The Empire Report – Saturday, May 11, 2024 – Race Analysis

RACE 1 – (3) BLUE POINT was good enough at 2 to make the NYSS Final and finished up her year with a win in a Reynolds division at Tioga – her 2 tighteners at Pocono should have her ready for a winning effort tonight. (1) IM A BELIEVER showed ability in many of her 2YO starts – she was a well backed 3rd in her 3YO return but a little disappointing when 2nd best adding Lasix in her next, then didn’t finish well enough in her last pair at PCD – this is a good spot for a trip, but the big concern is that her barn is 0 for 53 since 3/21! (5) LINEMUP KNOCKMBACK qualified nicely after a brief freshening and enjoyed some success here this winter – she can be a little unreliable, but any of her better efforts could put her right into the hunt. (7) OBJ was a winner at 1/10 in her YR debut but that was from the pole, in a very weak field – maybe she’s good enough to handle the class jump and poor post, but still hard to get excited about a wager at that 5/2 ML price! (2) QUIET ASSURANCES has been finishing poorly in all her recent starts – waiting for a better effort before endorsing. (4) FLAMBOYANCE may be a bit better than her lines suggest but still seems a bit below the top ones in here. (6) JESS INDEED was very weak in her YR debut

RACE 2 – (1) NOME HANOVER was a sharp winner (at Fhd.) off the barn change 2 back and was a decent first over 3rd in his next – he had a good year here in 2024, and lands in a very manageable spot for his YR return – he does figure to be a bit overbet, though. (5) CURBSIDE PICKUP has also been racing well at Fhd…on the weeks when he does NOT get stuck with horrible posts – could be a live player with the switch to Brennan. (2) WAR DAN DELIGHT N tends to be camera shy but picks up plenty of pieces– good one to include in exotics (3) MY CARBON COPY N was a decent 3rd two back but just not all that sharp last week – maybe a small slice with an easy trip? (4) GOOD INVESTMENT was the latest in a growing list of form reversing winners for a barn that did a complete 180 beginning in April – faces tougher tonight, and may not be quite as effective as last week. (6) SPRINGSTEEN lands back in one of his old barns and may attract some attention as a result – the once promising 9YO has been highly unreliable for a long time, however, and definitely tends to disappoint more often than he delivers.

RACE 3 – (6) DEETZY gets a less than stellar draw but he drops in class off a hard charging 2nd and has beaten better than these many times in the past – worth a shot here, hoping Holland can find him a manageable trip. (3) ROLLING WITH SAM was going plenty of big miles vs. much better here this winter, and returns off a very good looking score at Tioga (off 3 weeks) – definitely worth using here if the price is decent. (2) SARANAC BLUE CHIP steps up in class after hitting board in his last 3 and should be able to be a significant player against these too – not a fan of that 2-1 ML price, however. (4) ALEX TYE has become wildly unpredictable from week to week – he was up the track 2 and 3 back but then turned in a powerful first over score last week (vs. a bit easier) – a similar effort puts him in the mix again, but he just never seems to race the same way twice! (5) AIR FORCE HANOVER felt like he was on a good roll but then faltered on the lead last week with no real excuses– maybe a small piece? (1) MR MATT MAJOR N looked like he was finally starting to find his game across the river but comes into tonight having missed a month (after a sick scratch) – inclined to just watch, for now

RACE 4 – (4) AMBUSHED made her 4YO return last week and certainly impressed, attacking HONEY LOVE to the final turn, then wearing her down and sprinting home in :27.2 to seal it – Kakaley sticks with her tonight, and we will too. (1) HONEY LOVE (new barn last week) grabbed herself an easy half but simply was no match when the top choice came at her on the final turn (losing 2nd late, as well) – wouldn’t write her off just off that one effort, and she could easily come up with a solid try tonight, especially from the pole. (5) DEVILISH DREAMS finished 2nd to the top choice last start, but was also helped by a very easy trip – can still make some noise here, but does face a bit more uncertain journey. (2) OAKWOOD DYNASTY IR was an even 4th behind the top trio last week, and may suffer the same fate tonight– the easier her trip, the better chance she’ll have of finishing a bit closer. (3) CANNERY ROW had no prayer last week (into the fast final quarter/half) but certainly wasn’t “bad” – the right trip gives her a chance to possibly fill out the tri or Superfecta. (6) VARSITY BLUE CHIP won 4 of 5 local starts here not long ago but facing easier competition – she returns off solid tries at PCD and may be a good fit with these too… but the poor draw may also limit her a bit for tonight. (7) ANNELIESE HANOVER seems unlikely to ever get near the action

RACE 5 – (6) PAT STANLEY A went a BIG mile off the claim last week, launching a long first over move from 5th, wearing down the leader and still pacing off powerfully to the wire – a repeat of the mile would make him very tough here (even from Post 6) …but his tendency to NOT always string together big miles does make the nod a bit of a tepid one. (3) SMOKIN BY N does terrific work for this barn but did get worn down by the top choice in his
last – remains a very logical threat… and his chances go up even more if #6 is unable to bring that same mile tonight. (2) MAJOR DESIRE was a sharp winner vs. the 25s two back and an excellent 2nd to the top choice last week – another very solid player to consider. (1) DON DOMINGO N is the “x factor” – he was on a nice form spree when he made an unexpected miscue (vs. 40s) on 2/19 – he had a terrible qualifier almost a month later then stayed on the shelf until last week, turning in a much better qualifier here – hard to know how close to top form he’ll be under the circumstances. (4) ARRHYTHMIC SURGE was good finishing 3rd in his first start off the layoff but remained lost in the back last week – which version tonight? (5) SULLIVAN recently found his top form again but got parked the mile on 4/18 and hasn’t raced in the 3+ weeks since then – seems a bit iffy for tonight. (7) LUCIANO N was a no factor 4th from the pole last week, and now gets stuck all the way outside

RACE 6 – (7) AMERICAN HOPE disappointed as the odds-on choice in her 3YO return but at least had a useful start (and was a close 2nd best) – she won’t offer any value from out here, but is likely the best of these and Brennan can probably find her an easy enough trip, despite the draw. (2) JUST ONE BITE has yet to hit board in her 6 career starts but still shows more potential than most of the others – could add some value to the ticket. (1) URSULA BLUE CHIP is 0 for 32 for a reason but her speed should set her up with a good trip here, and that could be enough for a place in the exotics. (5) SHANGHAI STAR was an even 4th in her career debut and may improve in start #2 – would consider underneath. (6) CRAZIERTHEBETTOR is a homebred for Super Siblings but her handful of career starts have been mixed at best, and her return qualifier is less than encouraging – maybe the tote board will offer some guidance? (3) DUCK INTO THE NITE has managed just one 3rd from 7 local starts and her last was pretty weak – prefer others. (4) FANSBABY adds Lasix but would need significant improvement even for a small piece

RACE 7 – (1) OZONE BLUE CHIP has been VERY good in his last 3 starts (especially the last!) without the benefit of a victory – after drawing the pole, the road to the winner’s circle definitely goes through him tonight. (2) STOP STARING drops back down to 20s, where he recently picked up a win and a 2nd – logical threat to land somewhere in the exotics. (6) CAPTAIN T HANOVER flew from last to 2nd last week, even if helped by the hotly contested pace – he’s shown the ability to handle a variety of trips, and could grab another good chunk tonight. (3) WAIMAC ATTACK N was a sharp 2nd vs. the 15s last week and his connections give him a vote of confidence moving him up a notch – a good trip could land him right in the hunt here too. (4) SHANWAY N isn’t usually a threat to win, but he usually finishes well and is always a candidate for a minor share. (5) MISSILE SEEELSTER is just 10-0-0-1 this year but has raced better than that record would suggest (many bad posts/tough trips) – good bomb for 3rd/4th. (7) BLUEBIRD RECON should appreciate the drop to 20s but that may be offset by the terrible draw – may need to wait for a better post. (8) IM A POWERPLAY A gets a pass for his last (caught behind the tiring leader turning for home) but may have to wait for a much better draw to be a threat

RACE 8 – (4) DEVIOUS MOJITO AS has come back solid at 3, winning his first start of the year (in NJ) and then winning again last week, taking a 1:54.4 mark at Chester – just seems a bit more advanced that most of these right now. (2) RILEYS REBEL seemed to be getting the hang of it at the end of her 2YO season, hitting board 3 straight to close out the year – she picked up a nice 2nd last week (behind a standout winner) to start off her 3YO campaign, and could land somewhere on the ticket once again. (6) SKY BOX won a couple of Excelsior A legs at 2, and was a nice 3rd in his 3YO debut at Chester – could easily outperform that 20-1 ML price. (7) STOCKHOLM HANOVER added Lasix last week and was able to pick up a nice 3rd at Fhd. in the Dexter Cup, despite an easy miscue – there’s definitely ability here, but he won’t be offering any value from post 7 with that 5/2 ML listing. (5) SAKARI FASHION shows a pretty mixed bag of tries – if she brings her best, she’s another that could outperform her long ML odds. (1) HIPPIE SHAKE picked up minor spoils in several starts at 2 and was able to earn $40K without ever finishing 1st or 2nd – seems a notch below a few of the main players. (3) BARN CREDIT was solid all year at 2 but has yet to go a good mile for his new connections at 3 – sticking with others, for now. (8) TO MY CREDIT is 1 for 33 and starts from all the way outside – pass

RACE 9 – (4) ITALIAN DELIGHT N went down as the odds on choice in his first 2 starts off the layoff (tough/unlucky trips to end up 2nd and 3rd) but made no mistakes in his last, jogging first over at $3.00 – should be able to take another, but a very short price looms! (5) LIBERTY N FREEDOM hasn’t been worse than 4th in his last 5 starts and that includes a win and a close 2nd solid player every week, and a good chance for a piece of the pie tonight. (1) MAJESTIC KIW1 N wasn’t close in his last pair but he moves all the way inside after a pair of 8 holes and that may be enough to help him land somewhere on the bottom of the ticket. (8) SWAGASAURUSREX has been pretty unreliable from week to week but he does have a win, 2nd, and 3rd from his last 5 starts and does represent a pretty strong trainer/driver tandem – chance for a piece, despite the post. (6) LYONS PRIDE had a nice form cycle that
culminated in a win 3 back but may be heading in the wrong direction at the moment – the poor draw doesn’t help. (2) COLD CREEK FELIPE drops to 15s after finishing distanced (across the river) off the barn change – a wake up call could help him grab some minor spoils. (3) SHARK PLAY failed to thrive after dropping to 20s recently, and last week’s drop to 15s didn’t do much either – still waiting for signs of life. (7) ATLANTIS just hasn’t seemed to want to be out there lately – tonight’s draw certainly isn’t going to help his cause

RACE 10 – (5) NYMERIA broke in her first 2 qualifying attempts – added hopples and behaved nicely in her next try, then raced well in both of her lifetime starts, including last week’s blowout at Pocono – we’ll give her a try in her Yonkers debut. (1) VERSACE BLUE CHIP won her first lifetime start as a 2YO (jogburger at Stga.) but then made breaks week after week – took 7 months off, re-qualified cleanly, and then won her first start as a 3YO (also at Stga.) – can be a big player IF she continues to behave. (4) MAGIC MELVIN was no threat last week but did trot a solid final half to be a “best of the rest” 4th – we’ll see if he can build off that mile. (6) HIGH LIFE started off his 3YO campaign with a win at PcD but then was no factor (vs. better) in his next few starts – probably fits ok with these, but will have to overcome the bad post. (3) NATIONAL LOVE AS hails from a sharp trotting barn but hasn’t been overly impressive in his 9 lifetime starts. (2) HEART OF A TITAN was an ok 3rd at Monti last week (first start of 2024) – keep an eye for future consideration.

RACE 11 – (8) GINGRAS BEACH finished with good pace vs. better last week, and has been holding his own with tougher for a while – he did jog the last time he was down at this level, and MAY be able to pull off the upset in the finale...IF Marohn is willing to handle him aggressively. (3) WICHITA LINEMAN hasn’t been on his best game but hasn’t been terrible either – legitimate player from this spot, but could end up overbet. (2) MARLBANK ROAD came up a little short after an aggressive speed try last week – may have a chance here if he’s a little tighter off that try. (4) ODDS ON PICK SIX is winless in 11 starts this year, but does fit well with this bunch – would consider if the price was good enough. (1) TOM MCMIKI landed on a perfect trip last week but could only manage an even 4th – will need to be sharper if he’s hoping for a bigger chunk tonight. (6) MIND HUNTER has been somewhat inconsistent, and is also winless in 2024 – maybe he can rally for a small slice if he shows up in a good mood. (7) EMINEM HANOVER has been ok lately, but may have trouble overcoming the draw. (5) GRATIANT HANOVER was a dull 5th in his YR return and could only manage another 5th off a pocket trip last week – the old war horse may need a little easier spot