

The Empire Report - Friday, January 11, 2019 - Race Recap

Race 1 - VEGAS ROCKS was urged from the start and responded with a quick rush to the lead, rated an easy half before really stepping on the gas to 3/4s (:27.3), opened a clear lead into the stretch and never let up, kicking home in :27.4 to complete the dominant front end score. ARDIE B SPEED was content to let the winner cut this mile, couldn't stick with that one in the final 1/8th of a mile but was still a very solid 2nd (off the hiatus). SHOW THE FASHION sat in 4th, was clear for the drive home and finished well to be 3rd. ADONIS BAY sat last with NO chance, but paced a strong final half to be a fairly close up 4th - seems to have returned sharp to begin 2019 (just had no prayer). PICKLED PREACHER tried a first over bid past 5/8ths but struggled on the rim into the sharp final half! UF ROCKIN DRAGON pulled needlessly at the half, went nowhere, and soon found himself all the way in the back.

Race 2 - LILYS SWAN POND was used a couple of times to secure the lead to the quarter, rated a very soft half before picking things up considerably to 3/4s, suddenly opened up daylight to the final turn and was an easy winner, despite the margin shrinking a bit near the end. BOINGANATOR made the top off turn one then gave it back to the winner, started to lose ground at 3/4s and seemed to be in trouble, found a better stride once into the stretch and was making up some of the ground he lost near the wire, despite drifting out a bit - not bad at all in his local debut. TIDQUIST saved ground all the way then finished up well, beating all the ones who pulled to the outside - certainly helped by the trip, but did race well himself. ALWAYS A GOOD TIME flushed cover to race 2nd over to the half, had to go wide when that cover stalled to the final turn but never found any pop of his own. MUSCLES ON FIRE yielded early and was soon sitting 3rd, came out uncovered to the half but struggled on the rim when the pace quickened, stalling badly by the final turn - disappointing tonight. MAJESTIC PRESENCE ended up 3rd over to the half, gapped to 3/4s and just wasn't any good (as the favorite). BARRY BLACK was out 4th over to the half, got stuck behind a terrible flow and never had a chance - willing to give him a pass. BLENHEIM was offstride well before the start.

Race 3 - LETTUCEROCKTHEM A hit the top very easily then enjoyed a soft :58.1 half, stepped on the gas to 3/4s and faced only mild pressure to the final turn, figured to have plenty left in the tank but was all out from midstretch to barely hold off the tripsitter to his inside - got it done, but it got a little dicey at the end! GOTTA MINUTE N got away easily in the pocket but gapped a bit early on, gradually moved closer to the leader and tracked closely most of the way, ducked inside for the stretch drive and LOOKED like he'd get there, but just couldn't get it done. MASTERSON moved out 2nd over on turn three but gapped a bit when the pace accelerated, worked hard to stay close and eventually was in closer contention on the final turn, angled clear for the drive home and paced well to the end for a close 3rd - good mile to end 2018, and returns with a solid one to start the new year. OURLITTLEGENERAL A left well then dropped in 3rd, was back out first over to turn three, challenged for 2nd to 3/4s then inched closer to the winner to the top of the lane, couldn't fully maintain that bid once into the stretch but did stick around well for a close 4th. HIGHVIEW CONALL N moved out from 6th to 3/4s, was never an actual player but did finish alertly in an encouraging 2019 debut. O SUNDLAND was sluggish on the rail to 3/4s, never having any impact tonight. DELIGHTFUL OFFER N was never involved, but did pace evenly at the back. DEDIS DRAGON moved out from 7th at the half but never got anywhere close.

Race 4 - FROST DAMAGE BLUES was sent right down the road, carved out hot fractions while cruising on an open lead, was definitely getting pretty tired in the final 1/8th of a mile but still held on safely for the win. JEWEL LEHIGH A pulled first over on turn three, advanced up into 2nd on the final turn, started to reel the winner in once into the homestretch but got a little tired herself near the end, and was fortunate to hang on to 2nd. SHESJUSTADELIGHT N was out 2nd over from turn three, lost her cover on the final turn then moved into 3rd, started to gain late in the mile and almost got the place spot - good try off the bad date. DONGAL RUNDLSCRK N left okay but had to back off into 3rd, ended up stuck behind a tiring rival to 3/4s, finally shook free at the top of the stretch and finished well....but the damage had already been done. GLENFERRIE BRONTE N struggled chasing the winner from the pocket and basically bottomed

out trying - definitely short. GINA GRACE N was out 3rd over to 3/4s but was empty before they hit the final turn.

Race 5 - LYNBAR ROSE N advanced up into 4th off turn one, got flushed out by SAIL TO THE BEACH but picked up cover from SALLY LETCHER A, rallied up into 2nd to the final turn, took aim on the leader into the stretch and sailed on by confidently as they neared the wire - handled the big class jump beautifully, and may prove to be a fine acquisition. SALLY FLETCHER A pulled first over to the half and was already pressing the leader by turn three, paced on by into the sharp :27.2 quarter and still looked strong on the final turn, dug in bravely when the winner came after her at the top of the stretch but ultimately had to settle for 2nd to her very sharp rival - excellent effort off the hiatus! SAIL TO THE BEACH got the live flow started and ended up 3rd over, was up to 3rd on the final turn and continued to finish well, though not quite able to rally for the 2nd slot. ANNABETH got shuffled a bit inside before slipping out nearing 3/4s, had too much work to do at that point but did finish well in an encouraging return mile. FANCY CREEK JOLENE was never in play but did finish steadily for the final pay check from an impossible spot. QUITE A DELIGHT N sat in the back and was never close (her 46-1 price suggested that she wasn't wound all that tight for her delayed U.S. debut. BROWN BRINNY got stuck in the pocket behind the tiring longshot leader and lost ALL chance. BYE BYE MICHELLE was off a month from Post 7 (at 53-1) but decided to blast to the lead anyway, not surprisingly gave way to pressure on the back side and backed through the field.

Race 6 - ITTY BITTY was briefly in the pocket then popped out to take over to the quarter, stepped on the gas heading to 3/4s and soon the rout was on - barn has sent out a few live ones, and Bartlett has wisely hopped on most of them. CLEAR IDEA was out 2nd over at the half, had to go wide around (badly) stalled cover on the final turn, then found enough in the stretch to rally into 2nd....way behind the runaway winner. DUDESALADY was quiet until moving out (and wide) on the final turn, hit her best gear into the stretch and kicked home well to be 3rd, not all that far off 2nd. AMATEUR HOUR pulled first over before the half, moved up to challenge for 2nd to 3/4s, watched the winner pull away to the final turn and while she clearly stalled before they turned for home, she did hang in pretty well to take home a 4th place check. CULINARY DELIGHT N was out 3rd over at the half, dropped back inside to 3/4s (as the pace quickened), had to search for room into the stretch then had some mild pace once she found it. WISHY WASHY GIRL flew to the early lead but surrendered it willingly to the winner, was starting to tire to the final turn then fell apart badly in the homestretch. BEST OF JENNA never got close, and was on a line at times in the back. MADE OF JEWELS AS was sent off at 50-1 and raced accordingly.

Race 7 - WE THINK ALIKE was urged leaving the gate and responded to take over off turn one, was under steady pressure from TRIPLE SEELSTER from before 3/4s through the final turn, fended that one off into the stretch and was able to prevail fairly easily, though definitely pretty tired in the latter stages - seemed way overbet, but the public got this one right. TRIPLE SEELSTER pulled uncovered early off turn two after being flushed out by ZIGGY SKY, battled a long way with the winner and never gave in, even after being "put away" entering the stretch - very game effort off the layoff. ZIGGY SKY didn't have enough speed leaving and was fortunate to find a seat in 5th, was back on the move from turn two and grabbed live cover to race 2nd over, swung wide on the final turn and continued to try hard all the way home, although without the punch he needed to get to the top two - used VERY hard off the bad date and raced super....just as he did before the winter break. BUGSY MAGUIRE left enough to improve to 6th, joined the developing flow early to race 3rd over, gapped a bit on the final turn but hung in nicely through the stretch for 4th - not a bad 8 hole try. TOWNSLIGHT HANOVER came out 4th over to 3/4s, finishing steadily from an impossible spot - decent tightener. CHUCARO ACERO BC got caught in by the early developing flow then got shuffled back behind a quitter - had NO chance, and gets a total pass. MILLIONDOLLAR WAVE got shuffled inside to last and had no chance (but didn't seem to have any offer, regardless). NATURAL LEDA got away in the winner's pocket but gradually backed through the field heading to 3/4s - no good in his 2019 return.

Race 8 - SKYFUL OF LIGHTERS dropped in 3rd early on, pulled uncovered at the half and grinded patiently towards the leader to 3/4s, crept a bit closer on the final turn then found his best once into the

stretch, digging in very gamely to tough out the victory! CHEYENNE REIJANE was pocketed by LONE RAIDER, waited for the inside to open up in the stretch and finished strong once it did....not quite enough to outbattle the winner though. LONE RAIDER seated the leavers and went down the road, got away with VERY soft fractions but still didn't have quite enough to hold off the top pair in the latter stages. TWOMACSONESHADOW followed the winner from before the half, tipped wide on the final turn but was unable to fire his best shot once into the stretch - might have been just a bit short off the layoff. RAKSMACH N ended up racing 3rd over, swung wide at the top of the lane and finished solidly - should be even tighter next week. FIRST CLASS HORSE was pretty well backed but wasn't all that well intentioned from Post 8 (off a month) - finished with "sneaky" good pace, and is surely worth following going forward. SLUGGEM N had a slow start, stayed inside all the way and didn't look all that good tonight. STATESMAN N angled wide from the back entering the stretch but had no offer.

Race 9 - SHEZ SUGARSWEET A stepped right around ROCKIN THE BOYS A for the lead, faced no real pressure, looked VERY strong on the final turn and easily finished off the sharp front end score - sent off at 8-1, but raced more like an 8/5 shot! TRUTH AND LIBERTY lacked the speed to leave and quickly backed off, grabbed cover off turn two but was forced wide around that one early on the back side, got closer to the leader to the final turn and despite the tough trip, kept on coming through the stretch for an excellent 2nd. BETABCOOL N got away 3rd and remained on the cones, found inside clearance for the drive home and offered mild pace to grab the show spot. D GS ELSA was out 3rd over off turn two, followed wide to 3/4s and remained out there through the final bend, flattening a bit once into the stretch (but still an okay 4th). ROCKIN THE BOYS A yielded to the winner for the pocket trip, slipped out at the head of the lane but had nothing at all in the tank, floundering through the latter stages. CHEYENNE TRIENGEL was never involved from the back. VINTAGE BABE was surprisingly on the move from turn two...but was NOT surprisingly empty on the back side, tiring badly by the final turn - very surprised that Stratton pulled her when he did!

Race 10 - BLACK CHEVRON N made an alert quarter move to the lead, fended off MR HASANI N to the top of the stretch and remained steadfast to the wire, a sharp winner in his 2019 return! CAPOZZO was the only speed and took over on turn one, yielded to the winner's early move and sat the pocket, remained strong to the wire but just wasn't getting to the top one tonight. MR HASANI N pulled first over at the half, got turned aside by the winner by the top of the lane but stayed on gamely the rest of the way, a solid 3rd place finisher. ELWELL tried to retake to the quarter but the winner was already moving and he was stuck sitting 3rd as a result, sat most of the way then kicked home steadily for 4th in what should serve as a useful tightener. PERFECTLY CLOSE raced 2nd over from the half, tipped wide on the final turn but couldn't fire nearly enough. SHADY CITY was a bit sluggish in 6th, pacing home evenly as a non-factor. MACH TIME N gained a bit to the final turn, followed wide but flattened out once they hit the stretch - tough spot. GHOST PINE always had the best view.