Handicapping Analysis
Sat September 2nd, 2023

Stakes Spotlight

Del Mar Race 7

Post Time 6:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 7 – DEL MAR MILE (G2)

#8 WAR AT SEA stands out on current form returning for Ellis and intent for this particular stakes race. He made his return off the layoff in a sprint last month with the intent to get a race (PREP) and his class alone almost pulling off the win to finish with a strong CLOSE in a BLANKET at the wire. The visuals suggest he should move up off that race especially with added ground.

Del Mar Race 8

Post Time 7:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 8 – TORREY PINES (G3)

Mike Smith looked to have a few options in this race and sticks with #1 JUSTIQUE. As an individual she showed a lot of ability leading up to her debut and ran to breaking her maiden impressively first out. She has had some subtle trips in her route races and could see Smith as the right fit as he sees fit to land here and with experience from the August 5th allowance. She turned in a good race all things considered making a MOVE after a SLOG on the pacesetting longshot winner, Yuki, and the only runner to make up a lot of ground.

#2 INFINITE DIAMOND has some quality to her, and the connections have pressed on that running her all over the county, in various, class, surface distance and she has shown up with her race each time. She will find some subtle class relief wheeling right back from the Del Mar Oaks (G1) two weeks ago with a subtle upgrade chasing a fast pace inside before losing ground. She has shown speed figure improvement with the two starts here this season and has recorded some of the higher numbers in the field going back to her Gulfstream Park efforts.

#6 AHYWHO is a lightly raced progressive type that looks to be sitting on a peak effort for this race. She has had some favorable trips though has remained consistent and training well into this race – a heads up work with stablemate BRAN (Green Flash) on August 14th.

#7 OCEAN CLUB does not stand out in this field with any advantages though comes into this race with consistency, progression and has shown to be a competitive type in each start with RunStyle versatility. She must step up in this race, though the timing is right to give her the chance to do so and see where she fits in this division.

#9 FAIZA projects to be favored in this race (no value) as she is looking to rebound from the WIDE trip and show finish in the BES (G2) back in May. This will be her first start back in 106-days and will give up some recency though will also see Prat back aboard in town to ride as a positive. She has the most established graded stakes form in the field, though number wise does not hold an edge over some others in the field and must show she has improved coming back off the break. Watching her work leading up to the race, she looks as race ready as possible though nothing standing out from a visuals standpoint in those works.

Del Mar Race 9

Post Time 7:39 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 9 – GREEN FLASH (G3)

Trip and class is key with this shorter sprint distance and full field. #6 LANE WAY and #10 BRAN give up some recency returning from longer layoffs into this race and are not proven at this 5f distance. In terms of the layoff, watching them work, they both look to come into this race without knocks on fitness and preparedness with BRAN given the preference of the pair and is likely to be longer of the two.

Morning line favorite #8 MOTORIOUS lacks any edge in this race to justify that role and the shorter price. In addition, he also gives up recency off a 119-day layoff and layoff lines this season, questionable with the 5f distance where trip and pace could be a hurdle and this one has shown a pattern of breaking slow/SLOG.

#3 TURN ON THE JETS is a surface/distance specialist here at Del Mar with a perfect three-for-three race record. While none of those races were graded stakes events, those races held a similar OFR to today's race and should be able to transfer his form with today's group – he has a slight edge over stablemate rival #5 BEER CAN MAN the two returning from the BLANKET finish on August 4th. Utilizing OFR, #9 CHERUBIC FACTOR also holds a solid surface/distance record though those efforts recorded in lower OFR (85-94) races stepping up to today's 101-93 OFR and form is not as strong as the other two.

One of the main pacesetters, #13 HELLADIC is sitting on the AE and failing to draw in takes some of the early pace (and SpeedRate) out of the race. #7 NOBLE REFLECTION has legit speed though a rider change could change those tactics and taking him out of his natural RunStyle would be to their disadvantage. #1 FAST BUCK is proven at the shorter sprint distance and with the rail (and without the AE) was pointed out by OptixEQ contributor Chris Ado sits as a runner with "speed of the speed" potential and one that has some buried form and legit front end contender.

Del Mar Race 10

Post Time 8:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

RACE 10 – PACIFIC CLASSIC (G1)

The 10f distance of this race makes it a more complicated puzzle as many in this field are either unproven at the distance or have run at the distance and shown (even when posting a win) it to be not their ideal. That change can shift the handicapping from looking towards the "best" horse in the race to the one suited to today's race distance and conditions. #4 TRIPOLI has pulled off the slight upset in this race going back to 2021 and could take up that role again today. Going back to 2021 he had been more consistent both in finishing positions and higher speed figures, though coming into this race has shown progression in this current form cycle. He has also reunited with Periera, a rider that has had the success with this horse and even coming back from the San Diego (G2) the B- OptixGRADE and CLOSE OptixNOTES upgrading the running line and 5th place result.

In terms of trip, #9 ARABIAN KNIGHT is the lone "E" in the field and could present a pace advantage. Velazquez did not utilize that tactic in the Haskell (G1) and might have cost him on the day and trip benefit #1 GEAUX ROCKET RIDE under Smith. The way he has trained into this race working solo and given the draw it is projected Prat will be aggressive early and look to make the lead and take the field gate-to-wire.