

# Chasing

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

## Georgia 'Chase, powered by fan grass-roots, launches in April

A new event, the Georgia Steeplechase Race Meeting and Festival—The Tradition Lives On!, will stage its inaugural meet at Kingston Downs on Saturday, April 7, 2018.

Indeed, the tradition of steeplechase racing in the Atlanta region will live on as the Georgia Steeplechase takes over the site formerly occupied by the Atlanta Steeplechase, which ceased operations in May after 52 years.

But the new meet will not be the former meet with a new name. Its organizers—all fans of the steeplechase meet—are planning for growth, new attractions, and a more diverse fan base. “This is an event for all of Georgia,” said co-chair Anthony-Scott Hobbs. “It is the premier Georgia outdoor social and sporting event each spring.”

The meet is the product of a rapid-fire, grass-roots efforts by those fans, led by Hobbs and his wife, Phoebe, who are owners of Magnum Contact, a software and marketing company with contact center serving the automotive, mortgage, non-profit, financial, and real estate industries.

Like most race meets, the Georgia Steeplechase will have three major goals: top-flight Thoroughbred racing over fences, a memorable social event for those who attend the races, and a benefit to the community.

The Georgia Steeplechase already has designated three charitable beneficiaries. Selecting local beneficiaries, Anthony-Scott Hobbs said, is part of an effort to generate charitable revenues that will remain in the Bartow, Cherokee, Cobb, Floyd, Fulton, Gordon, Paulding, and the Pickens County region.



*In an exciting finish, Bill Pape's Martini Brother, inside, edged Selection Sunday by three-quarters of a length in the featured Georgia Cup optional allowance hurdle at Kingston Downs on the Bartow-Floyd County line.*

CATHERINE FRENCH PHOTO

Among the new highlights of the race meeting and festival will be a Food Truck Furlong with a variety of savory foods; Vineyard Row, featuring wine tastings provided by local Georgia wineries; and some great bands for music. “You have to have things for different generations,” Hobbs said.

One element of the marketing effort will be to reach a younger generation that may never have been exposed to steeplechase racing or the enjoyment of a race meet. “Looking down the

road, you have a generation, a new demographic known as the millennials, that we can introduce to steeplechase racing at the Georgia Steeplechase and Festival,” Hobbs said.

Steeplechase race meets historically have attracted friends and family, and the Hobbs family's introduction to the sport began 12 years ago when they first attended the races at Kingston Downs. In time, they brought in friends and family to start up the Steeplechase Turf Club, which grew into Brunch on the Backstretch.



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## Tryon Equestrian Center redoubles efforts for 2018 Tryon Block House

Tryon International Equestrian Center has assured National Steeplechase Association officials that it will redouble its efforts with partner Tryon Riding & Hunt Club to assure a top-quality race meet at the North Carolina property next spring.

TIEC informed the NSA in early September that it was canceling its inaugural fall race meet, which had been scheduled for Sept 30.

“TIEC officials told us that they had made every effort to prepare for their first fall meet, but they recognized that many logistical issues would prevent them from putting on a first-class event,” said NSA President Guy J. Torsilieri.

“Rather than stage a race meet that did not meet its standards, TIEC decided to cancel and prepare for next spring’s races. Obviously, we are disappointed for our program and for our horsemen,” he said.

“But we have to respect TIEC’s decision and support its efforts to build toward another outstanding meet at their lovely new course next spring. TIEC is determined to have a top-quality fall meet, and we will provide all the support that we can toward achieving that goal.”

The Tryon Block House partners staged races that offered \$150,00 in purses last April.

In April, the Carolina Cup Racing Association announced that it was canceling its fall meet and moving the signature Marion duPont Scott Colonial Cup (Gr. 1) to its spring meet. Carolina Cup officials said the fall Colonial Cup meet had been losing money for decades and was severely impacted by competition from South Carolina college football games.

Torsilieri said the NSA is exploring initiatives



The hounds are paraded at the acclaimed new race course at the Tryon International Equestrian Center, site of the Tryon Block House Races in western North Carolina in April.

TOD MARKS PHOTO

to bolster the fall program. “We have initiated conversations that could lead to exciting new venues in the fall. While those conversations are in the preliminary stages, we are very hopeful that they will be productive in the years

to come,” he said.

“The NSA is committed to providing the highest quality racing opportunities for its owners and trainers and an exciting event for our many fans.”

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