DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
By Frank R. Scatoni
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Date: 12/2/23
Race 5: $100K Jimmy Durante (G3) for 2yo fillies going 8F on turf (rails at 0-feet)
Post: approx. post 2:26 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

We've got two contest races today to sink our teeth into—and those two races just happen to be really nice graded-stakes races, so let's get right to it with the first one: $100K Jimmy Durante (G3), a one-mile turf affair for 2-year-old fillies with the rails at zero-feet.

#1 MS BRIGHTSIDE (IRE) (12/1) will have Killers fans running to the windows, and they might just be rewarded, as this Irish-bred makes her first U.S. start for D'Amato, who knows what to do with a decent import. Back in June, this gal beat 12 other rivals to break her maiden at 5/1. The trouble line says she was prominent early, so you can expect Franco to be aggressive here, and note that she still won easily despite being green. Her works don't leap off the page, but I'm sure she was purchased with one goal in mind: to win this race. GRADE: B.

#2 ANTIFONA (FR) (12/1) is another European import, but this gal has seven starts under her belt, all in her native France. I usually like French imports out here in SoCal, but it should be noted that Sadler hasn't really mastered the import game. Sure, some of his first-time U.S. runners have run well, but he's 0-for-12 the past year or so with these types. I'm tempted to watch one. GRADE: C.

#3 YATTA (6/1) seems a bit slower than her main rivals, but she does know how to pass horses, so you can expect her to be running on late. I always give East Coast invaders extra credit because they come out here after facing tougher competition at home. That said, I would like this one a lot more if the race were a lot longer. I can see her running on too little too late, but she's eminently usable in your exotics. GRADE: B.

#4 CIRCLE OF TRUST (8/1), the second D'Amato runner, crossed the wire first last time at 2/1, but she was not awarded her diploma after being disqualified. It was unfortunate because she was the best horse in the race, so we'll see if "the ball don't lie" today, as D'Amato promptly runs her against stakes animals. Not much separates her from her SoCal rivals, but is she good enough to beat some East Coast and Euro invaders? We shall see. GRADE: C.

#5 SHE IS ROMANTIC (15/1) just broke her maiden, but she looked good doing it, tracking a slow pace and powering home to get up to win by a nose. Her come-home time was pretty solid

for a young horse, so she still has plenty of upside—but she's going to need a big step forward to win this race today. GRADE: X.

#6 MO FOX GIVIN (6/1) had solid East Coast form when she went off at 9/2 in her first SoCal start Breeders' Cup weekend. She stalked a very fast pace, looked pretty good turning for home, but then got overtaken late and was outgamed for second by one of today's foes. Still, that's a better race than it looks (and the winner was a boy), since it was one of those very rare times that Prat misjudged the pace. He ends up elsewhere, but you get Berrios instead, and he is eminently patient, so I can see this one running a very good one today. Will it be enough against some good fillies, including one who just beat her? We shall see. GRADE: B.

#7 BLUE OASIS (15/1) has yet to cross the wire first, but she's had some trouble, so perhaps we haven't see her best yet, since Yakteen is running her in this spot today. She makes the third start of her form cycle, so she's sitting on a peak effort, but I have to think someone will prove better today. One could argue she wasn't too far off Circle of Trust last time after having to steady in the lane, but she never passed her on the gallop out, so I'm having a hard time seeing her turn the tables on that one today. GRADE: X.

#8 LADY DE BERRY (5/2) wins Prat's allegiance, since he rode her to victory last time in an MSW at Keeneland and rides back again today against stakes animals. It's tough to face stakes horses in your first try versus winners, but if Chad Brown thinks she's good enough, then who am I to argue? GRADE: A.

#9 GO WITH GUSTO (4/1) was favored in the Qatar Mile on Breeders' Cup weekend, but she could only manage second after a somewhat tough journey despite it being a six-horse field. She wasn't going to beat the winner, but she did show heart to fight on for second, despite being in tight throughout the lane against the boys. Two back, she had a ridiculously wide journey in the Summer (G1) against the boys as well, yet she still finished third. I think she still has plenty of upside, and I'm expecting her to run a big one today. GRADE: A.

#10 FEISTY MITOLE (20/1) just broke her maiden in a turf sprint, so this seems like a tough spot for her first try versus winners, especially since she's never been two turns. Hernandez doesn't ride back, and that's a concern for me. GRADE: X.

#11 ZONA VERDE (IRE) (8/1), the third D'Amato, was 18/1in the Surfer Girl (G3), and she never really threatened while racing well off the pace. She did put in a mild late bid, but she had no pace to close into and could only manage sixth. She should run better today with more of a pace to close into, but she will have to work out a trip from this tough post. At least Hernandez takes the call, so that must mean she's working well. Still, she'll need a lot to go right from out here. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

This is a really interesting race, and it wouldn't shock me if several of these won. I do like **#9 GO WITH GUSTO (4/1)** to make amends for last time, but it's tough to ignore **#8 LADY DE BERRY (5/2)** for Chad Brown as well. If you want the sneaky horse, it's **#6 MO FOX GIVIN (6/1)**, who should really improve off that last race.

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Date: 12/2/23
Race 7: $300K Hollywood Derby (G1) for 3yos going 9F on turf (with rails at 0-ft.)
Post: approx. post 3:25 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW
From 2-year-olds in the previous contest race to 3-year-olds here, we've got two chances to make a move on today's Saturday card. This second contest race is one of my favorites all year: the prestigious $300K Hollywood Derby (G1), a 9-furlong turf affair for 3-year-olds only with the rails set at zero-feet. What a race: this is such a competitive field, and so many of them come out of the same race.

#1 SILVER KNOTT (GB) (6/1) is a really nice horse who typically runs his race, but he hasn't been able to get the job done here in the States. That said, he has had some trouble, and it's not like he's been losing by all that much, so it's quite possible he can turn the tables on Seal Team, who just beat him in the Twilight Derby (G2). He's an obvious contender, but his odds will determine how playable he is in this very tough race. GRADE: B.

#2 MALTESE FALCON (IRE) (20/1) has lost to Seal Team twice now, so he'll need to show more today to turn the tables on that foe and still be strong enough to beat some new faces. He's a nice horse who has done good work over this course, but he'll need to do something to buck that 0-for-5 record at today's distance. I like him more for underneath, but he's not impossible. GRADE: C.

#3 REIQUIST (10/1) was 73/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2) last time against a few of these, but he outran those odds to finish fourth, beaten by a half-length. That was a very good race, but as good as it was, it still wasn't good enough to get the W. He'll need a big step forward today, and with his stalking style, I can see him flattening out when the real running starts. GRADE: X.

#4 WATSONVILLE (12/1) had to go from the 13-hole in the Twilight Derby (G2), and that early move took its toll late, as he flattened out after taking the lead, finishing sixth behind a few of these. He draws much better today, and because of that, he can resort to a tracking style that saw him win two races here over the summer. He should give a good account of himself, but I can see him getting outkicked late. GRADE: C.

#5 WEBSLINGER (3/1) is a really nice horse who was favored in the Twilight Derby (G2), but he ran out of room to finish third after mounting a furious late rally from well off the pace and

moving about eight-lengths wide. He came home in 11-and-one over a Santa Anita course that typically favors speed (although it was way more fair Breeders' Cup weekend). I think this guy will love Del Mar, and I can see him making amends today. GRADE: A.

#6 SANTORINI (15/1) has outrun his double-digit odds twice in a row now, and that's because he's been allowed to contest the pace, so you can expect him in the vanguard early today. There isn't a ton of speed in here, but there are enough good closers to make this guy earn a victory today. Also note that he's never been this far, so we'll see how much punch he has late in the lane. GRADE: X.

#7 REDISTRICTING (GB) (5/1), the first Chad Brown entrant, did what he was supposed to do against allowance foes last time, doing the business at 2/5 in a field of 10. He was coming off a freshening after finding Grade 1 foes too much in the Belmont Derby (G1), though he did have a wide journey. I like that Brown is giving him another Grade 1 shot in here, so he must be doing well—though his stablemate does look a bit more accomplished. GRADE: B.

#8 PROGRAM TRADING (GB) (9/5), the second Brown entrant, looks like the one to beat, showing up here after a brief freshening while most of his foes were knocking heads in the Twilight Derby (G2) a month ago. That makes me think that Brown targeted this race, and we all know that he's dangerous when he points a horse to a graded stakes. I like that he's versatile and that Prat bothers to stick around. GRADE: A.

#9 SEAL TEAM (GB) (5/1) was 7/1 in the Twilight Derby (G2) against a few of these, and he rewarded his backers with a well-earned victory in that big full field. He's really done nothing wrong, finishing on the board in all five of his starts, and I see no reason why he won't show up again today—but he does have the far outside post, so he will have his work cut out for him today after a better trip than most of his foes in the Twilight Derby (G2) last time. GRADE: B.

CONCLUSION
I think **#8 PROGRAM TRADING (GB) (9/5)** is the one to beat, especially because Brown skipped the Twilight Derby (G2) to have a fresh horse for this tough race. That being said, the horses who are exiting that race are pretty darn good as well. Of those, however, I'll take **#5 WEBSLINGER (3/1)**, a millionaire who just exudes class and rarely runs a bad race.

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