The Empire Report – Thursday, April 11, 2024 – Race Analysis

RACE 1 – (3) STEUBEN HANOVER has an off week here and there but he’s still managed to compile a terrific 10-4-2-1 record this year– he comes off an excellent 7 hole victory last week, and remains the one to knock off. (1) INN AT RODANTHE is winless on the year but has hit board in half of his 10 starts – been solid recently, and the good draw makes him a very legitimate player. (5) LIGHTFOOTEDLEGEND has raced well in all of his 2024 starts at this level, including last week’s 2nd to the top choice – a live trip puts him right back in the hunt tonight. (7) ALL CH AMPY had a very long form spree through 2022-23 but then went on the shelf after a blowout win last August – he looked a bit short in his 2024 return, and may need to wait another week after drawing so poorly tonight. (2) WILLY WALTON was no factor last start but has been ok overall lately – an easy trip could land him a minor piece. (4) ICE BREAKERS raced well here a few times this winter but it’s hard to say how he stacks up vs. the main players right now – mixed feelings. (6) BAR COINS had MASSIVE improvement immediately upon joining this barn last year but his form soon became mixed, and he may not be ready to tackle these at the moment.

RACE 2 – Good race: (4) EUROBOND took a little too long to find his best stride last week and he had to settle for a late-gaining 3rd – it’s hard to know exactly how this race will play out but IF this guy lands on a live trip, he could offer some decent value in this well matched field. (6) B NICKING has been good for a long time, making last week’s miscue a surprise – that line will probably boost this one’s price considerably, and we know he can trot with these on his best game – worth considering! (3) CREDIT CON was sharp in those wins 2 and 3 starts back but those miles are sandwiched between a pair of odds-on losses – he could take this for sure, but there may be better to be found with others, on top. (2) P L OSCAR came up a little light in his last pair but that was in the Open – drops down to the level he beat 3 back, and has to be seen as a legitimate threat. (1) HIGHLAND MOWGLI draws the pole for the leading barn in the nation but he also steps up in class after wiring softer last week – wouldn’t be a surprise, but he’s another that could be overbet tonight. (5) DWS POINT MAN is listed on the bottom but only because he faces an uncertain trip from this mixed – he’s more than sharp enough to make some late noise.

RACE 3 – (5) J S HOPSCOTCH just missed vs. tougher last week, and his last 2 efforts at this $40K level have resulted in wins – barn has sent out some eye-popping winners this week, and we’ll try this guy on top. (2) FLIP THE SWITCH saw his 4 race winning streak snapped last week and will now try to get another one started for his new connections – very logical threat. (3) TOCCOA FALLS would normally look mighty tough shipping into this class from NJ but his last 3 starts have resulted in a break, and two well-beaten performances – feels a little iffy at the moment, and also figures to be heavily backed. (6) PERRON hasn’t won yet this year but he’s raced well more often than not, and his current slate stands at 10-0-4-1…would certainly include him in exotics with that 20-1 ML price. (1) IN MY DREAMS picked up that win on 3/7 but has otherwise struggled (just to stay trotting!) in his other recent starts – a little shaky for our tastes at the moment. (4) NO TURNING BACK is one of the few from the barn that has NOT picked up their game recently – drops, but still hard to get excited about at the moment.

RACE 4 – (2) AIR FORCE HANOVER left from a terrible spot last time and was predictably parked – he did hang around for about 3/4s before tiring, and now lands in a MUCH kinder field – feels like a spot he should be able to handle, though he’ll probably be heavily backed. (1) GOOD INVESTMENT is overdue for a better effort and he should land on a good trip tonight – maybe he can complete the exacta? (5) LAST MACH is 3-0-0-0 to start 2024 and was the same 3-0-0-0 at Yonkers last year – not sure he should be listed as the 2nd ML choice but he still looks better than a bunch of these right now. (6) WON LAST FEELING tailed a bit in his last couple – he can grab a share tonight IF he can rekindle to one of his better efforts. (4) HURRIKANE CHUCK has yet to hit board in 4 starts this year but may still be able to beat out a few of the even weaker ones in here. (8) HEISMAN PLAYER was just 1 for 25 last year and has started off 2024 at 8-0-0-1 – hard to recommend from Post 8! (7) ROSE RUN WOODROW draws Post 7 after missing a month and is 5-0-0-0 at YR. (3) ICE HOUSE hasn’t functioned in ages.

RACE 5 – (1) NO MAS DRAMA has become a bit unpredictable this year, mixing in “good” efforts, with “great” efforts and also some not-so-hot efforts…guessing we’ll see one of her better miles from the pole tonight, and that would stamp her as the one to knock off. (8) HOT FLASH KIMMY made a BIG recovery after a first turn miscue in her local debut – she re-qualified sharply at Pocono, and MAY have a chance to threaten tonight if she can find a way into the hunt. (3) HELPOFTHESEASON started her local career with 3 straight victories but shows a mixed bag of tries in her next 5 starts – this is a spot where she can be a threat, with a good trip. (4) PERFECT VIXEN has had an amazing season so far, going from the bottom levels upstate to winning the FM Open here at YR – she’s...
missed 3 weeks, however, and her barnmates that have had similar layoff have produced a mixed bag of results this week – not sure what to expect! (6) P L NOTSONICE landed on a tough trip in her YR debut and still almost picked up a 4th – she seems capable of better, but this is another tough spot. (2) LADY JETER was disinterested at the back last week but may be able to have a bigger say with the move back inside. (5) THE BALLYKEEL DEAL has definitely upped her game since arriving from Canada but may need to be in a bit easier than this. (7) IMA DIAMOND BABE picked up a no-threat 3rd last time but moves from the rail to Post 7 – figures to hurt!

RACE 6 – (3) TYPHOON BANNER N was much better in his last than his line might suggest and gets the benefit tonight of both post and class relief – look for a strong, aggressive effort tonight. (1) CYRUS N was very sharp to start off the year for a barn putting up some seemingly unachievable numbers so far – he’s another that will benefit from both post and class relief tonight…and looms the main danger. (2) KJ HUNTER hasn’t had much success in his limited local action but he’s also been in some awful spots – looking at an easier trip tonight, with the possibility of a decent piece. (4) GOTHIC ROCK turned in a better effort last week, rallying well for 2nd behind the dominant front end winner – chance for another good with a similar effort. (8) WAR DAN DELIGHT is winless in 9 starts this year but has raced well in most of his starts – faces an uphill battle starting from Post 8, but he’s not a bad bomb for 3rd/4th. (6) HURRIKANE JONNYBOY caught tough fields for his first 2 starts of 2024 then tired in a hot mile (in NJ) last week after showing speed from the outside – could go either way tonight. (5) KIMBLE A struggled for a while after arriving in the U.S. but his last pair were much better – not sure how he’ll respond to tonight’s class jump, however. (7) HIMSELF N adds Lasix but draws poorly after a month off – “watch mode” for tonight

RACE 7 – Amateur Race: (2) ALLINDOTIME was an overnight winner at Fhd. last week and reunites tonight with John Calabrese…who steered him to a pair of March amateur victories – we’ll give him the narrow edge. (3) LION HEAD was 7-2-0-2 at Yonkers last year, and recently had a win, 2nd, and 3rd, with “Yogi” at the lines – logical player for tonight. (7) BACARDI just missed here (to #4) three back then rallied for 3rd in his next – he returns off an overnight win at Fhd., and that 20-1 ML price does make him worth at least considering! (4) B MEDITHREE was sent off at a miniscule price here on 3/21 and just held on (by a quivering nostril) over #7 – he probably won’t go off as short tonight, but he still figures to be somewhat overbet…and could be a bit vulnerable. (6) MUSCLE DAN picked up a 2nd and a 3rd in his last 2 local amateur starts and is another with a chance to outperform his long ML odds. (1) SOUTHWIND FROST picked up wins 3 and 4 back in NJ and won with tonight’s pilot on 1/27 at Fhd. – draws the pole, and has to at least be considered. (8) EXPLOSIVE RIDGE has had some recent success but lands Post 8 off a break last week. (5) EMPEREURTHEBEST FR is winless in 26 local starts and struggling right now

RACE 8 – Tough race: (7) PAT STANLEY N was super in that win 2 back, then “good” when 3rd last week – he’ll be a good price from a hot barn, and we’ll hope for some trip luck. (5) MAXIMUS RED A was averse to winning last year but he comes into this with 3 wins from his last 5 starts, with 2nds in the other two – has become a reliable weekly threat! (6) HURRIKANEKINGJAMES had fallen a bit off his best game recently but his last (2nd to #5) was much more encouraging – a similar effort puts him right back in the mix. (3) MAJOR DESIRE has been “ok” in his last tries at the $30K level, but he’d look much better with a drop – can still grab a piece, though. (2) GLACIS got roughed up early last week and was left with little late – can be a bigger player tonight with an easier trip – ok for exotics. (1) FOREVER FAV was WAY overdriven last week and just ended up hurting himself and a couple of others – a more sensible steer may help him take home a minor share. (4) ODDS ON PICK SIX gets a better draw but just seems to have fallen well off form. (8) HEART ON MY SLEEVE will need lots of trip luck from out here

RACE 9 – (1) TAKE A CLOSER LOOK shocked at 23-1 3 back, proved it was no fluke with a nose loss the next start then came back to wire ‘em last week – his (always hot) barn has been sending out some major missiles this week, and this guy certainly is the one to beat tonight. (2) WISE THINKING toured the oval from Post 8 in his first try for the Super Siblings but wasn’t far back at the end – look for a much more serious try tonight…and consider using on top if the price is right. (4) URIEL BLUE CHIP comes in two versions – if the “smooth” one shows up, he’ll be a handful…but if the “other” one shows up again (as he did at 3/5 last week), he could burn some more $$. (6) BIG DREAM FELLA made a break off the claim 2 back but bounced back with a solid 3rd last week – tough draw, but still belongs in exotics. (3) FINAL CHEESERECIPE raced much better than expected in his local debut but then failed to come up with the same kind of effort the 2nd time around – he could be a live longshot if he reverts to the form from 2 back. (8) COLD CREEK FELIPE regressed a bit last week (after a couple of good tries) and now gets stuck on the far outside. (5) BOOM TOWN BOY needs an easy trip just to hope for some minor spoils. (7) ALL BETSONFRITZ would be a surprise from this spot
**RACE 10** – (3) ON THE VIRG got hammered at the windows on 2/29 and delivered the solid front end score – he was a decent 4<sup>th</sup> in his next but has been in a series of no-chance spots since then – lands in a beatable field tonight, and may be ready to come back to life. (4) STOP STARING, like several of his barnmates, really stepped up his game over the last couple of weeks – looms a dangerous threat to repeat, but that 6/5 ML price is definitely a turnoff. (2) IM A POWERPLAY A has been somewhat of an “all or nothing” type the past few months – his last few aren’t pretty, but this is a spot where we MAY see a wake up call. (1) MISSILE SEELSTER feels more like a “field filler” stepping up to 25s tonight (he’s a borderline 20 claimer), but the good draw could help him land a trip…and a piece. (6) BRUSHING UP has picked up some decent pieces lately but he really hasn’t been all that “sharp” – the tough draw certainly won’t help his cause. (5) BLUEBIRD RECON drops, but just hasn’t been sharp in a long time.

**RACE 11** – (4) ON HIGHER GROUND was well meant last week, landed on a winning trip but just couldn’t overtake the favorite at the end – he catches some iffy rivals tonight, and may be able to get the job done this time. (7) MISSISSIPPI STORM will need things to go his way from all the way out here but he’ll be a good price, and this race just may fall apart – worth a stab? (2) TOP ME OFF has come in two versions recently – he went a beastly mile in that win 2 back, but was dull (and a bit choppy) last week – his best effort makes him a threat…but it’s hard to know if we’ll see it tonight. (1) UNVERGONNAGETHIS was terrific in 2023 but his lone win this year came on the lead (vs. cheaper), and he may be looking at only a smaller piece tonight, even from the pole. (3) EPOS OSTER VANG DK has been possibly THE most consistent horse to race here over the last 2 years, and has hit board in what feels like 99% of his starts – that being said, he has an unknown pilot for tonight, and may be worth playing against (5) GAELIHILL is a pretty erratic sort – he had a very promising 2024 return (in NJ) but flopped badly here last week – he’ll certainly be a big price for top shelf connections for anybody that thinks he may bring a big one tonight. (6) MAHONE SEELSTER has completed a lot of exactas for us this year but the month off has to be a concern.

**RACE 12** – (1) THREE GRAND hasn’t really thrived all that well since arriving here 5 starts back but he lands the pole in a pretty soft field, and this figures to be a prime spot for a wake up call…both for him, and his normally high flying barn. (2) GENIUS MAN can be fairly inconsistent but he went a big try for 2<sup>nd</sup> to a very well meant winner last week, and a similar mile would make him very dangerous tonight. (4) MIRRAGON A is capable of beating better than these but he’s been missing time between starts, and throwing clunkers more often than not- he’s playable here, but only if the price is juicy. (7) SPRINGBRIDGE DUEL has “figured” here on several occasions but is now 0 for 19 at Yonkers – maybe he can find his way onto the bottom of the exotics? (6) BILL HALEY N started off the year with a 3<sup>rd</sup> in NW20000 but has been on a major decline lately – not sure this drop to the bottom level will be enough to help him right the ship. (5) HURRIKANE HUNTER makes his first start since October – perhaps the tote board will offer some clues? (8) EMINEM HANOVER has a brief brush in him most weeks – not sure that’s going to be enough to get him in play from out here. (3) MARLBANK ROAD has been away since last June…and his qualifier certainly looks less than stellar.