The Empire Report – Thursday, April 18, 2024 – Race Recap

Race 1 – BENHOPE RULZ N was really stung by GOTHIC ROCK before reaching the top (:26.2), had to roll on from there and parked HURRIKANE JONNYBOY to a wicked :55.1 half, dismissed that one past turn three and carried a clear lead to 3/4s, felt a fresh CYRUS N coming at him to the top of the lane but somehow found enough to hold that rival off to the wire, REALLY earning his 2nd victory of the season! CYRUS N came out behind the parked horse to the half, went around that one on the back side and was up into 2nd on the final turn, looked ready to reel in the winner as they turned for home but came up surprisingly short in the drive to the wire, lacking his usual strong late kick and having to settle for 2nd best. BLUE HUNT ended up 4th over to the half, rallied a bit to the final turn and found enough in the lane to get there for the show spot – just a little too far to come. TYPHOON BANNER N was hurt by a pair of leavers to his inside and had to drop in 6th, came out 3rd over to the half and followed wide to 3/4s, was right there 2nd over in 4th on the final turn but just couldn't sustain his rally nearly enough, flattening into the lane and reporting home a disappointing 4th. KIMBLE A saved ground all the way and was shuffled to 7th by the top of the lane, finishing alertly once finding room into the stretch. WAR DAN DELIGHT N ended up sitting 3rd off the early battles, failing to rally once clear in the stretch. GOTHIC ROCK left hard from the pole and forced a very hot pace before yielding for the two hole trip…but ultimately squandered that trip after tiring on the final turn (he's usually not nearly as effective when used hard early on). HURRIKANE JONNYBOY took a shot at leaving from Post 6 but was hurt badly when the winner was stung so hard before making the top – ended up parked, and gets a pass for tiring off turn three

Race 2 – HILLEXOTC took over past turn one and cut a reasonable half, felt CREDIT CON coming closer to 3/4s, fended that one off to the top of the lane then was kept to task through the stretch to safely preserve the victory – makes his 2024 return a winning one! CREDIT CON came out first over from 4th off turn three and was a closer 2nd by 3/4s, was turned back by the winner to the head of the lane but stayed dead game to the wire for an excellent 2nd – remains sharp! TEXSONG SOPRANO got away 3rd, was able to slip out 2nd over before 3/4s, angled into the lane and finished strong, not too far off 2nd – nice try in his first foray into the local Open. I GET IT had a good start and secured the two hole trip, tracked well all the way but was outmuscled late by the top trio – still, not bad! NOWS THE MOMENT was caught wide through the first turn and finally had to retreat to last…sealing his fate for tonight

Race 3 – INN AT RODANTHE was flushed out uncovered from 3rd at the half and soon was turning up the heat at 3/4s, battled a long way with the leader and finally wore that one down late, a very determined winner! J S HOPSCOTCH made a couple of early moves to secure the front end, was able to grab a very easy half but soon faced major heat from the winner, fought that one long and hard and only gave way very grudgingly nearing the wire – he was disqualified to 3rd for being just inside a couple of pylons in the stretch, though it's not really clear how that gave him an "unfair advantage" (since it happened in a straightaway, and it wasn't to create room for himself). STEUBEN HANOVER was a patient 5th early on, ended up racing 3rd over but had to swing wide to 3/4s to get around poor cover, rallied up to be a closer 2nd over on the final bend and kept coming hard through the lane, right there 3rd at the wire…then was placed 2nd, via DQ. NO TURNING BACK left hard from Post 8 to take command off turn one, yielded to a retake and sat the two hole trip, was still there as they turned for home and only weakened a little bit in the final 1/16th of a mile – nice try! WILLY WALTON stayed inside at the half as three others pulled, slipped out from 5th to the top of the lane and trotted evenly for a small check. CREDARENA saved ground to no avail. BAR COINS looked rough in last off turn three, never getting close to contention. IN MY DREAMS got away 4th then flushed cover to race 2nd over at the half, gapped cover badly to 3/4s and finished well back.

Race 4 – TOP ME OFF came out from 5th on turn three and was all over the favorite by the final bend, trotted on by easily once into the stretch and stayed strong through the wire, a powerful winner tonight! UNEVERGONNAGETHIS followed the winner all the way, capitalizing on the beautiful trip to be a strong 2nd best (at 46-1)! EPOS OSTERVANG DK made the top off turn one then released MISSISSIPPI STORM to the quarter, found room inside in the stretch after the winner gave way but had only enough to pick up 3rd, no threat at all to the top two. MISSISSIPPI STORM was outleft into turn one but able to take over to the quarter, got hounded by the winner on the final turn then gave way once into the lane, a tired 4th at the wire. HAT TRICK MARLEAU got away 4th, was under a big hold to turn three but elected to sit in, got shuffled back to last and was never a factor from there – not sure why Pantaleano didn't pull tonight. GAELIHILL yielded early and got away 3rd, got shuffled to the top of the lane then trotted evenly at the back – at least he rebounded from last week's tough outing

Race 5 – PAT STANLEY N was relaxed in 5th early on, came out to the half behind the parked SULLIVAN then swung wide around that one on the back side, rolled up to test the leader at 3/4s and put that one away easily at the top of the lane, drawing clear to a very sharp victory – brought his best game tonight! HURRIKANEKINGJAMES followed the winner all the way, couldn't quite kick home with him once into the lane but was still safely 2nd best – racing "well" most weeks, but probably not quite at his best right now. GLACIS yielded to PASS A GRILLEBEACH then watched that one take all the heat, found room into the stretch after the leader tired and offered a decent finish for 3rd, not too far off 2nd. HEART ON MY SLEEVE sat 3rd all the way, angled free into the lane and was pacing well late for 4th at a big price. PASS A GRILLEBEACH stepped around GLACIS then rolled on to park SULLIVAN, dismissed that one to 3/4s but soon faced a fresh test from the winner, gave way to the top of the lane and tired from there. FOREVER FAV came out from 6th on the final turn, beating only the weaker ones. ODDS ON PICK SIX sat last and was never close. SULLIVAN left hard from Post 7 was unable to loop to the lead then was parked by PASS A GRILLEBEACH, lasted as long as he could but understandably started to fade to 3/4s

Race 6 – ITSONEOFTHOSE was outleft by BULLY BOY but was content to sit in the pocket, was clear to the top of the lane and was able to blow right on by to another jogburger victory! SKYWAY PROFESSOR found his way into the three hole off turn one, had room in the stretch and rallied nicely for the place spot – good at both ends of the mile. BULLY BOY had a clean start from Post 8 and flew right to the top, had things his own way to the final turn but did get a little tired in the final 1/8th of a mile, weakening to 3rd in a nice effort. LIONHEAD ended up getting away in 4th, slipped out first over to turn three but had trouble advancing on the rim, wasn't up to the top trio but kept trying hard to take home a 4th place check. SOUTHWIND FROST was moving from 6th to the half then gained cover from LIONHEAD to race 2nd over, was hurt by dull cover but then failed to rally himself. BACARDI got away 5th and looked sluggish on the cones most of the way. ALLINDOTIME got away last and just never got into the mix at all this week. B MEDITHREE lacked early speed tonight and got away 7th, ended up 3rd over in a weak flow but then had no offer from the top of the lane

Race 7 – LUCIANO N left well to a pocket tuck then was soon sitting 3rd, pulled first over to 3/4s and moved into 2nd to the top of the lane, suddenly started to gain late (as the leader began to curl up) and was able to surge on by to the wire, picking up a rare Yonkers victory! ON THE VIRG came out 4th over from the back to 3/4s, was up to race 3rd over on the final bend, angled from 6th into the stretch then charged home late, almost pulling off the 17-1 upset! STOP STARING let a couple of leavers go then quarter moved to command, really looked home free at the head of the lane but got the jelly legs late in the mile, letting things slip away as the 4/5 choice. MISSILE SEELSTER got away 4th, came out behind the winner to race 2nd over to 3/4s but just never fired tonight, squandering a great opportunity. BLUEBIRD RECON came out from 5th off turn three, ducked back inside to the final turn and paced home evenly for 5th. MAJOR DESIRE tried hard to throw a loop from Post 8 but was unable to do so and had to make a full retreat to last, came out on the final turn and did finish ok (after losing all chance). IM A POWERPLAY A went right to the top, seated the eventual winner then yielded for the two hole trip, gapped on the final turn and was all done early in the stretch. BRUSHING UP gapped cover in 5th off turn three, never looking any good tonight

Race 8 – TAKE A CLOSER LOOK went right out to an easy lead, came under fire from URIEL BLUE CHIP on the final turn and suddenly looked very vulnerable, was able to fend that one off into the stretch then held off another late challenger to seal the deal – fine form spree continues. FINAL CHEESERECIPE got away 4th then came out 2nd over to 3/4s, angled wide at the head of the lane and kicked home strong, moving into 2nd and gaining a bit late on the winner – brought his good game tonight. URIEL BLUE CHIP found a nice spot in 3rd to drop in, pulled first over to 3/4s and was all over the winner into the final turn, couldn't fully sustain that bid once into the lane and settled for a solid 3rd place finish – much better than last week. ALLBETSONFRITZ had a good start in the pocket, enjoyed a beautiful trip but was outkicked home by the top three with no excuses. HURRIKANE CHUCK had to go around a stopper off turn two, made up decent ground to 3/4s but flattened a bit from the top of the lane – was definitely hurt by the early deficit. WISE THINKING left but had to grab and drop in 5th, making a costly break off turn three. OTHER PEOPLES BEER just failed to function. DEMPSEY HANOVER seemed to just refuse at the start, and ended up being pulled up

Race 9 – P L NOTSONICE drove on to force PERFECT VIXEN behind her then let NO MAS DRAMA take over, watched that leader park out HOT FLASH KIMMY then was able to pop out between horses to the final turn, trotted on by the softened leader easily to the top of the lane then drew off as she pleased – much better trip in her 2nd local try – and a much better result! IMA DIAMOND BABE came out from 5th to 3/4w then swung wide around the parked/tiring HOT FLASH KIMMY, started to flatten a bit to the top of the lane but was able to take over 2nd into

the lane, no match at all for the much-the-best winner. PERFECT VIXEN couldn't get the lead early on and was back to 3rd to the quarter, shook free into the stretch and had solid trot for 3rd, the best she could really do with tonight's trip. NO MAS DRAMA worked to take command to the quarter then rolled on to park HOT FLASH KIMMY, finally shook that one off to 3/4s but was soon being tested by the winner, gave way to the top of the lane and was a pretty tired 4th at the end. CALL ME DANI sat in the back and was no threat at all. LADY JETER was about to move from 6th off turn three but went offstride – recovered, but the damage was already done. HOT FLASH KIMMY was hurt by inside leavers and ended up parked, lasted a pretty long way on the rim but had to call it a night before 3/4s. TIPSY MONI was offstride early as the odds-on choice

Race 10 – KEG STAND was a patient 4th early on, followed poor cover to 3/4s and had to launch a wide move from 5th on the final turn, accelerated rapidly and looked like an easy winner once into the stretch…but did have to keep working late to put away the stubborn leader for good. P L OSCAR made an easy lead then cut a strong half, was asked for even more to 3/4s and avoided any pressure, heard the winner coming at him once into the stretch and did fight hard to the end, though a little too tired to hang on for the one – sharp in defeat. HIGHLAND MOWGLI left well and grabbed himself a two hole trip, wasn't quite up to the top pair into the lane but did stay on well for the show spot. B NICKING was under a good hold in 5th early on, came out 3rd over on the back side, followed wide on the final bend but did flatten a bit in the drive to the wire. HELPOFTHESEASON sat last and stayed inside to 3/4s, never a threat tonight. DWS POINT MAN got away 3rd, pulled uncovered off turn three but struggled in the rim tonight, really tiring badly from the top of the lane

Race 11 – Fall apart race: WON LAST FEELING was forced to drop behind HURRIKANE HUNTER then ended up sitting 3rd behind a pair of horses off long layoffs, came out to turn three and paced on by the leader to 3/4s, found himself enjoying a big lead on the final turn, holding safely the rest of the way. SPRINGBRIDGE DUEL ended up 3rd over to turn three, was up to be 2nd over on the final bend, took over 2nd into the stretch and narrowed the gap on the winner to the wire – nice trip 2nd. AIR FORCE HANOVER tried to loop to the lead but ultimately had to retreat to last, ended up 4th over on the back side then advanced up into 5th by the final turn, offering plenty of late pace to be a close 3rd – maybe wins tonight if not for that tough start? VIVA LAS VEGAS N was outleft and away in 4th, followed the winner's move to race 2nd over to turn three, was left uncovered at 3/4s and into 2nd on the final bend…but suddenly got very rough, making it impossible for Lachance to even drive him the rest of the way home. GENIUS MAN made a fatal error staying inside to turn three and got trapped badly to 3/4s, losing all chance! LAST MACH beat the tired ones only. HURRIKANE HUNTER (off 6 months) and MARLBANK ROAD (off 9 months) BOTH got involved in a hot opening panel…and BOTH predictably tired badly to 7th and 8th

Race 12 – LIGHTFOOTEDLEGEND had a good start in the pocket but was soon sitting 3rd, pulled first over to 3/4s and pounced on the leader into the final turn, trotted on by once into the lane and was a very sharp winner (at a nice 7/2 price). PERRON got away 4th, slipped out 2nd over on the final turn (when THE BALLYKEEL DEAL gapped), couldn't kick home with the top one but trotted well enough to beat the others for 2nd (thanks to the very good trip). MANCLANE flew to the top from Post 8 then let FLIP THE SWITCH go to the quarter, found room in the stretch after the leader tired and finished well, though outmuscled for the place spot – well meant, and very solid try! CRESCENT BEAUTY saved ground to the lane, found room and trotted well late for the 4th spot. THE BALLYKEEL DEAL was moving from 7th from turn three, gapped 2nd over on the final turn (allowing PERRON to get out), then had no pop once into the lane. TOCCOA FALLS got away last and was no factor tonight. FLIP THE SWITCH quarter moved to command, rated an easy half, felt the winner attacking on the final bend then caved badly once into the stretch. ICE BREAKERS K came out 3rd over to 3/4s, was behind dull cover but then empty himself.