DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY
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Date: 8/18/24
Race 9: $150K Solana Beach for Cal-bred fillies & mares going 8F on turf (rail at 18-ft.)
Post: approx. post 6:01 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

An oversubscribed field of Cal-bred fillies and mares are entered in today's $150K Solana Beach Stakes with the rails at 18-feet. I have a soft spot for this race because I spent about fifteen years living in Solana Beach, and I loved every second of it. I'm only a few miles down the road now, but I still get back to the sleepy little beach town quite often—especially during this time of year. This year's renewal of the race is a very competitive one.

#1 TOM'S REGRET (4/1) is a really nice gal who has never finished off the board in 12 career starts. That's quite remarkable when you think about it. That being said, she's 0-for-2 on turf, and all of her wins have come sprinting. She'll have no choice but to go hard from the rail, but I'm expecting a pretty quick pace in here. I've always liked her, and I'm rooting for the connections, but I don't think the race sets up all that well for her. GRADE: C.

#2 STAY AND SCAM (2/1) has tactical speed and likes to be close to the pace, but I'm expecting a fast pace here, so Mario Gutierrez will have to make sure he doesn't use her up too early. She's an obvious contender because she always runs her race, and you have to like her two wins in three tries over this course. Still, she won't offer any value in this very tough race, but she is a worthy contender. GRADE: B.

#3 ABHITA (20/1) is not as good as some of the others, but she is a deep closer who has a pretty decent late kick. The race sets up really well for her, so I'm going to bet that she will outrun her odds—but she's probably better served underneath, since she just doesn't look fast enough. GRADE: B.

#4 ROSE MADDOX (5/1) is such a cool horse. She has won on dirt, synth, and turf, and she's won at all manner of distances. She ran a good second in this race last year, and even though her recent form seems a bit off, she has been freshened up, and the best race of her life came off a similar layoff. I do think she's a better sprinter, but she's capable of winning at a mile. I'm surprised she's as short as 5/1 on the morning-line, but I'm thinking she's going to fire today regardless. GRADE: A.

#5 MOMENT'S PLEASURE (10/1) was sharp in victory last time when beating a few of these in a Cal-bred allowance-optional-claimer—but this is a much tougher group. She was 27/1 three back in a similar stakes, and she finished behind Stay and Scam, so she's actually a decent fit in here. She's a 3-year-old who still has room to improve, and 10/1 seems like a really good price on a horse who finished second to the horse who is likely going to be the post-time favorite. GRADE: B.

#6 COURT SNORT (6/1) looked like a cinch last time when sent off at 7/5 against a few of these in the aforementioned Cal-bred AOC, but she had to wait a bit and could only manage third once she was able

to make her run. She finished behind two of these, but she was good enough to win that race. That said, there are some tougher gals in here, and it should be noted that Rispoli ends up elsewhere. GRADE: C.

#7 UNCONTROLLABLE (12/1) doesn't look like much on paper, still seeking her second career win and her first win on turf. Hernandez keeps the faith, which is interesting, and there was a time when she was competitive in graded-stakes when she was a juvenile—but it seems like she hasn't trained on. On one hand, I like Michael McCarthy, so if he thinks this gal can be competitive here, then who am I to argue? But on the other hand, this gal is tough to support on paper. GRADE: X.

#8 WORTHY OF MAGIC (15/1) ran second in that aforementioned Cal-bred AOC, but she had an easy lead on a speed-friendly turf course yet still got ran down. I can't see her wiring this group GRADE: X.

#9 SNEAKER (15/1) is another one who has speed, so she seems up against it here. She tried to wire several of these back in May and she got inhaled. If she wins, I lose. GRADE: X.

#10 SAFA (8/1) is a very useful horse, and she really knows how to earn her keep, but she does have a tendency to settle for the minor awards. She'll also have to overcome a very tough post. If she wins, I'll tip my cap and congratulate Gary Stute for doing a really nice job with her. GRADE: X.

#11 CORNELIA FORT (20/1) ran a decent third in the Fran's Valentine, but she lost to two of today's foes. She has a versatile run style, but she'll have to work out a trip from this very difficult post. I think her best chance is to angle over and just anchor out the back and try to make one run, but if she tries to stalk, she's going to get hung wide, and you can't win with that trip. GRADE: X.

#12 ULTIMATE HY (12/1) (AE) is such a cool horse. She always shows up to run, and she's been competitive in all kinds of races throughout her career. That said, she's a 7-year-old mare who may have tailed off a little bit. She'll need some luck to get in, and if she does, Rispoli will have to work his magic. She'll also have to reverse form over Rose Maddox. As much as I like her as a horse, I have to side against her today. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
I thought this was a really difficult race, but sometimes you just have to plant a flag. That's what I'll do with **#4 ROSE MADDOX (5/1)** today because if I don't just single one horse, I'll have to make three other horses "A's," and that's never a good thing. I'm hoping we get more than 5/1 in here, and then this gal becomes a decent play—but this is a real pin-sticker's race.

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