

Expert Analysis

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Maggles McGee (9th race)

First Race

1. Benny's Puzzle

2. Just a Graze

3. Nineteenth Hole

~BENNY'S PUZZLE^ is the only legitimate late-runner in this turf mile for Cal-bred maidens; the seven-start maiden can mow them down late. He ran his final quarter-mile last out in :24.04, three starts back he finished in :24.02. None of his rivals finish close to those final fractions. ~JUST A GRAZE^ is a 10-start maiden stretching back out from a pair of comeback sprints in which he finished fourth. Neither of his two route races last spring were that great, but his two recent sprints were okay and he might be a better horse this season at age 5. ~NINETEENTH HOLE^ wheels back one week after he set the pace and tired late in a maiden-50 turf mile that was dominated by closers. 'HOLE actually ran well, bucking the race flow. DANZING WILD CAT stretches out from a creditable fifth in a comeback sprint. He is expected to set or pace the pace.

Second Race

1. A Fleet Ride

2. Sweet Delta Dawn

3. Union Heiress

~A FLEET RIDE^ drops to the \$10k claiming N2L after a better-than-looked third last out in a \$16k claiming N2L. 'RIDE broke from post 5 in the mile race, and raced four-wide from start to finish. She actually uncorked a little rally on the far turn before she flattened out. This is her third start back following a months-long layoff, and the easiest chance of her career. ~SWEET DELTA DAWN^ has been facing tougher company on turf. She virtually split the field both recent starts vs. \$25k claiming N2L rivals on grass (one sprint, one route), and now drops to an easy spot. Two starts back, 'DAWN finished in front of ~UNION HEIRESS^, who came out of that race to miss by a neck at this class level last out. 'HEIRESS is proven on dirt, but it's a new racing surface for SWEET DELTA DAWN.

Third Race

1. Man O Rose

2. On the Whim

3. Drop Um

~MAN O ROSE^, a 12-for-19 sprinter who won his last five starts, all in stakes, will be tough to beat in this Cal-bred turf sprint stakes on the hill. 'ROSE overcame the rail and uncomfortable trip last out to defeat open stakes company on dirt; he won his only hillside race during the Santa Anita fall meet by a nose over G1 winner Lovesick Blues. 'ROSE is a versatile pace-presser who handles turf and dirt, he is the class of the field and the fastest on figures. Low-odds standout, on paper. Late-runner ~ON THE WHIM^ shortens up after a solid third-place comeback at one mile. That was his first start since last spring. 'WHIM won a Cal-bred stakes on the downhill in fall 2024, he will be rolling late. Not sure, however, if there is enough pace to flatter his kick. ~DROP UM^, runner-up to MAN O ROSE in dirt stakes in autumn and winter, finished a creditable third last out in a N2X. He'll be tucked in right behind the speed. FLYOVER is all speed, dropping in to face Cal-breds after he duelled and tired in back-to-back turf sprints stakes vs. open company. Longshot theft? Probably not, because MAN O ROSE will be nipping at his heels. SPEEDY WILSON should rally late, though his turf ability is uncertain. He might prefer dirt.

Fourth Race

1. Sharons Angels

2. Montana Jet

3. Dutton's Song

This optional claiming/restricted maiden sprint (horses sold or RNA for \$150k or less) is a scramble. ~SHARONS ANGELS^ was gelded following his recent comeback in a race that produced at least two next-out winners. 'ANGELS worked well since raced, and might be a better horse since being gelded. ~MONTANA JET^ raced wide and finished a nondescript fifth in his debut, but Peter Miller-trained second-start maidens are always worth a closer look. The past five years according to Formulator, Miller second-start maidens are 35-for-159 (22 percent wins, flat-bet profit). Second time out, 'JET should move forward. ~DUTTON'S SONG^ finished third in the same race MONTANA JET exits. The effort by DUTTON'S SONG, who added blinkers and switched to dirt, was a step in the right direction.

Fifth Race

1. Spotted Haze

2. O K Rose

3. Bessie Coleman

Lightly raced ~SPOTTED HAZE^ makes his first start since June, with a history of firing fresh. Both wins were off the bench: her career debut vs. maidens, and last May vs. Cal-bred allowance rivals on dirt. Although neither turf start was that great, this is the first time she will have raced on turf while running fresh. There is not much true speed in this field; SPOTTED HAZE figures to be positioned first or second early. Route-to-sprint ~O K ROSE^ is a two-turn late-runner whose races in fall and winter earned figures that rank among the highest in this field. She will be rolling late. ~BESSIE COLEMAN^ is the other front-runner, second start back following a long layoff. Her fourth-place comeback was good; she duelled and did not tire until late. Now she moves from the hill to the main oval with speed to either set or press the pace along with the top choice.

Sixth Race

1. Uncle Evco

2. One Happy Dude

3. Irish Element

Third last out in a highly rated and productive route at this \$16k claiming N2L level, ~UNCLE EVCO^ is the logical choice. His last-out figure (71 Beyer) tops the field, the number was validated when the fourth- and fifth-place finishers behind him returned to win their next start. 'EVCO should be able to wear these down. But with five runner-up finishes and only one career win, he's tough to trust at a short price. ~ONE HAPPY DUDE^ is the only two-time winner in the field; 3yos are not restricted by the non-winners of two clause in this race. 'DUDE scored a sharp come-from-behind sprint win last out in a race that's unfolded perfectly for his style. It is uncertain if he will be as effective around two turns, however. He might be best as a closing sprinter. On the other hand, trainer Steve Knapp is xx-for-xx this winter going sprint to dirt route. ~IRISH ELEMENT^ finished far behind the top choice two starts back, then scored a confidence-building maiden win last out. Back to back? MUCH MAN stretches out and drops in class for his second start following an extended layoff.

Seventh Race

1. Running Spartan

2. Broheim

3. Sand Bagger

~RUNNING SPARTAN^ is back with maidens after a promising comeback vs. winners in a in starter allowance turf sprint. He pressed the pace, made the lead, stuck in there until late, and got collared. Good try by a 5yo who needed the start, it was his first in more than a year. He ran well against tougher company early in his career, and is fast enough to

handle maidens. ~BROHEIM[^], who placed in three successive starts vs. special eight maidens, drops in for a \$50k claim tag in his first start since being gelded. He ran well against good company in summer 2024; this is just his second start since. ~SAND BAGGER[^] is an eight-start maiden with four successive in-the-money finishes at this maiden-50 turf sprint level. He'll get there one of these days.

Eighth Race

1. Binging	2. The Big Cheeseola	3. Alpine Thunder
-------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------

A big field of \$5k claiming sprinters race five and one-half furlongs; ~BINGING[^] and ~THE BIG CHEESEOLA[^] merit top billing while dropping from \$10k claiming. The \$10k claiming N3L win by BINGING two starts back would be fast enough; he was not disgraced last out in the open \$10k claiming sprint. He finished a grinding fourth. These rivals are easier, his even running style gives him the versatility to press the pace or rally from off. THE BIG CHEESEOLA is speed. He dueled through a fast pace last time before fading in the stretch. One more class drop, and a bit less speed to deal with, gives him a chance to win with an up-front trip. ~ALPINE THUNDER[^] dusted a small five-runner field last out at this level, and was claimed. He faces a bigger field here (12 entrants), but he is in sharp form and will be involved in the pace scenario.

Ninth Race

1. Maggles McGee	2. Baby Needs Shoes	3. Have Style
-------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------

With a pair of runner-up turf sprints under her belt, ~MAGGLES MCGEE[^] is ready to stretch out and win this turf mile for Cal-bred maiden 3yo fillies. She has distance potential in her pedigree, the even-paced style she showed in her sprints suggests she will appreciate two turns. ~BABY NEEDS SHOES[^] finished a creditable fourth in her comeback following a nine-month layoff. After she veered out and bumped a rival on the first run, she raced evenly thereafter, like a filly who needed a comeback prep. A forward move is expected second start back. ~HAVE STYLE[^] improved when she switched to turf, third in the same race in which BABY NEEDS SHOES finished fourth. HAVE STYLE adds blinkers and figures to be forwardly placed from the inside post. RISKY PLEASURE is racing into condition, making her third start following a late-season break. Rider switch to Juan Hernandez might benefit.