The Empire Report – Wednesday, April 24, 2024 – Race Recap

Race 1 – CENTURY IGLESIAS lacked the speed to leave and had to drop in 5th, gained cover from LYONS JOHNNYJN past 5/8ths to race 2nd over and was up into 3rd by the final turn, joined three wide into the bend and had the fresher legs into the stretch, outkicking LYONS JOHNNYJN to the wire for the 2nd straight week, making it 2 in a row at The Hilltop. LYONS JOHNNYJN was sitting 3rd by the quarter, pulled first over past 5/8ths and was up into 2nd to 3/4s, came after the leader on the final turn and put that one away once into the stretch, fighting hard to the wire but coming up 2nd best to the winner...for the 2nd straight start! PHELGON was shuffled back on the cones until moving out from last on the final bend, kicking home solidly to win the battle for the show spot – definitely outraced his 32-1 price. PROVOCATIVEPRINCE sat in from 4th and was eventually shuffled all the way back, finally shook free and did finish well tonight, almost winning the race for 3rd. MACAHOLIC (opened up at 1/5!) was very aggressive tonight and used hard a couple of times early on to secure the front of turn two, tried to escape to 3/4s but felt the top pair getting closer on the final turn, gave way once into the stretch and faded to 5th – just not up for tonight’s aggressive attempt. SWAGASARUSREX was used hard from Post 8 to finally reach the top at the quarter, allowed a retake and was back into the pocket, started to weaken on the back side and soon was tiring badly. KEYSTONE DASH joined the live flow 3rd over on the back side, was up into 4th on the final bend but went off stride before he could even think of doing any damage – he’s shown some hints at coming around recently, but now is 8-0-0-0 on the season.

Race 2 – TRUE BLUE HANOVER took control off turn one, hit the gas to 3/4s and avoided any pressure, started to edge away into the lane and absolutely crushed these under a triple armlock from Zeron – clearly REALLY appreciated the major class drop! HONEY LOVE was first to the top then yielded to the winner, lost some ground on the final turn (while battling for 4th) and started to run out a bit, smoothed out once into the homestretch and safely held the place spot, though well behind the dominant winner. HURRIKANE LADY LOU took off the gate and raced from 5th, rallied a bit into 4th to the final turn then kicked home very nicely, grabbing the show spot late (while not too far off 2nd). DEVILISH DREAMS got away 3rd, tried a first over move on the back side but could only challenge for 2nd, weakened a bit once they turned for home but didn’t tire all that badly as she ended up 4th. FRONDEUR just looked short off the layoff. FIGHT NOT FLIGHT got away last and started to fade off turn three (but did finish with broken equipment).

Race 3 – ITALIAN DELIGHT N couldn’t keep the pocket closed up to the quarter and ended up sitting 3rd, pulled first over from turn three and was closer to the leader by 3/4s, really turned up the heat into the final turn and took over for good once into the stretch, drawing off with authority in the lane – finally puts it all together in his 3rd start back off the layoff. ALOTBETTOR N made an easy lead and eventually opened a seat behind him for MAJOR MAKEOVER before the quarter, battled with the winner from 3/4s and succumbed to the pressure as they turned for home, never stopped trying and did a nice job holding the place spot. MAJOR MAKEOVER left from Post 7 at 97-1 and finally was able to squeeze into the pocket at the quarter, managed to stick close right to the top of the lane, digging in right to the end to hang on for 3rd – turned a $5.40 chalk exacta into a juicy $152 trifecta! LIBERTY N FREEDOM was a bit lazy early in 6th, was stuck following an empty BEST BETTOR to 3/4s and hurt badly before that one finally got out of the way on the final turn, started to rally nicely from that point and was going very well late, just missing 3rd and pretty close to 2nd too – just killed by that horrible cover! ATLANTIS got away in 4th, was on and off the bit most of the way then outkicked from the top of the lane with no excuses. GOLDEN GESTURE sat the cones at the back and was never in the hunt. BEST BETTOR came out from 5th to 3/4s but only clogged the rim, eventually dropped back inside on the final bend and tired. LYONS PRIDE had to abort his leave attempt when MAJOR MAKEOVER left to his inside, retreated to last and was never heard from after that.

Race 4 – OAKWOOD DYNASTY IR found a spot in 3rd on turn one, pulled first over to 3/4s and was up into 2nd on the final bend, collared the badly-running-in leader at the top of the lane and held safely the rest of the way. SHES NEVER WRONG (hampered down to even money upon arrival from Stga.) retook from URSULA BLUE CHIP to the quarter, extended her lead off turn three, met with a challenge from the winner on the final turn and became hard to steer (going inside a bunch of pylons), lost the lead as they turned for home but did settle down a bit in the lane and battled on well to well ahead of the others in 2nd...but was then disqualified to last for being inside so many cones! URSULA BLUE CHIP made an easy lead before yielding for the two hole trip, lost some ground off turn three and was back to 3rd by the final turn, finished way behind the top pair but somehow was able to hold the show spot...before being placed 2nd, via DQ. PULL THROUGH got away 4th then gapped to the half, raced on and off the
bit the whole way then was unable to rally at all in the stretch. PINE BUSH MAGA left ok but had to grab up and drop into 5th, came out to 3/4s but couldn’t produce any significant gain. DUCK INTO THE NITE came out from 7th to 3/4s, finding some life well after the fact. GANDY DANCER came out from 6th to 3/4s, was back inside on the final bend, faced traffic into the lane but not sure it really mattered. GROOVY JANE ANN lagged at the back

Race 5 – DOWNRIGHTDELICIOUS left quickly tonight to the top then let ADAM TWELVE take over, moved out before 3/4s to come after the leader but elected to drop back inside (to draft) on the final turn, came out for another shot into the lane and this time was able to roll by confidently to the wire – well backed tonight, and delivered impressively! ADAM TWELVE took over off turn one, cut an honest half then floored the gas to 3/4s (.27.3), seemed to put away the winner on the final turn but was unable to hold that one of the final 1/16ths of a mile, coming up 2nd best while well ahead of the others (he’s now 18 for 18 on the board at Yonkers)! THUNDER HUNTER JOE was outleft by the top pair but away in 3rd, gapped a bit to the final turn, was no match at all in the final 1/8ths of a mile but still was able to beat the others safely for the show spot. ULTIMAROCA got away 4th and sat in, was clear into the stretch but unable to rally for 3rd. TAKE A GAMBLE came out from last to the half, was forced three wide around a parked GREG THE LEG off turn three but was caught wide into the hot 3rd panel, never got near the leaders but actually went a big mile just to get 5th! NIGHT HAWK ended up following TAKE A GAMBLE and also finished up very well considering the impossible journey. GREG THE LEG was outleft at the start (despite urging) and caught in no man’s land off turn one, ended up taking the mile on the rim and obviously deserves a total pass. KINGSVILLE got shuffled badly inside to 3/4s and never had a prayer tonight

Race 6 – CAL MILES N SHELL left between horses then made his way to the top, had things his own way and was able to hold off the trip sitter in the two horse sprint to the finish. SISTER MARY MAUDE had a good start in the pocket to the winner, had plenty of trot right to the wire and was an excellent 2nd best in her first start back as a 3YO. VOSS BLUE CHIP was very careful at the start and away in 5th, gained into 4th to 3/4s then took over the show spot from a final turn breaker… but was still considerably behind the top two at the end. BEACON BEACH got away 6th, saved ground and finished up well, almost getting the show spot – raced ok, even if an easy trip. MR KNOWITALL left well but was caught wide on turn one then had to back off into 3rd, was right there to the final turn but made a very costly miscue before he could even try to rally. BARN DREAMER came out from 4th on turn three but was soon retreating quickly on the rim – something not right tonight. WAYS N MEANS broke off turn one.

Race 7 – WARRAWEE YANG took command off turn one, rated very easy fractions on his own terms, felt the plugs come out into the lane and had no trouble sprinting home to his SEVENTH straight victory! ROYALTY BEER made the early lead then yielded to the winner, chased nicely all the way and was a rock solid 2nd best. BONTONI DEGATO S got away 3rd, sat the cones and dug in late to hold on to the show spot (no threat to the top two). MOHATU AS came out from 5th at the 5/8ths, was up to challenge for 2nd on the final turn, couldn’t sustain his bid well enough into the lane and was outbattled at the wire for 3rd (not a bad try at all). IMMANUEL K S came out 2nd over from 7th to 3/4s, trotting home steadily into the quick final quarter (no chance spot). WICKENBURGH took off the gate and got away 6th, sat the cones and trotted evenly at the back. LAVA FIELD sat in from 4th, coming up empty in the lane

Race 8 – SEA CAN was moving from turn one and took over to the quarter, picked things up to 3/4s and was helped when the pocket sitter broke on the final turn, easily prevailing the rest of the way – ends up tied for 2nd in the Series point standings but will have to settle for being the prohibitive choice in the consolation, as barnmate WARRAWEE YANG will get to represent the connections in the Final! BY THE BOOK was a little shaky early tonight and got away 3rd, inherited 2nd to the top of the lane and finished with good trot to the wire for 2nd – usual solid effort. COVENTRY HALL got away 5th, saved ground nicely and was trotting well to the end for the show spot. RESOLVE TO WIN sat 7th and was never in play, but did finish with plenty of late life for 4th (been good in all 3 series legs). CREATIVE VENTURE pulled first over from 4th from turn three but struggled on the rim, unable to get near the winner – hasn’t been sharp lately. STRONGERWITHLINDY got away 6th and was never in it. OPTRIX lost all chance after a very early miscue. DYLADMAR flew right to the top then let the winner take over to the quarter, was right there on the final turn when he made a very costly miscue – likely was looking at a big piece tonight, at 35-1!

Race 9 – SHIV went right to the top and seated WAVERYL HANOVER behind him, crawled through very slow fractions then safely held off a pair of pursuers to the wire, in a yesteryear-like 2:00.2 mile – classic example of a driver just reading the program, and figuring a way to “steal” a win over a soft bunch. WAVERYL HANOVER left
well and found the two hole (behind the winner), lost some ground to the top of the lane then did a bit better late to lock up 2nd best – now 1 for 25, but does remain eligible to race for this $14,000 purse next week. TO MY CREDIT got away 3rd, came out on the final turn and trotted home steadily for a pretty close 3rd – another that remains stuck on one win, with an opportunity to come back and try again next week. LIGHTNING TAMER sat 5th and beat out a weak BARN CREDIT for 4th, well behind the top trio. BARN CREDIT was off slowly in 4th, gapped into the very slow clip and still weakened to 5th – did solid work at 2, but not looking too good at 3 (so far) for his new barn. MAGIC MELVIN sealed his fate with a break at the start.

Race 10 – CRAZY BROTHER JIM got away 4th, tried a first over move to 3/4s then gained cover on the final bend from the pocket popping MYCROWNMYKINGDOM, found a “gear” when the leaders started to stagger into the lane and was able to rally on by (into the :30.4 final quarter), scoring the 41-1 upset… and earning himself a spot on next week’s final! FERRETTI found a spot to drop in 5th off turn one, ended up following the winner’s cover to 3/4s, found his best stride a little too late and had to settle for 2nd. DEADLINE HALL got away last and saved ground, finally saw a clear rail into the stretch and charged home late to pick up 3rd – racing very well lately! TACHYON made his way to the top to the quarter, rattled off a hot clip but was suddenly tested by the tripsitter on the final turn, was on fumed into the lane and came home in :31 seconds, fading to 4th as his 3 race winning streak came to a thud! MYCROWNMYKINGDOM hit the top tonight then yielded to the heavy favorite, came out on the final bend as Bartlett sensed the pace really slowing, couldn’t sustain his 2nd move and could only take home a 5th place check. CASSIUS HANOVER came out from the back on the last turn and swung wide, finishing well late into the very slow final quarter. DRACO S had a good start then ended up sitting 3rd, had room inside for the drive home but was empty at the end. YOU GOT IT was off terribly in 6th, ended up mired in stretch traffic and had to grab up, losing all chance.

Race 11 – SMOKIN BY N left fast but was pocketed by OZONE BLUE CHIP, popped out to challenge on the final turn, had to work through the stretch but was able to get by late, scoring as a BIG 14-1 overlay (returning to his favorite barn tonight)! OZONE BLUE CHIP blasted from the pole and seated the winner, had things all his own way (helped by a hot :27.2 third panel), battled the winner all the way home but had to settle for a tough loss 2nd best (well ahead of the others). JOJOS PLACE sat 3rd all the way, started to lose ground by the final turn but to his credit, was able to hang on to the show spot. ROCK THIS WAY benefited from a ground saving trip, pacing home steadily for 4th. IMABEACHBOY dropped in 4th off turn one, got flushed out uncovered to turn three but was caught out into that sizzling 3rd panel, never could get near the leaders but still raced well, picking up a check despite the brutal trip. IM J BEE N got away 6th then ended up 3rd over to turn three, was forced wide from last to 3/4s (into the :27.2 quarter!), remained wide on the final turn and probably raced a lot better than his line will look. CAPTAIN T HANOVER was off the gate this week and never had a prayer. SHARK PLAY flushed and followed IMABEACHBOY to turn three, was blindswwitched at 3/4s but it really didn’t matter.