



## THE PICK 4 MATRIX

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**2/1/2020**

*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**

Three quality stakes races help comprise Saturday's nine-race card at the Great Race Place. The Late Pick 4 features all of them, so let's get right to it and see if we can connect the dots with some stellar stakes animals.

### **LEG 1 (R6):**

We kick things off with the Robert B. Lewis (G3), an 8.5-furlong main-track affair for 3-year-olds with Derby aspirations. It only drew a six-horse field, and Baffert has two, including the overwhelming favorite, making this a tricky leg to start the sequence.

#1 ENCODER (8/1) has been running on turf from day one, so this seems like an ambitious spot for this son of English Channel. His turf form is solid, but he's always had the look of a miler to me, so the extra distance and switch to dirt today will make things tricky for him. GRADE: X.

#2 THOUSAND WORDS (4/5) is your legitimate favorite, having won two in a row, including a game victory last time in the Los Al Futurity (G2) in just his second career start (and having to stretch out from 6.5-furlongs to 8.5-furlongs that day). This Baffert trainee cost \$1 million for good reason, and the breeding suggests he's only going to get better with experience. That said, he offers no value at all here, so you're going to have to play your combos extra times when using him. GRADE: A.

#3 TIZAMAGICIAN (3/1) lost twice in a row as the heavy favorite before finally breaking through last time at 2/1—stalking the pace and drawing off nicely to beat seven other rivals. He's only run one bad race in his career, and perhaps the lightbulb went on last time, as he was paraded back to the winner's circle. He poses the main threat to the deuce, and he kind of looks like Omaha Beach in that it took him a while to figure things out. GRADE: A.

#4 ROYAL ACT (15/1) has decent turf form, but he checked in behind Encoder last time in the Eddie Logan, getting going too late. He now moves to dirt and adds blinkers today for a trainer who is fine with all of those moves. There is ability here—and he cost \$500K for a reason—but there are some hurdles to overcome in this spot. That said, he gets a positive jock change and should continue to move forward under more ground. GRADE: C.

#5 HIGH VELOCITY (3/1), the "other Baffert," attracts Rosario, so maybe he can do better than last time, when this guy attended the pace in the Los Alamitos Futurity (G2), only to be run down by his more fancied stablemate. His two sprint races before that were really good—and he should be more fit today—but he'll need to dig deeper late in the lane to best his buddy. GRADE: B.



#6 ZIMBA WARRIOR (15/1) has been double-digit odds in each of his tries at the graded-stakes level. He hasn't been disgraced, picking up minor awards, but he hasn't shown a deep-down will to win either, just kind of running place. GRADE: X.

### **LEG 2 (R7):**

Today's second leg is the second of three graded-stakes in the sequence, this one being the \$200K San Marcos (G2), a 10-furlong turf affair with the rails at zero-feet.

#1 CHOSEN VESSEL (12/1) has tactical speed, and that will come in handy in this paceless race—but he's also had two tries at the graded-stakes level and has shown he's a cut below the best in here. Maybe Van Dyke can steal the race, but I expect others to run this guy down in the lane. GRADE: X.

#2 CLEOPATRA'S STRIKE (2/1) makes the third start of his form cycle and gets back to his preferred distance after finding 9-furlongs too short last time and 12-furlongs too far the time before that. He'll sit in a good spot just tracking the pace, and he'll have every chance to get the nod today. GRADE: A.

#3 MULTIPLIER (12/1) couldn't find a win back East, so he's reunited with Peter Miller, who saddled him to a win here at Santa Anita way back in May 2018, when he captured an N2X going 9-furlongs on "good" turf. His recent form isn't much, but he is battle-tested against some good turf runners—and he looks to be sitting on a peak effort after prepping in a one-mile dirt race at the Big A. If he summons a glory-days' run, he could contend for a slice. GRADE: C.

#4 UNITED (8/5) has lost a couple of heartbreakers, including a head defeat in the Breeders' Cup Turf (G1), losing to the super-talented Bricks and Mortar. He then lost by a neck to Oscar Dominguez (Ire) last time in the Hollywood Turf Cup (G2), getting edged very late. Three back, Cleopatra's Strike got the jump on him and beat him at today's distance. All that said, this guy could easily turn the tables on those foes today. GRADE: A.

#5 BROWN STORM (CHI) (6/1) has been double-digits in each of his two U.S. starts, and even though he finished fifth and sixth in those starts, he was never able to show his best stuff, encountering trouble in each one. He'll have a chance to show what he can do in this short field, and his South American form is pretty solid. He's a little interesting as an X-factor in here. GRADE: B.

#6 CAMPAIGN—program scratch.

#7 OSCAR DOMINGUEZ (IRE) (5/2) is a cool old boy who has a strong late kick—something he showed off last time when defeating United in the Hollywood Turf Cup (G2) at 12-furlongs. He shortens up a little today, so he'll need a perfectly timed ride from Rosario, who takes the reins on him for the first time. That said, both Cleopatra's Strike and United will get the jump on him, something each did when finishing ahead of him in the John Henry Turf Cup (G2) at today's distance. GRADE: B.

### **LEG 3 (R8):**

The third and final graded-stakes race of the sequence is a doozy: a full field of ten are signed on to greet the starter in the \$200K San Pasqual (G2), a 9-furlong main-track affair that is the annual prep for the Santa Anita Handicap (G1) on March 7.

#1 ROADSTER (7/2) ran one of the best races last year when winning the Santa Anita Derby (G1). He was off the pace on a speed-favoring track and just kept coming to beat stablemate Game Winner and today's foe Instagrاند. Unfortunately, he hasn't found the winner's circle since. Two back, he was disappointing as the 4/5 favorite in the Native Diver (G3), losing to Midcourt at Del Mar. At least he's back at Santa Anita, a track he really likes. GRADE: B.



#2 ROUTE SIX SIX (20/1) is still eligible for an N2X, and he's had several tries at that level and hasn't been able to get the job done, so I'm having a hard time seeing him win a Grade 2. That said, trainer Brian Koriner is on fire. GRADE: X.

#3 RESTRAINEDVENGEANCE (4/1) is a cool horse who has acted on dirt and turf, and he has a versatile running style, so Cedillo can have him wherever he wants early. That said, he'll need to be ready to go off a November layoff, and his class will be tested on dirt. He did run a bang-up second in the City of Hope Mile (G2) on turf back in October, but this is a different ballgame. Still, it's hard to really knock this fierce competitor. GRADE: C.

#4 KING ABNER (4/1) has speed, and he'll use it—but will he stick around late? He attended the pace last time in the San Antonio (G2) and was easily run down by a better animal. He doesn't have to face Gift Box today, so he'll have every chance to show his best stuff—but he'll need to show more starch in the lane, especially at today's 9-furlong distance. GRADE: B.

#5 MIDCOURT (3/1) got a muppet ride last time, ridiculously wide the whole way with the jock making zero effort to save ground or give this guy a chance to win the race. And therein lies the rub: you can't trust Espinoza ever. He will win races, but he never does anything to help a horse win a race—unless he aggressively puts the horse on the lead because he doesn't want to be stuck inside. Still, this runner has really blossomed, and he'll have every chance to make amends today after finishing behind King Abner last time with that aforementioned wide journey. Two back, he dusted Grade 3 company going today's distance at Del Mar, when Espinoza wanted no part of being on the rail, so he pushed this guy to make the lead and never looked back. I don't know what kind of ride he'll get today, but I do think this horse is a very talented animal. GRADE: A.

#6 INSTAGRAND (12/1) has speed and should help ensure an honest pace—but this once-ballyhooed \$1.2 million purchase has yet to live up to his connections' expectations. He hasn't won since his juvenile year, and a few of these already have him on form. That said, he's making the third start of his form cycle, so a peak effort is likely—and he is a lightly raced 4-year-old who still has upside, if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

#7 CALIFORNIA STREET (12/1) is a one-paced runner who will just keep grinding away to the wire, regardless of distance. He'll get a pace to close into, but he seems a decided cut below the best in here—and it remains to be seen if his grinding style will be as effective going this farther distance, since there must be a reason why Gallagher has kept him at 8-furlongs or less since coming off a long layoff last May. GRADE: X.

#8 TWO THIRTY FIVE (8/1) ran some big races back in 2018, but Midcourt has gotten the measure of him in his last two starts, so this guy will need a step forward to beat that foe today. That said, this guy has always been an overachiever, trying hard to the wire, so there is a world in which he fires a big one today off a freshening. Still, will it be enough to beat Midcourt? GRADE: C.

#9 BOLD ENDEAVOR (30/1) just beat N1X foes in wire fashion. He won't wire this field today, and he looks like a pace factor to me. GRADE: X.

#10 COMBATANT (10/1) makes his first start for Sadler and Hronis after an okay career back East. I like that Sadler thinks enough of him to place him in a Grade 2 in his first SoCal start, and I like that the blinkers go on this deep closer, who will need to be a lot closer to the pace here in Southern California. I trust the connections—because they've had plenty of success with these East Coast purchases—but it's hard to know where he fits with this group. As an X-factor though, it makes sense to include him, especially since there should be a decent early clip in here. GRADE: B.



**LEG 4 (R9):**

Today's Saturday sequence ends with a very cool \$40K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going 8-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at zero-feet. This race drew an oversubscribed field of 14, so it's a solid way to end a fun day of racing.

#1 COURTEOUS (5/1) has speed, and she'll have to use it from the rail. Unfortunately, there is other speed in here, and this gal has had plenty of bites at the apple at this N1X level. Never count out a Mandella trainee, but this one seems up against it from a race-flow perspective. That said, she'll be fit on the cutback if you're a believer. GRADE: C.

#2 PRIMA VALENTINA (15/1) has been double-digit odds in each of her three tries at the N1X level. She's basically just run around the track, splitting horses to finish a non-threatening fifth or sixth. She'll be fit cutting back and making the third start of her form cycle, but that's where the positives end. GRADE: X.

#3 PINK SCATILLAC (15/1) has been mostly running on dirt, where she's shown tactical speed but hasn't been able to get the job done at two tries at the N1X level. Her maiden-breaker was a loose-on-the-lead victory over a sloppy/sealed Keeneland track—and I don't think she's going to wire this field today. She has tried turf twice before to no avail, but she had wide posts, so it's hard to know how much this daughter of Scat Daddy will move up on the lawn. Even if she does, the race shape doesn't suit her. GRADE: X.

#4 ABSOLUTELY PERFECT (8/1) has had absolutely perfect trips in each of her two victories against Cal-bred foes. She now comes off an October layoff while having to face open-company for the first time. Her tactical speed ensures she'll get a good forwardly placed trip in here, but I'm anticipating a hot pace, and I prefer a runner who can come from out of it. GRADE: C.

#5 BODHICITTA (GB) (7/2) looks poised for a big run today, getting some class-relief and making the second start of her form cycle after showing decent stretch runs in all of her SoCal starts at a mile. Prat is reunited with her, and I'm sure he'll have her in the right spot turning for home—then I expect her to explode in the lane. GRADE: A.

#6 SUTRO (15/1) has a decent stretch run, but she lacks early speed, so it will be incumbent upon bug-boy Diaz to time her ride perfectly. That said, the presence of the apprentice makes me think this one is out for a conditioning race today, since she's coming off an April layoff. She also seems to want longer. Still, this race will play longer given the anticipated pace, so maybe she can luck into a win. GRADE: C.

#7 OUT OF BALANCE (4/1) should also benefit from a quick pace, but this gal has had so many chances and just hasn't found the eye of the tiger to get the win at the N1X level. That said, she's adding Lasix, so where there's dope, there's hope. She'll be fit on the cutback and should be motoring home late, making her a good exotics horse. GRADE: B.

#8 MAGICAL GRAY (15/1) has sprint speed and an apprentice rider, so I'm sure the instructions will be clear: go to the front and hope for the best. I don't think that's going to work in this big full field with other speed horses. GRADE: X.

#9 PETER'S KITTEN (5/1) is a 5-year-old mare who makes the second start of her form cycle after putting in a mild late bid to finish sixth in a 9-furlong event. She'll appreciate the cutback, and there was a time last year when she was favored multiple times at this level. She ran well, but she lacked that extra oomph in the lane to get the job done. That said, Rosario sticks around, so I expect a peak effort today. GRADE: B.



#10 SHE'S OUR CHARM (12/1) broke her maiden in wire fashion back in August when stretching out for the first time. It was a nice effort, but she hasn't been seen since, and she's not going to get an easy lead today. Maybe for next time? GRADE: X.

#11 SILKEN SPY (15/1) is a former claimer looking to get a win at this N1X level here in SoCal, and that's proven elusive. Her two most recent wins came on the lead, and there is plenty of other speed in here to make things difficult for her. On the plus side, Smith takes the call for Eric Kruljac, who has started to heat up lately. GRADE: C.

#12 CHARMINGSLEW (15/1) has two wins, and they both came on the lead—and that's going to be an issue in here with so many other frontrunners signed on. Plus, this Cal-bred seems a cut below the top open-company runners in here today. GRADE: X.

#13 DESERT OASIS (GB) (6/1) (AE) comes off a July layoff after a win, and that's never a good thing. I trust Drysdale implicitly, and Rosario being named is interesting, but this gal might need one (and might need a little extra ground) before showing her best stuff. GRADE: C.

#14 KOOKIE GAL (9/2) (AE) ran third at this level back in November, inching toward the winner. It wasn't a bad effort, but she needed a little time after that and now comes into this race off two layoffs. Back in 2018, she showed class against fellow state-breds, so there is something here—but the post is no picnic, and I'm tempted to watch one off the freshening. GRADE: C.

### **SUGGESTED WAGERS**

The good news is that the **MATRIX** is an inexpensive \$57; the bad news is that I don't have anything really clever today, so there is a real chance this sequence chinks out. Because of that, you'll want to play the most logical combinations multiple times. 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/>.

[SCROLL DOWN FOR **MATRIX**!]



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
6	2 3	5	4	1 6
7	2 4	5 7	3	1
8	5	1 4 10	3 8	2 6 7 9
9	5	7 9	1 4 6 11	2 3 8 10 12 13 14

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 6	Race 7	Race 8	Race 9	\$ per Bet	Cost of Ticket	Emphasize
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All A Entries	1	2,3	2,4	5	5	\$0.50	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A's with One B	2	5	2,4	5	5	\$0.50	\$1.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	3	2,3	5,7	5	5	\$0.50	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	4	2,3	2,4	1,4,10	5	\$0.50	\$6.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	5	2,3	2,4	5	7,9	\$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	5	5,7	5	5	\$0.50	\$1.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	7	5	2,4	1,4,10	5	\$0.50	\$3.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	8	5	2,4	5	7,9	\$0.50	\$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	9	2,3	5,7	1,4,10	5	\$0.50	\$6.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	10	2,3	5,7	5	7,9	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	11	2,3	2,4	1,4,10	7,9	\$0.50	\$12.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A's with One C	12	4	2,4	5	5	\$0.50	\$1.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	13	2,3	3	5	5	\$0.50	\$1.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	14	2,3	2,4	3,8	5	\$0.50	\$4.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
	15	2,3	2,4	5	1,4,6,11	\$0.50	\$8.00	<input type="checkbox"/> x2 <input type="checkbox"/> x3 <input type="checkbox"/> x4
<b>Total:</b>						<b>\$57.00</b>	Select "BetNow" to place this bet!	