for home. Will he be good enough? Maybe, since this isn't the toughest entry-level AOC. GRADE: B.

#3 TWO RIVERS OVER (6/1) is another one who faces a class test, since he just won his second race two back against starter-allowance foes. This group is tougher, so this 3-year-old will have to show he belongs at this level. You can expect him to be running on late, maybe vying for a slice. GRADE: C.

#4 EASTSIDE COOL (4/1) gets the nod here. I don't really like that Mulhall claimed him for $62.5K back in June at Churchill, but now the horse shows up here running for $40K—but Mulhall is a very good horsewoman, and she spots her horses where they can win. A win, plus a claim, plus some ship-and-win money, plus a win bet would equal a pretty good payday for the connections. I also expect this one to get a great stalking trip off the speed horse. GRADE: A.

#5 MASTERING (5/2) it the one to beat on paper, but Baffert doesn't usually give up on horses with upside, so the fact that he risked this one for $40K is a bit telling. Knapp—who is terrific off the claim—took the bait and bought this guy for $40K last time out of a very sharp win. A repeat of that race is good enough to win this, but will he repeat with a change of scenery? He'll get the trip, but he'll also be shorter than 5/2 methinks. GRADE: B.

#6 GOOD JUJU (6/1) gets a big vote of confidence from Glatt, who just ran this guy off a long layoff for $16K…and now enters him here for $40K. He must think this horse is doing great because he also gets Prat to ride. He has some races from way back that are a fit here, but he will need to find that old form to get the W against these. GRADE: B.

#7 CHARLES CHROME (15/1) ran a few decent races back East on turf against weaker foes, so we'll see how he does today moving to the dirt. He does have a dirt win, but it came in a really slow race a while ago. I can see Maldonado being aggressive here, but I'm not sure this one will be able to keep up with some speedy horses to his inside. GRADE: C.

#8 GHAZAALY (15/1) should be fit, cutting back from a 12-furlong affair where he just ran around the track against stakes foes. Before that, he was running a mixed bag of races against starter foes. He faces a class test today, but at least he gets a 7-pound weight-break to aid his cause. Still, he's probably looking at a 4-wide trip here. GRADE: C.

#9 ZIMBA WARRIOR (10/1) should get a good tracking trip behind a decent pace, but do note that Mastering has him squarely on form. He seems a cut below the top few in here, but I can see him picking up a slice if the speed starts to back up. GRADE: C.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>
This isn't the greatest race, especially since my top pick, **#4 EASTSIDE COOL**, is only 4/1 on the morning-line. The good news is that #5 Mastering is likely to be overbet, so there should be value on all of the other horses—and if you're clever enough to come up with an upset winner, you should be compensated. Good luck!

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