The Empire Report – Thursday, May 2, 2024 – Race Recap

Race 1 – MAX left very alertly tonight to secure a two hole trip behind the favorite, got his chance in the lane and was able to get by late to score the mild upset. ALL CHAMPY was kept a bit wide early on by J S HOPSCOTCH then gradually made his way to the top, was able to grab a nice middle half breather, had only the tripper to beat once into the homestretch but came up just a little short at the wire, settling for 2\textsuperscript{nd} best tonight. PERRON sat the 3 hole trip, was no threat in the lane to the top pair but stayed on well to hold on to the show spot. ILLINI EARL saved ground from 5\textsuperscript{th}, was clear for the drive home and trotted well to the wire, not far off 3\textsuperscript{rd} – solid try off the easy trip. DRACO S saved ground from 6\textsuperscript{th}, finishing up evenly for a small paycheck. DARBYSHIRE was underway from 7\textsuperscript{th} to the half, gained cover on turn three to race 2\textsuperscript{nd} over, gapped to 3/4s then tried a wide move on the final bend, lacking any pop from there. J S HOPSCOTCH was outleft and finally backed off (after hurting ALL CHAMPY a bit, came back out first over from turn three, could only challenge for 2\textsuperscript{nd} to 3/4s and was all done by the final turn – not up for the over-drive at all. WILLY WALTON followed cover from last to turn three, ended up 3\textsuperscript{rd} over in a poor flow but had no offer of his own.

Race 2 – KEG STAND moved up into 3\textsuperscript{rd} off turn one, pulled uncovered past 5/8ths and trotted on by into the final turn, opened a clear lead and jogged under wraps! HERODOTUS left quickly but was forced to drop in behind GAELIHILL, came out behind the winner to the top of the lane and finished with plenty of trot to be a sharp 2\textsuperscript{nd} best – excellent first try of 2024! GAELIHILL forced HERODOTUS to drop in behind him, met up with the winner at 3/4s and was outbrushed on the final turn, gave way and tired to 3\textsuperscript{rd}, well behind the top pair. JULS MUSCLEPACK got away 4\textsuperscript{th} and made no moves tonight. SEVENSHADESOFGREY broke early and then multiple times after that.

Race 3 – ON THE VIRG got away comfortably in 3\textsuperscript{rd}, pulled first over on the back side and paced on by the tiring leader after a sizzling 1:23.1, opened a clear lead to the head of the lane and prevailed easily from there… with his fastest win time in at least 3 years! GENIUS MAN was outleft and away in 4\textsuperscript{th}, followed the winner 2\textsuperscript{nd} over to 3/4s and was up into 2\textsuperscript{nd} on the final turn, was no match once into the lane but dug in to the wire to preserve the place honors – raced very well as the 14-1 overlay! KERFORD ROAD A got away in the pocket behind HUDSON PHIL and was caught behind that tiring leader to the final turn, was fortunate that WON LAST FEELING allowed him to escape and avoid a disastrous shuffle, moved up into 3\textsuperscript{rd} and paced well to the wire, though not enough left to rally for the place spot – his 4 race winning streak comes to an end, but still raced very well despite a less than stellar trip! HURRIKANEKINGJAMES came out off turn three but ended up following excess cover to the final turn, swung very wide then kicked home with good pace for 4\textsuperscript{th} (but too late for a chance at anything better). WON LAST FEELING came out from 5\textsuperscript{th} on turn three and joined the live flow to 3/4s, allowed KERFORD ROAD A to slip out to the final turn while moving three wide, flattening out then outkicked home. HURRIKANE GEORGIE saved ground all the way, faced traffic into the lane but appeared to have little even when clear. GLACIS got away last and never fired at all. HUDSON PHIL blasted to the top from Post 8, carved out a sizzling pace, gave way to the winner past 3/4s and folded badly after that.

Race 4 – NOWS THE MOMENT made an easy lead this week, opened a clear advantage on the final turn and cruised home to a sharp 1:53.3 score – the move inside made all the difference! CREDIT CON backed off into 4\textsuperscript{th} early on, pulled first over to 3/4s and rallied up into 2\textsuperscript{nd} on the final turn, was no match for the winner (in a hot mile!) but was still an excellent 2\textsuperscript{nd} – brought his good game tonight! HIGHLAND MOWGLI sat the two hole trip, dropped back to 3\textsuperscript{rd} on the final turn and was fortunate to cling to the well beaten show spot. SWAN IN MOTION got away 5\textsuperscript{th} and was a bit lazy to turn three, was still struggling to 3/4s and didn’t find some life until too late, unable to rally for the show spot – just not as sharp tonight. I GET IT got away last, was never involved but did finish with plenty of energy, after it was too late. P L OSCAR got away 3\textsuperscript{rd}, gapped on the final turn then was outkicked in the lane.

Race 5 – MANCLANE took the top off turn one then cut an honest half, faced no real pressure to the top of the lane and easily held off the tripsitter to score as the odds on choice. THE BALLYKEEL DEAL had a good start and secured the two hole trip, chased closely all the way and was a clear 2\textsuperscript{nd} best – solid again. LIGHTFOOTEDLEGEND thought to leave before backing off, came out 2\textsuperscript{nd} over off turn three, angled into the stretch (after his cover stalled out) and offered solid late trot to rally for the show spot – usual sharp try, but from a tough spot! BAR COINS inherited 3\textsuperscript{rd} from a breaker off turn one, saved ground and was able to hold onto 4\textsuperscript{th}, though outkicked home by the top ones. FLIP THE SWITCH came out uncovered from 4\textsuperscript{th} off turn three but could
only challenge for 2nd to the final turn, stalling out to the top of the lane and tiring – continues to struggle. HOMER HALL saved ground from the back, had to deal with some stretch traffic but had only mild trot once clear. BLUEBIRD BISHOP came out 3rd over from the back to 3/4s, failing to rally at all (took NO $S this week, and raced accordingly)

Race 6 – MUSCLE DAN was able to rush up into the first turn and seat JIVE NINETY FIVE behind him, continued to roll a very solid clip from there and enjoyed a clear lead into the final turn, started to get pretty tired late but was saved by the wire, hanging on by a nose! BEACON BEACH was moving from 5th past the stands on a LONG uncovered move, was up to challenge for 2nd to the final turn, took over 2nd to the top of the lane and set his sights on the winner, was gaining right to the end but the wire came up a step too soon – he came into tonight 11-0-0-0 on the year, but went a big effort for Joe Lee! DOO WOP KID got away well in 3rd, came out behind BEACON BEACH on the final turn, found his best stride late and was a close 3rd at the wire, JIVE NINETY FIVE left quickly but was forced to drop in behind the winner, gapped in the pocket off turn three and was back to 3rd to the top of the lane, weakening a bit more to be a best-of-the-rest 4th. CALL ME THEFIREMAN tried to leave but found no holes and had to back off into 6th to the quarter, saved ground to the lane, found some room and trotted home evenly for 5th. JUST A PASSENGER grabbed up at the start and got away 4th, moved out 3rd over on the final turn but lacked any stretch pop tonight – dullish try. CYCLONE MAXIMUS was never close. BACARDI broke before the start

Race 7 – John Brennan Trotting Series Consolation: SEA CAN floated away to a spot in 4th, came out to the half and was up to press the leader by 3/4s, trotted on by easily on the final turn and absolutely crushed these in 1:54.4 – he earned enough points to be in the final but that spot was already taken by his barnmate WARRAWEY YANG…so he had to “settle” for trouncing these in the Consolation! MOHATU AS had the early lead before yielding to IMMANUEL K S, moved out behind the winner on the final turn and trotted solidly to the wire to be 2nd, though no threat at all to the winner. CASSIUS HANOVER ended up with the three hole trip, came out from 4th on the final bend and trotted steadily through the lane for an easy 3rd. DEADLINE HALL got away 5th, tried to follow the winner on the back side but gapped cover into the hot pace, did keep trying and was able to take home a 4th place check. WICKENBURGH sat in the back and was never close, finishing well just to take home a 5th place check (from a no-chance spot). IMANUEL K S shunned a spot in 3rd and marched up to take over to the quarter, felt the plugs come out to 3/4s as the winner came up to challenge but the response just wasn’t there – gave way for good on the final turn, and really folded badly after that. BONTONI DEGATO S tried to leave but was kept wide into the first turn and had to make a full retreat – basically sealing his fate for the night

Race 8 – John Brennan Trotting Series Final: WARRAWEY YANG was caught 4 wide early on but still able to take command in a reasonable opening panel, grabbed a big breather to the half, “played possum” as he let RESOLVE TO WIN challenge hard to and through the final turn then was cut loose once they turned for home, quickly opening up some daylight and winning easily from there – he won all three of the Series legs and keeps it going to win the Final, extending his winning streak to 8! TACHYON had a good start and ended up sitting the pocket behind the winner, had room into the stretch and finished with plenty of trot…but the winner was still very fresh and he just wasn’t going to threaten that one tonight – rebounds nicely from a rough outing the week before. BY THE BOOK ended up with a three hole trip, trotting solidly through the lane for a good 3rd – raced well throughout the entire series. RESOLVE TO WIN was caught three wide into the first turn before finally backing off into 4th, came out first over to turn three and was up to press the winner to 3/4s, remained that one’s shadow all the way to the top of the lane before finally weakening a bit, a good 4th despite the tough trip! FERRETTI came out to the half then ended up 3rd over to turn three, angled to the top of the lane and had just enough to squeeze out the final paycheck. ROYALTY BEER gave it a shot from Post 8 but was caught FIVE wide into the first turn and had to make a full retreat, came back out 4th over to 3/4s then swung 4 wide from last on the final bend, trotting home solidly after a totally impossible trip – actually raced very well to only lose by about 5 lengths tonight! OPTRIX came out 2nd over to turn three, tucked wide on the final bend but never fired at all. CRAZY BROTHER JIM got away 7th and was never in the hunt this week

Race 9 – John Brennan Trotting Series Consolation 2: COVENTRY HALL bypassed the pocket and made his way to the front, felt the plugs come out at 3/4s, was all out late but able to safely hold off the tripsitter to score his first U.S. victory in several years! CAL MILES N SHELL made a quick lead then yielded to the winner, stayed close all the way, did have a shot at the vulnerable leader in the stretch but came up a clear 2nd best tonight. BLACK TIE BACH got away 5th, came out 3rd over from turn three into a poor outer flow, finally swung three wide from 6th on the final bend and kicked home with plenty of trot for 3rd…but from way too far back to be a serious late threat.
LAVA FIELD took off the gate and got away 6th, saved ground throughout and gained spots nicely to the top of the lane as a result, but was still outkicked for the show spot. STRONGERWITHLINDY was out 2nd over from turn three, tipped wide around stalled cover on the final bend but flattened in the lane. LOS BALLYKEELAMIGO took off the car and raced from 7th, faced traffic into the lane and really wasn’t terrible. MYCROWNMYKINGDOM ended up sitting 3rd, pulled first over from turn three but offered only a weak bid, tiring (then briefly going offstride) on the final turn – just not on his game right now

Race 10 – P L NOTSONICE found the pocket off turn one, popped out to come after the leader to 3/4s, fought that one a long way then finally wrestled command, a sharp (but overbet) winner! PERFECT VIXEN left fast from the rail and opened a seat behind her for the winner, got tested by that one to 3/4s then raced as a team through the final turn, succumbed to the heat into the lane and was all out late to salvage the place spot. PARISO got away last, swung wide on the final turn then really kicked ii into gear through the lane, charging home to almost grab 2nd! LADY JETER lost the pocket off turn one and sat the 3 hole trip, couldn’t stick with the top pair on the final bend and was fortunate just to hang on to 4th. IMA DIAMOND BABE pulled first over from 4th off turn three, gained cover when the winner popped out of the two hole but gapped on the final bend in a weak performance

Race 11 – BIG DREAM FELLA was outset by AIRY SHADOW then took over from that one to the quarter, opened up a bit to 3/4s and carried a clear lead into the stretch, a much the best winner tonight! URIEL BLUE CHIP was away well in 3rd, pulled first over before 3/4s and moved into 2nd to the top of the lane, no threat to the winner but safely handling the others – brought the “good” version tonight. LAZ got away 4th, came out 2nd over at 3/4s, tipped wide on the final turn but didn’t have his usual late kick tonight, only able to take home a “steady” 3rd. FINAL CHEESERECIPE got away last, came out on the back side and while never a serious threat, did make up a ton of ground for 4th…while not far off 2nd and 3rd CENTURY IGLESIAS got away 5th, gapped to the final turn, did a bit better last but still wasn’t a player. AIRY SHADOW was away quickest and right to the front, let the winner take over to the quarter and sat the two hole, started to weaken on the final turn then continued to tire in the lane – not nearly as sharp as last week. JK STANDINGOVATION saved ground to no avail

Race 12 – STORMONT DIVIDE got away in the pocket, got his chance in the lane and was able to nip the leader in the very last step, making it 6 in a row (first at Yonkers) despite a month off and class jump! SHARE THE WEALTH blasted right to the top, shook off DWS POINT MAN to the final turn, looked poised to deliver the 31-1 upset but was nipped right on the money by the 14-1 winner – brutal beat! DWS POINT MAN pulled first over from 3rd to turn three, put in a good bid to 3/4s but stalled on the final turn – somehow did hang on to 3rd. STEUBEN HANOVER was out 2nd over to turn three, tipped wide on the final turn around stalled cover but never even was able to move into 3rd! HAT TRICK MARLEAU broke before the start. EPOS OSTERVANG DK made a very uncharacteristic break after the start. OUTSIDE THE FIRE looked a bit shaky as he got away in 5th…then did go offstride on turn two as the 1/10 favorite (no big shock to readers off The Empire Report, who were warned that he made breaks in his last THREE Yonkers starts)!