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
Day two of a four-day race week showcases a fine nine-race Saturday card with a first post of 12:30 p.m. The featured race is the Santa Monica (G2), a 7-furlong main-track dash for fillies and mares, and it slots as Leg 3 (R8) of today's Late Pick 4. That race drew a short field, but the races surrounding it offer up some interesting possibilities.

LEG 1 (R6):
The festivities begin with a tried-and-true $20K maiden-claimer contested at 6.5-furlongs on the main track. We have a few class droppers in here who should prove pretty tough.

#1 BOWL OF SPAGHETTI (2/1), perhaps the worst name for a race horse, is coming off a 307-day layoff and dropping in class after showing speed and weakening against tougher while racing 5-furlongs on the turf. Maldonado's presence means one thing (go to the front and don't look back), and Miller is lethal with these class droppers, but it should be noted that he's a woeful 3 percent off this kind of long layoff—something has to give! GRADE: A.

#2 BIG HEADED BABY (4/1) came off a 229-day layoff last time, showed some tactical speed early and failed to kick on against much tougher MSW foes while going 5.5-furlongs on the turf. He should be much tighter today, and the class drop will make a world of difference for a trainer who has had a terrific meet so far. GRADE: A.

#3 SIBERIAN TIGAH (12/1) was 18/1 in his debut against Cal-bred MSWs. He was off slowly and never got untracked. He should gain experience from that race, and the drop will help, but there are other class droppers who have shown more against open-company. GRADE: X.

#4 J C'S HENRIETTA (30/1) has broken last in each of his two starts, and that has prevented him from making a dent against this level of competition. Even with a cleaner break, however, this one has his work cut out for him in terms of much-needed improvement. GRADE: X.

#5 CALDER VALE (6/1) has been knocking on the door, but he's 0-for-24 and just really hasn't shown a willingness to win, simply content to run alongside horses when it matters most. One of these days a race will completely fall apart for him, and this guy will be there to pick up the pieces, but I just can't bet on that eventuality happening. GRADE: X.

#6 AFIRMJJJOJORULE (30/1) should make the Jockey Club institute a new rule that prohibits naming a horse with three consonants in a row! Anyway, this first-time starter has been working very slowly at Los Al, and I have to think this is just an experience run today. GRADE: X.

#7 KING PARKER (12/1) has definitely had his chances, but he's also had some excuses. He now makes the second start of his form cycle after coming off a 168-day layoff. He's capable of better today

after being hooked wide last time—and the 5-pound weight-break should come in handy in a race that will have a contentious early pace. GRADE: B.

        #8 TIME N MONEY (5/1) came off a 379-day layoff last time, showed tactical speed while wide, and packed it in to lose badly at 7/2. I can forgive that race because of the layoff, especially since Palma thought this guy was good enough to run at the $50K level last year. Today he adds blinkers and makes the second start of his form cycle. I prefer others, but it wouldn't shock me if this one was competitive today. GRADE: C.

        #9 GIT ON YOUR PULPIT (3/1) picks up a lot of checks but hasn't found the winner's circle in 11 tries—and that's a tough pill to swallow. I've always been a huge fan of Kathy Walsh and have cashed a lot of tickets on her runners over the years (and I've bet this guy a few times before), so I'll smile if her charge wins today, but this guy has always been a one-paced grinder who hasn't really shown a willingness to pass horses. He'll win one of these days, but I suspect a class dropper will have an edge over him today. GRADE: C.

LEG 2 (R7):
Today's second leg moves to the lawn for a Cal-bred $20K optional-claiming/N1X for horses aged 4-years-old and upward going one mile on the turf with the rails at zero feet.

        #1 KAKISTOCRACY (4/1) just broke his maiden in start number-two, stretching out for the first time and looking good doing it. He was even-money that day against maidens and won the way he was supposed to. He now has to face winners, but his come-home time suggests he can continue to improve, and he'll save all the ground here on the inside. GRADE: B.

        #2 COAST OF ROAN (8/1) sports a good angle: tactical speed cutting back to a mile after racing 9-furlongs. He should be super-fit off that race, and even though others have already beaten him, he draws a favorable post today and offers good value at 8/1. GRADE: A.

        #3 INCREDIBLE LUCK (12/1) was a mediocre mainstay on this circuit before he went up north to win an entry-level allowance race on September 1 in his first race for Wong, who took him for $20K. He hasn't progressed since then, so it makes sense for Wong to offer him back up for $20K again today. He's not impossible here, but what you see is what you get. GRADE: C.

        #4 FAST AS CASS (20/1) just won his second race, beating a weak group of $12.5K/N2L foes going a mile on dirt. He's 0-for-8 on turf and seems up against it at this level. GRADE: X.

        #5 GENERAL INTEREST (6/1), the first Miller entrant, was 5/2 at this level last time in a 5.5-furlong turf sprint, but he was bottled up and never got a chance to show his best stuff. He was claimed out of that race by Miller, who promptly stretches him out. I like that Cedillo takes the call, and I expect this guy to get a very good forwardly placed trip. Can he stay two turns? Tough to know, since his only two-turn experience came up north on synth. Still, 6/1 seems like good value for a horse who was just favored at this level. GRADE: A.

        #6 WESPHIRE (15/1) broke his maiden in start number-two back in December while going 6-furlongs on synth. He's been freshened since then and now returns for his 4-year-old campaign, trying two turns for the first time while also racing on this tougher circuit. I'm fine watching one. GRADE: X.

        #7 PUSH THROUGH (5/1) is a hard-tryer who rarely runs a bad race, but he's also one of those horses who just always finds himself in trouble—and that's why he's been stuck at this level for a long time. He'll run his race and win one of these days, but he's hard to back on top given his propensity for trouble. That said, perhaps the jock change will make a difference. GRADE: B.

#8 SUANCES SECRET (50/1) makes the second start of his form cycle after running sixth against $25K/N2L foes while turf-sprinting. He re-adds blinkers today, but he was 57/1 in that last race, and he'll need a big step forward today since his best work has come at Turf Paradise. GRADE: X.

#9 JAMMING EDDY (8/1), the second Miller runner, is obvious, cutting back from a 9-furlong race where he showed speed before weakening at a distance that was too far for him. His race at a mile before that was a solid third at this level, losing to a next-out winner. He has tactical speed, so Franco can get him in the race early. Still, I prefer the stablemate who seems to have more upside than this guy. GRADE: C.

#10 PLAY MONEY (5/1) was 3/1 at this level last time, and after bobbling at the start, he lost all chance when his jock showed no patience, putting this guy in the race while racing wide (from the 2-hole, mind you). He's likely to get a wide journey today from this far outside post, which makes him tough to support, even though he has shown enough to be competitive at this level. GRADE: C.

#11 FOSTER BOI (7/2) looks to be sitting on a peak effort, making the second start of his form cycle and stretching out after a very good prep in a 5.5-furlong event, where he closed resolutely to finish a better-than-looked fourth. If he were drawn inside, I'd make him an "A," but this is a tough post, even with the master Prat doing the steering. GRADE: B.

LEG 3 (R8):
Today's third leg is the featured $200K Santa Monica (G2), a 7-furlong main-track affair for fillies and mares. It drew a short but interesting field.

#1 ROAD RAGER (30/1) has speed, and she'll have to use it while breaking from the rail—and that's likely going to soften her up late. Look for her next time in the allowance ranks. GRADE: X.

#2 ZUSHA (12/1) curiously ends up here instead of the two-turn N2X that was run on Friday. She does have form against graded-stakes foes, but she's always been a bit of a grinder who just stays on and picks up checks around two turns. I'm not sure this is her optimum game, but at least you know she'll be fit on the cutback if you're a believer. GRADE: X.

#3 LADY NINJA (2/1) turned into a win-machine last year, seemingly out of the blue, moving up from the $25K claiming ranks all the way to win a Grade 3. She came off a freshening last time to run a decent second to Mother Mother. She can improve off that race, especially with the blinkers off today. Still, I think the other two logical ones in here are just slightly better animals, and one of them should find a way to beat this gal. GRADE: C.

#4 HARD NOT TO LOVE (6/5) has an abundance of talent but is a nutjob—which is no surprise, since she's missing one eye, and that would make anyone crazy! She was awesome last time in the La Brea (G1), storming home from off the pace to win that prestigious event, but she did get a perfect set-up. She won't have such a quick pace today, so Smith will need to be more aggressive early. She's definitely "A"-worthy, but I don't want to make two horses "A's" in here, so I'll side with the better-priced runner. GRADE: B.

#5 MOTHER MOTHER (8/5) lost to Hard Not to Love two back, but this gal carved out wicked splits before getting overtaken late. She won't have that issue today, where she can just sit off Road Rager and Lady Ninja, looking to pounce—similar to the trip she got last time when looking good in the Kalookan Queen. GRADE: A.

LEG 4 (R9):
The sequence ends back on the lawn with a competitive Maiden Special Weight for 3-year-olds going one mile on the turf with the rails at zero feet.

#1 DOMINANT SOUL (15/1) showed speed last time and weakened going 9-furlongs. The cutback will do him wonders, but he was 46/1 in that race and will need to do better today. GRADE: X.

#2 WAR PATH (6/1) was 25/1 at this level and distance last time, and he ran a creditable third, making up some ground in the lane under a 5-pound weight-break. He loses that weight-break today, so he'll need to show he can rally on equal terms. GRADE: C.

#3 PORT SAINT JOE (15/1), the first O'Neill charge, dueled through quick splits last time when stretching out to 9-furlongs after two sprint races. He predictably weakened. I like him a lot better in this spot, cutting back with that foundation race under his belt, and I like that Pereira continues to ride despite three blah efforts. Upset? GRADE: A.

#4 TIME TO TESTIFY (30/1) was 53/1 against $75K maiden-claimers and clunked up for fourth. It was his debut, so he can improve, but he's moving up in class, and his jock inspires very little confidence in a race like this. GRADE: X.

#5 SHOW BUSINESS (15/1) is that rare Mandella runner who has yet to break his maiden in four tries, three of which came going a mile on turf. He's been off since November and returns without blinkers as a new gelding. He's in good hands, and I like that Cedillo sticks around, but I'm tempted to watch one. GRADE: C.

#6 ABSOLUTE UNIT (3/1) is going to love two turns, stretching out after a nice closing second in a 5.5-furlong turf sprint last time, looking for all the world like a router. Prat stays put, and Eurton is good in all of the relevant categories. GRADE: B.

#7 FRASARD (GB) (10/1) is interesting to me because he showed speed last time and dueled with Port Saint Joe before weakening to finish fourth at 9/1. Before that, he showed he could stalk the pace, even though he wasn't given the best ride in that race either. In other words, seeing Van Dyke means this guy should finally get a chance to show his best stuff. GRADE: A.

#8 JURGEN (5/2) was 2/1 in his first U.S. start, and he ran a decent fourth despite some trouble. He'll have every chance to make amends, but there is also the possibility of the dreaded Euro bounce, since this guy must have been fully cranked for that Stateside unveiling. He could easily win this, but he doesn't offer much value in a big field like this. GRADE: B.

#9 LEPRINO (20/1), the second Mandella runner, was way off a fast pace in his debut, but he didn't really show much in the lane, just plodding along. That was his debut, so I can be forgiving, but he will need to do better today. Mandella is looking for every advantage, as he legs up bug-boy Velez for the 5-pound weight-break. GRADE: X.

#10 LEMON KICK (12/1), the second O'Neill trainee, looked like he was out for a leg-stretcher in his debut, just running around the track while wide in that 5.5-furlong dirt race. He's bred top and bottom for turf, and he cost a pretty penny, which means we haven't seen the best of him yet—but he will need to work out a trip from out here. GRADE: B.

#11 PURE CARMINE (15/1), the first Drysdale colt, is a first-time starter who is likely in here for conditioning, with Maldonado named to ride. I can see him hustling this guy out of the gate and just hoping for the best. Next time. GRADE: X.

#12 COSMO (6/1), the second Drysdale colt, debuted going long and ran okay, considering it was his first start and he was racing without Lasix. The Lasix goes on today, and Mike Smith takes the call—two positives that suggest this one is ready for business in here. The problem is the post: Smith will have to work out some magic from out here. GRADE: B.

SUGGESTED WAGERS

Today's **MATRIX** costs **$77**, which isn't too bad considering we've got some nice prices in the mix, and it could pay really well if we are right about our bombs. If you want to spend less, **$59** will get you all "A's" with two "B's," while **$24** 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/.

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

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
✓ All A Entries	1	1,2	2,5	5	3,7	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with One B	2	7	2,5	5	3,7	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	3	1,2	1,7,11	5	3,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	4	1,2	2,5	4	3,7	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	5	1,2	2,5	5	6,8,10,12	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with Two ...	6	7	1,7,11	5	3,7	$0.50	$3.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	7	7	2,5	4	3,7	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	8	7	2,5	5	6,8,10,12	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	9	1,2	1,7,11	4	3,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	10	1,2	1,7,11	5	6,8,10,12	$0.50	$12.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	11	1,2	2,5	4	6,8,10,12	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with One C	12	8,9	2,5	5	3,7	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	13	1,2	3,9,10	5	3,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	14	1,2	2,5	3	3,7	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	15	1,2	2,5	5	2,5	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
					Total:	**$77.00**		