

JANUARY 2017

# Chasing

NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE ASSOCIATION | 400 FAIR HILL DRIVE, ELKTON, MD 21921

## NSA purses, driven by race meets, pass \$6-million mark for first time

In 2016, the National Steeplechase Association communicated a message through the Thoroughbred industry, both in the United States and internationally. The message was: Watch us grow.

The brief sentence was much more than an advertising slogan. It is reality. For six consecutive years since 2011, the NSA has increased its purses. For the second year in a row, the NSA achieved record purses, and it exceeded \$6-million for the first time, growing to \$6,138,810 in 2016. Since 2011, purses paid to owners have increased by almost 40%.

The growth did not happen by itself. The NSA's race meets, recognizing the importance of purse payments to the future of the sport, stepped up impressively and provided year-to-year increases from 2015 levels. Purses generated by the race meets climbed an impressive 8.8% in 2016.

Double-digit percentage increases were posted by no fewer than nine race meets. Far Hills Races recorded the highest purses ever for a continuing race meet, nearly \$700,000, and the International Gold Cup rose impressively to become the sport's second-leading race meet by purse payments at \$484,500. The Marion duPont Scott Colonial Cup raised its purses by a third, and Virginia Fall notched an increase exceeding 28%. Also posting a significant increase was Shawan Downs, up 23.2%.

Total starts continued to grow, increasing more than 3% to 1,444. Even with more starts, the average earnings per start grew to \$4,251. Average purse per race, an important yardstick for evaluating how much is at stake each time



*The International Gold Cup, worth a record \$90,000, was won by Grand Manan, above. The late-October meet in Virginia had the NSA's second-leading purse total at \$484,500.*

TOD MARKS PHOTO

an owner sends a horse onto the course, was \$33,545, up more than \$2,500 from 2015.

Higher purses advance two important objectives of the National Steeplechase Association. Increased purses help to attract new owners and retain current ones, a key goal of the NSA's Pro-

motion and Growth Committee. Bigger purses for stakes races such as the Grand National (Gr. 1), Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1), and Marion duPont Scott also are important in attracting international participation in NSA races. All three had overseas competitors.



**Go Jump Racing!**





## Rawnaq crowned NSA champion

Irv Naylor's Rawnaq, winner of two Grade 1 classics, was crowned as the National Steeplechase Association's Lonesome Glory Champions Award winner for 2016 and became a heavy favorite to be the year's Eclipse Award winner.

Naylor, who smashed his own earnings record for an owner and fell just short of \$1-million in purses, was honored as the year's leading owner at a dinner and awards ceremony held at the Springdale Race Course in Camden, S.C., on Nov. 19.

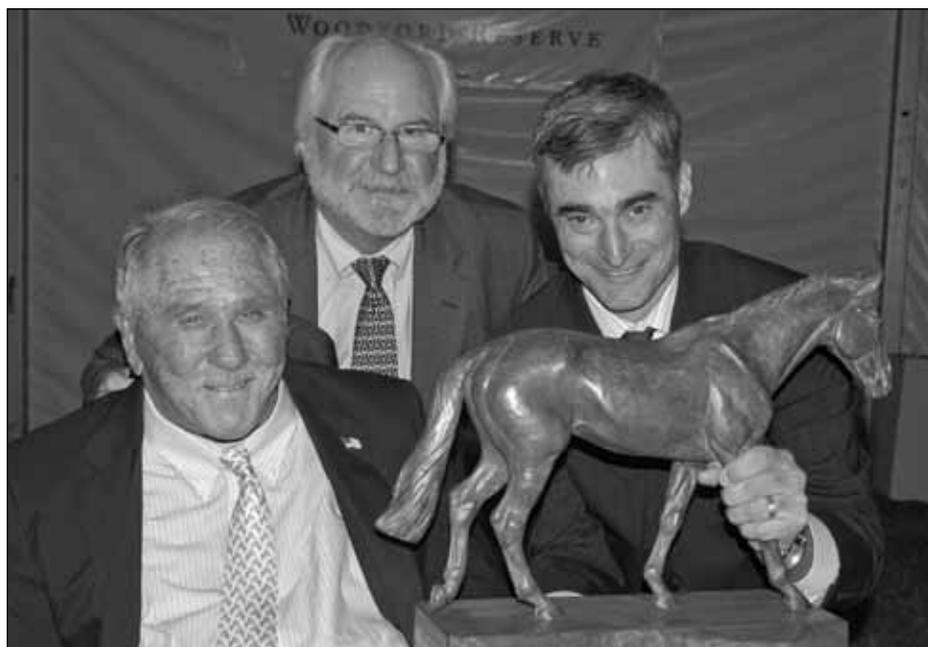
Rawnaq, a Irish-bred nine-year-old who was imported in the summer of 2015, won \$387,000 from three wins in four starts. He began the 2016 season with a smashing victory in the Temple Gwathmey (Gr. 3) and then courageously fended off two Irish invaders to win the \$200,000 Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1), a victory that earned him a shot at the \$500,000 Brown Advisory Cheltenham-Iroquois Challenge if he can win the Ryanair World Hurdle on March 16 at Cheltenham Race Course.

Rawnaq also faced overseas challengers in the \$350,000 Grand National (Gr. 1) at Far Hills, but he was easily up to the challenge and defeated Bruton Street-US's Scorpionier in the year's richest steeplechase race.

The only blemish on his 2016 record was his second straight second-place finish in the \$150,000 Marion duPont Scott Colonial Cup (Gr. 1), held a few hours before the awards ceremony at the Springdale course.

Jack Fisher, who topped \$1-million in earnings for the second straight year, was crowned the champion trainer by wins for the fourth straight year and was the earnings leaders for the third straight time.

Kieran Norris turned back a challenge from five-time champion Paddy Young to win his first



NSA President Guy Torsilieri, center, presented the Lonesome Glory Champions Award to Rawnaq's owner, Irv Naylor, and trainer Cyril Murphy.

DON CLIPPINGER PHOTO

jockey championship by wins. Sean McDermott was the leading jockey by purse earnings. Brendan Crowley won the year's final race to break a tie with Connor Hankin and claim the year's apprentice jockey title.

Hankin, who closed out his steeplechase career in August and entered the U.S. Marine Corps, was the year's champion amateur jockey.

Owner-trainer F. Hill Parker's Get Ready Set Goes, underdog winner of the Mrs. Ogden Phipps Stakes at Saratoga Race Course and Far

Hills Races' Peapack Stakes, was honored with the Life's Illusion Filly and Mare championship and the novice title. One other female, Guelph, claimed both titles in 2008.

Officer's Oath, undefeated in his two starts over fences, was crowned as the year's champion three-year-old. Owned by S. Bruce Smart Jr., the Luftikus gelding was bred in Virginia by the Daybreak Stables of his trainer, Jimmy Day. He also was a two-time winner on the flat at Charles Town Races.

### National Steeplechase Association

400 Fair Hill Drive  
Elkton, Md. 21921

Phone: (410) 392-0700  
Fax: (410) 392-0706

Website: [www.nationalsteeplechase.com](http://www.nationalsteeplechase.com)  
E-mail: [info@nationalsteeplechase.com](mailto:info@nationalsteeplechase.com)

#### Officers

Beverly R. Steinman, Chairman  
Guy J. Torsilieri, President  
P. Douglas Fout, Vice President  
Patrick Butterfield, Secretary  
Charles Strittmatter, Treasurer

#### Directors

Patrick Butterfield  
R. Reynolds Cowles  
Kate Dalton  
Alfred C. Griffin Jr.  
Dwight Hall  
P. Douglas Fout  
Michael D. Hankin  
Virginia Lazenby  
George Mahoney Jr.  
Charles Noell

#### Staff

William Gallo Jr., Director of Racing  
Peter D. McGivney, General Manager  
Courtney C. Reid, Racing Operations  
Nancy Dougherty, Executive Secretary  
Don C. Clippinger, Communications



## Go Jump Racing!

