Date: 11/2/24
Race 8: $7 million Breeders' Cup Classic (G1) contested at 10-furlongs on the main track
Post: approx. post 2:41 p.m. PDT

OVERVIEW

It's the big one…and it's in the middle of the card. Oh, well. Still…it's a really competitive race, and I had a hard time separating a lot of these. The only thing I know is this: you have to beat City of Troy and Fierceness to make any money—and that doesn't seem too hard to do.

#1 FOREVER YOUNG (JPN) (6/1) is a head away from being undefeated, but all of his races have been against 3-year-olds. This Japanese import will have to face elders for the first time, but it seems like the connections have been pointing to this race, and the rail draw means he can save all the ground before uncorking his run. GRADE: A.

#2 HIGHLAND FALLS (20/1) has run a few monster races, but do note that Prat sides with another off this guy's 10-furlong win. Still, a repeat of that race puts him in the frame, and I like that he's capable of adapting to any pace. GRADE: B.

#3 CITY OF TROY (5/2) is either the product of a snake-oil salesman or he's the greatest thing since sliced bread. I'm perfectly fine clapping my hands if he wins on a surface that he's never tried before, but how can you take a short price on a horse who has never raced on dirt (which means that he's never experienced kickback). I could be on the wrong side of history, but I'm not part of the O'Brien cult machine. GRADE: X.

#4 MIXTO (30/1) likes Del Mar, and he did win a Grade 1 here over the summer (in what I will politely call a sub-par renewal of the Grade One Pacific Classic). I like that he'll be prominent early, but I'm not feeling him here. GRADE: X.

#5 SENOR BUSCADOR (30/1) has been prepping for this, so don't worry about his last two races, which were clearly tune-ups. I'm expecting a big effort, but keep in mind that it's so hard to win a dirt race in SoCal as a deep closer. He's bucked the trend, but his success has been few and far between. GRADE: X.

#6 DERMA SOTOGAKE (JPN) (20/1) will add blinkers to try and move forward in the second start of his form cycle. For a horse who hasn't regained his 2023 form, that move seems like a

desperation try. I don't like that. He does have some good races to run back to, but this is a tough spot. GRADE: X.

#7 USHBA TESORO (JPN) (12/1) is very consistent, and you don't earn $16 million unless you have some ability. I know he's 7-years-old, but he's competed with the best in the world. Toss his last try in this race last year, as he was too far back to have any real impact. GRADE: B.

#8 PYRENEES (30/1) is a lightly raced 4-year-old who could be sitting on a big race after a decent second in the Jockey Club Gold Cup (G1) when he finished second behind Highland Falls. That foe had a better trip, but I think this runner can be more prominent today, and I have to respect the fact that DeVaux is running this one here off that September race. GRADE: B.

#9 FIERCENESS (3/1) has run some big races and earned some big speed figures, but all of his best work has come with perfect trips. He was all out to beat a girl last time, so even though he showed a new dimension and a modicum of professionalism, *he…still…just…beat…a…girl*. He could win and prove himself as the best of his generation, but you can have this horse at 3/1 all day long. GRADE: C.

#10 TAPIT TRICE (30/1) is a bit of a grinder who should be running on through the lane, but he'll need some help, since he looks a bit unexciting on paper. I like that he runs all the way through the wire, but that means he's more suitable for underneath. GRADE: X.

#11 SIERRA LEONE (12/1) has yet to put it all together, but he always seems to be running on through the lane. He's been a beaten favorite three times in a row, but he'll be the forgotten horse now, and I like that Prat hasn't given up. Nor have I. GRADE: A.

#12 ARTHUR'S RIDE (15/1) ran two monster races at Saratoga over the summer, but he made easy leads and never looked back. He can make the lead again today, but he'll have to use some energy to angle over—and I think that compromises his chances late. I can see him maybe hanging on for a small slice, but he'll really have to earn it. GRADE: C.

#13 NEWGATE (20/1) came off a March layoff to run a corker last time in the California Crown (G1) at 7/1. That race screamed "prep." I'm not crazy about Baffert re-adding blinkers, but that's always a good move for him, and there isn't much speed signed on here, so perhaps he wants this guy to be a bit closer—and I know he'll finish. GRADE: A.

#14 NEXT (8/1) is such a cool horse, but he's been beating up on much weaker competition while going much longer distances. His speed figs are impressive, but who knows how reliable they are at those marathon distances. The thing I don't like the most is that this race was never really a legit target. He can beat me. GRADE: X.

#15 RATTLE N ROLL (30/1) (AE) is a grinder who will have to angle over and hope for the best. Maybe for the super. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION
I could be wrong, but I could be right! If City of Troy or Fierceness win today, good for them. If you don't like them the same way that I don't, then you have a lot of choices. My three "A's" all have a big shot, so I'll watch the board and play accordingly.

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