

The Empire Report - Thursday January 10, 2019 - Race Recap

Race 1 - SHADY STELLA was content to sit the two hole early behind BELLA RAGAZA then popped out around 5/8ths to test that one, remained in a good battle to the head of the lane then gradually edged away to the easy victory. BELLA RAGAZA responded to an early whip crack and shot out to a fast, easy lead, felt the winner coming after her on the back side and responded to heavy urging to keep that one from going by to the final turn, was still right there nose to nose as they turned for home but eventually gave way to the pressure in the stretch, and settled for a clear 2nd best. AMERICAN IMAGE struggled a bit in 3rd much of the way but did keep on trying, easily holding the show spot (though no threat at all to the top pair). NORTHERN SOIREE benefited by saving ground (as others pulled) and that led to a (well beaten) 4th place finish. GLAMORGAL saved ground at the back, pacing home evenly to take home the final pay check. CRUISINWITHMYBABY was hampered by very poor cover but really had no offer of her own. JENNA HANOVER tried an uncovered move to turn three but went quickly into reverse as the pace quickened on the back side.

Race 2 - RAISING KERCKHAERT was outstepped early but took the lead when FINS UP made a break, crawled through some pretty slow fractions until tested by the tripsitter at 3/4s, never could get away from that one but still was able to prevail safely under some pretty confident Stratton handling (considering the narrow margin). GOT NO MONEY HONEY benefited from a couple of early breakers to get away in the pocket, popped out before 3/4s to come after the crawling (1:31.1) leader, remained a big threat right to the end but just couldn't go by. MACKWORTHY ended up sitting 3rd, moved off the cones to 3/4s then gained cover from the pocket-popper, angled for the drive with dead aim but couldn't find enough to get past the top two. DRUM HANOVER broke briefly off turn one but recovered quickly to maintain his spot in 4th, gained inside (into the vacated pocket) on the final turn but was simply outfinished by the top ones. DESTAROFNIGHT was outleft and then broke before turn one, managed to recover and land in 6th, tried a three wide move to 3/4s but couldn't gain nearly enough, and flattened out by the head of the lane. CANT WIN stayed flat but was empty from the back. FINS UP left quickly to the front but never made it to the first turn before going offstride.

Race 3 - A CRAFTY LADY retook control from VELOCITY LAYLA to the quarter, built a nice lead into the final turn then was kept to task in the lane to finish off the easy victory. ROCKLINDAROCK sat the cones and was trapped behind a tiring one to the final turn, found a clear rail once into the stretch and finished very nicely to rally up into the 2nd spot - nice effort off the bad date. KEENE OLIVIA pulled first over at the half, moved up to press the winner at 3/4s, was turned back into the final turn and got pretty weak in deepstretch, losing the place spot that seemed certain as they turned for home. BIG LIS flushed cover to race 2nd over at the half, gapped a bit to 3/4s and was pretty much empty by the final bend, beating the lesser ones for 4th. SEAFOOD MISSY raced 3rd over to 3/4s, was hurt by sluggish cover but could only manage even pace in the stretch. VELOCITY LAYLA was the only leaver and took over off turn one, yielded back to the winner but started to fade in the pocket before 3/4s, tiring badly in the final quarter of a mile.

Race 4 - SEVEN KNIGHTS was content to sit the pocket behind TRUMPS RALLY, popped out at 3/4s to take his shot at the leader, eventually measuring that one off that as they trotted to the wire. TRUMPS RALLY left right to the front then was helped when THE LIONKING AS made a break off turn one, had things all his own way until the winner came out after him, tried to battle on through the stretch but came up 2nd best tonight. FIRST CLASS ACT floated out but lacked any speed and had to back off into 4th, finally moved off the cones before 3/4s and trotted steadily the rest of the way, a pretty solid 3rd - much better than in her last try here. HOUSE HUBBY sat a loose 3 hole to the quarter, never looked all that strong at any point and basically ended up 4th by default, never a threat to the top ones (short off the bad date?). MONTEPULCIANO sat in the back most of the way, moved out with cover on the final turn but was unable to make any gain in the stretch. THE LIONKING AS left okay from Post 7 but made a break off the first turn before he could really come after the leader. CREDIT FRAUD was sitting 3rd on the first turn when she made an unexpected miscue.

Race 5 - SEELEY MAN didn't really "leave" but was happy to rush up and take over to the quarter when Stratton sensed nothing happening in front of him, built a decent lead to the final turn and had no trouble completing the front end, with his driver motionless in the bike all the way home. SCARLET CHASER sat in and was shuffled a bit, had room to move out on the final bend, angled for the drive home and kicked in just in time to grab 2nd - trip actually worked out well, after all. HUGH HEFNER N was out 2nd over off turn three, was left uncovered on the final bend and gradually rallied into 2nd through the stretch...only to then get nailed himself, having to settle for 3rd. KING ROYALTY pulled uncovered on turn three, moved up into the vacated pocket on the final turn but was unable to sustain his momentum into the stretch, a weakened 4th by the time they hit the wire. AN THE THUNDEROLLS was the early leader (by default) then yielded to the winner, started to suddenly lose ground to 3/4s then caved badly - major clunker tonight.

Race 6 - PRINCE OF POPS N flew right out to an instant lead, paced a strong 3rd quarter on his own, and needed only a couple of light stretch taps to complete the 1/5 score. HE CAN FLY N got away nicely in the two hole, chased all the way and was a solid 2nd best. ROOSTER RABBIT saw the rail horse get away sluggishly and alertly moved up into a spot in 3rd, pulled briefly at the half but soon dropped back to the cones, came out again before 3/4s under urging and while he could never get close enough to bother the winner, he did stay on gamely to the end for a nice 3rd place finish. MATT MAJOR was out 3rd over in a weak flow to 3/4s, wisely dropped back to the cones then paced home well to be 4th - well behind the leaders, but easily best of the others. BYBY LANDON drew Post 8 off a sick scratch (and bad date) and seemed content to just get a "tighter mile" in from the back of the pack - wouldn't hold the dull try against him. ASCOT ENCOUNTER N was off to a slow start in 4th, elected to get underway past the stands then gained (then lost) cover, was okay to almost 3/4s then just hit a wall and stopped completely. WINDSONG NAPOLEON got away 5th and was pretty much all done leaving turn three.

Race 7 - PERLUCKY patiently worked his way to the top to the quarter, had to let NO EXCUSES take over on turn two, popped out of the two hole before 3/4s and started to wear down the leader on the final turn, took over for good when that one went offstride before the top of the stretch then drew off effortlessly from there. WORTHYOURATTENTION made an easy lead then yielded to the winner to the quarter, was back into 3rd after a lead change on turn two, inherited the 2nd spot from a breaker at the top of the stretch and finished way ahead of the others (but also well behind the winner). GLENCOVE CARTER moved out from 5th off turn three, advanced up into 4th before 3/4s, inherited 3rd into the stretch and was put to a heavy drive through the final 1/8th of a mile to maintain his position. HOLY KOLY was sitting 4th from turn two, lost a spot before 3/4s then trotted evenly the rest of the way, beating the breakers for a (distant) 4th place finish. BROADWAY BRUISER broke at the start, recovered to catch the pack by turn three but spent all his energy doing so. NO EXCUSES shunned an easy 3 hole tuck to get parked for the lead into turn two, got tested by the pocket popping winner before 3/4s, was urged through the final turn to try to hold his position but made a break before they hit the top of the stretch - was definitely sharp tonight, and would have likely been an easy 2nd (with a chance at winning) with a more conservative approach. DIRECT ROUTE was offstride way before the start and out of it.

Race 8 - WILD AGAIN was helped by a couple of scratches (he had drawn Post 8) and made the lead pretty easily, faced no pressure at all and was a VERY easy winner, despite being away for a month! JOE HILL left well to grab the winner's pocket, chased as best he could but proved no threat in the end - easy 2nd best. LONE SURVIVOR pulled first over at the half, never could advance at all to 3/4s and was fortunate to hold off the others for the show spot - definitely not on his toes off the hiatus, but still tried hard for a good piece. SKYWAY BOOMER was stuck inside at the back, found room into the stretch and kicked home well for a small share - useful tightener. COACH CAL was outleft and away 3rd, sat all the way and was clearly short. PIECE OF THE ROCK came out behind dull cover at the half, had NO prayer but also had no offer - sent off favored, but certainly didn't look the part tonight.

Race 9 - BANDOL ROSE made the lead off turn one, faced no challengers at all, extended her lead on the final turn and was tons the best (as the tote board suggested). HYBRID HENRY was away well in 3rd, pulled uncovered past 5/8ths and was challenging for 2nd at 3/4s, took over that spot from a breaker on the

final turn and beat the others by many (while well behind the jogburger winner). LION SAFARI AS stepped around HYBRID HENRY then yielded to the winner, began to lose ground on the final turn then rolled into a break - galloped home the rest of the way, and was DQ'd to 7th. SECRET BRO was stuck inside near the back, shook free for the drive home and did finish well to grab a board spot. FASHION FOREVER went by a tiring breaker on the final turn, continued to finish well into the stretch but was outfinished late for the show honors. CLIVE BIGSBY sat in 4th and looked a bit lazy all the way, finally moved out on the final turn then promptly broke - just never looked sharp for the beginning. TROPICAL SPLASH AS gapped in 5th off turn three, eventually breaking on the final turn. STRIKING ENCORE broke before the start and was out of it.

Race 10 - MEADOWBRANCH RICKY made the top off turn one after COASTAL REGION went offstride, rated an easy half, felt heat from BLACK MAMBA AS at 3/4s and while he never really trotted away from that one, he was an easier winner than the final margin might suggest. BLACK MAMBA AS pulled first over on turn three and was up to press the winner at 3/4s, backed off just a bit to the top of the stretch but re-rallied to the wire to make things fairly close - excellent try tonight. KINDA LUCKY LINDY was out 2nd over on the backside but gapped cover a bit, moved up to be closer to the final turn then trotted home steadily for a solid 3rd. VOLARE sat in 3rd all the way, finally found room into the stretch and was going well when he hit the wire. ACES AND EIGHTS inherited the pocket early on, was a player to the top of the stretch but came up empty soon after that. COASTAL REGION left well from the pole but blew up on the lead into turn one, made another break on turn two and was pretty well back, trotted a ton just to catch the pack and wasn't beaten all that badly considering how much ground he lost!

Race 11 - FILLY FORTY SEVEN made the lead off turn one, had things all her own way then had no trouble sprinting off to the easy win. MISS IRISH ROSE A tracked well from the pocket to the top of the stretch, started to lose ground to the winner but had no trouble salvaging 2nd. TWIST OF FATE got away on 3rd, remained there all the way then hung on to that spot to the wire, though unable to gain on a tiring one in front of her. WHISKERSONKITTENS saved ground all the way, found some clearance into the stretch and finished with some good interest, though not enough to grab a board spot. BEYONCES ROCKN sat 4th until pulling off the cones to 3/4s, had trouble advancing at all and was never a player. SNEAKY GIRL sat well back all the way, pacing home evenly (while never a factor). THE SPINSTER N came out at the half but never really went forward, did gain cover on the back side but was empty by the final turn. CHERRY BLISS lagged in last throughout.