

Chasing

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

Rawnaq, 2016 Eclipse champion, tops initial 2018 Ratings at 156

Irv Naylor's Rawnaq, the 2016 Eclipse Award winner who missed last year's racing season, has returned to training and heads the first edition of the National Steeplechase Association's 2018 official ratings.

The ratings will determine eligibility for ratings handicaps and will be a guide for determining weight assignments in other handicap races in the early weeks of the 2018 racing season.

Inaugurated in 2015, the ratings evaluate every hurdles winner in training and determine eligibility for ratings handicaps. The ratings are prepared by an expert three-member committee comprising Equibase chart caller Martin Chamberlin, Mid-Atlantic Thoroughbred Editor Joe Clancy, and Virginia Fall Race Director Will O'Keefe. Their work is overseen by NSA Director of Racing Bill Gallo Jr.

Rawnaq carries a 156 rating and is 10 points above 2017 Grand National (Gr. 1) winner Mr. Hot Stuff, who is second in the ratings. The Irish-bred suffered an injury in January 2017 but resumed training with Cyril Murphy at Naylor's farm in Butler, Md.

He scored a memorable victory over two overseas invaders in the 2016 Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1) at Nashville's Percy Warner Park and won that year's edition of the Grand National at the Far Hills Races. He also won Middleburg Spring's Temple Gwathmey (Gr. 3) before his Iroquois victory.

Gillian Johnston's Mr. Hot Stuff, a two-time Grade 1 winner who was Grade 1-placed on the flat, earned the NSA's Lonesome Glory Award as 2017's leading earner. The veteran, now 12, is trained by Jack Fisher.

The Tiznow gelding was rated one point ahead



In a clash of future champions, Irv Naylor's Rawnaq and Ruby Walsh defeated Scorpiancer in the 2016 Grand National (Gr. 1). Rawnaq was that year's Eclipse Award winner, and Scorpiancer received the 2017 Eclipse.

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of Robert Kinsley's Modem and Buttonwood Farm's All the Way Jose, who finished second and third, respectively, in the Grand National. Modem was a nose behind Mr. Hot Stuff, and All the Way Jose was a nose farther back.

Also rated at 145 was Naylor's Sempre Medici, an import who did not see action in 2017. Then

trained by Willie Mullins, the French-bred won two Irish hurdles stakes leading up to the 2016 Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham.

The inaugural 2018 ratings can be found in the Feb. 7 official notices on the NSA website, nationalsteeplechase.com, and updates to the ratings also are found in the official notices.



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NSA promotes Courtney Reid to Manager of Racing Operations

Courtney C. Reid, who has become a mainstay of the National Steeplechase Association's racing program since joining the NSA in 2015, has been promoted to Manager of Racing Operations.

NSA President Guy J. Torsilieri announced the promotion. "In a short period, Courtney has become a very important asset to the NSA and steeplechasing," he said. "She is extraordinarily competent, she is a very quick study, and she has brought much-needed technological skills into our racing operation."

A native of Williamsburg, Va., she holds an undergraduate degree from James Madison University and a master's degree from Liberty University. She previously worked for the Virginia Racing Commission.

During her time at the NSA, she has graduated from the Racing Officials Accreditation Program's stewards school and become an accredited steward. She also has worked in the racing offices of the New York Racing Association and the Breeders' Cup.

"I am both flattered and grateful that the NSA Board has acknowledged my efforts with a promotion and a new title," she said. "I am very grateful for the many opportunities the NSA has provided me in the short time I have been with the association, and I look forward to the future."

"Thoroughbred racing is my passion, and while steeplechasing represents a small segment of the industry, it is steeped in tradition and



Courtney C. Reid

plays an important role in Thoroughbred history, especially at Saratoga, which is my favorite racetrack."

Ms. Reid will continue to report to Bill Gallo Jr., the NSA's director of racing. "Courtney Reid has had a distinct and definitive effect on our racing operations at the NSA," he said. "In a very short time, she has grasped the scope of the racing program and has streamlined many of our racing functions."

"Her understanding of technology and its benefits when applied to the traditions of racing allows us to move forward with swift precision to better serve our horsemen and the race meets. She is an invaluable asset to me in my role as Director of Racing, and I am delighted that the NSA Board has recognized her many contributions," he said.

Ms. Reid paid tribute to the insights she has learned from working with Gallo, who joined the NSA in 1977 and has been director of racing since 1999. "Working with Bill has been a gift. I continue to receive an invaluable education and learn more about the industry every day. I could not ask for a better mentor," she said.

"Managing a racing operation that includes 30 race meets in addition to the major track program is no small task. The challenges of writing appropriate races and filling them with competitive fields are the same throughout the country. We at the NSA have a strong racing product that has great appeal to our horsemen as well as our many followers."

Members of the NSA Executive Committee praised the skills that Ms. Reid has brought to the NSA and the talents she has honed in her tenure with the organization.

"Courtney has quickly learned the nuances of the racing office and works well with our horsemen and race meets," said NSA Vice President Doug Fout, a longtime licensed trainer and Middleburg Spring's president.

National Steeplechase Association

400 Fair Hill Drive
Elkton, Md. 21921

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

Website: www.nationalsteeplechase.com
E-mail: info@nationalsteeplechase.com

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