

# Chasing

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

## Far Hills, International Gold Cup offer wagering options to world

American Steeplechasing offered a Thoroughbred-racing trifecta on the final two weekends in October, with large crowds, pari-mutuel wagering, and high-definition video coverage for the two most important race meets on the fall calendar.

Kicking off the jump-racing Octoberfest was the 98th annual Far Hills Races in New Jersey, where \$900,000 in purses were distributed, including the \$450,000 Grand National (Gr. 1), America's richest steeplechase race, on Oct. 20.

A week later, the action swung to Virginia for the International Gold Cup in the Washington metropolitan area. The 35th annual International Gold Cup offered almost \$400,000 in purses over a mixed program of hurdle, timber, and flat races.

In partnership with Monmouth Park, Far Hills made its first foray into pari-mutuel wagering, while the International Gold Cup launched wagering on its races in 2013 under the supervision of the Virginia Racing Commission. Similarly, the New Jersey Racing Commission oversaw the Far Hills races, which were conducted under Monmouth Park's pari-mutuel license.

The leaders of both race meets see the betting option not only as providing a service to their fans but also as a way to support Thoroughbred racing in general and American jump racing.

"The exposure is fantastic," said Dr. William H. Allison, the longtime co-chairman of the International Gold Cup with Dr. Al Griffin. The International Gold Cup signal was carried worldwide under a contract with XpressBet, one of America's premier horse-racing betting outlets.

"It's hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions," Dr. Allison said of the XpressBet distribution. "It's the greatest thing for jump



*In partnership with Monmouth Park, the Far Hills Races offered pari-mutuel wagering for the first time in October.*

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racing." Dr. Griffin said the International Gold Cup signal also was picked up in Australia, which has a rich tradition of betting on horse racing, including jump racing.

Dr. Allison noted that the benefit is not only for steeplechase racing. The wagering exposure supports all of Thoroughbred racing and especially Virginia racing, where the International Gold Cup and the Virginia Gold Cup in the spring have been the principal live racing venues since the closing of Colonial Downs in 2014. The track located in the Richmond, Va., area is scheduled to reopen next year under new ownership.

"Now and into the future, the Virginia Gold Cup and the International Gold Cup will occupy

an important role in Virginia's Thoroughbred industry," Dr. Allison said. "We are so grateful for the support that we've received from the Virginia HBPA, the Virginia Equine Alliance, and especially the Virginia horsemen in the years that Colonial has been closed."

Guy J. Torsilieri, Far Hills' chairman, said pari-mutuel provided the meet's thousands of fans with another on-site amenity and also to promote American Thoroughbred racing around the world.

"We are becoming a target for overseas trainers in the early fall," he said. "We want the world to see American steeplechasing at Far Hills and the International Gold Cup, and we want the world to see the racing opportunities we provide."



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## Doc Cebu again rules over timber with three-victory fall campaign

The 2018 timber championship was a lot like the preceding year, only different.

For the second straight year, Doc Cebu reigns as the timber champion. Other constants were his trainer, Jack Fisher, and his jockey, Hadden Frost.

Also for the second time, Doc Cebu clinched the title with a victory in the \$75,000 International Gold Cup. Also for the second straight year, the 3 1/2-mile fall classic on Oct. 27 was a must-win race for the gelding by Hard Spun, now eight.

Without the \$45,000 winner's share from the fall's richest timber race, he would have fallen short of another competitor. This year, it was Senior Senator, who won \$90,000 in eight days in April with Grand National and Maryland Hunt Cup victories.

In the end, Doc Cebu earned \$102,000, up from \$96,600 last year. Finishing third in the 2018 standings was Sara E. Collette's homebred Zanclus, winner of the Virginia Gold Cup and the My Lady's Manor.

Another constant was that Doc Cebu won by daylight, although the margins were smaller. He won the International Gold Cup by 11 lengths in 2017 and by 5 1/4 lengths this year. He also had smaller margins—though still decisive—in his two other repeat victories, the Willowdale Steeplechase and Genesee Valley Hunt Cup.

As in most of his races, Doc Cebu races close to the pace before dropping the hammer. In the International Gold Cup, he played a cat-and-mouse game with Le Chevalier before pulling away over the last fences.

"It was a classic timber race," said Doc Cebu's co-owner, Charles Fenwick Jr. Irv Naylor's Super Saturday showed up for second.

But the 2018 title was by no means a carbon



Raising the historic International Gold Cup trophy were, from left, International Gold Cup Co-chairman Dr. Will Allison, co-owner Charles Fenwick Jr., jockey Hadden Frost, trainer Jack Fisher (partially hidden), and co-owner Michael Hankin.

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copy. Doc Cebu had to throw in another victory, in Shawan Downs' Legacy Chase in September, to make possible a second title.

Also, his ownership changed. In 2017, Doc Cebu was owned solely by Fenwick, who acquired his champion off the flat in a two-horse deal for \$12,000. Fenwick, the leading timber rider of the 1970s and 1980s, is a partner in Bruton Street-US with Michael Hankin and Charles Noell.

Bruton Street-US reigned as the National Steeplechase Association's leading owner last year and campaigned Eclipse Award winner Scorpioncer.

Fenwick thought it was only right that he should share some of the fun with his Bruton Street-US partners. He asked Fisher to determine a market price for Doc Cebu, and the three became equal partners for Doc Cebu's second championship season.

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