Handicapping Analysis
Thu August 20th, 2026

Emily's Analysis

Del Mar Race 2

Post Time 4:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#5 LADY RUTH is the clear horse to beat (esp if #4 BIG WOOSH cross entered on 8/23 takes that spot) with the change in class and consistent speed figures to move up naturally here.

Looking to mix in: #6 HOWMANYMORETIMES as they STRETCH out for the first time given that OptixNOTES Projection in both starts to date should be sitting on a new top here; AE #13 NICO DIJO also projects to IMPROVE coming off the 7/31 trip/outcome racing X_FLOW and going back to their 6/13 debut also projected STRETCH; #1 SMOKEM HOT GIRL recorded a B OptixGRADE at this level back on 7/4 at LRC and returns to A. Bautista the rider aboard that day and following a TACTIC- on 7/30.

#8 SPUN SWEET debuting here was scheduled to debut back on 5/29 in a $50 MCL event at a mile turf, a Stewards scratch that day - some gaps in the works though this placement could be by design to compete first out.

Del Mar Race 3

Post Time 5:00 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

#6 BELIEVER should move up from the debut two weeks ago racing GREEN to get experience in a subtle (TROUBLE- SHUFFLE) trip and benefit all around with added ground/STRETCH.

#1 INSTRINCTIVELY projected to move up on TURF and did just that on 8/6 tough to knock showing progression number wise with each start; #9 MISSED FORTUNE also exiting the 8/6 common race with a higher B-OptixGRADE and adversity at the break SLOG TROUBLE_S in running TROUBLE putting in a solid CLOSE.

Del Mar Race 8

Post Time 7:30 PM CST

Analysis by Emily Gullikson

A wide open finale, taking a swing with #3 SAARISELKA one who demands value though should be in that range given their running lines, finishing position and speed figures coming into this race. While a new top is required to win, trips arguably have played a role in each of the four local starts racing X_FLOW off the layoff first out in April and X_WIDE with significant ground loss in the next three starts including the most recent at DMR around two turns on 7/23 and moving inside today could be that subtle/necessary change.