


***Sunday, November 22, 2026***

**INTRO**

Yesterday was a whacky day for everybody, which is why we have a $140K Pick 6 Double Carryover! And even though I started off the $3 Late P3 with my top pick doing the business (8/1 morning-line sent off at even-money), I quickly flamed out when Midway Lane (a "C") beat my key "A" Mr. A. P. (7/5) by a nose, and the "other" Gallagher, Ronilla, who I thought might be a rabbit for my top pick (I'll Be Your Baby), won the nightcap as an "X" and paid $54.80.

Of course, it sucks to lose—but I can accept losing this way. I don't mind being wrong; I don't mind chaos; I don't mind getting beat by a nose when my horse runs a winning race. That's horse racing.

What I don't like is losing the way I have been for the last several weeks: having the right horse and not getting the expected result despite having the odds in my favor. I'm not naïve—I don't expect that "expected" result to play out every time, but when it hasn't played out a half-dozen times in a row, that's very frustrating.

By the way, I'm not using this space to complain or tell bad beat stories: I'm using it because it's important to address the ups and downs of horseplaying—and to explore the mental side of the game. It's also good therapy for me because I have to be honest with myself otherwise someone will call me out if I'm not. Ciaran and I pride ourselves on full transparency, and we are the first to call "B.S." if we think the other one is rewriting history!

I don't think anyone would argue that I've had a rough run of "right decisions, wrong outcomes." Fortunately, yesterday wasn't one of those days. I lost, plain and simple. I was

wrong about the last race—but so were thousands of others. That's normal! What isn't normal is losing when you feel like you should have won. That's a tough feeling to shake off, especially when you are playing multi-race wagers where the strike rate is low to begin with. In those moments where you are set up to win, you need to—and expect to—win!

I feel like a dark cloud may have just passed by, and it's nothing but bright skies ahead. Today is a new day. Let's go!

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Couple of things: if you are on track, come to my seminar with Jerry Weseloh at noon on the Kona Big Wave stage. You've all seen Jerry in the live chat, and you know how admirably he filled in on one "DTL" show when Ciaran had a family emergency—so if you are at Del Mar, come support one of our guys. He's also a damn good handicapper!

I can't wait to go live today at 3:05 p.m. PST for a long-awaited "Double Trouble Live" show. Ciaran was on vacation, but based on some of the things we are going to talk about today, you'd never know it. We have made some cool additions to MarkGelding.com in an effort to become the horseplayer destination site (now in English and Spanish!!!)! While all of the established brands have rested on their laurels over the last ten years (while doing nothing creative or innovative for horseplayers or to advance the industry), we are here to disrupt in the name of progress...by order of the DTL Crew!

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## DEL MAR MATRIX

*This analysis is for ON TURF only. All bets are off if the races come off the turf.*

***RACE 7: $3 LATE P3 (LEG 1):***

We kick off the $3 Late P3 with a **$100K Optional Claimer/N2X for 3-year-olds and upward sprinting 5-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at zero feet.**

This is a pretty salty group of turf sprinters, and there are plenty of places to land, so I wouldn't fault anyone for spreading deep in here to try and catch a good horse at a good price.

**#1 VIRAT (3/1)** is the obvious horse to beat based on his established form at this level, including a victory over this course and distance in July. He followed that up with a third in the Green Flash (G2), where he opened up a clear lead before getting caught late. I'm willing to forgive his most recent race at Remington Park, where he chased the pace and weakened, but there's a concern here: he's been involved in some pretty demanding early battles, and there's other speed in this field. That said, he doesn't need the lead, and he has the shortest distance to travel to the finish line. GRADE: A.

#2 REGAL PATRIOT (7/2) is an interesting horse because he's been running some very fast races, but most of his success has come against claimers. He won a $32K claimer here in August, and his recent runner-up effort at Santa Anita was respectable, though he had a favorable pace scenario and still couldn't finish the job against starter foes (though he did lose to a next-out winner who beat proper allowance horses). He's clearly fast enough to make his presence felt early, but he's stepping into a much tougher group. I'm not convinced he can withstand the pressure from these better horses, especially at a relatively short price, but who wants to get beat by O'Neill, Jaramillo, and Run Fast Racing (Terri would never forgive me!)? GRADE: B.

#3 MESCALERO (10/1) was no match for Virat last time, but he has been freshened since that race, and he is a lightly raced 4-year-old with room to improve. Improvement will be necessary, however, but he's in good hands with Mandella, and I wouldn't be surprised if he comes back with a much better effort than the public expects. That said, will it be good enough to win this? GRADE: B.

#4 INCANTO (IRE) (6/1) has been knocking heads with legitimate allowance and stakes-quality turf sprinters, and his recent third at Santa Anita was a decent effort. Two back, he had a troubled trip in the Green Flash (G2), so I'm not holding that race against him (though he was 42/1). He should be tracking from off the pace, and he has finishing times that could put him in the frame if the pace flatters his late run. GRADE: C.

**#5 MATT AT FIVE (5/1)** comes off a victory at the N1X level, and he's been remarkably consistent except for one dud around two turns. Miller wins a lot of these races, and even though the step up to this next level is never easy for a 3-year-old, J.J. can have him in a perfect stalking spot, and he should have plenty left cutting back from that nice 6-furlong win last time. GRADE: A.

#6 WOUND UP (8/1) returns from a lengthy layoff after a disappointing effort in a Gulfstream Park stakes race back in February. He has some respectable back form on dirt,

which is definitely his preferred surface. Yes, he has two wins on turf, including his maiden-breaker over this course and at this distance, but this might be a tune-up for a dirt race next time, since he's coming off a February layoff. That said, that 5-furlong bullet work two back certainly jumps off the page. GRADE: B.

#7 ARRAKIS (8/1) comes off a victory at Santa Anita against lesser competition, where Rispoli had to ride the hell out of him just to beat starter foes. Ellis claimed him from LRF (and Ciaran!) for $50K and now promptly jumps him up in class, which is a nice vote of confidence by a very good trainer—but I'm having a hard time seeing this guy grind down these foes while stalking from a wide position. GRADE: C.

#8 BOOK SMART (5/1) is a hard-knocking 7-year-old who has faced some decent competition throughout his career. His most recent race at Del Mar wasn't terrible, considering the early pressure he faced while trying to upset a few multiple graded-stakes winners, but he's been away since that July race, and he's drawn outside several other horses with early speed. I wouldn't be surprised if Maldonado sends him aggressively, but that could make things difficult for everybody involved. He'll be in contention late, but I think someone out-finishes him for the W. GRADE: B.

*A: 1,5*
*B: 3,2,6,8*
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***RACE 8: $3 LATE P3 (LEG 2); $5 LATE DOUBLE (LEG 1):***
Leg 2 of the $3 Late P3 is also Leg 1 of the $5 Late Double, and we've got a **$50K Maiden Claimer for Cal-bred fillies and mares sprinting 6-furlongs on the main track.**

This looks like a pretty evenly matched group of runners trying to find their best form at the right level—so that makes it a tough race to handicap.

#1 NATIVE EMPRESS (20/1) was 19/1 in her first try at this level, and she was never a factor in that one-mile turf affair. She now cuts back and moves to dirt, and that's an interesting angle for a horse who showed some run on the Emerald dirt over the summer against open MSWs. McCanna and Americano have done good work together, but typically with horses who get the right support at the windows. GRADE: B.

#2 CHUPARROSA (30/1) likely needed that debut run in the minor leagues to prepare her for this heat in SoCal. Her Los Al works aren't anything special, and I have a feeling that her

next start will probably be there after another educational run against a decent group of Cal-bred claimers. GRADE: X.

#3 GENUINE GRACE (8/1) is 0-for-10, and that's because she's been running the same race no matter what the level. Yes, she's faced plenty of MSWs, but she also has defeats at this level as well. Three back, she ran a good second here against Cal-bred MSWs, so if she can repeat that race, she'll have a chance to get some money. GRADE: B.

**#4 IMNOTVANILLASKY (9/2)** comes off a runner-up effort at this level at Santa Anita, where she encountered some trouble but still finished willingly. She also had a troubled trip at Del Mar two back, so she's been running better than her recent finishes might suggest. Glatt is good at getting these types to improve, and I like that she's shown she can make up ground going shorter, so an extra half-furlong should really help her cause. She looks like one of the more reliable contenders. GRADE: A.

#5 UNUSUAL EXCHANGE (8/1) returns from an August layoff after failing to make much of an impression against Maiden Special Weight competition on turf. She did show some speed in her earlier races, and her June runner-up effort at Los Alamitos suggests she can be competitive at this level—but she'll need to show more oomph late while coming off an August layoff. GRADE: C.

#6 ANYA (15/1) has been facing Maiden Special Weight competition without breaking through, but she has run some decent races against these types, including a good second here three back when she lost by a neck at 36/1. GRADE: B.

#7 QUEEN OF BANTRY (6/1) has been competitive at this level, and she has enough early speed to make her presence felt. She was third at Santa Anita last time after dueling for the lead, and her previous effort was another respectable showing against similar competition. The concern is that she keeps finding ways to get beaten after doing the hard work early. It's interesting to see Cristobal Herrera have a choice of mounts in here, so the fact that he chose Anya makes me like that one better. GRADE: C.

#8 HAYLEY AMBER (20/1) hasn't shown much in her recent races, but she did make a useful move in a Maiden Special Weight at Del Mar back in August. Her recent start at Santa Anita at this level was no good—but maybe she needed that one—but how much improvement can we expect from a 5-year-old mare who is still a maiden? GRADE: X.

**#9 LOW LA BUNNY (4/1)** is an interesting horse because she was competitive against similar company at Del Mar in August before trying a Maiden Special Weight turf route at Santa Anita, where she didn't do much. I'm willing to toss that experiment and focus on her sprint form. She has enough tactical speed to get good position, and Rosario should help her work out the right trip. The question is whether she can finish strongly enough to beat the other logical contenders, but I think she has a legitimate shot. GRADE: A.

**#10 TROPICAL RAIN DAY (5/1)** has been knocking on the door for a long time, and she has some respectable efforts at this level. Her recent fourth at Santa Anita wasn't particularly inspiring, but she was returning from a long layoff, so she should be fitter today after showing speed in that turf sprint. She's a contender, but that 0-for-12 record doesn't inspire confidence. GRADE: A.

#11 ENDLESS EDGY (20/1) is a first-time starter for Edwin Alvarez, and I don't see enough evidence to recommend her against this group. She'll need to show something before I can get interested. GRADE: X.

#12 MUSTANG KNICKY (6/1) has been competitive at this level, including a runner-up effort at Del Mar in August when she dueled for the lead and got caught late when I backed her for the W! Her two subsequent races weren't nearly as good, so she needs to do much better today—and what kind of trip is she going to get? She has plenty of speed, but others do as well. GRADE: B.

*A: 4,9,10*
*B: 6,1,12,3*
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***RACE 9: $3 LATE P3 (LEG 3); $5 LATE DOUBLE (LEG 2):***
Today's pay leg is a **$25K Claimer for 3-year-olds and upward contested at 8.5-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at zero feet.**

This is a competitive group of older turf routers, and several of these guys know each other well. I think the pace should be fairly quick, so I'm looking for a horse who can secure a decent tracking position and still finish. Of course, that's easier said than done!

**#1 CALM SEA (5/1)** has been competitive at this level without getting the job done, and his recent fifth at Santa Anita wasn't a terrible effort considering he encountered some trouble. He's been facing similar horses for a while, and he has enough tactical speed to work out a

decent trip from the rail. The problem is that he hasn't won in a long time, and he keeps finding one or two horses who are better. That said, I respect his consistency, and that's something to be said for a claimer. GRADE: A.

**#2 LAHAINA FLAVOR (5/1)** has been running against slightly tougher competition, and his recent fourth at Santa Anita was better than it looks on paper. He finished willingly after racing behind horses through slow splits, and his previous efforts at Del Mar were respectable. Gallagher has him in good form, and I like that he can make a sustained run without needing everything to go perfectly. He's one of the more logical contenders, and I wouldn't be surprised if he finally gets his picture taken for the first time this year. GRADE: A.

#3 NEON LIGHTS (IRE) (12/1) returns to SoCal after a three-race stint in Louisiana, where he used his sharp speed to beat much weaker foes at Louisiana Downs. He does have SoCal form at this level: three tries at this level for Mullins but no wins while unable to carry his speed. He now shows up in Antonio Garcia's barn to try $25K foes again. Know him early; we'll see about late. GRADE: C.

#4 ZALAMO (FR) (7/2) is a cool claimer who tries hard every time regardless of the level. He was claimed for $25K last time out of a fourth-place finish in a 9-furlong affair, and new trainer Pederson gave him a couple of months to freshen up for his return to the level of the claim. His best races are a fit, but he's always at the mercy of pace and trip. He's an obvious contender, but 7/2 doesn't excite me. GRADE: B.

#5 DAIRAGO (FR) (4/1) came to SoCal with okay turf form from Colonial and ran an even fourth going 9-furlongs against $16K starter foes as the 6/5 favorite. He should be fit off that, but it's kind of what you see is what you get from this 5-year-old, and I think he needs to improve here to get the W. GRADE: B.

#6 UNCLE HAPPY—program scratch.

#7 DEALERS SPECIAL (12/1) was 20/1 at this level two back, and he finished mid-pack. He needs to do better today, but he does have races where his closing time would put him in the frame here at a nice price—but a win would require lots of things going right for him. GRADE: C.

#8 KIMMER (10/1) hasn't won in a very long time, but he has always shown a decent late kick, and I just know that one of these days, he's going to get the right race flow to step up

and surprise. His recent form isn't pretty, but he was facing some decent starter foes. This is a better spot for him, and the move to Berrios is not insignificant. He might not be fast enough now as a 7-year-old to get a win today, but he should outrun his odds. GRADE: B.

#9 CATHAL (IRE) (15/1) comes off a runner-up effort in a starter allowance at Santa Anita, where he finished willingly after racing behind horses in a 9-furlong affair. That race should have him ready for this, but this 5-year-old has shown the same level of consistency regardless of level, distance, or surface, so he'll need to show improvement today—and that's a tough ask considering the fact that he's winless since being claimed off Papaprodromou way back in January. GRADE: C.

**#10 AMPLITUDE (9/2)** runs for a tag for the first time here in SoCal, and that's a significant class angle for a trainer who spots them where they can be competitive. His starter form is just okay, and the post does him no favors, but if he gets the right trip, he's going to be tough for the lethal Sadler/Rosario combination. GRADE: A.

#11 DOUBLE NEAT—program scratch.

#12 PHOSPHORESCENCE (FR) (30/1) has some respectable back form, including a victory at Santa Anita earlier this year against some tough starter foes, but his recent efforts since changing barns haven't been particularly encouraging. He's shown enough early speed to get involved, and Gonzalez is the right guy to hustle him out to get good early position out of the chute, but that will likely take its toll late. GRADE: X.

*A: 2,1,10*
*B: 4,5,8*

***[SCROLL DOWN FOR MATRIX]***

# THE MATRIX

## DEL MAR: $3 LATE P3

| DMR $3 LP3: Sunday, 11/22/26 | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| R7: Leg 1* | 1,5 | 3,2,6,8 |
| R8: Leg 2 | 4,9,10 | 6,1,12,3 |
| R9: Leg 3* | 2,1,10 | 4,5,8 |
| **For on turf only.* | | |
| | | |
| **POTENTIAL WAGERS** | | |
| $3 LP3: 1,5 / 4,9,10 / 2,1,10 ($54) | | |
| $3 LP3: 5 / 6,1,12,3 / 2,1,10 ($36) | | |
| $3 LP3: 3,2,6,8 / 4,9,10 / 2 ($36) | | |
| ***LP3 TOTAL: $126*** | | |

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## DEL MAR: $5 LATE DOUBLE

| DMR $5 LDBL: Sunday, 11/22/26 | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| R8: Leg 1 | 4,9,10 | 6,1,12,3 |
| R9: Leg 2* | 2,1,10 | 4,5,8 |
| **For on turf only.* | | |
| | | |
| **POTENTIAL WAGERS***** | | |
| ****LDBL wagers will be finalized during DTL show pending Leg 1 of LP3.* | | |

**--END—**