

## The Empire Report – Monday, April 15, 2024 – Race Analysis

**RACE 1** – (4) MY ULTIMATE BYRON A was the choice here last week and he just took a little too long to find his stride, rallying in the lane to be 2<sup>nd</sup> best – he just missed with Bongiorno 5 starts back and perhaps the pair can make it to the winner’s circle tonight. (6) KOUNT BLASTER has a pretty unappealing local slate (14-0-0-2) but to be fair, he’s generally faced better than these – would be willing to consider him off the class drop tonight IF the price is fair (7) SURFSIDE BEACH finished with solid pace from a hopeless spot last week – he lands in a pretty rough spot once more, but may have a shot IF things get testy up front – consider if the price is juicy enough. (1) BALLERAT BOOMERANG was a prolific winner here in the past but is off to a very rough start in 2024 – we’ll see if he can at least utilize the inside draw to sit a good trip, and pick up a decent piece. (2) YS DO IT RIGHT had a major excuse 2 back but simply didn’t fire enough in the lane last time – willing to consider underneath, but looking elsewhere for the winner. (3) WORLD FOR TWO won by 10 lengths the night he was claimed (Feb. 1) but hasn’t really come close to winning since then – his barn has been heating up recently, so maybe this guy can find a good one tonight? (8) HUDSON PHIL would normally be a serious consideration in this class but he has Post 8 off 3 weeks and we may not see his best. (5) BARRIER makes his YR debut and his 2 for 55 record doesn’t inspire much confidence!

**RACE 2** – MGM Borgata Pace, Leg 5: (2) VENTURESOME ARDEN N may end up overlooked here but he was pacing fastest of all at the wire last week (to end up right there 4<sup>th</sup>) and has paced his final quarter in :27 seconds or LESS in 4 of his last 5 starts – he seemed overmatched on paper coming into this series, but he hasn’t embarrassed himself at all – maybe he can pull off an upset tonight? (1) WHATS STANLEY GOT A has been the biggest series surprise so far, struggling badly with cheaper heading into Week 1, but delivering a win and a pair of 2nds in his 3 starts – not sure why he skipped Leg 4, but he’ll be a threat tonight if he’s as good as he’s been. (3) ROCKNROLL RUNA A picked up a pair of wins and a crisp rallying 3<sup>rd</sup> from his first 3 series starts, and probably deserves a pass for getting worn into submission (by BACKSTREET SHADOW) last week – could bounce right back with a big effort. (5) PLEASELETMEKNOW was a little dull in the first 2 legs, used Leg 3 to qualify on Lasix in NJ then came up with a BIG winning effort in Leg 4, pushed to a :54.1 half and still prevailing easily – have a feeling he’ll end up a bit overbet tonight off that mile, however. (4) THIS IS THE PLAN can still throw a good one with the right trip, but the others just seem a bit sharper right now

**RACE 3** – (4) NANDOLO N (because of his racing style) is never a great bet at a short price but tonight’s compact field should really help him avoid a “bad” trip, and he’s already put up a 6-3-0-2 local slate this year – has to get top billing...but again, not one to bet the ranch on! (1) BURNHAM BOY N continues to race well every week, often at good prices – IF the top choice fails to deliver, he’d be a logical one to take advantage. (5) CENTURY HEINEKEN has some recent Canadian efforts that suggest he’d be a good fit here, and his new barn often does very well with fresh stock – couldn’t blame anybody looking to take a shot with him, at the right price. (3) SPLASH BROTHER seems to always work out a good trip, look done on the final turn then battle back in the lane for a nice slice – may be able to do the same tonight. (2) CAPTIVATE HANOVER loves to win races, and he’s taken 3 of his last 4 – faces better tonight, however, and that may slow him down a bit

**RACE 4** – (6) MOTIVE HANOVER saw his 2 race winning streak snapped last week but he may have raced even better in defeat (took back at the start, was moving from 6<sup>th</sup> on turn two, already pressing the leader at the half, battled into a :27.3 third panel and still was right there at the wire)– he’s going to be mighty tough tonight, barring another brutal trip! (1) URBAN RENEWAL just missed at this level upon arrival from PA 4 starts back, was ok in his next pair, and then in a no-prayer spot last week – moves all the way inside, and may be able to add some juice to the exotics. (3) AUSSIE HANOVER was terrific to start off 2024, had a couple of rough tries but then bounced back with solid efforts in his last few – a good trip gives him a shot at a piece. (7) THRASHER has been very consistent all year, especially at this \$40K level – he was just reclaimed by a barn that’s done well with him, but the terrible draw may be tough to overcome. (5) SAN DOMINO A is winless here in 10 starts this year after going 0 for 9 in 2023 – it MAY be a spot where Gingras can be aggressive, though, and that may help him at least grab a decent piece. (2) PRETTY HANDSOME was just an “ok” 2<sup>nd</sup> two back then really disappointed last week – may rebound from this good spot, but still leaning a bit more towards others. (4) PINEBUSH LIFESAVER was a “drop and flop” 4<sup>th</sup> in 30s last week, and now steps back up to face tougher after that disappointing try

**RACE 5** – (2) ARTIST BEST is still winless on the year (and thrown some duds along the way) but he’s also raced well in spots like this, and should be looking at a good trip tonight – may be able to come up with the late rally needed to (finally) find the winner’s circle. (1) KERFORD ROAD A has picked up wins in his last pair... and they represent half of the barn’s total victories for the year – he’ll get to call the shots once more tonight, and is a clear threat to make it 3 in a row. (7) TIN ROOF RAIDER A has been good for weeks but his lack of “real” speed has hurt his chances week after week – it certainly won’t be any easier starting from Post 7 but IF he can somehow find some trip luck, he’d have at least a chance for an upset. (5) FLOW WITH JOE has used easy trips to pick up pieces in his last pair and may be able to take home another small share tonight. (4) KB MAC figured to be handled aggressively last week but when he couldn’t put away the leader on the final turn, it sealed his fate (ended up 4<sup>th</sup>) – playable underneath. (3) ROSE RUN X CON was overbet last week and not into the first over trip at all – an easier trip puts him in play for a small piece. (8) NOWHERE CREEK A recently changed barns and feels like he may be starting to turn things around – another awful draw may leave him waiting for a better spot, however. (6) STATEMENT MADE A has been struggling for a long time – not sure why he doesn’t drop into an easier spot

**RACE 6** – (4) EUPHORIA N was listed on top here last week and went a BIG effort to come up a neck shy (to #1) at 10-1 – that price will surely come down a bit for tonight, but he probably still deserves a chance to make amends. (1) ROCKIN JUKEBOX really stung the top choice for the lead last week (:26.3), retook command and was able to hang on for the very sharp front end score (one of the barn’s three winners last Monday) – he’s able to stay in the same class (as a win dropped off the bottom of his card), and he’s obviously a serious threat to make it 2 in a row (6) PRICELESS BEACH came into his last start off a sick scratch (and bad date) but still raced super, rallying wide from well back on the final turn to be 4<sup>th</sup> – tough draw, but still worth a look at the right price. (2) SAMHARA N has picked up 3 seconds at big prices recently – never a bad one to include in exotics. (3) STONEBRIDGE REX is already 3 for 8 here this year and was 2 for 8 locally in 2023 – he’s proven that he fits with these (with a trip), and is another that’s usable underneath. (5) HAZEVILLE came up short at the end in his first couple of starts this year but was able to prevail on the lead last week, vs. a bit easier – he wouldn’t be a surprise here, but we are leaning more towards others. (7) GROOVY JOE can still bring a good one but likely needs a better draw to show his best. (8) JAHAN HANOVER’s best asset is his speed but he may have a hard time using it from out here.

**RACE 7** – (1) REIGNING DEO was pretty camera shy at Yonkers for some time but that seems to have changed recently, as he’s taken 3 of his last 5 starts (including last week’s career best 1:51.2 blowout) – he’s one of several from the barn doing amazing work lately, and he’s in line for another good trip tonight – has to get the nod, even if he won’t be much of a price. (3) SAILBOAT HANOVER showed surprise speed last week, did well keeping up into the sizzling pace and held well for 3<sup>rd</sup> – barn has been doing good work lately, and this guy may bring some value to the ticket. (4) TUGGIN ON MY HEART got way too hot on the lead last week and had no answers when the top choice rolled right on by him on the final turn – he did a great job just lasting for 2<sup>nd</sup>, and he won 4 in a row just prior to that – goes for a new barn tonight, and we’ll see if that last mile took anything out of him. (6) REAL WILLEY was a jogburger for \$40K last week, one of several razor sharp horses for the barn that night – he moves up to 50s and lands a tough post...but he’s still worth using in exotics. (5) AMERICAN ZEST A benefited tremendously from a perfect trip in that win on 3/11 but his next couple showed it was no fluke – he moves up in class and faces some pretty sharp foes tonight, and that may result in a bit smaller share. (2) WICHITA LINEMAN doesn’t feel like he’s on his best game right now...and faces several who probably are. (7) ALEX TYE has actually been pretty good since the 2/19 claim but this is just a brutal spot

**RACE 8** – (2) MY ULTIMATE STAR A flew home from a seemingly impossible spot last week to almost pull off a 47-1 shocker – his barn has been having its usual solid year, and the right trip may help him get to the winner’s circle. (3) TUFFENUFTOWEARPINK was empty off a sick scratch on 3/25 but looked much better the next week (dropping down to 40s), then built off that with last week’s front end score – should be a very live player once more. (5) DANCE ON THE BEACH took no real \$ last week, got away 6<sup>th</sup>, was still well back on the final turn but still managed to explode in the lane, pacing by them all to get up in the last stride – he’ll try his luck vs. the 40s tonight, and he may be sharp enough to have a say here too. (4) KING JAMES EXPRESS pulled off a shocker 3 back, raced well the next week for 3<sup>rd</sup>, but never grabbed the bit at all last week – mixed feelings about his chances for tonight. (1) BARON MICHAEL beat a much softer group at PcD 2 back then used a perfect trip here last week to beat a soft bunch of 30s – he should be feeling good about himself right now, but we’ll see if he can be as effective in this much tougher field. (7) GINGER TREE PETE is a favorite in this corner but he’s in a terrible spot tonight, and may have to wait for a better scenario to strut his best stuff. (6) MEMPHISTENNESSEE N would look better in a much easier spot

**RACE 9** - MGM Borgata Pace, Leg 5: (1) BACKSTREET SHADOW got a late start on his season, seemed rushed just make it for the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg, picked up a pair of “good” 3rds then was able to pick up a much needed victory last week – we probably still haven’t seen his “best”, but we’ll look for him to pick up another win tonight...to really boost his chances for a spot in next week’s Final. (2) COVERED BRIDGE probably isn’t at the absolute peak level we saw from him last season, but it’s still pretty remarkable that he’s still out there banging heads every week for as long as he’s been going at it – Stratton has done a good job finding “easy” trips for him lately, and will probably look to do the same tonight. (4) DUNKIN lost all chance with an unexpected miscue before the start last week but his recovery was outstanding, beaten by only 6 lengths after pacing his final 3/4s in 1:22.3 – with his spot in the final assured, look for a conservative, clean mile tonight. (5) COACHES CORNER has been rock solid, picking up 2<sup>nd</sup>s in all four legs – he’s another that could be taking a conservative approach tonight, with his eye on the prize for next week. (3) HEMSWORTH N can be fairly inconsistent so it really wasn’t a shock to see him squander what COULD have been a great trip last week – always a threat to save ground and rally for a share. (6) SEMI TOUGH came into the series riding a 4 race winning streak but tougher trips vs. tougher competition have slowed him down

**RACE 10** - MGM Borgata Pace, Leg 5: (2) LINEDRIVE HANOVER, along with DESPERATE MAN, has been one of the two “most impressive” horses in the series so far – he took off last week, and this week’s good draw puts him in position to grab one last win before the Final...without having to work too hard. (3) HELLABALOU was in 9<sup>th</sup> place after last week’s legs but with barnmate SUMOMENTSOMWHERE A taking this week off, he’ll start off in 8<sup>th</sup> place, hoping to be able to hang on to a spot in the Final that he WON last year – he’s finally hitting on all cylinders, so look for a big effort tonight. (4) LEONIDAS A is finally starting to find some better form after an uncharacteristic rough patch – it may be too late for him to make the Final, but keep an eye for future possibilities. (1) STRENGTHFROMABOVE hasn’t embarrassed himself and may even be able to grab a small piece with the inside draw. (5) IDEALSOMEMAGIC A threw a pair of clunkers at the worst possible time but gave it a better go last week – another to watch for the future. (6) FUNATTHEBEACH N went a big mile in Leg 2 but the former champ hasn’t been able to shake his inconsistency – tonight’s draw won’t help.

**RACE 11** – (6) TWIN B DELUXE has been very good (vs. better) lately, and was definitely hurt being jammed behind a “lazy” leader last week – draws outside but the short field helps, and he has a solid chance to come out on top with TT back on board. (5) POUND FOR POUND raced a bit better in his last couple, his barn has sent out some recent winners and he figures to be a good price here...good one for exotics. (1) THAT DOG WILL HUNT has disappointed so far as a 4YO but the barn is notorious for big wake up calls when they draw the pole – he could be next. (3) FLIRTIN JK is listed at 7/5 on the ML but he was dull last week, and hasn’t had any luck at Yonkers so far – barn always deserves respect, but this guy could be vulnerable here. (4) CLEVELAND B MIKI has a pair of 3rds from his 3 starts this year and is certainly playable for the bottom of exotics. (2) ROCKIN PHAROH hails from an eternally hot barn but seems to have little else going for him right now

**RACE 12** – (4) WALKINSHAW N rallied crisply in his last pair and feels like he’s ready to pick up his first win of the season – there should be some action in front of him tonight, so perhaps he can get it done in this well-matched finale. (2) CHURCHVIEWFRANKL IR seemed to appreciate some time off as he’s come back with a pair of nice wins (over cheaper) at PcD – he’s enjoyed success here in the past, and could be a very live player...even with the class jump. (3) FULSOME hit board in his first 9 starts this year but caught hot miles the last 2 weeks and had to settle for smaller pieces – he should be a very good fit with this crew and assuming he hasn’t started to tail a bit, could make a lot of noise tonight. (1) QUALITY BUD is prone to some off weeks but the classy 11YO still throws more than his share of good ones, especially from spots like this – can be right in the mix, even bumping up a notch. (5) LEVINE just missed the last 2 weeks and continues to knock at the door (5-0-3-1 here this year)– probably better used underneath, rather than on top. (6) ROCK DIAMONDS N stopped pacing and was beaten by a zillion lengths last week – while understanding the desire to have full fields, he (and others in the same boat) really should be forced to re-qualify, to protect the wagering public (how can anybody really know what to expect from him this week?) (7) GINGRAS BEACH has held his form remarkably well while climbing the class ladder, but this does feel like a pretty rough spot! (8) YO AJ ships in to a brutal spot from Fhd – would prefer to wait for a better spot (and class drop) next week.