

Expert Analysis

By Brad Free

BEST BET: Jimmy Blue Jeans (7th race)

First Race

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| 1. Gazon | 2. Spearfish | 3. Valiant Son |
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The comebacker ~GAZON^, off since June, is the choice in this N3L claiming turf sprint. Since being gelded in late 2024, GAZON won two of three Santa Anita turf sprints including a highly rated comeback win last spring. He runs well fresh, sharp recent works indicate he is set to fire. He returns in a \$30k claiming N3L while employing the "no-claim waiver." That signals optimism. ~SPEARFISH^ merits upset consideration returning to preferred footing, which is turf. His Dec-Jan-Feb races against better company were strong; he had excuses for three subsequent misfires (bad start, followed by two dirt races). Back on preferred footing, he might be overlooked in the betting, and fits perfect with a pressing/stalking trip. ~VALIANT SON^ finished well for third in his comeback, first on turf. He will be rolling late at a six-furlong turf distance recently kind to off-the-pace runners.

Second Race

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| 1. Precision | 2. Mutt Dillin | 3. B Grayson |
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A mishmash field of \$25k claiming N2L sprinters race six furlongs on dirt, which is a surface and sprint distance ~PRECISION^ never tried. But the turf-route gelding has run well against better, his dirt works are decent, and his rivals are modest. Tepid choice in a wide-open field of five. ~MUTT DILLIN^ lost his chance at the break last time, when he lost position early and finished next to last. The speedster returns to dirt first start off the claim, and is the one they must catch. He could be long gone. ~B GRAYSON^ benefits by a return to his preferred distance, which is a sprint. His trainer Val Brinkerhoff won with 6 of his last 17 starters including three ridden by Alfredo Bautista, the new rider for B GRAYSON.

Third Race

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| 1. Seeking Attention | 2. Jasmine | 3. Confidentiality |
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Front-runner ~SEEKING ATTENTION^ and late-runner ~JASMINE^, both trained by Peter Eurton, merit top billing this turf sprint for maiden 3yo fillies. SEEKING ATTENTION started three times this winter at Fair Grounds, in the money twice including a third last out in a race that produced three next-out winners. If she can avoid a duel with the pace rival two stalls to her outside, 'ATTENTION can win with an up-front trip. If a pace duel unfolds, that would benefit JASMINE, who switches to turf after three okay efforts on dirt. Although progeny of Bolt d'Oro are less effective in turf sprints (8 percent wins), the closing style of JASMINE suits the pace scenario. ~CONFIDENTIALITY^ is the aforementioned pace rival for the top choice. CONFIDENTIALITY duelled and cracked as the even-money favorite in her debut on dirt; she is likely to improve second out. Progeny of Complexity have won 12 percent of turf sprints; the filly's dam produced one other runner whose wins both were on turf. GOODIES has worked well for her debut, meet-leading trainer Phil D'Amato won with 2 of his last 5 turf-sprint firsters, 3 of his last 10. HIGH SOCIETY U misfired last out, but her promising third-place debut puts her in the hunt.

Fourth Race

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| 1. Perfect Life | 2. Tom's Star | 3. Misty Dancer |
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Overmatched and off the board last out, ~PERFECT LIFE^ is back where she fits perfect in a \$10k claiming N3L dirt mile. She ran well three starts back winning a N2L route, she ran even better two back when second in an unrestricted claiming mile. The off-the-pace filly meets a field with speed to flatter her closing rally; the SA main track has played fair to all running styles this spring at one mile. ~TOM'S STAR^ also was overmatched last out after winning a N2L two back. She has more speed than the top choice, and fits with a forwardly placed trip. ~MISTY DANCER^ looms an upset candidate, stretching back to two turns and removing blinkers. LIL'S COFFEE, who is racing above her conditions (eligible to N2L claiming) is a contender based on the figures she earned this winter on synthetic in Kentucky.

Fifth Race

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| 1. Midnight Cowgirl | 2. Baby Needs Shoes | 3. Humidity |
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A slight drop from Cal-bred MSW to Cal-bred maiden-50 makes ~MIDNIGHT COWGIRL^ the choice in this turf sprint. She may have been compromised by the race shape last out; her and odds-on She's No Quant sped clear of the field, then both backed up. Now 'COWGIRL faces a field without speed. She could be loose, she could be gone. ~BABY NEEDS SHOES^ is rounding into form, while shortening in distance after a career-best third last out racing a mile. She showed in her third-place debut here last spring that she can sprint on turf. It's been a while since trainer Peter Miller won with a route-to-sprint maiden on turf (0-for-last-10), but the move has been historically productive for Miller. He won with 5 of his previous 14 who went route to turf sprint. ~HUMIDITY^ also goes route to sprint, Cal-bred MSW to Cal-bred maiden-50, and will be rolling late. The likelihood of a soft pace does her no favors, however. LATIN AIR makes her debut for trainer Jeff Mullins, who scored upsets with two of his last three first-time starters (\$13.40 Surfin the Coast, \$30 Run With Liberty).

Sixth Race

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| 1. Christa McAuliffe | 2. Never in Doubt | 3. Very Smart |
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Five-start maiden ~CHRISTA MCAULIFFE^ and first-time starter ~NEVER IN DOUBT^ top this dirt sprint for Cal-bred maiden fillies and mares. CHRISTA MCAULIFFE is the choice based on runner-up finishes two of her last three. She missed by only a half-length last out on turf; she also runs well on dirt. The knock is she is not particularly quick, and this six-runner field does not include much speed. Tepid choice, from off the pace. NEVER IN DOUBT appears to have trained okay for Andy Mathis, who won with four of his last eight runners this meet including a first-time starter. 'DOUBT must overcome the inside post, and it is unclear if she is quick. She broke okay her only gate work captured on video (April 19), but she did not look particularly quick. Furthermore, progeny of Honor A. P. are only 1 for 28 first time out according to Formulator. Nonetheless, she is the second preference from a hot stable. ~VERY SMART^ makes her first start since a disappointing last-place debut a year ago. Based on her modest works, this comeback prep looks like merely a prep race. ZADRA finished a promising third in her debut, and is likely to improve.

Seventh Race

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| 1. Jimmy Blue Jeans | 2. Stylishlyacclaimed | 3. Druidic |
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~JIMMY BLUE JEANS^ will enter this Cal-bred N1X/optional claiming turf route as an apparent low-odds standout. An eight-time winner who has been running well against tougher open company, 'JEANS drops into the state-bred ranks, runs for the \$20k optional tag, and has a pressing style and inside post. On figures, he stands out. Trainer George Papaprodromou lost with his last four turf-route favorites, but he won with 12 of his previous 15 turf-route favorites. 'JEANS won the 2021 Snow Chief Stakes at this mile and one-eighth turf distance. ~STYLISHLYACCLAIMED^ had a weird trip last out, finishing last in a similar Cal-bred allowance turf route. A maiden sprint winner two back and expected to set or press the pace, STYLISHLYACCLAIMED was anchored early, got rank while under restraint, and completely sputtered. He needs to use his speed, which is the likely strategy this time. Logical contender with a forwardly placed trip. ~DRUIDIC^ stretches out in peak form and is likely to be close to the front. This race has plenty of pace, which benefits late-runner SABERTOOTH.

Eighth Race

1. Magnify	2. Coach Cronin	3. Voldemort
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~MAGNIFY^ and ~COACH CRONIN^ are tough to separate in this N1X dirt mile. MAGNIFY ran the fastest race of his career last out, runner-up with a 95 Beyer while finishing eight lengths clear of third. His up-front style and outside post in this six-runner field translates to a comfortable pressing trip. COACH CRONIN moves up in class after a pair of runaway allowance wins vs. Cal-bred company, one short and one long. He crushed by nearly five lengths last out, and was subsequently purchased for \$80k via an online auction. This is the gelding's first start since moving to trainer Bob Hess, Jr. Sharp gelding fits with a pressing trip similar to the top choice. ~VOLDEMORT^ tossed in a clunker last out, a distant sixth as the favorite. But his runner-up finish two back at this level gives him a shot. From the inside post, he'll probably go.

Ninth Race

1. Marjoram	2. Light Won Up	3. Surfin' U. S. A.
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A deep field of 3yo turf fillies sprint 6.5 furlongs on the hill in this G3. Well-bred, lightly raced ~MARJORAM^ can post an upset. She overcame a bad start in her debut victory last fall on dirt; she lost all chance in her hillside comeback last month. She stumbled, trailed by double digits, and finished well. With a clean break, she would have won. A full sister to G3 turf-sprint winner Spiced Up, MARJORAM worked well since the off-slow comeback, and may only need a clean break. Program favorite ~LIGHT WON UP^ won a stakes over this hillside layout in February, followed by a creditable fourth last out in a productive G3 in Kentucky. The three-one finishers wheeled back to run one-two in a G3. LIGHT WON UP is proven on the hill, with speed for a pressing trip. ~SURFIN' U. S. A.^ moves up in class after she crushed an allowance turf sprint on the main oval. Each start better than the start before, SURFIN U. S. A. is one of many contenders in this deep field. REVERA, already a sprint stakes winner on dirt, switches to turf for her first start in nearly three months. Front-runner STILL UNWRITTEN will lead as far as she can. Route-to-sprint YOURS SINCERELY has worked exceptionally under new jockey Kyle Frey, and might be best suited to this sprint distance.