

Chasing

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

NSA season wraps up with meets from Pennsylvania to Georgia

The National Steeplechase Association's 2019 season wraps up this month with four race meets ranging geographically from eastern Pennsylvania all the way south to Georgia.

The action kicks off at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2, with the 84th annual Montpelier Hunt Races in Virginia.

Montpelier's races will offer purses totaling \$145,000. The traditional opening race is the Montpelier Foundation Cup, the NSA's only dirt race. Limited to horses bred in Virginia or sired by Virginia stallions, the one-mile race offers no purse.

The afternoon's feature, the \$40,000 Noel Laing Handicap, will be raced over Montpelier's brush course at 2½ miles. The meet also will offer a \$30,000 maiden hurdle, a \$25,000 allowance hurdle for fillies and mares, a \$20,000 ratings handicap for horses ranked at 110 and below, and a \$15,000 maiden claiming hurdle.

The action shifts northward the following afternoon for the 84th annual Pennsylvania Hunt Cup in Unionville. Its namesake feature will be worth \$40,000 for its classic four-mile distance. First post is 1:30 p.m. for a program that also includes an allowance timber, a maiden timber, and an apprentice jockey training flat race.

The Steeplechase at Callaway Gardens will be held for the 34th time at its Pine Mountain, Ga., course on Saturday, Nov. 9. The action gets under way at noon. The meet will offer races for all steeplechase disciplines: three races over hurdles, one over timber fences, and one race on the flat. Purses will total \$170,000 for its five scheduled races.

Heading the program in the \$75,000 Aflac Supreme Hurdle for novices, or horses in their



Frank A. Bonsal Jr.'s *Stand Down*, left, led over the final fence of the 2018 Pennsylvania Hunt Cup and won by 7 3/4 lengths.

TOD MARKS PHOTO

first seasons of racing over fences. Last year's Aflac Supreme Hurdle was won by DASH Stable's *Ice It*, who came back in open company in March to win the \$50,000 Carolina Cup ratings handicap.

A Sport of Kings maiden hurdle will offer a \$30,000 purse. Also on the Callaway program are a \$20,000 allowance race over timber, a \$20,000 maiden claiming hurdle, and an allowance flat race with a \$25,000 purse.

The season concludes where it began, in South Carolina. The Steeplechase of Charleston at

Stono Ferry will bring down the curtain with a five-race program on Sunday, Nov. 11.

Under the management of the Randolph Co., the Steeplechase of Charleston will step off at 1 p.m. On the tentative card are a \$30,000 ratings handicap hurdle for horses at 125 or lower and a \$30,000 maiden hurdle.

Three-year-olds, the sport's newest competitors, will compete over hurdles for a \$25,000 purse. Also on the Charleston program are a \$20,000 maiden claiming hurdle and a training flat race.



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Diplomat wins as 'chase stars find new careers

Adam Newman's Diplomat, a Grade 1 steeplechase winner in 2017, has excelled in a new discipline and won the Thoroughbred Makeover's field hunter division on Oct. 5 at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington.

He was trained to his championship by Sara Katz, who also is a licensed steeplechase jockey.

The Kitten's Joy gelding, foaled about 20 miles south of the Horse Park by one-time steeplechase owners Ken and Sarah Ramsey, was one of approximately 450 Thoroughbreds transitioning into new competitive careers at the Thoroughbred Makeover.

Also competing were 2017 Lonesome Glory Award winner Mr. Hot Stuff and 2015 Eclipse Award winner Dawalan, who did not advance to their divisions' finals. Mr. Hot Stuff was entered as a show jumper, and Dawalan as a show hunter and dressage competitor.

Under Katz's guidance, Diplomat concluded the first day of competition on Oct. 3 in the lead for the field hunter title and maintained his advantage in the title round two days later to secure the championship.

The Thoroughbred Makeover, now in its fifth year in its current format, is a creation of the Retired Racehorse Project, a nonprofit charitable organization that showcases off-track Thoroughbreds who have found new avenues for their talents.

The Thoroughbred Makeover is sponsored by Thoroughbred Charities of America and also included educational seminars on strategies for helping Thoroughbreds make the transition from the track to new endeavors.

Ten different categories of competition were offered, and the horses had to be in training for their new disciplines. Rules for the competition required that the horses raced or had a workout after mid-2017 and began



With trainer Sara Katz in the saddle, Adam Newman's Diplomat jumped a log as part of the Thoroughbred Makeover's field hunter competition on Oct. 3.

CANTERCLIX PHOTO

preparations for their new careers no earlier than last Dec. 1.

Multiple careers for steeplechase horses are by no means a new development. Most were on their second careers when racing over fences, and an informal NSA survey in 2016 found that three-quarters of more than 400 retirees were involved in some other sporting activity, led by hunting.

The remaining 23% were retired to pasture. Steeplechase horses train in the country, and they often retire on the same farms where they were trained.

Diplomat secured his top-level victory with a 17.70-to-1 upset of Saratoga Race Course's

2017 New York Turf Writers Cup Handicap (Gr. 1). He made one further start, a Suffolk Downs flat race in July 2018. Claimed by Adam Newman and his brother, Richard, from a 2015 Saratoga optional claiming hurdle, he was trained by Kate Dalton and ridden by her husband, Bernie Dalton.

Mr. Hot Stuff, who won the 2017 Grand National (Gr. 1), was prepared by Quinn Scala, who rode and cared for him while he was in training with Jack Fisher.

Dawalan, who secured the 2015 Eclipse Award for owner Irv Naylor, was trained to his title by Cyril Murphy. In his new career, he is in the care of Rosie Allen.

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