

## **The Empire Report – Wednesday, June 26, 2024 – Race Recap**

Race 1 – UNITY made the lead easily and soon opened a seat for JUST ROSAS LUCK, faced no real pressure, felt the tripsitter taking aim at the top of the lane but still had fresh legs into the lane, holding sway in the two horse race to the wire. JUST ROSAS LUCK found the pocket off turn one, had her chance from the final turn but couldn't find enough to get by the winner – strong 2<sup>nd</sup> best, and well ahead of the others. SHOTGUN PERSUASION was outleft by the top pair and away 3<sup>rd</sup>, came out first over to 3/4s but stalled by the final turn, unable to kick home with the top two but safely holding off the others. TERACITA got away last. Swung wide on the final bend and finished up a bit better this week. LYONS MIKI gapped much of the way in 4<sup>th</sup>, never looking like a serious player. THATS A HUGE BEACH got away 6<sup>th</sup>, was caught behind a sluggish LYONS MIKI but had little herself. WHATINEEDISAMAN took off the gate and got away 5<sup>th</sup>, came out from turn three but just flopped on the tim in another disappointing performance

Race 2 – ROCK THIS WAY was forced to work a bit to retake command as IMABEACHBOY (Bongiorno) really tried to prevent him from doing so, grabbed a breather to the half then extended his lead off turn three, was roused into the lane and was a very safe winner – makes it 2 wins and a 2<sup>nd</sup> from his last 3 starts. JUST A WRANGLER came out 2<sup>nd</sup> over at the half, was up to 3<sup>rd</sup> by the final turn, continued to pace well into the lane and did a nice job rallying for the place spot – much sharper than he has been. SOMEBEACH BARON pulled first over at the half, took over 2<sup>nd</sup> from a tiring tripsitter at 3/4s, got a bit closer to the winner to the top of the lane but was outkicked late for the place spot – still, not a bad try! VICTOR HIC closed a big gap to the half, squeezed out 3<sup>rd</sup> over to 3/4s and was pacing well late...but TOO late. HURRIKANE GEORGIE came out to race 3<sup>rd</sup> over from last on the back side, may have been pushed wide by VICTOR HIC to 3/4s and was soon all done. IMABEACHBOY made an easy lead and really tried hard to prevent the winner from retaking command, was soon back into the pocket but suddenly started gapping on the back side, ultimately finishing last

Race 3 – LARJON LEAH easily seated ROLL WITH SHORTY then waltzed over the half in :58, felt SUNSET SOPH getting closer on the final turn and looked vulnerable into the stretch...but was able to dig in to the end to hang on for the win. SUNSET SOPH pulled first over from 3<sup>rd</sup> past 5/8ths, got closer to the winner on the final turn, had dead aim into the lane but just couldn't find quite enough to get by for the victory. ROLL WITH SHORTY left to an easy pocket tuck, chasing home closely behind the top pair – solid try off the sick scratch. DANDYS SHOWTIME took off the gate tonight and got away 4<sup>th</sup>, enjoyed a nice 2<sup>nd</sup> over trip but had even pace at best after angling clear into the stretch – definitely a bit disappointing. AINTNOHOLLABACKGRL came out from last to be a loose 3<sup>rd</sup> over to the final turn, unable to rally at all in the homestretch

Race 4 – CENTURY HEINEKEN got away 3<sup>rd</sup>, was able to move up into the vacated pocket to 3/4s, found a clear rail into the stretch and was able to rally on by the softened leaders to win it – opportunistic for sure, but still sharp as well. SEMI TOUGH avoided getting looped early on then was able to work up into the pocket behind MY ULTIMATE BYRON A, was denied a chance to take over and had to be content with the two hole (possibly “payback” for when Bongiorno made Dube's life difficult in Race 2), popped out again to 3/4s and came after the leader into the hot pace, finally got by that one near the wire but BOTH could only watch the much fresher winner scoot up the cones and nail the two of them! MY ULTIMATE BYRON A blasted off the car and seated SEMI TOUGH, rolled on when that one looked to take command to the quarter, cut a sizzling :55.2 half then was tested again by the tripsitter into the hot 3/4s, battled right to the wire and was dead game in defeat! KOMODO BEACH got caught wide leaving and was forced to retreat to last, followed cover off turn three then ended up 3<sup>rd</sup> over to 3/4s, swung wide on the final bend and still had enough left for the lane to rally into 4<sup>th</sup>, not all that far behind the top trio – raced much better than his line will look on paper. CAPTIVATE HANOVER was caught wide leaving and had to back off into 5<sup>th</sup>, came out off turn three then gained cover from SEMI TOUGH before 3/4s, was in a decent spot to the top of the lane but just had nothing left for the drive home. SPLASH BROTHER got away 4<sup>th</sup>, gapped off turn three and was no factor at all

Race 5 – TYRA MAKES BANK had to work a bit to step around WESTERN ROSIE, cut a solid half, easily repelled the tripsitter to the head of the lane and was a confident winner at the wire! PLEASURE SEEKER dropped in 3<sup>rd</sup> off turn one, came out to 3/4s but struggled a bit and soon dropped back to the cones, found a bit of pace in the lane and was able to move into 2<sup>nd</sup>, though no threat to the top one. BLUEBIRD GRAF came out on the back side but ended up 3<sup>rd</sup> over after waiting for cover, was hurt when PLEASURE SEEKER struggled (and then eventually

dropped back inside), ended up a loose 2<sup>nd</sup> over to the final turn then found her best stride once into the stretch, finishing well and nearly grabbing 2<sup>nd</sup>. WESTERN ROSIE stung the winner a bit before yielding, popped out of the pocket to 3/4s to take her shot, was turned back pretty easily and weakened to 4<sup>th</sup> – probably finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> if a bit more patient. TUAPEKA JESSIE N came out from 6<sup>th</sup> on the final turn, finishing up ok from a tough spot. ITTY BITTY saved ground to no avail. EVAS SPORTS CZECH always had the best view.

Race 6 – IGNATIUS A left tonight and dropped in 3<sup>rd</sup>, was jammed up badly when the leader hit the brakes to the quarter (along with the rest of them) and had to get underway very early as a result, began to really turn up the heat to 3/4s and remained strong the rest of the way, wearing down the leader for good in the lane for a very sharp victory. SLIP THE HUNDY N flew to the top quickly then refused to let SOHO LENNON A take over from him, just dropped anchor coming to the quarter and caused the horses behind him to “accordion” all at once, brought pressure on himself with that move as it forced the winner to pull early (to avoid mishap) and start coming after him, felt that pressure build even more to 3/4s and while he did remain very game to the end, he was still no match for the top one coming to the wire – it sure seemed like he’s be penalized for that incident at the quarter but the judges felt otherwise, never even posting the “inquiry” sign. SOHO LENNON A got away in the pocket to SLIP THE HUNDY N then was denied a chance to take over to the quarter, started to gap a bit in the pocket on the final turn, had room at the cones into the stretch but couldn’t get by the hard used leader for 2<sup>nd</sup> at the end – may have been hurt when forced to back off (and grab up) to the quarter. SLING SHOCK had to back off when outleft at the start, sat in the back to the top of the lane, split horses into the stretch and did have some good pace finishing for 4<sup>th</sup>. GAMBLINGTERROR saved ground from 6<sup>th</sup> with no stretch offer. AFLAME HANOVER was quickly outleft and away in 4<sup>th</sup>, was out early to follow the winner 2<sup>nd</sup> over to turn two, started to gap cover to 3/4s and was all done by the final turn. EMINEM HANOVER was off to a slow start, ended up out 3<sup>rd</sup> over from turn two, was behind poor cover to the final bend but empty himself

Race 7 – GREAT SOMEWHERE went right to the top, opened a clear lead to 3/4s and was a very safe winner – was well backed tonight, and certainly delivered. SHADOW CAT was moving from 5<sup>th</sup> to the half then grabbed cover behind PURPLE POET, tipped wide on the final bend then kicked home full of pace to be 2<sup>nd</sup> best – sharp tonight. PURPLE POET was unaggressive this week and got away 3<sup>rd</sup>, pulled first over from turn three but could only challenge for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3/4s, never really looked “strong” and reported home a no-threat, disappointing 3<sup>rd</sup>. RAYRAY saved ground from 4<sup>th</sup>, searched for room into the stretch and did finish with some pace once he found some. MY CARBON COPY N sat a loose pocket to the quarter, gapped again to 3/4s and tired to 5<sup>th</sup> once into the stretch – dull lately. B COOL FOOL sat in the back and was never in it

Race 8 – SHEIKH YABOOTY N shot right out to the lead then crawled over the half in a snail-like 1:00.1, faced no pressure despite the 1:28.4 three quarter, was finally roused as they entered the stretch and was able to safely find the wire, despite the yesteryear-like 1:58.3 mile! JAVA chased the winner all the way and was solid to the end, though unable to rally much despite the slow mile. PINK RUBY was moving from last past the stands, got closer to the final turn then moved three wide, kicking home solidly to pick up the show spot. ACEFOURTYFOUR ALEX sat 3<sup>rd</sup> all the way, but could only pace evenly in the lane. JILLIAN JIGGS was moving from 6<sup>th</sup> on turn two then moved back inside, came back out 3<sup>rd</sup> over to turn three and paced home evenly for a 5<sup>th</sup> place check – jury still out on the fresh shipper. KATHYS MOMENT got shuffled back to last on the cones, with no real chance. BETTORSHIGHLIGHT N got away 4<sup>th</sup>, pulled first over to the half, could only challenge for 2<sup>nd</sup> into the very slow pace and was all done by the head of the lane

Race 9 – FEARFUL INTENT rushed to command to the quarter, still enjoyed a clear lead to the final turn and extended his margin even more to the wire, just crushing these tonight! ARDEN MESSI N was outleft and away 4<sup>th</sup>, came off the cones to 3/4s but gapped on the rim, was still struggling on the final bend but started to do better once into the stretch, and was able to just beat out a few others for 2<sup>nd</sup> (well behind the runaway winner). BENHOPE RULZ N was pocketed early then back to 3<sup>rd</sup> by the quarter, pulled first over on the back side but could only challenge for 2<sup>nd</sup> to the final bend, did take over that spot into the lane but was nipped late and had to settle for 3<sup>rd</sup> – pretty nice effort. CASINO ACTION N sat 6<sup>th</sup>, swung wide at the top of the lane and kicked home strong...but too late for better. LEVINE made the top, seated BENHOPE RULZ N then released the winner, gapped in the pocket to the final turn then weakened more in the homestretch. MELANION N qualified like a beast but elected to just sit last around the track in his stateside debut, steering into traffic through the lane while given no chance at all to stretch his legs – can’t say if he’ll win his next start, but don’t count on him being much of a price, despite a race line that won’t look great “on paper”. SOUTHBEACH HANOVER saved ground from 5<sup>th</sup> but was still empty

Race 10 – GREG THE LEG was outleft by SAVE AMERICA but away in the pocket, worked hard to stay close to 3/4s and still had work to do as they turned for home, started to gain in the lane (as the leader finally began to weaken a bit) and was able to cruise on by coming to the wire, helped by a nice drive from Holland (keeping him motivated until he had a chance at the top one)! TWIN B HEART THROB floated into a spot in 3<sup>rd</sup>, angled into the stretch and finished strong, rallying late for the place spot. SAVE AMERICA stepped around the winner easily, had things all his own way, looked very strong entering the lane but just couldn't keep it going late, weakening to 3<sup>rd</sup> - no excuses. ANOTHRMASTRPIECE N was out 2<sup>nd</sup> over from turn three, tipped wide from 6<sup>th</sup> on the final bend and kicked home full of pace for 4<sup>th</sup>, from an impossible spot – actually pretty good tonight! THIS IS THE PLAN was moving from 5<sup>th</sup> from turn three, had trouble gaining on the rim and was outkicked home after the tough trip. ROCKIN JUKEBOX sat the cones in last, was never in it but did hit the wire ok in the back. TRAIN STATION was away carefully in 4<sup>th</sup>, gapped off turn three then gapped more at 3/4s, pacing evenly from the top of the lane – probably handled carefully after last week's miscue