

The Empire Report – Monday, April 5, 2024 – Race Recap

Race 1 – BARON MICHAEL got away 4th and was reserved off the strong early pace, ended up 3rd over to 3/4s then had to swing wide around poor cover, hit a good gear on the final turn and started to gain rapidly, easily rolling past the tired leaders once into the lane – came into this off a win out of town, and uses a perfect trip to make it 2 in a row. MY ULTIMATE BYRON A was out 4th over (behind the winner) to 3/4s, struggled a bit while wide on the final bend, found a much better gear once into the lane and rallied nicely for the place spot. LUCIANO N blasted down the road from his pole position, met up with the tripsitter to 3/4s and was able to just hold that one out to the final turn, had no answers when the fresh top pair rolled by in the lane but did dig in to at least hold the show spot. KB MAC couldn't get around LUCIANO N at the start and was forced to take the two hole, popped out to 3/4s and came hard at the leader, didn't have enough to go by into the strong 3/4s and did weaken once they turned for home, settling for a well-meant 4th. ARTIST BEST swung very wide from last on the final turn, finishing willingly from an impossible spot. HURRIKANE GEORGIE saved ground to no avail. J B GRAM had to back off into 3rd off turn one, followed the pocket popping KB MAC to 3/4s but quickly gapped cover, empty by the final turn – disappoints as the favorite in his Hilltop debut

Race 2 – STRIKING IMPACT left under heavy urge but still got away 3rd, was put on the move early and needed more heavy urging to take over on turn two (after TWIN B DELUXE grabbed up to let him go), was still lazy after making the lead and remained under Kakaley prodding to roll on, looked very vulnerable heading to 3/4s as JUST ENUFF STUFF took a big rush at him but was able to hold the lead despite the very slow 3/4s (1:26.4), still appeared to be in trouble on the final turn but Kakaley was somehow able to motivate him enough to finally fend off that big challenge, kicking him in :28 to save the chalk players – definitely NOT his best effort, and credit Kakaley for somehow keeping him motivated for almost the entire mile! JUST ENUFF STUFF was hot in 5th as the field jammed up to turn two, launched wide around FLIRTIN JK off turn three and was soon rushing up at the winner to 3/4s, looked like a winner on the final turn but just wasn't able to get by the hard fighting winner once into the lane, settling for 2nd off a big effort. TWIN B DELUXE was wide early then made the front, grabbed up hard to let the winner go on turn two, angled free once into the stretch and kicked home steadily for the show spot – was definitely hurt by the way the race played out. AUSSIE HANOVER was used a bit to secure the two hole then was back to 3rd on turn two, sat in from there and paced home evenly behind the top trio. FLIRTIN JK came out from 4th on turn three but soon watched JUST ENUFF STUFF going around him, gapped 2nd over to 3/4s and just wasn't sharp tonight – he MAY just not appreciate racing at Yonkers all that much. LOUS THE ATTITUDE continues to struggle

Race 3 – DESPERATE MAN saw that COVERED BRIDGE wasn't leaving and waltzed right to the lead himself, started to edge away to 3/4s and easily made it 4 for 4 in the series, making his 1:51 victory look effortless! COVERED BRIDGE took off the gate and elected not to pull until coming out 2nd over behind SUMOMENTSOMWHERE A on the final turn, angled for the drive home and was able to outkick the others for 2nd – went as conservative as possible, and was rewarded with a 2nd place finish. IDEALSOMEMAGIC A sat pocketed behind the winner, started to lose ground from 3/4s but never quit, digging in to hang on to 3rd even after losing the place spot late – encouraging try. SUMOMENTSOMWHERE A got away 4th and was stuck coming out first over to turn three, couldn't quite get by IDEALSOMEMAGIC A into 2nd on the final turn, kept trying all he could in the lane but was stuck settling for a tough trip 4th. DUNKIN made a very costly break before the start and lost all chance (but paced his final 3/4s in around 1:22.2 after landing at the back)! TORRID SAINT A was offstride well before the start.

Race 4 – PLEASELETMEKNOW got down to the quarter in a fiery :26 as he elected to just park FUNATTHEBEACH N, was still being hounded as they got over the half in an eye-popping :54.2, finally shook off that rival past 5/8ths but then faced a fresh test from THIS IS THE PLAN, fought THAT one off to the top of the lane and was actually drawing away at the wire, when he figured to be completely exhausted instead – he was adding Lasix for the first time tonight, and the difference in his performance (from his previous 3 starts this year) was substantial (and gave Kakaley his 4th winner of the night)! LEONIDAS A sat the pocket and watched the winner take heat the entire way, couldn't find enough to be a serious stretch threat but did stay on well to safely secure the place spot – some encouraging signs the past 2 weeks. THIS IS THE PLAN came out behind the brutally parked FUNATTHEBEACH N on turn three then swapped wide around him on the back side, rallied up uncovered to take on the winner at 3/4s, was fended off by the top of the lane and weakened to 3rd. STRENGTHFROMABOVE sat in the back behind the hotly contested pace, pacing home steadily for a 4th place check. HEMSWORTH N came out

from 5th and swung three wide on the back side, was a bit closer while 2nd over on the final bend but just didn't fire tonight, flattening in the lane for a disappointing 5th. FUNATTHEBEACH N pushed the winner to that sizzling :26 quarter but still wasn't able to get the lead, battled to that :54.2 half and gets a full pass for calling it a night with 3/8ths still remaining!

Race 5 – REAL WILLEY made a couple of moves to secure the top by turn two, cut a hot half then built a big lead to the top of the lane, absolutely crushing these tonight with a powerful performance! AMERICAN ZEST A came out from 5th at the half, had to go wide around stalled cover on the final turn, rallied up into 2nd into the stretch then dug in late to hold the place spot – nice try behind the razor sharp winner. THRASHER got away 6th then grabbed cover behind AMERICAN ZEST A to the half, followed that one three wide from 6th on the final turn then kicked home with crisp pace in the lane, not far off 2nd at the wire. POUND FOR POUND came out 4th over on the final turn, offering solid late foot to easily outkick the others for 4th – not bad in his last 2 starts. TALK RACY TO ME gapped a bit in 4th to the half, was behind a tiring rival on the final turn, faced traffic into the stretch then offered some mild late pace once clear to beat the weaker ones. OZONE BLUE CHIP was outstepped and got away 3rd, pulled first over off turn three but couldn't even get by a struggling GDS THUNDER GB on the final turn, tiring by the head of the lane – just never looked sharp tonight. GDS THUNDER GB took over to the quarter then yielded back to the winner on turn two, briefly thought about popping out on the back side but then stayed on the cones, started to weaken on the final turn and was all the way back to 7th by the time he hit the wire. MEMPHISTENNESSEE N lagged at the back throughout

Race 6 – TAKE A GAMBLE made the early lead but was back to 3rd by the quarter, pulled first over off turn three and was up to challenge for 2nd to 3/4s (into a sharp 3rd panel), kept coming once into the stretch and eventually was able to collar the leader, digging in late to hold off BOILING OAR to the wire – VERY sharp tonight! BOILING OAR was moving from last to the half then gained cover from the winner off turn three, angled for the drive home and rallied solidly to the end, though not quite able to get to the top one – another excellent performance! ADAM TWELVE took over past turn one, paced a strong 3/4s and had things his own way to the final turn, was put to urging to the top of the lane hoping to escape but was eventually hauled in by the top pair, having to settle for 3rd – did look a bit better than last time, but just wasn't as sharp as the top two. BURNHAM BOY N got away 5th then was shuffled to last inside, faced traffic in the stretch but did finish with good pace once clear. FORTIFY made the top off turn one then yielded for the two hole trip, worked hard in the pocket on the final bend then was outmuscled to the wire for a better piece. ALWAYS A MIKI was outleft and away 4th, gapped into the sharp 3/4s but kept hanging in there, not too far back at the end – some class drops would likely help! AMERICAN DEALER N got away 6th and sat in to the half, came out 3rd over behind the top two but still was empty in another disappointing try

Race 7 – ROCKIN JUKEBOX seated MACH N CHEESE then let EUPHORIA N take over after a hot :26.3 opener, came back out and was able to retake command to the half, opened a clear lead to the final turn and stayed strong right to the wire, picking up his first win of the season – a couple of SERIOUSLY sharp winners for the barn tonight! EUPHORIA N was parked past the hot :26.3 opener before making it to the front, had to let the winner reclaim command to the half, stayed close through all the sizzling fractions and was still right there 2nd to the wire – was very well meant tonight and raced huge...but ran into an equally sharp winner! SEVEN HUNDRED saved ground from the back as others pulled, was all the way up into 3rd to the top of the lane and paced well to the wire for the show spot – opportunistic for sure, but also sharp (for the 2nd straight week). PRICELESS BEACH got away 6th then ended up 4th over to turn three, was forced to swing wide from last on the final turn and offered a solid stretch rally for 4th – nice try off a bad date. MOVIN ON UP got away last, gained inside on the final turn and paced home evenly for the final paycheck (no chance spot). ALL ALONE had to drop in 5th when a couple left to his inside, came out to the half and ended up 3rd over to turn three, launched a wide move on the final bend but flattened once into the homestretch (tough trip). MACH N CHEESE was forced to drop behind the winner then was back to 3rd past the quarter, came out uncovered to turn three but could only challenge for 2nd to 3/4s, stalling badly to the head of the lane. FEARFUL INTENT slipped out 2nd over to turn three, got blindsighted on the final turn but was all done anyway

Race 8 – DANCE ON THE BEACH took off the gate tonight, followed SHARK PLAY to 3/4s then ended up 3rd over, swung very wide to the top of the lane then exploded once into the stretch, seemingly airborne as he flew by the leader right at the wire – makes it THREE ultra-impressive winners tonight for the Dynamic Duo! PASS A GRILLEBEACH was the lone speed and grabbed a modest half, faced no pressure then felt the plugs come out to the final turn, looked home free into the stretch but was no match late for the blur that was the winner – tough beat!

HIGH ON ROCKNROLL sat pocketed from the start but looked a bit sluggish all the way, unable to really rally in the lane but able to safely hold the show spot. PINEBUSH LIFESAVER sat patiently in 3rd before coming out first over to 3/4s, never really looked “strong” and was clearly outkicked from the top of the lane – was a “drop and flop” tonight. SURFSIDE BEACH came out from last on the final turn, pacing home solidly from an impossible spot. QUATRAN BLUE CHIP saved ground to no avail. SHARK PLAY came out from 5th to 3/4s then ended up 2nd over, tipped wide to the top of the lane but failed to fire. BALLERAT BOOMERANG was never in the hunt

Race 9 – TUFFENUFTOWEARPINK lopped right to the lead tonight, cut an honest half then was pushed to a :27.2 third panel by the challenging MOTIVE HANOVER, was still battling with that one into the stretch before finally putting him away, digging in late to hold off a late charge from the 47-1 outsider – served notice last week that he was coming into a big one, and definitely delivered it tonight. MY ULTIMATE STAR A saved ground from the back, was still 6th as they turned for home, angled free into the lane and was charging late, almost getting there at nearly 50-1! MOTIVE HANOVER took back at the start (when the winner left to his inside) and got away 6th, waited long enough and was cut loose from turn two, rushed up to come to the winner at the half then raced as a team into the sizzling 3rd panel, was STILL there as they turned for home and only gave way well into the stretch, ultimately finishing 3rd – wasn’t another winner for the Super Siblings, but he raced AS big (if not bigger?) than his 3 victorious barnmates! SULLIVAN got away well and sat the pocket to the winner, gapped a bit on the final turn then paced home evenly for 4th – big difference in the competition moving up to the 40s tonight. KOUNT BLASTER sat 3rd to the final turn, slipped out from 4th but failed to rally at all, weakening instead. AS ALWAYS was outleft and had to drop in 4th, came out 2nd over to turn three but gapped to 3/4s, all done by the final turn. KING JAMES EXPRESS came out 3rd over from turn three but quickly gapped cover, never grabbing the bit in a dull performance. OSTRO HANOVER was empty at the back

Race 10 – BACKSTREET SHADOW got away 3rd then was cut loose uncovered from turn three, took a big rush at the leader to 3/4s but didn’t quite clear on the final bend, took over for good once into the stretch and had to work hard to hold off THREE gaining rivals when they hit the wire – not his absolute “best”, but improves once again and at least gives himself a chance to make it to the Final– he also gives his barn a clean sweep of tonight’s Borgata legs! COACHES CORNER grabbed the winner’s cover off turn three, gapped a bit as things quickened to the final turn, angled clear for the drive home and rallied well, not quite getting to the winner but outmuscling a couple of others in the tight place/show photos. HELLABALOU made the top off turn one then let ROCKNROLL RUNA retake, did a beautiful job maneuvering free into tight quarters through the stretch and was just edged out for 2nd, not far off the winner – definitely feeling good right now. VENTURESOME ARDEN N came out 3rd over from 5th on the final turn, angled widest into the lane and was pacing fastest of all when they hit the wire, finishing 4th but only a neck behind the winner (and a nose off 2nd and 3rd) – he’s kicked home in :27 or better the last 3 weeks, and quietly proving that he may just belong with these! ROCKNROLL RUNA A retook command to the quarter, somehow kept the winner from going by fully into the final turn, tried to keep it going into the lane but had simply been worn into submission at that point. FOUREVER BOY sat last, was no factor but really wasn’t terrible

Race 11 – REIGNING DEO pulled uncovered from 3rd on the back side after watching the leader go an insane :54.2 half, attacked by 3/4s (1:22.4!) then went on by into the final turn, swelling up at the top of the lane and drawing off to the wire, equaling his lifetime mark (1:51.2) – just another scary sharp winner for the barn tonight (their 4th!) and another winner’s circle appearance for Kakaley, and “The Manager” (their 6th!) TUGGIN ON MY HEART retook command after the sizzling :26.2 opener, remained hot and rattled off a :54.2 half, was still flying to 3/4s in 1:22.4 but that wasn’t enough to deter a major challenge from the winner, succumbed on the final turn but somehow was still able to hang on to 2nd! SAILBOAT HANOVER left tonight and was rolling on the lead before yielding at the :26.2 quarter, was right there through the red hot fractions and can be forgiven for being a little tired in the lane, finishing 3rd – well meant tonight. FULSOME took off the gate tonight, came out from 5th on turn three then gained the winner’s cover on the back side, was unable to really stay on from the final turn but really wasn’t a bad 4th, considering the trip. ALEX TYE was never really to get in play in this sizzling mile, but certainly wasn’t terrible. HAMMERING HANK sat last with no prayer. WICHITA LINEMAN seemed to tire from chasing the sizzling clip, fading to last

Race 12 – KERFORD ROAD got a free pass to the lead from ROSE RUN X CON, yielded to BIG SIR on turn two then took back over to the half, faced only minimal pressure to the final turn then had more than enough left to safely hold off the tripsitter to the wire – two in a row for him, and the 4th winner of the night for Mr. Bongiorno! BIG SIR rushed up from 3rd to take over on turn two, allowed the winner to retake to the half, had another chance in

the lane but came up 2nd best tonight. FLOW WITH JOE saved ground all the way, using that easy trip to slip into 3rd. YS DO IT RIGHT grabbed cover on the back side to race 2nd over, had to go wide as that cover stalled on the final bend and just couldn't find the stretch kick to be a bigger player. ROSE RUN X CON yielded to the winner early and was back to 3rd on turn two, came out first over from the 5/8ths but offered only a weak bid, stalling badly on the last turn. STATEMENT MADE A saved ground to no avail. NOWHERE CREEK A was hurt badly when caught behind a badly gapping FOX VALLEY PATRIOT early on – actually raced pretty well considering how much ground he had to make up just to get back to the pack. FOX VALLEY PATRIOT just didn't function from early on