Date: 11/26/23
Race 8: $100K Native Diver (G3) contested at 9-furlongs on the main track.
Post: approx. post 3:55 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

We take a break from the graded-stakes turf races and move to the main track for a fine rendition of the $100K Native Diver (G3), a 9-furlong main-track affair for handicap horses. We've got a nice horse in Newgrange and a few steadily improving 3-year-olds looking to make a name for themselves.

#1 VISITANT (4/1) is so vexing to me. He is a monster on the synth, and yet here he is in SoCal, butting heads against some really good horses on turf and synth, two surfaces he's yet to win on—but his synth record is an amazing 15: 11-2-1. Look, Peter Miller is no dummy, so he must think this horse has more to show than his previous blah races, but I'm not seeing the necessary improvement from a 7-year-old who doesn't have any upside. Then again, what do I know? GRADE: X.

#2 ARROWTHEGREAT (6/1) has two sharp wins in a row, dusting maidens two back and then beating up on N1X foes in his first try versus winners. Both of those races were really nice, but the waters get deeper today, and I'm not sure this 3-year-old is going to be able to take some heat early and then have the stamina to stay on late in his first try beyond a mile. GRADE: X.

#3 CELESTIAL MOON (10/1) had mediocre form back East under Mott, and his recent form under Glatt is nothing to write home about. Granted, you can make mild excuses for his last two races out here, but even his best races back East aren't good enough to beat the best in here. GRADE: X.

#4 KISS TODAY GOODBYE (8/1) is a horse I respect, because he's just a grinder who will show up and try as hard as he can through the wire. Unfortunately for him, he hasn't been good enough to break through with a wow performance, but he's certainly an animal who picks up checks and earns his keep. I would use him underneath, but the top few would have to falter for him to clunk up for a W. GRADE: C.

#5 NEWGRANGE (5/2) gets top honors, since he has tactical speed in a race that shouldn't have a fast pace. I liked him last time at 5/2 in a classified allowance race at Santa Anita, but he was keen off the layoff, and he got caught up in a quick pace. He should be more relaxed today, and I think this 4-year-old still has plenty more to give. GRADE: A.

#6 SKINNER (4/1) is a 3-year-old who has a nice career ahead of him, assuming he stays in training. He has decent form against some quality horses of his own age, and even though he hasn't really shown up in a big way against older horses, he has tried all the way to the wire. He likes to sit back and make one big run, so he's always up against it—but at least this track is more fair than most dirt tracks, and I can see him running on late for a slice, making him a good exotics candidate. GRADE: B.

#7 MR FISK (3/1) is another 3-year-old with upside. He got half the money in the Shared Belief here over the summer when he dead-heated for the win, and I like that Baffert freshened him up for this spot. He's never won beyond a mile, so that's a question mark for him, but I expect him to show up and run a good one. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION
I've always liked **#5 NEWGRANGE (5/2)**, and I like him a lot today. I think he's the winner. Wish I had something sneaky, but I like who I like!

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