

**OAK TREE AT SANTA ANITA ANALYSIS**  
**By BRAD FREE**



**BEST BET: Paddy's Magic (1st race)**

**First Race: 1.Paddy's Magic 2.Learn the Sport 3.Remember Mike**

PADDY'S IMAGE is sitting on a win, third time out. He was third with a tough trip in his debut, then followed with a good runner-up finish in a maiden-25 that already produced two next-out winners. PADDY'S IMAGE has worked well recently over the Santa Anita track, he switches to Joel Rosario, and his closing style is the type that wins most sprints at this track. Best bet on the card, first race of the day. LEARN THE SPORT finished third all three sprints at Del Mar, while facing slightly tougher than the top choice. SPORT hit the board in maiden-32s or higher, whereas the top choice was racing at the maiden-25 bottom. REMEMBER MIKE chased and faded in his debut against special-weight company, and drops immediately into the selling ranks. Looks like an early surrender on a colt whose ability is suspect. One thing is certain. He is taking a huge drop in class. BIG MIKIE M. finished six lengths clear of third last time at the Fair. This group is tougher, but he is sharp.

**Second Race: 1.Diferentkindagreat 2.Cafe Con Leche 3.Box Office Star**

DIFFERENTKINDAGREAT crushed maiden-32s by four lengths in his debut by using a strong finishing kick that has been effective in Pro-Ride sprints early in the autumn meet. The gelding was claimed by Dan Hendricks; since the victory three others that finished behind him returned to win. CAF à CON LECHE ran a faster final time by .46 seconds than the top choice, on the same Friday-afternoon card at Del Mar. But the Polytrack surface that day seemed to get faster later on the card. That is why there is a disparity in Beyer Figures (87 to 76), even though LECHE ran faster by more than two-fifths. The race CAF à CON LECHE won also has proven to be live, with two next-out winners. BOX OFFICE START was not disgraced her first start against winners, finishing fourth in a race just like this one. She is lightly raced, and her big-fig maiden win one back makes her a genuine contender.

**Third Race: 1.Ruffled Feathers 2.Silver Heat 3.Glory Forever**

RUFFLED FEATHERS finished second in her last three starts at this class level (Calbred maiden turf route). That makes her the unimaginative and predictable favorite. Her three races were good; her connections (Paddy Gallagher, Alex Solis) already scored at least twice this meet on the grass. SILVER HEAT is wheeled back in a week by Barry Abrams, that's his style. SILVER HEAT finished third against open company, and now drops in to face Calbreds. GLORY FOREVER always trained better than she ran. Maybe the switch to grass will help. She has turf on both sides of her pedigree.

**Fourth Race: 1.Dynamalt 2.Lucius Antonius 3.Concerning Sutton**

This \$12,500 claimer, restricted to non-winners of two lifetime, is the lowest class at Oak Tree. It's a slow, cheap level. DYNAMALT is being managed negatively by Jack Carava, who took him for \$25k one start back, and drops to half that price. The gelding is 1-for-19 and probably a cheater, but he has never raced this low and has run races plenty fast enough to win. DYNAMALT originally was purchased for more than \$1 million. LUCIUS ANTONIUS had a tough trip and finished third in his most recent at Del Mar. He broke his maiden on this track in March, and has changed both trainer and jockey since his last start. Blinkers are on. His typical forward running position puts him in direct conflict with the closers-friendly profile that existed the first seven days of the Oak Tree meet on this Pro-Ride surface. CONCERNING SUTTON is lightly raced (four starts); his maiden-25 win one back makes him a contender. Productive trainer-jockey combo, also (John Sadler-Joel Rosario).

**Fifth Race: 1.Viscount 2.Candy Arches 3.Riviera Cocktail**

VISCOUNT was compromised by his trip last time, when he found himself farther off the pace than expected. He trailed the field behind six furlongs in a slow 1:13.93, rallied late against the grain, and missed by a neck. VISCOUNT is likely to be positioned closer to the front this time, and the lightly raced (four starts) colt should continue his upward pattern. Fast works, hot connections, proven at the level. CANDY ARCHES got rank and did not use his speed to full advantage in a comeback race that was basically a throwout. He is a better colt than that seventh-place finish indicated. The obvious challenge is he is a front-runner on a track that has been killing speed. That is overdue to change. CANDY ARCHES should improve second start back. RIVIERA COCKTAIL won well in his U.S. debut over maidens. The time was good, the field was weak. The Giant's Causeway 3-year-old is bred to be something special. He is a half to three graded stakes winners (Teammate, War Front and Ecclesiastic). He might have found his niche on the California synthetics. WICKED MISCHIEF won two fast maiden-claiming caliber sprints, now goes long vs. allowance foes. It's a huge class hike.

**Sixth Race: 1.Gumption 2.Elusive Allie 3.She's Borracho**

GUMPTION is an eight-start maiden, and perhaps tough to trust. But his last three synthetic starts were runner-up finishes in fast maiden races. Any one of those efforts would be good enough to win this. He has worked well on the Santa Anita surface since returning home this fall, and his closing style suits the trend. Ninth time the charm? ELUSIVE ALLIE showed promise in her fourth-place debut almost a year ago in a race won by the good filly Navigator. ALLIE returns for Baffert with an impressive work tab at Hollywood Park. SHE'S BORRACHO is similar to the top choice in that he hit the board four recent starts. Her closing style suits. FUND RAISER debuts for Baffert with some good works. She went six furlongs from the gate at Del Mar in 1:10.20 and could fire first time out.

**Seventh Race: 1.Presious Passion 2.Spring House 3.Rendezvous**

The lone front-runner is G1 winner PREVIOUS PASSION, facing a G2-caliber field of modest West Coast turf runners. PASSION went wire to wire his last three firm-turf races, and also finished second on this course in winter. If the race unfolds as expected, PREVIOUS PASSION should be long gone. Gate to wire. SPRING HOUSE, first or second in four straight graded stakes, won last time with a good ride by Alex Solis. That was the G2 Del Mar Handicap, and though the class of that race was suspect, SPRING HOUSE shows up every time. RENDEZVOUS is an improving 3-year-old who cannot be taken lightly at a big number. He is not good enough yet, but he is still moving up while most of his rivals may be past their prime. TIMES GONE BY is an improving allowance horse making only his sixth career start. He finished second in a fast race last out, despite popping a foot abscess out of the race. The neck loss might have been better than it looks. All systems go. BLACK ASTOR is a good horse who was compromised by the pace last time. Trouble is, the presence of front-runner PREVIOUS PASSION makes the pace scenario problematic again. BLACK ASTOR ran so well in his comeback win in summer that perhaps he does best with more time between races.

**Eighth Race: 1.Crown of Thorns 2.Gayego 3.Square Eddie**

The Ancient Title this fall is a difficult G1 sprint, and the strategy is to go against the speed. The Pro-Ride surface has favored off-pace types this fall, particularly in a sprint with as much heats as this. CROWN OF THORNS, a G2 winner in just his third career start, can rally for the win. He was away from the races for more than 18 months when he returned with a good third in a NX2. He posted a bullet work Oct 3 (six furlongs in 1:11.80), that was called "dazzling" by the clocker for Handicapper's Report. CROWN OF THORNS is a good horse in the right spot, in a race that sets up for his closing style. GAYEGO is 6-for-12, a G2 winner, and making his second start on the comeback trail after a good winter-spring against world-class competition in Dubai. He usually runs close to the lead, but facing six-furlong speedballs and with Garrett Gomez aboard, GAYEGO will probably be cutrun early and finish late. That is, if he likes this track. SQUARE EDDIE has not raced since April, but he trained well for his return and was among the best of his generation last fall and into winter. Runner-up in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile last fall, he will roll late. There is little question that he is good enough. A ton of speed in this field spells meltdown.

**Ninth Race: 1.Dadsalittleunusual 2.Camisado 3.Fight On**

DADSALITTLEUNUSUAL is a bottom-level claimer racing in good current form, returning to his favorite track. CAMISADO has won two straight at this \$10k claiming level. Why not three in a row? FIGHT ON is an 8-for-33 pro who finished second at this level last time out. It makes him a contender, even if the horse that beat him was CAMISADO.