

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Date: 8/25/24

Race 7: \$32K/N1Y contested at 9-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 12-feet

Post: approx. post 5:05 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

What a tough way to close out this week's slate of contest races: we've got a very challenging \$32K/N1Y time-restricted claimer contested at 9-furlongs on the turf with the rails at 12-feet. This race is for horses who have not won a race in 2024, so we are dealing with horses who are kind of on the downsides of their careers. That said, we have a bunch of evenly matched hard-knockers, so it should be an interesting race.

#1 SPIRIT MAKER (5/1) just missed against open \$25K claimers, putting in a strong late run to finish second. The horse he lost to is in very good form, so the race is even better than it looks on paper. Miyadi took the horse off Hess and now raises his price tag. I like that Desormeaux rides through the claim, but it's not like he's been lighting the world on fire. The horse is good enough to win this, but his chances will all depend on the ride. GRADE: B.

#2 HURRICANE CLOUD (GB) (7/2) gets top honors. This horse just missed against open \$32K claimers back in January, but he had to hit the shelf. He's a bit of a China doll, but when he's right, he's capable of running some good races. Baltas brings him back protected, so it's possible this is just a prep, but Baltas is so good off this kind of layoff, I suspect this one will be ready to run today. GRADE: A.

#3 HANDY DANDY (6/1) drops to the lowest level of his career, so I'm sure that's why he attracts Hernandez. This guy hasn't won in a while, but he also hasn't raced on turf since August of last year. There was a time when he was running in stakes races, so if he shows up with his best race, the other horses are going to be in trouble—but then again, there's a reason why he's in for \$32K today. GRADE: B.

#4 SYDNEY STREET (GB) (8/1) has looked very common against allowance types, but he looked like a star when he ran for \$40K over this course last fall. He clearly has some physical issues, but if he's right, he's going to be very tough while racing at this lower level. GRADE: A.

#5 MOODY JIM (IRE) (15/1) is a professional racehorse, but he often finds himself with too much to do because of his closing run style. The old boy still has something left to give, and I can make excuses for his last few bad races, but I think others might be slightly better than he is at this point in his career. GRADE: C.

#6 FLY THE SKY (20/1) is a pretty good bet at 20/1. I know the horse doesn't look like much on paper, but he is proven at the distance, and he has been facing much better animals. Knapp now puts this one where he can wake up and run a winning race. Why not take a shot? GRADE: A.

#7 BEE CATCHER (8/1) is a 7-year-old who was surprisingly claimed by O'Neill last time out of a \$30K/N3L where he finished sixth. He did have a troubled trip, but this guy had been struggling to get a win for a long time. Perhaps O'Neill thinks this old boy has more to give. I'm tempted to watch one, but there are some things here that make you go hmmm... GRADE: X.

#8 VANZZY (20/1) was 25/1 last time against open \$25K claimers, but he didn't cooperate and finished well behind Spirit Maker, whom he has to face again today. This 7-year-old ran some big races back in the day, but it's been slim pickings for him ever since. Glatt took him for \$25K last summer, and he hasn't given up on him yet with a big drop. Still, I prefer others. GRADE: X.

#9 MIDNIGHT JOSTAR (3/1) has always had a very nice late kick, but he's also had plenty of hang in him. That said, he is running at his lowest level, and his previous race going 11-furlongs against N1X types here wasn't all that bad. He can be competitive against these, but what kind of trip is he going to get from out here—and 3/1 doesn't seem like any kind of bargain. GRADE: C.

#10 RECKLESS SPIRIT (10/1) is a D'Amato dropper, so you have to consider him, but he's another one who will have to work out a trip from a tough post. He does have a nice late kick, so perhaps Kimura can just get him over and make one big run. It wouldn't shock me if he won for pretty good connections, but something about him leaves me a little cold. That said, 10/1 is a pretty good price on this horse. He should be closer to 9/2 in my book. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

In order of preference, I like #2 HURRICANE CLOUD (GB) (7/2), #4 SYDNEY STREET (GB) (8/1), and #6 FLY THE SKY (20/1). Sometimes it's not about playing who you like; it's about playing who you need, so let your contest position determine who you should play based on the live odds, especially since this is a pretty tough race.

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