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 really nice nine-race card (with a 12:30 p.m. first post) on tap for today at Santa Anita Park—let's hope the weather cooperates. The featured race is an excellent renewal of the Buena Vista (G2)—a one-mile turf affair for fillies and mares that drew a big full field—but unfortunately, it's Race 5, so it's not part of the Late Pick 4. Therefore, I suggest playing both the Late Pick 5 and the Late Pick 4, so you can get some action on that terrific race. As for the Late Pick 4, let's see if we can conjure up some magic.

LEG 1 (R6):
Today's sequence begins with a $16K/N3L conditioned-claimer contested at 7-furlongs on the main track.

    #1 SATORI (20/1) has tactical speed, and he'll need to use it while breaking from the rail at this tricky distance—and that is going to be an issue for a horse who hasn't been able to beat lesser foes at Los Al. That said, there are some positives, if you're a believer: he's making the third start of his form cycle, and he does have two very good races at elongated sprints here at Santa Anita. Still, I think the rail draw is a big disadvantage for a horse who doesn't seem fast enough to make the lead. GRADE: X.

    #2 RINSE AND REPEAT (2/1) was the 13/10 favorite at this level last time, and he ran his race, grinding away to the wire to finish second in a 6-furlong event. The added ground will certainly help his cause today, making him look pretty tough right back. That said, he will need an aggressive ride by Gryder. GRADE: A.

    #3 TWO FIFTY COUP (10/1) was 9/2 at this level last time, but a rail draw compromised his chances and he was well-beaten. He gets a more advantageous post today, along with a 7-pound weight-break, so it wouldn't shock me if he ran much better—but his two wins came with perfect trips against age-restricted foes, so he's going to need to step things up in his second start for Azcarate, who took him for $10K off O'Neill two back. GRADE: X.

    #4 BOUNCING AROUND (5/2) will be very tough if he runs his race, but it should be noted that he was a voided-claim three back when racing at the $25K/N2L level. Since then, he's been facing tougher, so this is the easiest group he's seen. There's also the slight issue with his lack of early speed, so Puglisi—who doesn't' get too many live mounts these days—will have to put him in the race to try and make the most of this situation. GRADE: A.

    #5 WHATSITTOYA (9/2) has an abundance of speed, so you can be assured that this guy will be out front winging it. Can he carry his speed 7-furlongs, however? Last time, he dueled through wicked splits at this level and weakened to finish behind Rinse and Repeat. He should be able to set much

slower fractions today, and he should be able to dictate the pace. I do think one of the other foes will run him down, but if he catches a speed-favoring track, he'll be long gone. GRADE: B.

#6 BIG BARREL (8/1) is a bit of a nibbler, who is usually right there but who hasn't really shown a strong ability to win. Even his N2L victory at Los Al back in December was won by a neck. He was claimed in his next start after that (for $16K) and hasn't really progressed for the new barn in two starts, including a fifth-place finish at this level two back going a mile. The blinkers come off today to shake things up, and he does have some back races that are good enough, but I think he's a cut below the top two in here. GRADE: C.

#7 TEMPLE KNIGHTS (3/1) just beat $12.5K/N2L foes pretty easily going 6.5-furlongs over this track. He now has to face tougher horses, but he's in good hands with Lerner, who knows where to spot his charges. He should also get a good stalking trip, getting first jump on his main rivals. That said, this guy will need to take a step forward to beat the top two in here. GRADE: B.

LEG 2 (R7):
Today's second leg is a $20K optional-claiming/N1X for fillies and mares going 8-furlongs on the turf with the rails at zero-feet. It drew a short field, making this mostly a jock's race.

#1 SUNRISE ROYALE (5/2) has speed, so she'll enjoy a very good forwardly placed position under Rispoli, who got to know her last time, where she attended a quick pace before getting overhauled late. She's capable of better today, since that was her first try around two turns, but I do expect a pretty quick clip in here, so she will need to show she can carry her speed a route of ground. Note that she's in for the $20K tag, since she won at this level going 5-furlongs on turf last summer. GRADE: C.

#2 CHARMINGSLEW (9/5) seems a bit short on the morning-line, since she looks like a gal who needs the lead to win, and the rail horse could make things difficult for her. That said, she's in for the $20K tag because she's already cleared this condition, so the class relief will certainly help, since her last several races have come against much tougher open N1X foes. Prat's presence is interesting, but I can't help but think this gal offers very little value. GRADE: B.

#3 AVALON RIDE (3/1) is a bit of a grinder who has had three tries at this level, to no avail. Last time, she got a hot pace to close into but still could manage only third. She'll run her race, but she is going to need a little help from the two inside horses, who must ensure a solid early pace. GRADE: B.

#4 SAY IT WITH ROSES (5/1) has speed, so she too should be part of the early vanguard. Last time, she attended the pace before weakening badly on the synth up north in an open N1X. This is a more sensible spot for her. She looks to be the speed of the speed, so if the other two suck back (and that's possible with Rispoli and Prat doing the steering), this gal could certainly steal it. Still, I do expect there to be a fast enough early clip. GRADE: C.

#5 SWING THOUGHTS (7/2) has six wins to her credit, so she knows how to find the wire (and is in for the $20K tag). Last time, she had an eventful journey against tougher open $32K foes. This is a better spot for her, and she should get a decent enough clip to close into today. The blinkers come off, and that should help this gal see the targets in front of her. GRADE: A.

LEG 3 (R8):
Today's third leg is a $30K maiden-claimer contested at 6-furlongs on the main track.

#1 GEOCAS STREET (15/1) is a first-time starter for a trainer who wins a lot of races, but this guy has been working at Los Al and will have to break from the rail for his debut—all that makes me fine watching one. GRADE: X.

#2 WICKED BLUE (30/1) drops to the lowest level of his career, but what you see is what you get, and that's a one-paced plodder who will need a lot of help to finally get his first win. Maybe the 10-pound weight-break can help him sneak in the exotics though. GRADE: X.

#3 PROMISE NOTHING (6/1) looks to be sitting on a good race, cutting back from an 8.5-furlong race that should have him super-fit for this. Before that, he was right in the hunt against tougher $50K foes before weakening at 6.5-furlongs. He can upset the apple cart here. GRADE: A.

#4 UNMASKED (30/1) debuts for low-profile connections, and the breeding doesn't exactly scream precociousness. Maybe the 7-pound weight-break can help out for a minor award. GRADE: X.

#5 PRINCE RICKY (15/1) should take a step forward today, second start off the bench after attending a hot pace last time before weakening to finish fifth at this level. He was ignored at 30/1 that day, and he's 15/1 on the line today—making him good value in here. I also like the jock switch to bug-boy Velez. GRADE: B.

#6 JAXON'S GOLDIE (5/2) is definitely the horse to beat, having just prepped against winners in a starter-allowance going 5.5-furlongs on the turf. He was part of a swift early pace, and still only lost by 2-3/4 lengths. GRADE: A.

#7 TACO WACO (4/1), the first Victor Garcia entrant, seems to run the same race every time, but today he enters the starting gate a new gelding, so maybe he can step up with a breakthrough performance. He has tactical speed and should get a good stalking trip, but he's been beaten twice before at this level at reasonably short odds, making him very unreliable in here. GRADE: C.

#8 CHERRY PIE (30/1) was 13/1 in his debut at Del Mar in November, and he didn't show much after a slow beginning. He's needed time since that start, so something clearly went wrong. Hess is good in all of the relevant categories, but I'm fine watching one in here. GRADE: X.

#9 GRAND SIERRA (20/1) attended the pace last time before weakening in an 8.5-furlong race against this level of competition. He now cuts back, which should help, but this guy hasn't been able to beat lesser at Los Al night, so I'm having a hard time seeing him beat some better animals today. GRADE: X.

#10 NIETZSCHE (12/1) should be fit, cutting back to a sprint after setting the pace in a mile race at this level, where he was sent off at 17/1. He'll get a good stalking trip, and he is certainly usable in your exotics, but it should be noted that this guy has had his chances at this level, and others always seem to prove just a little bit better. That said, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger!" GRADE: C.

#11 CALL OFTHE LURE (4/1) debuts for Yakteen, who can have them ready to run at first-asking. There are some decent works on display, and Prat's presence is interesting, but he is looking at a wide stalking journey, and I've never been a big fan of backing firsters in low-level maiden-claiming races. That said, I won't cut off my nose to spite my face. GRADE: B.

#12 GOLDEN VICTORY (12/1), the second Garcia runner, is a grinder who adds blinkers today, and that could help him get more involved early, especially since he's cutting back a half-furlong after a third-place finish at this level going 6.5-furlongs. That said, he will need a step forward. GARDE: C.

LEG 4 (R9):
We close out today's Saturday card with a neat Maiden Special Weight for 3-year-olds going 5.5-furlongs on the lawn with the rails at zero-feet.

#1 MUNNINGS' PILOT (6/1) debuts for Baltas, who has gotten so much better with his first-time starters this past year. It's nice to see out-of-town jock Bravo take the call on a horse who looks to have

some ability, but the rail draw could be a slight concern if this first-time starter doesn't get a clean break. GRADE: C.

#2 EXHORT (6/1) debuts for O'Neill, who can certainly have one ready, but this guy is bred to handle two turns, and the presence of bug-boy Velez makes me think this is just a leg-stretcher for start number-two. GRADE: X.

#3 RESTORING DREAMS (10/1) has speed and adds blinkers, and I usually like that move—but it's tough to wire the field in these 5.5-furlong turf sprints, so this one is going to have to show more stamina today after losing lengths in the lane in his last two turf sprints. GRADE: X.

#4 DIAMOND RANGER (5/1) debuts for Puype, and he can have them ready to run, especially for this ownership group. There are some decent works on display, but the only question is whether this $100K purchase can handle turf. GRADE: B.

#5 EASTER OCEAN (12/1) is interesting in here because he's coming from back East, where he was well-beaten in his debut, racing without Lasix. He now gets Lasix today, and I like that he's a sibling to Ankeny Hill, who did fine work on the turf for this trainer—so that tells me this one is live today. GRADE: A.

#6 VODKA TWIST (15/1) adds blinkers, removes the hood, and shortens up after a blah race going 9-furlongs on the turf. I can forgive that race, since he clearly needed the start. He now shortens up, and I like the route cutback move over this course. His debut run at 5-furlongs was an even affair, but he looks to be sitting on a good one today. GRADE: B.

#7 K P INDY (3/1) ran fourth at this level back in October, running on late as the 2/1 favorite but running out of room in that 5-furlong affair. Today's distance is a better fit, and Mullins can have them ready off this kind of layoff. GRADE: B.

#8 MUCH MORE HALO (5/2) should be fit, cutting back after two route races where he showed tactical speed—often a harbinger of good things to come at this 5.5-furlong distance. In his debut, he ran a better-than-looked fifth while turf-sprinting, making him a very logical contender today. GRADE: A.

#9 BRAVO (10/1), who is not ridden by Joe Bravo, is the second Drysdale runner in the field—this one being a first-time starter who debuts today without Lasix. He's certainly bred to be a runner, but I have to think this is just an educational run for next time, since Drysdale rarely has them fully cranked. Maybe look for this guy to make one late run. GRADE: X.

SUGGESTED WAGERS
Today's **MATRIX** costs **$88**, which isn't too bad, since we have a 12/1 and a 6/1 as "A's" in two of the races, and we are trying to beat the favorite in another leg, so this sequence does have some potential, despite some short fields. 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
6	2 4	5 7	6	1 3
7	5	2 3	1 4	
8	3 6	5 11	7 10 12	1 2 4 8 9
9	5 8	4 6 7	1	2 3 9

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	2,4	5	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with One B	2	5,7	5	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	3	2,4	2,3	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	4	2,4	5	5,11	5,8	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	5	2,4	5	3,6	4,6,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with Two ...	6	5,7	2,3	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	7	5,7	5	5,11	5,8	$0.50	$4.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	8	5,7	5	3,6	4,6,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	9	2,4	2,3	5,11	5,8	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	10	2,4	2,3	3,6	4,6,7	$0.50	$12.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	11	2,4	5	5,11	4,6,7	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
✓ A's with One C	12	6	5	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	13	2,4	1,4	3,6	5,8	$0.50	$8.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	14	2,4	5	7,10,12	5,8	$0.50	$6.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
	15	2,4	5	3,6	1	$0.50	$2.00	☐ x2 ☐ x3 ☐ x4
					Total:		**$88.00**	