

Chasing

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

Summer jump-racing action shifts to Saratoga and Monmouth Park

American Steeplechasing will spend the summer in the mountains and at the shore with a strong program of jump racing at Saratoga Race Course in July and August and two or three races at Monmouth Park on Thursday, Aug. 9.

New York Racing Association officials have scheduled six jump races—four of them stakes races—at Saratoga, the flagship Upstate New York track in the Adirondack foothills.

Keying the six races on the Saratoga schedule will be the two Grade 1 mainstays, the A.P. Smithwick Memorial on Thursday, July 26, and the New York Turf Writers Cup on Thursday, Aug. 23. Each race will carry a \$175,000 purse, a \$25,000 increase from last year's levels.

The Smithwick and the New York Turf Writers were won by longshots in 2017, with Rosbrian Farm's Swansea Mile winning at 28.50-1 and Flying Elvis Stable's Diplomat at 17.70-1.

The Saratoga action kicks off on Wednesday, July 25, with the \$75,000 Jonathan Kiser Novice Stakes, which will launch a strong midweek jumping package with the A. P. Smithwick the following day.

The \$75,000 Michael G. Walsh Novice Stakes will be run on Wednesday, Aug. 22, the afternoon before the New York Turf Writers. Last year's novice champion, Moscato, won the Walsh after finishing second in the Kiser.

Also on the schedule are \$65,000 allowance optional claiming races on Wednesday, Aug. 1, and Thursday, Aug. 20.

The Monmouth program on Aug. 9 will feature a \$35,000 ratings handicap for horses rated 115 or lower, and a \$30,000 maiden hurdle that will be split into two \$30,000 divisions if sufficient horses are entered.



Jockey Bernie Dalton gave Flying Elvis Stable's Diplomat a congratulatory pat after they roared past a top-quality New York Turf Writers Cup field and won by three lengths last August. Finishing behind Diplomat were Robert Kinsley's Modem, on the left, and Buttonwood Farm's All the Way Jose.

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Maryland, Virginia timber classics attract favorable media coverage

The best of a uniquely American sport, timber racing, was on display in April and early May in the Maryland timber classics and the Virginia Gold Cup. Both received wide and favorable attention in print media publications in both states.

The Maryland timber triple crown races—the My Lady’s Manor on April 14, the Grand National a week later, and the Maryland Hunt Cup on April 28—were all preceded by editorial coverage in the *Baltimore Sun*, most of it written by veteran sports reporter Mike Klingaman.

Prior to the My Lady’s Manor, the *Sun* featured a centerpiece portrait by Klingaman of leading National Steeplechase Association owner Irv Naylor. The lengthy story with an accompanying video detailed Naylor’s comeback from a fall in the 1999 Grand National that paralyzed him. The story noted that Naylor remains active in medical efforts to overcome the effects of spinal injuries.

A week later, before the Grand National, Klingaman told the story of the 1969 race in which Dr. John R.S. Fisher, riding *Island Stream*, was beaten by his own horse, *Landing Party*, who was ridden by Paddy Neilson.

Fisher trained *Island Stream* for George Weymouth and chose to ride the eventual timber champion in the Grand National. A week later, Fisher rode *Landing Party* to his first of two Maryland Hunt Cup victories.

Prior to the Hunt Cup, Klingaman profiled Joy Slater, the first woman to win the storied race in 1980 (she and *Cancottage* repeated in 1981), and Anne Moran, a mother of three who won the Hunt Cup with *Buck Jakes* in 1995 and 1997.

The Virginia Gold Cup, which attracts the largest crowds in American Steeplechasing, was



Eric Poretz guided Skip Crawford’s Senior Senator to his second Maryland Hunt Cup victory in three years.

DOUGLAS LEES PHOTO

featured in at least two different publications. Co-chairs Dr. Will Allison and Dr. Al Griffin were featured on the cover of the spring issue of *Country Spirit* magazine, which is produced by *Fauquier Times*. That issue also contained articles focused on steeplechasing in Virginia.

In the week before the Virginia Gold Cup, the *Fauquier Times* published a 48-page supplement

evoted to the Gold Cup, which it described as the “greatest show on turf.” Many of the articles were written by Betsy Burke Parker, who also edited the special edition.

Editorial support was provided to both the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Fauquier Times* writers by NSA Director of Communications Don Clippinger.

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