Handicapping Analysis
Sat August 15th, 2026

Emily's Analysis

Del Mar Race 1

Post Time 4:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 BOURBON STORY requires some price compensation as they must step up in the speed figure department as a contender, however holds overall upside from the races to date. Speed figures progression could be easily projected keying off the juvenile numbers and in the third start of the year while coming off a legitimate EX/EXCUSE in the 6/26 start at CD, run over poor track conditions from prior rain. The trip was compromised from the TROUBLES+ when they took a bad stumble and from there in hand before making an eye-catching strong middle WIDE BURST overall visuals to suggest they can IMPROVE off the outcome.

Del Mar Race 2

Post Time 4:34 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#4 WILDCATTER has the benefit of a race at the surface and distance upgraded with the WIDE trip tracking the pace, with the winner, Dee Snook from off the pace. WILDCATTER recording a B- OptixGRADE giving them the edge here over #5 AUTOMATIC PRESS (C+) -- while also subtle flow upgrade on the day, had the benefit of saving ground and visually some class questions.

The connections could have been waiting for a longer distance race to debut #2 ITINERARY based on their physicality and with the route for today's race. They should handle the turf while training on the main track and could see that surface switch to the dirt later on down the road.

#1 DANG SON exiting the 7/25 common race, must step up all around though from the debut a move forward can be projected with added ground and physically "surface versatile" to make the move over to the grass.

Del Mar Race 6

Post Time 6:41 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

This is a great race to play as #6 GRAND SLAM SMILE projects to be favored - and logical in that role as an individual however in today's race shape has some vulnerabilities with their runstyle and others projecting to keep the early pace honest -- Fire/62 SpeedRate. GRAND SLAM SMILE does not hold a strong pace advantage, something they have often needed to carry at the route distance and given those hurdles lacks the value at shorter odds.

Part of that early pace should come from #7 CAN'T SLEEP stretching out for the first time and brining in tactical route speed. While perhaps they are not "need the lead" would expect them to be assertive here and in this spot... especially as the C. Gaines barn brings back #9 WINK AND A GRIN (LONGSHOT) into this spot second off the layoff and from a game B- OptixGRADE effort in this stakes event last year to suggest they can compete at this level. This also being the second start off the layoff suggests intent and pairs with the 7/18 returning visuals noting a WIDE trip strong GALLOP+ out and STRETCH Projection all in play here. Going back to last year, she showed progression with racing breaking their maiden second start (similar sprint to route pattern) and showed class stepping up off the B MSW win to pair up wins with a B+ OptixGRADE first in against winner. Already discussed the B- CLOSE effort in the Solana Beach last year so discussing their other four starts all were against open company and while finishing off the board, not a single effort was "bad" given the placement and timing especially closing out 2025 in grades stakes company and now back in the right spot.

Del Mar Race 7

Post Time 7:12 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Thinker and sci-fi author Cory Doctorow uses a metaphor when discussing the possibility limitations of ai "tossing more works into the word-guessing program won't make it sentient" would be like saying, "well, we keep breeding these horses to run faster and faster, so it's only a matter of time until one of our mares gives birth to a locomotive"" and it appears the betting of this race will be expecting just that (insert monocle and eye raise emoji here) and propped up as such from the breeding funding horse racing media.

Del Mar Race 8

Post Time 7:43 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

Looking at expected favorite #5 VRONTI they are fit though lack any strong edge in this field when it comes to all handicapping factors to lean strongly on at a shorter number. That is not to say they cannot win, they are as likely to as perhaps some others such as #9 KENTUCKY GAL one with higher recorded Speed figures to date and similar Class/Plot both ABOVE.

#6 RESOLVE holds an ABOVE rating on Class and proven stamina for these longer marathon type turf distance events. While that has not always recorded the "1" there are plenty of B OptixGRADES and perhaps the presence of J. Rosario will make the difference in outcome as that was the case when the two teamed up for the allowance win in May.

In terms of the other two P. D'Amato runners #2 PULP FICTION is the "wild card" on their three recorded stateside speed figures to date, they are too slow (Speed Below) to win this race. Outside of that one could make a case for upside and progression given the WIDE trip first time at KEE on the main track followed up with a CLOSE B- over the turf at a mile at LRL with the long layoff following. They returned from the layoff and in allowance company from the outside post on 6/5 and appeared a PREP from cold on the board to visuals in running to suggest there is some upside, whether it is is in this race (time and place) is unknown and requires price compensation to find out; #3 INNOVATE should given an honest account though similar when talking price compensation as that is necessary though has a level of consistency and given the chance to show stamina (10f turf SA 6/12) finishing in a BLANKET at the wire B OptixGRADE.