

## DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

On Twitter [@ScatoniSureShot](#)

[www.FrankScatoni.com](http://www.FrankScatoni.com)

[www.OptixEQ.com](http://www.OptixEQ.com)

**Date:** 8/9/24

**Race 5:** Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6F on the main track

**Post:** approx. post 6:00 p.m. PDT

### OVERVIEW

Yesterday, we had the sister version of this race, so today, we have the boys—and we've got a full field of 11 horses to compete in this Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 6-furlongs on the main track. This race is filled with speed, so logic would dictate we pick a stalker—but the track has played so unapologetically toward speed that it's possible someone will hold on and win this race anyway. All I can say is this: pay attention to how the track is playing, and choose your selections accordingly. Yesterday, the track was a little more fair, so perhaps there is some hope for honestly run races.

#1 SO I'M TOLD (20/1) has speed and the rail and an aggressive jock, so he should be in the vanguard—and that's a good thing the way this track has been playing. That said, there is plenty of heat outside of him, and his races at this level are a bit lacking, which suggests he probably needs lesser to shine.

GRADE: X.

#2 KERRY GOLD (12/1) ran too good to lose last time when just missing in a one-mile turf race at this level. Shrewd connections of my man "Radar" Rob Talstra and trainer Dan Azcarate saw fit to claim this runner and promptly protect him. They are also moving him to the dirt and shortening him up. I don't like that this one is 0-for-4 on dirt and 0-for-4 at this distance, but this team knows what they are doing, so I wouldn't throw this 5-year-old out entirely. That said, there is a world in which they just want to give him a run for a longer turf race later. GRADE: C.

#3 WINDRIBBON (6/1) made the lead in an open \$20K claimer, but he yielded quickly and faded while racing on the wrong part of the track (outside). Miller took him out of that race and now brings him back protected. He did run third at this level last summer, so he's not too far out of it class-wise—and I like that he doesn't really need the lead to win, but he should be forwardly placed on a good part of the track.

GRADE: A.

#4 PLEASE FOCUS (12/1) is 0-for-3 on dirt, and that is a concern because this guy is a runner on turf. I'm not sure what the connections are thinking by running him here, but he is protected, so perhaps they'll use this as a public workout for a turf sprint later in the meet. Whatever the plan, one thing can't be ignored: this guy is fast early, so he will be prominent pressing the pace. I know he has some big races on his form, but I'll key on his defeat at this level back in April while racing on his preferred surface.

GRADE: X.

#5 INSTINCT D'ORO (12/1) is a 3-year-old who also likes to be prominent, so he seems up against it while facing older horses and Cal-bred allowance types after two claiming races against his own kind.

Pereira and Morfin can pop with a big price, so I'm wary of tossing this one, but he's tough to recommend on paper given the likely pace scenario. GRADE: X.

#6 LMLOOKNFORSCHIEF (15/1) is a total pro, but he's more of a synth specialist than anything else. He's 0-for-5 on dirt, but some of those races have come against much better company. He should get a good tracking trip, so if the track is fair, don't discount him, since there should be a quick pace. I know he's been plying his trade up north, but he's faced some decent runners, so don't sell him too short in here. GRADE: B.

#7 SAULS CALL (6/1) tried to wire them last time at this level at Los Al, but he got run down. He caught a speed-friendly track that day yet still couldn't get the win. He will be prominent again, and speed has been golden, but he's had his chances at this level and hasn't been able to get the job done. GRADE: X.

#8 PETESOLDFASHIONED (8/1) is a 3-year-old who will try this condition for the first time, which is strange to me because I thought he had some potential when he ran too good to lose in his debut last summer over this track against Cal-bred MSWs. He's still searching for his second win, but he's been a popular claim-box item, so he must be looking good. I think he's better than he's shown, so we'll see if Palma can get more out of him off the claim. The big concern is that he'll likely be chasing the pace from an outside post, and that's probably not the winning trip. GRADE: C.

**#9 JOE DON LOONEY (6/1)** has races that would tower over this field, but clearly this 6-year-old has seen better days. He missed a lot of time, hitting the shelf back in April 2023, and his comeback race in May was no good. Granted, that was a tough field, and he was in way over his head, but it was a bad race, and he needed a few months off after that as well—which I don't like. That said, I know Glatt won't bring them back unless they are ready, and I like where he spots this guy today, putting him in a race where he can win. Expect a hustling ride from Herrera, and then we'll see what this guy has left in the stretch. Still, I wish he were drawn inside. GRADE: A.

#10 SMILING BEST (2/1) debuted in May at 4-years-old and was bet off the board in a six-horse field. He was off slow, tracked the pace, took over when asked, and easily dispatched that field of maidens at even-money. Claps! Well, he must be training up a storm, because the morning-line maker has him at 2/1 on the line, and that's a pretty strong number considering the size and quality of this field. I don't like that he needed time after his May win, but Koriner is a good horseman, so I'm sure this one will be ready—but given his tracking style and outside post, don't you have to take a shot against him? I do. GRADE: C.

#11 CHICK'S DIG IT (20/1) ran a decent second at this level two back, but his tracking style does not fit the track profile so far this meet. He also seems a bit camera-shy, with only one win and three seconds, despite really good trips. GRADE: X.

## CONCLUSION

This is a really competitive race, and I wouldn't fault anyone for going their own way in here. I really think **#3 WINDRIBBON (6/1)** is capable of victory here, since he is drawn inside, has speed, yet doesn't need the lead. Plus, why would Miller claim an 8-year-old if he didn't think he could win with him? The other horse I like is **#9 JOE DON LOONEY (6/1)**, but I would like him more on a fair track. Still, I think he'll be prominent early, and if he can run back to one of his big races, he will be tough.

-----  
Visit [www.franksatoni.com](http://www.franksatoni.com) for more content.

If you'd like to learn more about **OptixEQ**, visit [www.optixeq.com](http://www.optixeq.com).