



Turf Meets Surf

Seaside racing in Southern California celebrates 72nd season of sporting ponies, bets and the Del Mar scene. And it all begins July 20.

By Jeanne Ferris

All photography courtesy of Brent Haywood

Thundering hooves, equine nostrils aspirating loudly, horse whisperers muttering incantations to invoke Pegasus while the constant din of salivating excitement for a hopeful long shot ricochets through the grandstands. The celebratory sound of fine French champagne with the haberdashery of haute couture millinery rivaling the Royal Ascot helps the art of racing in the sun remain a winning trifecta of entertainment.

Since 1937, when Crosby greeted the first attendees at the gate, Del Mar's racetrack has lured many a celebrity, dignitaries, horsemen and families to its seaside locale to try their "hand" at handicapping thoroughbreds.

"...And awa-a-ay they go" – the signature herald of Trevor Denman, the voice of Del Mar

Racing – will usher horse and rider to the gate for Del Mar's 72nd season July 20. Del Mar plays host to six designated Breeder's Cup Challenge races in its summer stakes schedule, earning the winners a berth in the designated BC races including entry fees and travel allowances for the horse and its connections.

According to Craig Fravel, Del Mar Thoroughbred Club (DMTC) general manager, "The 'Win and You're In' races that make up the Breeders' Cup Challenge pack some real punch. In light of those incentives, we expect our Challenge races to attract additional horses, and good ones at that. It surely should be a positive for us and our racing fans."

Fravel continued, "Del Mar's six Challenge races are reflective of its standing among the

DATE	TIME	NO. OF RACES	RACE DETAILS
July 20, Wednesday	11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.	10	Opening Day, Oceanside Stakes
July 21, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
July 22, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	8	CTBA Stakes
July 23, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Osunitas Stakes, Eddie Read Stakes
July 24, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	California Dreamin' Handicap, San Clemente Handicap
July 27, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Wickerr Stakes
July 28, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
July 29, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	8	Cougar II Handicap
July 30, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Fleet Treat Stakes, San Diego Handicap
July 31, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Bing Crosby Stakes
August 3, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Graduation Stakes
August 4, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
August 5, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	8	Sorrento Stakes
August 6, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Clement L. Hirsch Stakes

leading tracks in the country. Checking the list of top tracks and the number of Challenge races assigned to each, it reads like this: Saratoga (5), Keeneland, Santa Anita fall meet, Del Mar (6) and Belmont fall meet (8). The Breeders Cup has spread the wealth in this regard and Del Mar has gotten its fair share."

In regards to the future of the horse racing industry in California, Joe Harper, CEO of DMTC, offers this special insight: "For our meet this summer at Del Mar, we've instituted a program where we're going to reward owners for going out and getting racehorses from other jurisdictions and bringing them to California to run."

With the question of a viable industry on everyone's mind regarding the Del Mar Fairgrounds master plan, Harper responded, "California horse racing is in a most challenging — and most interesting — time. Master plan or no master plan, Del Mar and horse racing will carry on in San Diego. You can count on it. We've got a special spot here with our

gorgeous location on the beach and we've got the ideal summer racing dates."

Most racing fans are unaware that west coast racing is an island by itself from the east coast. "The racing states in the east are bunched together and there is a lot more interaction among them and their horses. It's a long way out to California for most folks, so anything we do is usually self-contained," notes Harper. "We're going to give direct economic rewards to California owners, or owners from out of state, who bring their horses here to our track to take part in our seven-week meeting. We've got a whole industry that looks forward to escaping the grind and the smog in Los Angeles and heading south to let their collective hair down. Del Mar stands on its own. It's a good thing and we work hard every year to make our good thing better."

The 2011 U.S. Challenge races will be televised on ESPN, TVG and HRTV and on TSN in Canada. ♦

DATE	TIME	NO. OF RACES	RACE DETAILS
August 7, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Best Pal Stakes
August 10, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Real Good Deal Stakes
August 11, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
August 12, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	8	Daisycutter Handicap
August 13, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	La Jolla Handicap
August 14, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	John C. Mabee Stakes
August 17, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Green Flash Handicap
August 18, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
August 19, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	7	Sandy Blue Handicap
August 20, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Del Mar Oaks
August 21, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Rancho Bernardo Handicap, Solana Beach Handicap
August 24, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Harry F. Brubaker Stakes
August 25, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
August 26, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	7	CTT and Thoroughbred Owners of California Handicap
August 27, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Del Mar Mile
August 28, Sunday	10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.	10	Pat O'Brien Stakes, Del Mar Handicap, \$1 Million TVG Pacific Classic
August 31, Wednesday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	Generous Portion Stakes
September 1, Thursday	Noon – 2 p.m.	8	
September 2, Friday	2 p.m. – 4 p.m.	7	El Cajon Stakes
September 3, Saturday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Windy Sands Handicap, Del Mar Debutante
September 4, Sunday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	Adoration Stakes, Torrey Pines Stakes, Del Mar Derby
September 5, Monday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	I'm Smokin Stakes, Palomar Handicap
September 7, Monday	Noon – 2 p.m.	9	C.E.R.F. Stakes, Pirate's Bounty Stakes, Del Mar Futurity, Closing Day

