THE PICK 4 MATRIX
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*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 a Friday through Sunday race week, so we start the weekend's proceedings with a seven-race Friday card with a first post of 1:00 p.m. The Late Pick 4 begins in Race 4, and the featured Baffle Stakes—an interesting turf sprint—highlights the latter part of the card.

LEG 1 (R4):
Today's sequence begins with a competitive $10K claiming event for fillies and mares going 8-furlongs on the main track. There should be an honest pace in here with a few forwardly placed types signed on.

#1 ALL TEA ALL SHADE (12/1) is more of a closing sprinter who is 0-for-3 at today's distance with one third-place finish. She will keep grinding away under a 7-pound weight-break—and she is racing at this low $10K level for the first time—but her lack of early speed has always been a problem. That said, she should get something to run at, so you can use her underneath if you are so inclined. GRADE: X.

#2 SEMI SWEET (5/1) has done good work at today's distance, but she has been racing in the minor leagues and will face a move today to a much tougher circuit. She's also coming off an October layoff and racing without Lasix, so it's quite possible she's going to need one. GRADE: C.

#3 TIKI BAR LOGIC (5/2) has a lot of speed and drops to this $10K level after weakening badly back in December against $12.5K runners. She'll blast off from the gate and try to wire them, but Desert Smoke will keep her honest and will probably wear her down. Still, Spawr is lethal off this kind of layoff, so at least you know this gal will be ready to fire her best shot. GRADE: B.

#4 DESERT SMOKE (9/5) is an old pro who has speed and adds blinkers after just running second in a 7-furlong event against $12.5K foes. She's done fine work around two turns, and it's nice to see the best jock in this field (Cedillo) stick around. She'll sit right off Tiki Bar Logic and look to inherit the lead turning for home. GRADE: A.

#5 CONFORMATION (3/1) looks to be sitting on a peak effort after prepping in a 7-furlong event last time, losing to Desert Smoke in a sprint race that was too short for her. She's a proven miler, never having finished off the board at this distance. She should also get a good trip tracking the two speedsters to her inside—and if they duke it out early, this gal will be the beneficiary. GRADE: A.

#6 DISCRETE STEVIE B (5/1) made the lead last time and never looked back at 31/1 against $12.5K/N2L beaten-claimers. It was nice to see her get the win, but it was a weak group, and this gal looked like she gave it her all in that race, coming off a September layoff. There's a real chance she regresses today—and I can pretty much assure you that she won't make the lead in this race with Tiki Bar Logic and Desert Smoke inside of her. GRADE: X.

LEG 2 (R5):

Today's second leg is an interesting renewal of the Baffle Stakes, a 5.5-furlong turf sprint for 3-year-olds. The rails are at 30-feet, and I don't expect a hot pace.

#1 RAGER (5/1) was ridden very hard to win his debut at 19/1 back in October. He hasn't progressed in two races since while facing decent company. He's coming off a December freshening and removing the hood, which makes me want to watch one today. GRADE: C.

#2 ROOKIE MISTAKE (4/1), one of three O'Neill runners, broke his maiden against Cal-breds two back, attending the pace and drawing away to win easily over this course and distance. He has speed and is cutting back after an ill-fated attempt going 8.5-furlongs against some decent state-breds. This is a much better spot for him, and he should rebound with a sharp race. (Do note, however, that Rager did beat this guy when they debuted together back in October, though Rookie Mistake was the favorite.) GRADE: B.

#3 BULLETPROOF ONE (2/1), the first Peter Miller entrant, is a filly versus boys, but don't let that bother you too much for two reasons: first, she's already beaten boys before; second, she has early speed, so she can be put in the race right from the bell. I also like that she is cutting back after setting the pace in the Cal Cup Oaks going a mile on the lawn. She'll be much tighter today. GRADE: A.

#4 BILLY BATTS (8/5), the second Miller charge, ran a tough-luck second in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (G1), so you know he won't be intimidated by anyone in here. Still, that race was at a mile, where this guy has done all of his best work. He began his career with two turf sprints that were just okay, so he'll need to do better today while making his first start since November. I suppose he could win off his two-turn form, but this smells like a prep race to me. GRADE: C.

#5 PHAST PHAROAH (5/2) finally put it all together and ran a hole in the wind last time when breaking his maiden over this course and distance. He was even-money, so he was supposed to win, but he did it professionally: tracking the pace before drawing away late. He'll get a similar trip in here, but he'll also be facing much better animals. GRADE: B.

#6 BIG RETURNS (12/1), the second O'Neill trainee, tries turf for the first time, so we'll see how this son of Mr. Big handles the lawn (though he should be fine given that sire). He's coming off a poor effort in the Cal Cup Derby going 8.5-furlongs, so he'll appreciate cutting back in distance today, since his two dirt sprints last year were pretty good. If he takes to the lawn, he could certainly vie for a slice, but others seem more appealing. GRADE: C.

#7 AIR FORCE JET (GB) (6/1), the final O'Neill entrant, was 34/1 in the Eddie Logan, his first start here in the States. It looked like just an educational run, as he was wide throughout and never really persevered with. He now cuts back and should be fit off that race, especially since his best work overseas came sprinting. GRADE: B.

LEG 3 (R6):

We switch to the main track for today's third leg, a $40K optional-claiming/N1X contested at 8-furlongs on the dirt. Admittedly, I don't have a really good feel for this race because most of these aren't true allowance animals.

#1 ROYAL INSIDER (4/1) is in terrific form, having won three of five races against mid-level claimers. He is moving up in class, but there are no world beaters in here—and he should get a very good tracking trip while saving all the ground from the rail. Plus, his trainer has been on fire. GRADE: B.

#2 SYNTHESIS (12/1) is a tough nut to crack because he's been pitched way too high against stakes animals. He finally gets to run in a realistic spot, though it should be noted that he was 43/1 at this level last summer at Del Mar and was well-beaten. Something went amiss because he hasn't been

seen since, and I do think it's interesting that Bejarano—who rode him in the Santa Anita Derby (G1)—wants to re-ride. I think we'll know right away if this guy has a chance because when Papaprodromou's horses are live, they show sharp speed out of the gate and rarely look back. In a field filled with claimers, why not take a shot on a horse who at least has some proper allowance experience? GRADE: A.

#3 UNO DANCER (8/1) is the "house horse," a Stronach Stables runner who is coming from Laurel off an April layoff. His Mid-Atlantic form is decent—with a few wins against weaker N1X types—but the layoff is a bit of a concern, so let's maybe watch one today. GRADE: X.

#4 SEVEN SCENTS (7/2) is in for the $40K tag because he won an N1X last year as a 3-year-old. Since that victory, his best race came sprinting against age-restricted $50K claimers, so it's really hard to know where this guy fits in the allowance ranks while going two turns on dirt (since most of his work has come sprinting). That said, I wouldn't discount anything sent out by this barn, and the 5-pound weight-break won't hurt. GRADE: B.

#5 KYLEMORE (6/1) has speed, so he should help ensure a decent pace—but this guy has had so many chances against allowance foes and hasn't been able to get the job done. He'll win one of these days, but it won't be with my money. GRADE: X.

#6 MONGOLIAN HERO (4/1) should get a decent set-up, so you can expect this grinder to try all the way to the wire. The problem is: he just isn't that good and doesn't seem fast enough to beat the best in here. He was 14/1 at this level two back and he finished fourth. I think he can certainly hit the board, but I expect someone to prove better than he will be today. GRADE: C.

#7 LAMBEAU (2/1) just broke his maiden back in November on a "good" Del Mar track, wiring the field at 4/1. It was a decent effort, but now he has to face winners while racing on a fast-dirt track for the first time (as his debut was on turf). He did cost $475K, so there are expectations here, but I have a hard time taking a short price on a horse like this, especially since Espinoza will either gun hard to clear (and maybe take the starch out of this one) or keep him 4-wide around the track. GRADE: B.

LEG 4 (R7):

Today's sequence ends with a competitive $75K maiden-claimer for 3-year-old fillies going one mile on the turf with the rails at 30-feet.

#1 VIOLENT SPEED (15/1) has some work to do, but she is sitting on a peak effort, making the third start of her career and stretching out for the first time. She'll save ground and should be forwardly placed exiting those sprint races. She also gets some class relief. She's not impossible with any sort of improvement today. GRADE: B.

#2 FLAMINGO BAY (IRE) (12/1) was 20/1 at this level last time, and she ran sixth, ranging into contention but weakening late despite a 5-pound weight-break. She's been freshened since and gets Cedillo today, so we'll see if she can put forth a winning effort. Others appeal more, however. GRADE: C.

#3 WINE AT SUNSET (10/1) didn't show much in her debut against MSWs while sprinting, so we'll see if she can do better today with more ground and that first-race experience under her belt. She will need a big step forward, but it is interesting to see Mike Smith take the call. GRADE: X.

#4 COSMIC COWGIRL (3/1) was favored against MSWs two back, but she disappointed and ran third. After a poor follow-up effort, she now drops in for a tag while moving to the lawn for the very first time. I'm not crazy about the turf breeding, but she has to be considered on the class drop alone. GRADE: B.

#5 I GIVE UP (5/1) was 6/1 at this level last time, and she had a bit of an eventful journey, so I'm willing to forgive that fourth-place finish because I liked her a little bit that day. I think she's capable of

better, and I like that Palma adds blinkers on a gal who needs to be more involved early in the race. GRADE: A.

#6 LUCIA'S DREAM (4/1) is obvious in here after two decent races at this level. She can sit a good tracking trip, and that 5-pound weight-break will come in handy. GRADE: B.

#7 TURKISH ANGEL (15/1) will finally get a chance to show her best stuff in her third career start after two races where she was pitched too high. Still, she really didn't do anything to catch the eye in those first two starts, so it's quite possible she'll need even lesser to shine. GRADE: X.

#8 OLIVE YOU MORE (8/1) has a shot in here, dropping in from the MSW ranks after a much-improved effort last time up north while racing a mile on the synth against MSWs. There was some funny business going on in that race, and this gal was very live, but she only managed third. Still, that was her first try in blinkers, so she should move forward today—and I'm sure Espinoza will hustle hard from out here and put this gal in the race. GRADE: A.

#9 GOING TO VEGAS (5/2) was 5/2 at this level last time, and she ran a decent second, creeping toward the winner. Three back, she finished third at this level at 4/1, so she certainly belongs here—but she's going to be the favorite, and she's parked out wide with the rails out 30-feet. I'm sure Prat will still give her a great ride, but I think others offer more value in a competitive race. GRADE: B.

<u>SUGGESTED WAGERS</u>
This is a tricky sequence because it looks like it could easily chalk out—but at the same time, I wouldn't trust any of the logical-looking horses. Because of that, I took some shots to try and sneak some prices in the mix. As a result, the entire **MATRIX** costs **$79**, but if you want to spend less, **$69** will get you all "A's" with two "B's," while **$19** 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
4	4 5	3	2	1 6
5	3	2 5 7	1 4 6	
6	2	1 4 7	6	3 5
7	5 8	1 4 6 9	2	3 7

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 4	Race 5	Race 6	Race 7	$ per Bet	Cost of Ticket	Emphasize
✔ All A Entries	1	4,5	3	2	5,8	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✔ A's with One B	2	3	3	2	5,8	$0.50	$1.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	3	4,5	2,5,7	2	5,8	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	4	4,5	3	1,4,7	5,8	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	5	4,5	3	2	1,4,6,9	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✔ A's with Two ...	6	3	2,5,7	2	5,8	$0.50	$3.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	7	3	3	1,4,7	5,8	$0.50	$3.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	8	3	3	2	1,4,6,9	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	9	4,5	2,5,7	1,4,7	5,8	$0.50	$18.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	10	4,5	2,5,7	2	1,4,6,9	$0.50	$12.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	11	4,5	3	1,4,7	1,4,6,9	$0.50	$12.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✔ A's with One C	12	2	3	2	5,8	$0.50	$1.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	13	4,5	1,4,6	2	5,8	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	14	4,5	3	6	5,8	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	15	4,5	3	2	2	$0.50	$1.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
					Total:		**$79.00**	