

Expert Analysis

By Brad Free

BEST BET: *Atomic Drop (2nd race)*

First Race

1. Mutaz	2. Big Bill	3. Cuban Confusion
-----------------	--------------------	---------------------------

An improved runner-up finish second time out tamps ~MUTAZ^ the choice in this maiden turf mile. He may not get the same soft-pace trip he benefitted from last out at a mile and one-eighth, but this shorter race is not exactly loaded with speed. MUTAZ can win with a front-running/pace-pressing trip. ~BIG BILL^ ran super in his debut, runner-up by a neck in a Cal-bred maiden turf sprint. He was not quick early, got shuffled back, finished well and galloped out well. Sired by English Channel, 'BILL benefits by this longer trip as he moves up in class to open company. ~CUBAN CONFUSION^, beaten favorite all three U.S. starts, in the money each time, stretches back to a mile while trying to break his maiden in his 14th career start. He will get there someday. BROSKI is an eight-start maiden, in the money seven times.

Second Race

1. Atomic Drop	2. Druidic	3. Quality Cat
-----------------------	-------------------	-----------------------

~ATOMIC DROP^ can make amends for finishing fourth at odds-on last out, when he wheeled back just six days after a romping win that earned a career-high figure. He regressed, obviously. But the nine-time winner has now had a month between starts, and he worked exceptionally well June 2 according to National Turf clocker Andy Harrington. Expectations are 'DROP can turn the tables on ~DRUIDIC^ in this low-level starter allowance/optional claiming route. DRUIDIC defeated 'DROP by nearly two lengths last out, and looms the main challenger again. The race in which DRUIDIC and ATOMIC DROP finished first and fourth was flattered when the two-three finishers both won next out. ~QUALITY CAT^ looms the upsetter, stretching out from an okay fourth-place sprint that was his first start in three months. He can run long. MAJOR TIME also merits longshot consideration on the stretch-out. He is a better horse since a pair of forgettable routes nearly two years ago.

Third Race

1. Step It Out	2. Hey Demps	3. Miss Meagher
-----------------------	---------------------	------------------------

~STEP IT OUT^, in the money her last three starts in similar N2L claiming turf routes, is the tepid choice. She faded to third last out as the odds-on favorite; perhaps a mile and one-eighth was out of reach. She shortens to a mile, the distance at which she finished second here in March and April. ~HEY DEMPS^ makes her first start in one year, entered for a claim tag for her comeback. She ran well against Cal-bred allowance rivals last year on this course. ~MISS MEAGHER^ stretches out from an okay fourth-place comeback in a turf sprint. She pressed the pace before tiring; she could make the lead against this bland, paceless field.

Fourth Race

1. Lady Rider	2. Eastwick	3. Sexzie
----------------------	--------------------	------------------

The last-out finish by ~LADY RIDER^ at this maiden-20 route level makes her the choice, although many of her rivals are dropping from tougher races. 'RIDER was stretching out from a fourth-place sprint debut; she finished 12 lengths clear of third, and earned a figure (58 Beyer) that matches par for this level. ~EASTWICK^ drops from maiden special-weight, and has speed to be forwardly placed. ~SEXZIE^ continues her class descent, from restricted maiden, to maiden-50, now to maiden-20. If she produces the speed she showed two starts back in her only dirt start, she might be the one o catch.

Fifth Race

1. Word Play	2. Notime for Squalls	3. Giggle Giggle
---------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------

~WORD PLAY^, runner-up both recent starts at this N2L starter turf-mile level, is the obvious choice at a short price. She is 0-for-8 in the U.S., but in the money six of those with recent closing fractions that are relatively fast (:23.46 and :23.38). If she reproduces either of her last two starts, she should win at a short price. However, she does have a history of falling short of expectations. ~NOTIME FOR SQUALLS^ finished behind the top choice both recent starts; 'SQUALLS has run virtually the same race all three starts on the comeback (Beyers: 74, 74, 75). ~GIGGLE GIGGLE^ faces winners after an okay maiden-50 win at a mile and one-eighth. Her figure was low, but that was the product of the slow fractions. It might have been a wake-up race for GIGGLE GIGGLE. CAMANOE is a comeback upset candidate. This is her first start since September at Delaware Park when she won a \$16k maiden-claiming turf route over a field that included three next-out winners.

Sixth Race

1. Jalisco	2. Pavlovian	3. Stanford Dropout
-------------------	---------------------	----------------------------

Third-time starter ~JALISCO^ is ready to win after finishing second in the meet's fastest 4.5-furlong race for Cal-bred 2yos (:51.96). JALISCO finished more than two lengths clear of third, and stretches to five furlongs with more speed than his main rival. That is ~PAVLOVIAN^, runner-up in his debut in a slower race. But PAVLOVIAN finished well in his debut and benefits by the extra half-furlong. He will be rolling late. ~STANFORD DROPOUT^ debuts with solid works for a stable that won with 7 of its last 25 debut 2yos. 'DROPOUT is by Stanford, whose 2yo progeny have won at an above-average 16 percent clip first time out. This race is a split of race 8.

Seventh Race

1. Ariri	2. Wink and a Grin	3. Eternal Reign
-----------------	---------------------------	-------------------------

An interesting turf mile for N1X fillies and mares includes European import ~ARIRI^ and sharp Cal-bred ~WINK AND A GRIN^. The call is the shipper. ARIRI unleashed an explosive turn of foot to win her debut on synthetic, and she appears to have trained well for her U.S. debut for trainer Leonard Powell and Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners. The same connections won a race here two years ago (May 29, 2023) with an imported filly (Anisette) who made her U.S. debut at SA after winning at Wolverhampton in England, same as ARIRI. ARIRI has trained well for her comeback, the maiden race she won overseas was productive. The runner-up won two starts later, the third-place finisher won next out. WINK AND A GRIN is the "now" filly, up in class off a powerful turf-mile victory against state-breds. 'GRIN flew home in :22.88 while running faster each successive quarter-mile. 'GRIN might be good enough to handle open company. ~ETERNAL REIGN^ was in tough in a G3 turf mile last out; she finished second in back-to-back N1Xs before that.

Eighth Race

1. Mo Holland Drive

2. Hero Or Zero

3. Arkadelphia

A creditable fourth-place debut by ~MO HOLLAND DRIVE^ stamps him the choice in this maiden race for Cal-bred 2yos that is a split of race 6. 'DRIVE faced open company first out in a turf sprint, chased from midpack, raced wide on the turn, looked green in the stretch, but finished evenly and galloped out willingly after the wire. It was a solid debut in a race won by the promising 2yo turf colt Hey Nay Nay. 'DRIVE switches to dirt, and drops into a race for state-breds. He should move up a ton. ~HERO OR ZERO^ makes his debut with a solid workout pattern for a stable that is rolling this meet with 2yos (two wins, two seconds, one third going into the week. Progeny of Pavel are 3 for 18 first out; the dam of 'ZERO produced one runner who won first out. ~ARKADELPHIA^ is likely to improve off his third-place debut on turf at Gulfstream Park. That race already produced at least one next-out winner. SUNSET RIDE has a solid work pattern for his debut.

Ninth Race

1. Divin Propos

2. Mrs. Astor

3. Balladeer

~DIVIN PROPOS^ gets top billing in the G3 San Juan Capistrano, but the mare ~MRS. ASTOR^ would give him a battle if she runs in this turf marathon instead of the filly-mare stakes she entered Saturday. 'PROPOS and 'ASTOR must catch front-runner ~BALLADEER^. The tepid call is DIVIN PROPOS, fourth last month at Pimlico and G3-placed at Santa Anita two starts back. He often finds trouble, but he will run all day. MRS. ASTOR crushed fillies and mares in a stakes at a mile and one-half, and trained well since. She would be a short price in the Possibly Perfect Stakes on Saturday; she could vie for favoritism in this G3 vs. colts and geldings. BALLADEER is lone speed, third start off the layoff. He will take this field as far as he can. Last-out allowance winner NITTI will be running late. A longshot to possibly hit the board is SANTA BARBARIAN, the first 3-year-old this century to contest the mile and three-quarters San Juan. 'BARBARIAN might be outclassed, but he has a history of outrunning his since switching to turf. He popped at 13-1 in a maiden turf race two back, followed by a 43-1 turf upset in the Snow Chief Stakes for Cal-bred 3yos.

Tenth Race

1. Varney

2. Indispensable

3. Brazenly

~VARNEY^ faces NIX rivals off a runaway maiden win at PIM. An improving 3yo with a six-pound weight break from his older rivals, VARNEY is likely to continue his upward pattern facing a field in which two main rivals are making their first start of the season. One of those is ~INDISPENSABLE^ who developed last summer and fall into a legit stakes-caliber 3yo. He has not raced since November, and might need this comeback prep to get ready for Del Mar, but he should continue his development this summer. ~BRAZENLY^ hit the board his last five starts; his last three dirt starts all earned speed figures that match or exceed the 92-Beyer par for this level. PONY EXPRESS, stablemate of INDISPENSABLE, has worked fast for his first start since September.

Eleventh Race

1. Beef Winslow

2. Doncic

3. Daniel's Magic

~BEEF WINSLOW^ crushed a \$50k claiming turf mile last out, he runs well over this downhill turf course, and gets the call to fire right back vs. NIX/optional claiming rivals. ~DONCIC^ is a five-time winner whose last-out runner-up finish earned the highest figure (92) of his career. ~DANIEL'S MAGIC^ could improve off a creditable third-place comeback that was his first start in seven months. He entered the G3 Daytona Stakes on Saturday; this race is more realistic and he is a two-time winner on the hill.

Twelfth Race

1. Godavri

2. Clubhouse Cutie

3. Tiger Fire

Comeback runner-up ~GODAVRI^ ran fast enough to win most Cal-bred maiden sprints last out while making her first start since last summer. She appears to have trained well since. Her main rival took a big step forward last out. ~CLUBHOUSE CUTIE^, a Clubhouse Ride sibling to Grade 1 winner The Chosen Vron, improved switching to turf for her second start. She produced more speed, loomed and tired while only two lengths behind the top choice. Solid effort by a filly bred to be a good one. Also-eligible ~TIGER FIRE^ switches to turf off a promising dirt debut behind Hurricane Layla, an allowance contender Friday in race 5. YOUNG LOVE appears to have trained well for her first start since a troubled sixth as the favorite in her debut last summer. That is a wrap for the Santa Anita season. Daytime racing at Los Alamitos begins Friday; this handicapper returns July 18 for opening day of the Del Mar summer season.