

DEL MAR ANALYSIS



BY BRAD FREE

BEST BET: RACE 7, SPOOKY WOODS

FIRST RACE

A severe bobble at the break and getting caught five-wide on the first turn sealed the fate of **HARD ARCH**. He finished seventh as the favorite. He runs best when forwardly placed, a trip he is likely to get this time. He drops a notch to the maiden-40 level of his runner-up finish two back; his up-front running style suits the track profile. **EMPIRE RULER** stretches out for the first time, which may or may not be to his advantage. It is possible is a late-running sprinter. On the other hand, he has run relatively decent speed figures around one turn; his pedigree suits the stretch-out to a mile. **RAFTER ONE** was caught wide from the outside post (10 of 10) in the same race the top choice exits. He has enough speed to be overcome the outside post (7 of 7). **WATERED DOWN** stretches out and is a candidate to set the pace; **TRUSTWORTHY** drops from maiden special-weight.

SECOND RACE

MY GOLDEN ONE finished more than seven lengths clear of third last out in his first try against winners. Sold privately since, he makes his first start for owner-trainer Ed Freeman and gets the tepid call despite an abbreviated work pattern since his last start. **HERO TEN ALL** dives to rock bottom (for winners) for the first time. His only win was on dirt, in December 2014. **WOODSTOCK MEMORY** pressed a fast pace and finished an okay third last out. He benefits from the likelihood of a softer pace. **MOSTLY CLOUDY** has run races that put him in the hunt. This is a weak race; tough to trust any.

THIRD RACE

First since January, proven over the Del Mar turf and with a history of firing fresh, **SECRETO PRIMERO** gets the call in this \$40k claiming turf sprint. He won a maiden race in 2016 following a 15-month layoff, he won a N1X turf sprint on this course last summer, and he has enough speed for a cozy trip positioned third behind front-runners **GUY CODE** and **UNREAL DEAL**. The speed of the field could be **GUY CODE**, claimed from a \$25k dirt sprint last out. He actually ran well his only previous turf start; he set the pace to the head of the lane in a \$90k stakes at Santa Anita in 2015. **GUY CODE** makes his first start for Brian Koriner, and looks like the one to catch. **UNREAL DEAL** is a pace-presser from Texas, reunited with jockey Sasha Risenhoover, who rode him to two wins and two seconds the last four times she was aboard. Last out, **UNREAL DEAL** finished third with a brutal trip. He stumbled slightly at the break, was shuffled back and lost all position into the turn, lost considerable ground five-wide into the lane, and missed by only a length and a half. That race at Lone Star already produced two next-out winners.

FOURTH RACE

The 2yo first-time starter **SOUL STREIT** might be a "good thing" based on his most-recent workout Aug. 6 (viewed on XTBV.com). **SOUL STREIT** popped the gate, toyed with workmate St. Patrick's Day (full brother to American Pharoah) and was timed in a solid 1:00. **SOUL STREIT**, trained by Bob Baffert, looks set to first time out. **GRAN FIESTA** made the Daily Racing Form "horses to watch" list following his better than looked fifth-place debut two months ago. He was void of speed, raced greenly and ran in spots, finished with run and galloped out big past the wire. Good effort; the Bernardini colt obviously has ability. He could fire first start back, despite a workout gap from July 17 to Aug. 6. **ESKIMO ROSES** is a Mick Ruis-trained first-time starter with a solid workout pattern; **STUDLY PERFECTION** debuts with good workouts, for a winning trainer-jockey combo.

FIFTH RACE

RED LIGHTNING and **LITTLE JUANITO**, two-three in a similar maiden race three weeks ago, are the proper favorites stretching to six and one-half furlongs. **RED LIGHTNING** may have benefitted from a pro-inside track profile when he finished second last out, but each start has been better than the start before. He has speed, he is versatile. **LITTLE JUANITO** loomed three-wide into the lane, as if he would go on with it, but then went flat. It was a disappointing effort at even-money. However, the racing surface July 23 was more kind to the inside than the outside. Maybe **JUANITO** had an alibi. He tries with blinkers, switches riders and might be the one to catch. **CAPTIVATE** prepped in a turf sprint; he trailed throughout. But he worked well since that debut, switches to dirt and gets a leading rider. Improvement expected.

SIXTH RACE

SKYE DIAMONDS emerged this season as the top filly-mare sprinter in California for trainer Bill Spawr; she dusted a good field last out in the G2 Great Lady M at Los Alamitos. Her figures continue to creep upward, she has speed and also can finish, and her recent work pattern is solid. All systems go. **BENDABLE** scored a sharp comeback win two months ago, her first graded stakes. She has been burning up the Del Mar track in recent workouts, and will give the top choice all she can handle. **CONSTELLATION** was no match for the top choice last out, but she finished a creditable second while more than two lengths clear of **FINEST CITY**. **ROCKPORT BABE** is fast, with only one option from the inside post. That is, speed to the lead and try to wire the field.

SEVENTH RACE

SPOOKY WOODS drops from Grade 2 to first-level allowance, and switches from dirt to turf. She glided through an outstanding turf workout Aug. 6, like a filly that will love the surface switch. First start in two months, ready to fire. **TOOREN DANCER** had a tough trip in her U.S. debut, and ran much better than the seventh-place finish suggests. She was bumped and squeezed at the break, raced four-wide into the backstretch, made a sweeping five-wide move on the far turn, loomed a threat midstretch and then flattened out. It was a good effort under compromising conditions. With a better trip this time, could be a different outcome. Front-runner **PAINTING CORNERS** stretches to a route for the first time and will lead the field as far as she can.

EIGHTH RACE

The 12-for-48 veteran **TRIBAL JEWEL** is solid in this N1X/optional \$40k claiming route. This is his first start in two months; he runs well fresh. He also likes this track (5-for-8), has the top figures and a pressing style and inside post. Tough customer is set to fire, first start back for Spawr. **AIN'T MISBEHAVIN** was visibly uncomfortable on turf last time, and completely misfired. Now he returns to his preferred footing, which is dirt. His closing style puts him at a potential disadvantage on a track that has been speed-friendly most of the meet, but the pace should be legitimate. He will rally late. **JUST KIDDING** drops in class and adds blinkers; **ROCKET FUEL** stretches out for the first time and should be forwardly placed; **IRISH FREEDOM** has not been seen since he was unplaced with a tough trip in the Santa Anita Derby.

NINTH RACE

GIA LULA stretches to a route and switches to turf following a pair of sprint preps on dirt. Her pedigree (sired by Gio Ponti, produced by a More than Ready dam) gives her a license to stay a mile on grass. **POLISHED** is a Kitten's Joy first-time starter produced by a maiden sibling to European multiple Group 1 winner Shamardal. **TRUSTINI** goes long and meets easier company after chasing next-out stakes winner Surrender Now and the talented maiden Tyfosa.