The Empire Report – Friday, April 12, 2024 – Race Analysis

RACE 1 – (5) MILLWOOD BONNIE N has always been a streaky mare (in BOTH directions) and she’s certainly been on one of her hot streaks throughout 2024, coming into tonight with a 7-3-3-0 local slate as she’s shot right up the class ladder – had a nice “maintenance qualifier” last week, and we’ll give her the slight edge in this short, well-matched field. (3) NO WIN NO FEED A has used her fast starts to grab great trips virtually every week, resulting in an 8-1-3-2 local slate to start the year – the shortage of WINS does make her tough to use on top at short prices, however. (6) OAXACAN DREAM N returned with some very sharp out of town form and has maintained that form beautifully – has to be considered (even from out here), especially since she’ll still be a pretty good price. (4) REC TIME seems to get stronger as the race gets longer, but her tendency to lag a bit early may hurt her chances of coming out on top tonight – still a good one for exotics, though. (1) HELLO YES HI was making her first start in over 3 months last week and was an excellent 2nd – she may find a few of these a little tougher than she’d like, however. (2) MISS DOTTIE MAE wasn’t as sharp last week as she has been recently – can she bounce right back?

RACE 2 – Only 5 mares but still a tough race! (4) GOLDEN QUEST N was in scary form recently, finishing 1st in 3 of 5 starts with the (2) narrow losses coming to COACHELLABOUND N – she has to be considered a bit of a question mark with qualifiers (instead of races) in her last pair but IF barnmate MILLWOOD BONNIE N does well in Race 1, perhaps we should look for a big mile from her too! (3) SILK CLOUD N has won 3 of her 6 starts this year, looking very good in a couple of those victories – she did falter a bit last week, but that doesn’t mean she can’t bounce right back with a big one tonight. (5) MC ANGEL had one win and SEVEN 2nds here last year but 2024 has been a different story, as she’s currently 8-5-2-0 – she fits into this by virtue of the newly created “AE $125,000 claimer” condition, and she does have a very real chance, despite landing outside. (2) TWIN B SUNKISSED had been racing well every week prior to a bit of a dud last start – if she rebounds quickly, she can be a contender. (1) DRAGONS LUCKY LADY had held form surprisingly well even at these higher levels – she’s listed her on the bottom, but that doesn’t mean she can’t be in the mix.

RACE 3 – (2) TALENT TO SPARE A gave her fans a good root last week when she worked out a pocket trip (at 32-1) but came up a little short in the stretch – she drops down tonight to the level she beat back in February, and faces nothing all that scary – could be a winning spot. (1) HEAVENS SHOWGIRL A is one of a few from the barn that hasn’t gotten off to the best of starts in 2024 – her last was definitely a bit better, and the inside draw gives Brennan lots of options – logical player from this spot. (3) CELIA B MONEY was no factor (at big prices) in a pair of NJ starts but she may find this field more to her liking – she showed enough as a 3YO to suggest that she can be a player here. (5) A GIRL THAT TWIRLS hasn’t really “taken off” since joining our leading barn this March, picking up a pair of 2nds from her 4 local starts – she wouldn’t be a shock here, but you’d want a fair price to try her on top. (4) GAME OF SHADOWS has been solid all year so it wasn’t that big a surprise to see her cash in last week when the race fell apart in front of her – may not be as fortunate tonight, however. (6) DEVILISH DREAMS was terrible for some time, perked up for a couple of starts but may be heading back in the wrong direction again.

RACE 4 – Yet another short, but very well matched field! (2) FAVORITE BEACH was doing fine work for her previous trainer, and has raced as well (and maybe even a bit better) since our leading conditioner took over – she was a gutsy first over winner last week, and we’ll give her the narrow edge over a few other very sharp foes. (1) PEMBROKE SOUTHIE moved to the Dynamic Duo for her 4YO campaign and has started off 4-3-0-1, beating this class last week after rallying for 3rd (behind the top choice) the week before – dangerous player. (4) VILLAGE JADE started to come out of a rough patch 4 starts back and has been good ever since, including her last (where she had no room in the lane at all) – a live trip makes her a threat, at a decent price. (5) MORNING HAS BROKEN was trapped a long way last week but was charging late after shaking free – she hasn’t been all that “great” for some time, so we’ll see if that last start suggests she may be ready to pick up her game. (3) ULTIMATE SPEED is listed on the bottom but she’s gone her share of miles that could make her a player, with the right trip.

RACE 5 – Blue Chip Matchmaker Leg 5: (1) COACHELLABOUND N didn’t look all that smooth in the first 2 legs but then looked MUCH better in the next 2, picking up strong 2nds behind MIKALA & DOUGS BABE A – Gingras makes a statement by taking her over TONY'S MOM tonight, and we’ll look for her to pick up her first Series win. (2) TONY'S MOM loses Yannick to #1 but gets back Bartlett, who has won plenty of times with her – she seems a bit off her game right now, but if her connections are dropping her in the box, look for her to come up with a strong mile tonight. (5) KARMA SEELSTER should be feeling good about herself after sitting in and
finishing with good pace last week – look for a more aggressive try tonight as she looks to solidify her spot in the Final. (8) INCASEYO UDONTKNOW has raced well in all 4 legs, but gets no luck with the draw tonight – look for her to lag most of the way then finish strong, hoping for a better draw in the Final. (6) MAN DONTFORGET ME tried a more aggressive approach last week but was outmuscled at the end – figures to go conservative tonight, looking to save ground and rally for a minor share. Neither (3) SALE EL SOL or (4) TRUE BLUE HANOVER figure to be able to threaten for a top slot here, but both draw well and that could help either/both of them to at least grab some minor spoils. (7) AV F CLAIRE doesn’t seem nearly sharp enough to find a way into the hunt from out here

RACE 6 – (7) SWEETEST BELLE is off to a disappointing start to her 4YO season, although facing some solid mares every week probably has a lot to do with it – this is obviously not an ideal spot but she’s facing much softer tonight, and perhaps she can find a way to get it done from out here? (5) HALLELUJAH HANOVER has been in and out so far in 2024 but she was definitely flying late last week – at that 10-1 ML price she’s certainly worth a look. (1) LAURIE LEE was sent off favored last week but got roughed up early and paid for it late – she could land a much easier trip from this spot, and it may not be a bad idea to stick with her one more time. (4) ROCKN PHILLY had an improved effort 2 back and was sent off favored last week as a result- but she’s been known for disappointing in the past, and last week was no exception – remains a threat, but still no value. (2) COWGIRL LILLY has been knocking on the door lately and she’ll get through eventually…maybe even tonight – playable if the price is good enough. (3) FORTUNADA ran down #2 last week in what turned into a two horse affair – she may be on the upswing, but she’s another that figures to be overbet. (6) GINGER TREE LIZ was handled aggressively last week, was in charge on the final turn but then caved into the stretch – tonight’s tough draw has us leaning elsewhere

RACE 7 – (1) PARISO was well backed for her local debut (for her new connections) and was an easier winner than the line might suggest – she made a big move for the lead the next week, rolled a hot clip on a night that was brutal on many speed horses and only tired late in the mile…makes amends tonight for a barn winning at an insane clip so far in 2024. (6) FIX A DRINK may be sharper than his lines look, as he’s been compromised by post/trip in his last couple – could add some value to the ticket tonight. (2) VOYAGE TO PARIS was a bit disappointing as our choice last week, landing on a beautiful trip but settling for a close 4th – too soon to write him off, and worth using in exotics. (3) SWISS HOUSE ONFIRE has 2 wins with Brennan this year but vs. softer – one of several eligible to grab a small piece here. (4) WINDSONG PIONEER can go some big miles on the front end but gave way and tired last week – eligible to rebound with a better mile, but still leaning towards others. (8) FOR A DREAMER trotted a solid mile last and just missed 2nd– he benefited from a quick start, however, and may not be as fortunate tonight. (5) JOXTER is a nice trotter, and one of the rare older horses his connections keep around – figures to need one after being away since October, however. (7) CLEOPATRA AS likely needs a better post to be a player at this level

RACE 8 – (2) P C FREE WHEELING hasn’t done much recently but she’s also been facing tougher – she drops to the bottom level and while this is actually a pretty good field for this class, it still feels like a spot where she can try to be more aggressive – may be worth a shot tonight. (4) JUST SHOW UP was picked up by Team Yannick, moves to our leading trainer and we’ve seen these results in many victories in the past – one to include on your tickets, for sure. (1) BEERTHIRTY K has “figured” several times this year but still hasn’t been able to finish first or 2nd – maybe that changes starting from the pole tonight? (6) QUIKSLVR BLUECHIP has been in and out this year – he moves to a new barn for tonight but hasn’t raced in 3 weeks – maybe the tote board can offer some guidance? (5) STREET GOSSIP feels like he’s getting closer to a win as he continues to slide down the ladder, but may be left with only a smaller slice once more. (3) ALLSUMMERLONG AS feels like she may be a notch below a few of the main players – minor share only. (7) FANATIC was a nice trotter in the past but comes off a rough 2023 season – he adds hopples for his new connections, but may be handled conservatively off some missed time and qualifier (and the poor draw). (8) BAZILLIONAIRE would be a surprise, to say the least

RACE 9 - Blue Chip Matchmaker Leg 5: (1) LIT DE ROSE has been turning in top performances week after week for the past few years…but it was a surprise to see her come up a nose shy last week (even if it was RACINE BELL) – she won’t offer any value from this spot, but we’ll look for her to find a way to come out on top. (2) DOUGS BABS E A certainly hasn’t been “bad” in her series efforts (a win, two 2nds and a 3rd), but she also hasn’t looked her absolute best – would love to see a little more energy in her this week as she preps for the Final. (7) RACINE BELL was struggling to start the year – she added Lasix 2 back and finished 3rd, but was able to pull off the mild upset last week when she just refused to let LIT DE ROSE go by her late – won’t be easy to repeat starting from Post 7, but wouldn’t say it’s impossible (and she does need a big effort for a chance to become eligible for the Final). (3) JIVE
RACE 10 – (5) VINNY DE VIE just missed vs. better in his 2 local starts this year – worth a bet that the 3rd time is the charm! (6) DRACO S drops back down to the level where he was 2nd 5 starts back – barn has really perked up lately, so perhaps this guy can add some value to the ticket/ (1) JULIA MUSCLE PACK landed on a good trip last time and picked up his first win of the year vs. cheaper – the rail draw will definitely help him with tonight’s class jump, but that 8/5 ML price is a definite turn off. (2) SMART AS HILL has been racing well in NJ but vs. easier – the good draw helps, and he’s a logical one to include underneath. (4) MAX was off to a poor start last week and that probably hurt his chances a bit at the end – may be able to rally his way to a small slice tonight. (3) MACMOR RIS HANOVER seemed to be sharpening before an even effort last week – the move inside could help, and Brennan knows him a little better now…another with a chance to grab a piece. (7) FULL RIGHTS has been hanging in there even at these higher levels but tonight’s draw figures to really hurt his chances

RACE 11 – (5) DONATO PATRIOT K was racing very well here vs. BETTER not long ago – have to believe tonight’s drop will trigger a big effort from him. (2) KASHA V seems to be on the upswing since recently adding hopples – logical player if he continues to improve. (6) HOOLIE N HECTOR still hasn’t really clicked like he’s capable of in 2024 but this is a spot where he at least should be able to be a contender. (4) WESLYNN CROWN had an alert start here 2 back, looked smooth and was able to cash in with a victory – willing to forgive that last slop try at PcD and look for him to make some late noise tonight. (1) DOUBLE DEALING hasn’t really thrived in his 2 starts since the recent barn change but he’s capable of better, for sure – willing to use on the bottom of exotics as he returns to YR. (8) SOUTHWIND ARTURO is another that just hasn’t found his game so far in 2024 – Post 8 won’t help! (7) MUFASA AS has been ok lately so last week’s dull try was a bit of a surprise – the poor draw here figures to limit him once more. (3) PIVOTAL has missed a month after forcing a scratch at Monti on 3/27 ("refused")