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

## Purses rise for NSA's spring season

The National Steeplechase Association's spring season will offer nearly \$2.5-million in purses, with significant increases for Sport of Kings maiden hurdles and novice stakes races. The spring schedule was approved by the NSA Board of Directors at its annual joint meeting with the Race Chairmen at the National Sporting Library and Museum in Middleburg, Va., on Jan. 23.

In all, 2015 spring purses are more than \$300,000 above last year despite the loss of Colonial Downs' Dogwood Classic from the schedule. As was previously announced, purses for maiden races over hurdles will carry a minimum \$15,000 purse.

"The race chairmen have stepped up and raised purses significantly for the new season," said NSA Director of Racing Bill Gallo Jr. "That purse money, mostly raised through sponsorships and ticket sales within their communities, contributes greatly to our efforts to encourage horse ownership."

The spring purse increases follow substantial increases for the 2014 fall racing season. The 2014 purses totaled more than \$5-million and approached pre-recession record levels.

The spring's richest race again will be the \$150,000 Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1) at Nashville's Percy Warner Park on Saturday, May 9. The Iroquois Steeplechase also is the spring's richest race meet, with a total of \$415,000 in purses and \$20,000 in bonuses for amateur or apprentice jockeys.

The historic Midwest meet also offers the \$75,000 Marcellus Frost Stakes for novices, the \$50,000 Margaret Currey Henley Stakes for fillies and mares, and the \$50,000 Mason Houghland Memorial timber stakes.

All Sport of Kings maiden hurdles will carry a minimum purse of \$30,000 this year, up from \$25,000, and Iroquois will offer a \$40,000 purse in its Sport of Kings race.

Also offering a \$40,000 Sport of Kings maiden hurdle will be the Virginia Gold Cup on the previous weekend. The meet at Great Meadow Race Course in The Plains offers pari-mutuel racing and will have the spring's second-highest purses at \$400,000, up from

### 2015 SPRING RACING SCHEDULE

| Date           | Race Meet         | Location            | 2015 Purses |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Sat., March 21 | Aiken Spring      | Aiken, SC           | \$125,000   |
| Sat., March 28 | Carolina Cup      | Camden, SC          | 145,000     |
| Sat., April 4  | Stoneybrook       | Raeford, NC         | 75,000      |
| Sat., April 11 | My Lady's Manor   | Monkton, MD         | 70,000      |
| Sat., April 18 | Atlanta           | Kingston, GA        | 110,000     |
| Sat., April 18 | Grand National    | Butler, MD          | 60,000      |
| Sat., April 18 | Middleburg Spring | Middleburg, VA      | 155,000     |
| Sat., April 25 | Foxfield Spring   | Charlottesville, VA | 95,000      |
| Sat., April 25 | Maryland Hunt Cup | Glyndon, MD         | 75,000      |
| Sat., April 25 | Queen's Cup       | Mineral Springs, NC | 145,000     |
| Sat., May 2    | Block House       | Tryon, NC           | 75,000      |
| Sat., May 2    | Virginia Gold Cup | The Plains, VA      | 400,000     |
| Sun., May 3    | Winterthur        | Winterthur, DE      | 50,000      |
| Sat., May 9    | Iroquois          | Nashville, TN       | 415,000     |
| Sun., May 10   | Willowdale        | Kennett Square, PA  | 80,000      |
| Sat., May 16   | Radnor            | Malvern, PA         | 180,000     |
| Sun., May 17   | High Hope         | Lexington, KY       | 80,000      |
| Sat., May 23   | Fair Hill         | Fair Hill, MD       | 120,000     |

\$250,000 last year.

Headlining the Virginia Gold Cup will be the year's richest timber race, the \$90,000 Virginia Gold Cup, with its purse increased to celebrate its 90th running. Also featured will be the \$75,000 David L. "Zeke" Ferguson Memorial (Gr. 2) over hurdles. In all, eight races are on tap for the meet, which annually attracts a large and festive crowd.

The novice stakes races are a part of the Sport of Kings series, and receiving \$25,000 purse increases for 2015 will be the \$75,000 Carolina Cup on March 28 and the \$75,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase at the Queen's Cup near Charlotte, N.C., on April 25.

The spring stakes schedule kicks off with the \$50,000 Budweiser Imperial Cup (Gr. 3) at the season's opener, the Aiken Spring

Steeplechase on March 21. The Middleburg Spring meet on April 18 will be highlighted by the \$50,000 Temple Gwathmey (Gr. 3), and the Radnor Hunt Races in Pennsylvania will offer the \$50,000 National Hunt Cup (Gr. 3) on May 16.

The historic Maryland timber triple again will conclude with the \$75,000 Maryland Hunt Cup on April 25. The series also includes the \$30,000 My Lady's Manor on April 11 and the \$30,000 Grand National on April 18.

Also on the spring timber calendar is the \$30,000 Radnor Hunt Cup, the \$20,000 Middleburg Hunt Cup, and the Fair Hill Races' \$30,000 Valentine Memorial for novices. The Fair Hill meet on Saturday, May 23, will conclude the 2015 NSA spring schedule with a full program of races with pari-mutuel wagering.



## Jonathan Sheppard to give keynote at inaugural Owner Symposium & Auction

Jonathan Sheppard, a Racing Hall of Fame trainer and a prominent owner of steeplechase horses, will be the keynote speaker at the inaugural Owners Symposium and Marketplace Auction at Shawan Downs in Hunt Valley, Md., on Sunday, April 12.

Created by the National Steeplechase Association's Promotion and Growth Task Force, the Owner Symposium and Marketplace Auction will bring together current owners, former owners, and prospective owners for a day dedicated to building owner skills through the insights of leading horsemen such as Sheppard, the steeplechase sport's all-time leading trainer.

"We are honored to have Jonathan Sheppard as our keynote speaker," said Task Force Chair Bill Price, a jump-racing owner and co-chair of the Queen's Cup Steeplechase. "He is a most appropriate industry leader to kick off this unique event."

Charles C. Fenwick Jr., a Task Force member and Shawan's race chairman, heads the committee putting together the Symposium and Marketplace Auction, which will be supported by Valley Motors and the National Steeplechase Foundation.

The Owner Symposium will fill the morning program, and it will be robust. In addition to Sheppard's keynote talk, other owners and trainers will provide best practices for participating in jump racing.

The Marketplace Auction, to be held after a catered lunch, will be a unique feature of the event. It is anticipated that the sale might include 15 to 25 horses, and all will be approved by a panel of experts. Many of the horses will be ready to run, and prospective buyers will have the opportunity to watch the sale horses school over either hurdles or timber fences.

The auction brings together buyer and seller, and the transactions will be between them, without an intermediary sales company. The



Hall of Fame member Jonathan Sheppard will be the keynote speaker at the first annual Owner Symposium and Marketplace Auction at Shawan Downs on Sunday, April 12.

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Marketplace Auction will offer outright sales, and other options might be leases, shares, or partnerships. Marketplace Auction buyers and sellers will determine how to structure the transactions. An entry fee of \$250 will be charged, and each seller will be charged 5% of the sale price by the NSF.

A detailed sales catalog will be developed, and it will be available both in print and on the Task Force's website, [www.gojumpracing.org](http://www.gojumpracing.org).

The information will include a pedigree, race record, and biographies of the horses and several NSA-licensed trainers. In advance of the sale, the prospects will be spotlighted on the Task Force's website and on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and podcasts.

For more information on the Owner Symposium and Marketplace Auction, contact Danielle Oster at [danielleoster@gmail.com](mailto:danielleoster@gmail.com) or call her at (443) 386-2097.

### 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)

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