

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

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Date: 11/23/24

Race 7: Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on turf (rails at 18-ft.)

Post: approx. post 3:28 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

We've got a full, oversubscribed field of horses entered in this competitive Cal-bred \$20K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 5-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at 18-feet. This is a tricky race, but someone has to win!

#1 CHROMEFLASH (15/1), the first Capestro entrant, broke his maiden over this course and at this distance, so he's not impossible here, despite his recent mediocre form. My big concern is the trip he'll get. He's not fast enough to make the lead and kick on, so he's going to get buried down here. That said, Valdivia (to his credit) will be glued to the rail, so perhaps if a seam opens up, he can slip through and make a nice rally, like this horse did in his debut win. He'll need a lot of luck, but this group is pretty evenly matched, so why not take a price? GRADE: A.

#2 UNCLE JOHN (8/1) ran a big one off a freshening when facing weaker company going 6.5-furlongs on the main turf course at Santa Anita. This is a tougher assignment, and I'm not sure the shorter distance will help this guy out. I expect some regression today. GRADE: X.

#3 DEVIL BE ME (5/2) ran a big race last time when going 6.5-furlongs on dirt. Knapp plunked down \$40K to take this guy, and I like that he promptly protects him. I'm not sure he'll be as effective going shorter and moving to the turf, especially at a short price, but a repeat of that last race would make this one very tough. Knapp is very good off the claim, and J. J. rides through the barn change—all good things—but I'm tempted to try and beat him. GRADE: B.

#4 GEEZER (6/1) is clearly a better dirt horse, but I can't blame the connections for running this one on turf, since they can keep him protected at a level he's already won at. I like that Berrios gets a shot, and I'm sure Palma will have this one ready to fire off a long layoff, but those turf races just seem *meh* to me. Expect him to be grinding along late. GRADE: B.

#5 DOUBLE JAB (3/1) is the obvious choice. He has tactical speed, and he just "won" at this level but was DQ'd down the hill at Santa Anita. He has good form over this course, and he should get a very good forwardly placed trip. GRADE: A.

#6 PRINCE PRANCEALOT (20/1), the second Capestro runner, has speed and an aggressive jock, so he should be prominent early. I'm not sure he'll have enough starch late, but you could slot him in for underneath. GRADE: C.

#7 SUPERNAL (5/1) is at the mercy of pace and trip, since he lacks early speed, but he has the right jock to make sure they don't get too far away early in this short race. He should be flying late, but he'll need some luck for the W. GRADE: B.

#8 REFOCUS (12/1) also likes to come from out of it, so he too will need some luck. It seems as if Rispoli chose Supernal over this guy, so make of that what you will. GRADE: C.

#9 CAPITAL OUTLAY (12/1) has speed and an outside post, so he'll have no choice but to gun hard and hope for the best. That worked two back when this guy finally broke his maiden, but I'm not sure he'll be nearly two-lengths clear at any point in this race, so he'll have to show he can stalk and pounce and get the W. GRADE: C.

#10 RACHEL'S COACH (15/1) has sneaky good form over this course, so I'm bummed he's drawn so far outside, since that means the bug-boy will either go so hard he weakens late...or he'll stalk wide and flatten out late. He's a little sneaky, but he's more likely to blow up the super than get the W. GRADE: B.

#11 PIPER'S CAUSEWAY—program scratch.

#12 MCGREGOR LAKE (12/1) (AE) was just claimed for \$25K, so I like that O'Neill is protecting this guy here, despite many failed attempts at this level for the previous trainer. He's pretty consistent from a speed-figure standpoint, but that just means he's not fast enough...nor will he have an easy go of it from out here. GRADE: X.

#13 SQUARE CAT (15/1) (AE) has some decent turf form from back in the day, but we'll see if he can recapture that while making his third start after a very long layoff. He did just dominate \$20K conditional-claimers on dirt, so perhaps he can take another step forward, but what kind of trip will he get from out here? GRADE: X.

#14 FORGIVING SPIRIT (8/1) (AE) makes his second start after rejoining the Miller barn, for which he did good work back in the day. His best races are certainly good enough, but he likes to stalk the pace, and that's not the winning trip on this turf course. Plus, it's been a while since his last win, and I don't like that he was no good for \$32K last time, and he's now in for \$20K. GRADE: X.

CONCLUSION

This is a tough race. I don't think either of the top-two choices have to win, but of those two, I prefer **#5 DOUBLE JAB (3/1)**, only because he has proven turf form. Because of that, I want a price. I'm not crazy about anyone, but I do think **#1 CHROMEFLASH (15/1)** looks a bit sneaky in here. And if you really need a price, **#10 RACHEL'S COACH (15/1)** should outrun his odds as well (I just wish he had a better post).

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