



## THE PICK 4 MATRIX

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**1/19/2020**

*NOTE: Because this analysis is posted in advance, always check my Twitter feed [@ScatoniSureShot](#) for real-time updates based on scratches and track conditions—as this analysis is written for surfaces that are fast and firm. Thanks!*

### **INTRO**

We've got an eight-race card on tap for Sunday's festivities with a first post of 12:30 p.m. The feature is an interesting renewal of the Astra (G3), a turf marathon for fillies and mares that is part of the Late Pick 4. Reminder that we have bonus Monday racing tomorrow in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

### **LEG 1 (R5):**

Today's sequence begins with a wide-open \$12.5K/N2L conditioned-claimer contested at 5.5-furlongs on the main track. This is an unreliable group, and there are several horses who like to contend for the lead, which might allow for something wacky to happen. Try to get as much coverage as you can.

#1 CONCORD JET (3/1) was the 2/1 favorite at this level last time, and he ran a valiant second, dueling throughout on the inside before getting worn down late in that 6.5-furlong race. The cutback will definitely help, and his speed should allow him to flee the rail—but there will be heat to his outside. GRADE: B.

#2 JEN GO UNCHAINED (5/2) just ran second against slightly better \$16K/N2L animals at Del Mar, tracking from off the pace and putting in a solid late bid to just miss despite a troubled trip. The slight class relief and his running style work in his favor today, making him an obvious choice for top honors—though, as mentioned, this is a pretty unreliable group. GRADE: A.

#3 RED VALOR (10/1) just broke his maiden as the 7/5 favorite at Los Al. He made the lead and never looked back in that 5.5-furlong event. His speed will ensure a good forwardly placed trip, but there is other speed in here, so this one will have to run hard every step of the way. Maybe the 5-pound weight-break will help him stick around for a slice. GRADE: X.

#4 PASSING (5/1) also broke his maiden in wire fashion, opening up early and cruising to victory four starts back at Del Mar. Since then, he's been up on the pace in each of his races against winners, but he hasn't been able to hold on—with his best finish coming against lesser \$8K/N2L foes at Los Al, where he was third by a neck. I like that Cedillo takes the call, and that this one is drawn outside two other speed horses, but he will need to show more late in the race. GRADE: C.

#5 IRISH BALLAD (15/1) just ran second against weaker \$8K/N2L foes at Los Al, running on decently from off the pace to earn the place—but he's now facing better animals, and he'll really need to step it up today. Maybe he could pick up a slice if the race falls apart, but that seems like the ceiling. GRADE: X.

#6 FRIENDLY STEVE (5/1) is coming off a 331-day layoff for a trainer who can have one ready to run—but it should be noted that this guy broke his maiden going a mile while loose on the lead—and his subsequent tries against winners were also around two turns (albeit against tougher \$25K/N2L foes).



There is a world in which he's just a better animal than these, but he will have to show that this short distance isn't an issue. GRADE: B.

#7 NORSKI (6/1) broke his maiden two back at Los Al, stalking the pace and digging in to win as the 19/10 second choice. He then found 8-furlongs a bridge too far in his first start versus winners, which came at this very same level. He was 2/1 in that race, so people clearly thought it was the right spot for him, but after setting the pace, he weakened. He should be fit on the cutback, and you can expect that 5-pound weight-break to help out as well. GRADE: B.

#8 TEMPLE KNIGHTS (6/1) was 3/1 at this level last time, but a wide journey and an extra furlong proved too much for him. Before that, he ran a very good second at this level at 6/1, despite a slow break from the rail. He should get a good tracking trip in his first start for Lerner (who took him for \$12.5K last time), and if they go fast enough up front, he should be able to reel them in late given his conditioning from that 6.5-furlong race. GRADE: A.

### **LEG 2 (R6):**

Today's second leg is a marathon turf affair, the \$100K Astra (G3), a 12-furlong turf race for fillies and mares.

#1 LOSTINTRANZLATION (4/1) could not have run any worse last time when she set an easy pace and stopped like she got shot in the Red Carpet (G3) at Del Mar, losing to a less-than-stellar group. In fact, I thought maybe something went amiss the way she lost her action, but alas, here she is right back in a stakes race for a trainer who wins a lot of turf races with female horses—especially long turf races. She's the only speed in the field, and Rosario bothers to ride. She's not nearly as talented as the top two, but she will be in front throughout most of the race, and we all know that anything can happen after that. GRADE: B.

#2 TINY TINA (9/5) looked like the winner last time in the Frankel (G3), but she was nosed out right on the line by her stablemate, who was the favorite. The fact that she couldn't hang on at 9-furlongs is a bit of a concern, as she will have to try and navigate 12-panels today. Two back, she was outkicked in the Red Carpet (G3) at 11-furlongs, so her stamina will surely be called into question. GRADE: B.

#3 BLUE DIVA (4/1) has won two in a row, including a nice win in an overnight stakes race at Golden Gate going 8.5-furlongs on the synth. That was her first start for Herbertson, who now looks to test her class on the SoCal circuit. She's never been this far, but she's certainly bred to go long with that Quiet American influence on the bottom—but can this former \$25K claim step up and win a graded-stakes race? GRADE: C.

#4 TRUST FUND KITTY (20/1) ran fifth in this race last year at 63/1, and she looks like a rank outsider again today. Her 1-for-18 record doesn't get the blood pumping, and a few of these have her on form already. The blinkers come back off today, but she's had plenty of chances both with and without blinkers. GRADE: X.

#5 SIBERIAN IRIS (5/2) was probably going to be odds-on in the Red Carpet (G3), but she scratched out of the race due to an illness. She should be primed for a peak effort today, and 12-panels should be well within her scope if her 11-furlong races are any indication. Her jock will have to time the ride, but she's the one to beat. GRADE: A.

#6 MS PEINTOUR (8/1) has tactical speed, so hopefully she'll keep the rail horse honest, just pushing the pace enough to ensure a fair early clip. So, she will get a good trip and first jump on the closers—but nothing in her previous races has suggested to me that she wants to run this far. GRADE: X.



#7 HEATHERS GREY (10/1) just lost to Blue Diva up north, so she'll have to turn the tables on that foe, who is only a tertiary contender in this race. She does have tactical speed, so she can help push the pace as well if Gryder decides he doesn't want the rail horse to get too far away. She's never been this far, and her class will be tested today. GRADE: X.

### **LEG 3 (R7):**

Today's third leg is a very interesting Maiden Special Weight for 3-year-olds going 6.5-furlongs on the main track. Some of these first-time starters are meant to have potential, and it's no surprise that Baffert crashes the party with two hopefuls.

#1 NADAL (5/2), the first of two Baffert debut runners, cost \$700K last March, so you know he can run. The workouts at Santa Anita leap off the page, and if it weren't for the rail draw, he'd be odds-on in here based on all the hoopla. Rosario takes the call. GRADE: A.

#2 VASARIANO (6/1), the other Baffert, has worked well also, but this Don Alberto home-bred is bred to go longer, so it wouldn't shock me if this were just an educational run for him. That said, Baffert always has his first-time starters ready to run, so it also wouldn't shock me if this one made some noise. GRADE: C.

#3 THREEARCHBAYMAFIA (6/1) cost \$225K back in 2018, so there are some expectations here—but this one looks like he'll also want some added ground, especially since Cerin doesn't often have them fully cranked for their unveilings. GRADE: X.

#4 JEFFNJOHN'STHUNDR (4/1) makes his fourth career start, and that's not usually a good thing, but this poor guy has had to square off against some legit runners, and he hasn't been disgraced. Two back, he was creeping toward the well-regarded Authentic while going 5.5-furlongs. Last time, he never really seemed comfortable going a mile. The cutback will do him wonders, and he should offer some value because of the fancy firsters in here. GRADE: A.

#5 EXAULTED (7/2) is yet another C R K Stables runner who has much potential, this one trained by Peter Eurton, who knows what to do with a good young horse when he gets one. Smith shows up, and this guy is drawn in a good spot to just stalk the pace and wait to pounce. I'm curious to see how much money shows up on this runner based on that big work on December 1. GRADE: B.

#6 WESTERN SMOKE (20/1) cost \$110K last year, and he's in good hands with the very underrated Craig Dollase, but I'm thinking this guy will need one or two starts (and probably more ground or even turf) before showing his best stuff. GRADE: X.

#7 LANE WAY (3/1) cost \$550K last March and brings a nice mix of speed and stamina works to the proceedings for a trainer who is eminently patient but who can win with the right horse. This could be the right horse considering how sharp he's been in the mornings. Prat rides for his main-man, and the outside post gives him plenty of options based on what the others do. GRADE: B.

### **LEG 4 (R8):**

We close out the day with an oversubscribed field of \$25K claimers going one-mile on the lawn with the rails at 20-feet. There looks to be a lot of heat in here, so I want a runner who is going to get the right trip.

#1 CABIN JOHN (12/1) has tactical dirt speed, so he will be forwardly placed while saving ground from the rail. He's also dropping back down to the right level after finding \$40K animals too tough. I don't like that he's winless on turf, but he will get a good trip and the right ride from Rispoli if you think this guy can make some noise on the lawn after racing the past year on dirt and synth. GRADE: C.



#2 REAL MASTER (FR) (6/1) has been a bust since coming to America, but he does have two positives today: first, he's dropping to a new low level after finding allowance foes too much for him; second, Rosario bothers to ride, and that's pretty significant, since this horse has some Euro form to run back to. One mile might be too short for him, but you can expect him to be rolling late. GRADE: B.

#3 TEQUILA JOE (7/2) is just a cool, honest racehorse who has done fine work in the claiming ranks, including a tough-loss last time when he was headed late by French Getaway. I hate taking a short price in a full field like this, but he's a legit threat and he should get a very good stalking trip. GRADE: A.

#4 THE CREEP (8/1) has tactical speed, so he should be attending the pace, something he did two back when he set the pace and weakened badly going 9-furlongs, losing to Swamp Souffle in the process. I can see him chasing a quick pace and weakening today. GRADE: C.

#5 KING EDDIE (10/1) removes the blinkers and makes the second start of his form cycle after what looked like a 5.5-furlong prep race for this, where he was protected against Cal-bred N1X foes. Before that, he ran fifth at this \$25K level up north and was claimed out of that race. Miyadi will look to spot him at that same level today—and I really like what he's doing, but this horse has speed and is likely to get involved in a quick pace, even with the hood coming off. GRADE: C.

#6 TOUGH IT OUT (8/1) is my key in the race because I think he's the strongest finisher in the field, and he should get something to close into. He will have to turn the tables on several foes who have beaten him before—especially Tequila Joe—but he's never been too far off those rivals, and today's race shape should move him up a length or two. GRADE: A.

#7 RIGOLETTO (SWI) (8/1) has to be considered in here, simply because it's the first time at this level after facing much tougher allowance types. It's also his second start off a long layoff while getting a positive jock change to Velez (and his 5-pound weight-break). I know Sadler has mostly sprinted this runner, but do note that all three of his wins overseas were at a mile, so it's not like he can't handle the distance. The only issue is if he's too close to a quick pace today. GRADE: B.

#8 START A RUNNIN (8/1) has an abundance of speed, and while that is usually an asset, it really hasn't been for this guy, since he always sets the pace and tires late. One of these days, he's going to just blast off and wire the field, but there is other speed here, and I expect a swift pace, which should be problematic for this one-way train. That said, this is the right level for him. GRADE: C.

#9 SWAMP SOUFFLE (3/1) was a top pick for us two back when he beat age-restricted \$50K foes going 9-furlongs over this course. I liked him that day because it looked like he'd get the perfect set-up, which he did. And while he grinded out the victory, he didn't earn any style points in what was a visually unimpressive race. He now comes off a freshening while racing at the \$25K level for the first time. Spawr is deadly off this kind of layoff, but this guy is looking at a wide journey today. GRADE: C.

#10 KYLEMORE (12/1) has dirt speed, so you can expect Pereira to blast off and be part of a hot pace as he angles over for position. Surely that will soften him up late. GRADE: X.

#11 FRENCH GETAWAY (5/2) (AE) beat a few of these two back at this level going 8.5-furlongs, and he needed every inch of the lane to get by Tequila Joe. His win before that was also at 8.5-furlongs, so we'll see how he does with less ground to work with and while breaking from a tough post. He's a fit here, obviously, but the post and price are no picnic. GRADE: C.

#12 IMPLICITLY (8/1) (AE) would be a pace factor if he drew in, but I'm having a hard time seeing him stay on with all the other speed in the race and his 0-for-5 record over the lawn. GRADE: X.

#13 BUSTER DOUGLAS (BRZ)—program scratch.



**SUGGESTED WAGERS**

I like this sequence, and we can get good coverage for **\$88**. If you want to spend less, **\$70** will get you all “A’s” with two “B’s,” while **\$26** will get you all “A’s” with one “B.” Remember: whatever you choose to do: only play what you’re comfortable spending or create your own Ticketmaker play here: <https://ticketmaker.drf.com/>. For more info about **OptixEQ**, please visit and register at <https://www.optixeq.com/>.

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*Keep in mind: I don’t add “Also Eligibles” to the matrix, so if they draw in, be sure to include them on all of your tickets!*

Race #	A	B	C	X
5	2 8	1 6 7	4	3 5
6	5	1 2	3	4 6 7
7	1 4	5 7	2	3 6
8	3 6	2 7	1 4 5 8 9	10 11 12

Below are your tickets based on your horse and budget selections above.  
You can continue to add, remove, or re-categorize horses and your tickets below will automatically adjust.

Bet Type	Ticket	Race 5	Race 6	Race 7	Race 8	\$ per Bet	Cost of Ticket	Emphasize
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All A Entries	1	2,8	5	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A's with One B	2	1,6,7	5	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$6.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	3	2,8	1,2	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$8.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	4	2,8	5	5,7	3,6	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	5	2,8	5	1,4	2,7	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A's with Two ...	6	1,6,7	1,2	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$12.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	7	1,6,7	5	5,7	3,6	\$0.50	\$6.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	8	1,6,7	5	1,4	2,7	\$0.50	\$6.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	9	2,8	1,2	5,7	3,6	\$0.50	\$8.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	10	2,8	1,2	1,4	2,7	\$0.50	\$8.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	11	2,8	5	5,7	2,7	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A's with One C	12	4	5	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	13	2,8	3	1,4	3,6	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	14	2,8	5	2	3,6	\$0.50	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	15	2,8	5	1,4	1,4,5,8,9	\$0.50	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<b>Total:</b>							<b>\$88.00</b>	