

Chasing

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

New opportunities open as NSA inaugurates high-definition video

Ushering in a new era for American jump racing, the National Steeplechase Association began offering high-definition video imagery for all of its race meets last month. In all, 11 meets will have the state-of-the-art video this fall.

"This is indeed a new day for our sport," said NSA President Guy J. Torsilieri. "Stuart Janney, The Jockey Club's chairman, recently called for all Thoroughbred races to be broadcast in high-definition, and the NSA will institute the highest-quality video beginning with the High Hope Steeplechase in Lexington on Sept. 23.

"The principal beneficiaries will be our stewards, who now will have real-time high-definition images to assure fair and safe racing. Beyond that significant benefit, our race meets will have access to the high-definition video to market their meets and to present steeplechase racing to a larger audience."

Following a competitive bidding process that spanned four months, the NSA has awarded a contract to a new company formed by Steve Hankin, an entrepreneur and business executive with extensive experience in marketing, including social, digital, sponsorships and merchandising, and video equipment and production.

"We welcome Steve Hankin to the NSA family," Torsilieri said. "We look forward to a long and productive relationship as we extend high-definition video capability and everything that it offers to all of our race meets."

The competitive bidding process was facilitated by Al Griffin Jr., chairman of the NSA's Promotion and Growth Committee, and a subcommittee composed of Queen's Cup Co-Chairman Bill Price and Jeffrey L. LeHew, a Virginia-based broadcasting executive.



The Iroquois Steeplechase (above) and the Far Hills Races have featured high-definition video programming in recent years.

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Assisting the subcommittee were NSA Director of Racing Bill Gallo Jr. and Racing Operations Manager Courtney C. Reid.

"The potential uses of high-definition video are all but endless," said Griffin, who is co-chairman of the Virginia Gold Cup and International Gold Cup. "Race meets and the NSA will be able to live-stream their races on their websites, and they can utilize high-quality video to market their meets year-round. In addition, the NSA website

will feature high-quality replays of our races.

"In our partnership with Steve and his team, they will be working with the NSA and the individual meets to develop the best approach to bring these efforts to market to support the growth of the sport."

Based in Los Angeles, Hankin is not a newcomer to steeplechase racing. His brother, Michael, is a member of the Bruton Street-US racing partnership and an NSA board member.



Go Jump Racing!





Championships on the line as NSA racing heads toward the finish line

October will be a crucial month for deciding National Steeplechase Association titles with meets scheduled in New York, Virginia, New Jersey, and South Carolina.

The battles for the championships were set up by a competitive summer season of Grade 1 and novice racing at Saratoga Race Course as well as three races at Monmouth Park.

The championship division leader, Zanjabeel, took off the summer season to focus on fall Grade 1 races and in particular the year's richest race, Far Hills' \$450,000 Grand National on Oct. 20. The Calvin Houghland Iroquois (Gr. 1) winner is owned by Rosbrian Farm and Wendy and Ben Griswold.

The hiatus allowed others to move into the championship picture with strong showings in Saratoga's A. P. Smithwick Memorial Handicap (Gr. 1) and the New York Turf Writers Cup Handicap (Gr. 1). Mark W. Buyck Jr.'s Show Court pulled a 14.10-1 upset in the 2 1/16-mile A. P. Smithwick on July 30, while Hudson River Farms' four-year-old Iranistan finished second.

The New York Turf Writers on Aug. 23 extended the distance to 2 3/8 miles and attracted three starters who were making their first U.S. starts. Ricky Hendriks, who trains Zanjabeel, went on a fast-track schedule to get Rosbrian's Optimus Prime ready for his U.S. debut. The six-year-old was purchased by Mandy and George Mahoney's Rosbrian in May.

Leading Irish trainer Gordon Elliott shipped over veterans Clarcam and The Game Changer, who together have earnings exceeding \$1-million. Rosbrian and the Griswolds purchased Clarcam, and Rosbrian acquired The Game Changer.

The New York Turf Writers turned out to be a



Rosbrian Farm's Optimus Prime, a newcomer to American jump racing, scored a 1 1/4-length victory over Jonathan Kiser Novice Stakes winner New Member in the \$175,000 New York Turf Writers Cup Handicap (Gr. 1) at Saratoga on Aug. 23.

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prime event for Optimus Prime, who sailed to the lead on Saratoga's last bend under Ross Geraghty and won by 1 1/4 lengths over Armata Stables' New Member, the Jonathan Kiser Novice Stakes winner on July 25. Iranistan, winner of Iroquois' Marcellus Frost Champion Hurdle, finished third, with Show Court fourth.

Clarcam tracked the early pace of Iranistan but lost all chance when he stumbled at the third from last fence. The Game Changer also was unplaced.

A day before the New York Turf Writers, Hendriks and Geraghty combined forces to win the Michael G. Walsh Novice Stakes with Wendy Hendriks' Surprising Soul. The Walsh was run in

memory of retired NSA Executive Vice President Charles T. Colgan, who died in January.

Three trainers and three jockeys had two wins apiece at Saratoga. In addition to the back-to-back wins by Hendriks and Geraghty, trainer Jack Fisher and jockey Willie McCarthy claimed wins with New Member in the Kiser and with Dark Gemini in an allowance hurdle for the Griswolds' Serendipity Stable on Aug. 29.

Arch Kingsley Jr. and Michael Mitchell combined for wins by Show Court in the Smithwick Memorial and Carrington Holdings' Boss Man in a \$65,000 allowance hurdle on Aug. 1. Boss Man ran third in the Walsh.

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