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

Colonial Cup moving to spring, will key Carolina Cup program

The 86th annual Carolina Cup Races on March 31 will offer a record \$325,000 in purses, highlighted by the first spring edition of the Marion duPont Scott Colonial Cup (Gr. 1), worth \$150,000 and showcasing the sport's stars.

In addition, the signature Carolina Cup for emerging steeplechase stars will carry a \$75,000 purse, and races will be offered for fillies and mares in the \$40,000 Life's Illusion and for four-year-olds in the \$30,000 Raymond G. Woolfe.

The program, approved in November by the Carolina Cup Racing Association's Board of Directors, was developed by Carolina Cup Executive Director John Cushman and Bill Gallo Jr., the National Steeplechase Association's director of racing.

Cushman expressed appreciation to his fellow board members for approving an expanded and expansive program. "We're very proud of the program. We're fully invested in the sport," he said. "This is the single best program we've ever put together."

Cushman said the Carolina Cup's prospective races were announced well in advance so that steeplechase horsemen will have plenty of time to prepare for the rich races in Camden, S.C.

Camden, a center of winter Thoroughbred training for nearly a century, also will have available stalls for horsemen wanting to prepare their horses in a moderate climate in late winter. "We're hoping steeplechase horsemen will ship down six or eight weeks before the races," he said. "You're not going to miss any time training, and you can ship north from here."

With the purse increases, the Carolina Cup will be one of the three richest racing programs on the NSA's spring schedule, with the Virginia Gold Cup on May 5 and the Iroquois Steeplechase in



Camden-based *Top Striker*, left, won the 2016 Marion duPont Scott Colonial Cup.

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Nashville the following Saturday.

A week after the traditional Aiken Spring kickoff for the racing season, the Carolina Cup will get the NSA's 2018 stakes program off to a fast start. The Colonial Cup is at 2 3/8 miles on the Springdale Course and will be one of spring season's two Grade 1 races along with the Calvin Houghland Iroquois in Nashville on May 12.

The Carolina Cup, at 2 1/8 miles, is open to novices, or horses in their first seasons of racing over fences. It will precede the Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase on April 28 and Iroquois' Marcellus Frost Champion Hurdle, all for novices.

The \$40,000 Life's Illusion at two miles will

put the spotlight on the females who run and jump. The Life's Illusion will be one of two top spring races for the fillies and mares with Iroquois' Margaret Currey Henley.

The Raymond J. Woolfe, to be run at two miles, also moves to the spring from the fall, when it was limited to three-year-olds. Also on the card is a maiden hurdle and a training flat race.

"The Carolina Cup is to be commended for putting together an impressive program for its 2018 spring meet," Gallo said. "On one afternoon, the Carolina Cup's fans will be able to see some of the sport's best horses as they begin their 2018 racing seasons."



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NSA to celebrate its champions at gala Awards Dinner in Baltimore

The National Steeplechase Association will toast its champions on Thursday, Jan. 18, at a gala Awards Dinner at the Maryland Club in Baltimore. The stars of the show will be the horses and horse people who made the 2017 racing season so special and memorable.

The dinner will follow the NSA Race Chairmen's meeting beginning that morning at 10 at the Maryland Club. The NSA Board of Directors will meet the following morning at the Maryland Club.

The dinner's principal award, the Lonesome Glory Award, will be presented to Mr. Hot Stuff, owned by Mrs. S. K. "Gil" Johnston Jr. and trained by Jack Fisher. The Tiznow gelding, then 11, seized the award as the year's leading earner with a gutty nose victory in the \$400,000 Grand National (Gr. 1) at the Far Hill Races on Oct. 21.

Also third in the 2017 Temple Gwathmey (Gr. 3), Mr. Hot Stuff topped the earnings board with \$251,000 in jumps purses.

Accepting its first leading owner trophy will be the Bruton Street-US stable of friends Mike Hankin, Charlie Fenwick, and Charlie Noell. Bruton Street-US led the owner table with \$438,500 and prevailed by a mere \$12,800 over Gil Johnston, who led after Far Hills.

Bruton Street-US raced two of the year's top five earners. Its Scorpioncer was king of the spring with two wins in two starts, the Temple Gwathmey and the \$200,000 Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1).

The stable's Moscato reigned as the year's top novice with four wins in six starts, including back-to-back triumphs in Saratoga's Michael G. Walsh Novice Stakes and Belmont Park's



Bruton Street-US's Moscato, right, won Saratoga's Michael G. Walsh Novice Stakes on his way to the year's novice championship. Bruton Street-US was the champion owner.

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William Entenmann Novice Stakes. He earned \$156,000 and topped the earnings list going into the Far Hills meet.

Fenwick's Doc Cebu won the Willowdale Steeplechase, Genesee Valley Hunt Cup, and International Gold Cup to claim the timber championship.

Fisher, who also trained Scorpioncer, Moscato, and Doc Cebu, claimed his sixth consecutive champion trainer title and established a record for trainer purses at \$1,321,150.

Amy Taylor Rowe's Lady Blanco reigned as the Life's Illusion filly-mare champion for trainer Leslie Young, and Julie Gomena trained Bonnie Rye Stable's Menacing Dennis to the three-year-old title. Lady Blanco won Far Hills' Peapack Stakes, and Menacing Dennis was placed first in the Gladstone Stakes at Far Hills as a result of a disqualification.

Darren Nagle had a career year with 18 wins and secured his first champion jockey title. Sean McDermott was the leading jockey by purses for the second straight year.

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