



MONDAY REPORT

A weekly report from the National Steeplechase Association

Monday, April 15, 2019

Mystic Strike triumphs in My Lady's Manor

The shortest path to victory is on the inside. Your horse runs three miles, and your opponents run three miles and change.

Mark Beecher, a premier amateur timber jockey, well understands that bit of geometry, and he put it to use in winning the \$50,000 My Lady's Manor on Saturday, the first jewel of the Maryland Timber Triple Crown, with Upland Partners' Mystic Strike.

His major competitor in the three-mile classic, two-time timber champion Doc Cebu, took himself out of the game when he bashed through the second-to-last fence, stumbled slightly on landing, and pitched jockey Hadden Frost over his shoulder.

Mystic Strike added a little drama at the last when he kicked down the top rail on the inside, but he hardly missed a beat and ran down Blair Wyatt's Witor to win by 1 1/4 lengths. Bruton Street-US's Lemony Bay, the 2017 My Lady's Manor winner, finished third.

As expected, Armata Stables' Grand Manan went right to the lead at the start, with reigning timber champion Doc Cebu tracking his pace through the first 1 1/2 miles. When Grand Manan began to falter, Doc Cebu went to the lead and jumped well through the middle portion of the race.

Beecher placed Mystic Strike close behind the leaders in the early going and largely kept to the inside to provide his 10-year-old mount with the shortest path around the Monkton course.

Approaching the final fences, Mystic Strike was well inside as Doc Cebu led the way ahead of Witor and Lemony Bay toward the outside of the spacious course. Beecher gave his mount



Douglas Lees

Mystic Strike, right, fought past a game Witor to win the My Lady's Manor by 1 1/4 lengths.

a brief break and sacrificed some headway approaching the last two fences.

Doc Cebu, switched toward the inside for the second to last fence, struck the top rail, and dislodged Frost. Doc Cebu hardly missed a stride and ran with the field to the next fence.

With Doc Cebu out of the chase, Witor took the lead under Eric Poretz, with Lemony Bay close behind him.

Mystic Strike, back on the inside path, easily overcame his mistake at the last and fought past Witor in the stretch run. Witor continued to bat-

tle to the finish line but could not gain back any ground. Lemony Bay was third, 12 1/2 lengths behind Witor.

Mystic Strike ran the three-mile distance in 6:18 2/5 on turf rated as good. A foul claim by Poretz against Mystic Strike and Beecher was disallowed.

A Florida-bred Smart Strike gelding trained by Todd McKenna, Mystic Strike secured his first victory since having his number put up in the 2017 Radnor Hunt Cup in Pennsylvania. He had finished third in last year's My Lady's Manor.

Prime Prospector blazes to Schapiro win

Peter and Sarah Jay's Prime Prospector seized the lead after a mile of Saturday's John D. Schapiro Memorial timber allowance, ignored a challenge by Carrickboy at the two-mile point, and gamely held off Stand Down to win by 1 1/2 lengths. Carrickboy finished third in the three-mile race that wrapped up the 109th My Lady's Manor meet.

Jeremy Batoff's Class Indian went to the lead shortly after the start, and Paul O'Neill moved Prime Prospector to the top as the field passed the one-mile mark and opened three lengths. Morning Star Farm's Carrickboy, ridden by

McLane Hendriks, burst to the lead as the field passed under the finish line for the first time.

Carrickboy's advantage was brief, however, and Prime Prospector soon re-established himself on the lead, with Pennsylvania Hunt Cup winner Stand Down lurking close behind him. Frank Bonsal's Stand Down launched his bid over the final fences but could not make serious headway on Prime Prospector in the stretch. An 11-year-old trained by Todd Wyatt, Prime Prospector was making his first start since losing his rider in the 2018 Maryland Hunt Cup. He had won a Willowdale timber allowance in 2017.

On the inside

Jack Fisher increased his lead in the trainer standings with victories by Schoodic and Political Theatre in the John Rush Streett Memorial and the Thomas H. Voss Memorial2

Next up: The Maryland Timber Triple Crown continues with the 117th Grand National, and Middleburg Spring celebrates its 99th running.....3

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My Lady's Manor Undercard

Fisher scores wins in Streett, Voss maidens

Jack Fisher's roots in the timber sport run deep, very deep. A great-grandfather on his father's side was John Rush Streett, a renowned Maryland horseman for whom one of the My Lady's Manor races is named. His father, John R.S. Fisher, was an accomplished timber rider and trainer.

One of Jack Fisher's mentors was the late Thomas Voss, the Hall of Fame trainer who was a neighbor of Fisher and his wife, Sheila. Thus, it was significant that the champion trainer won the maiden timber races named for Streett and Voss at Saturday's My Lady's Manor.

After a disappointment in the My Lady's Manor when Doc Cebu stumbled and flipped Hadden Frost out of the saddle, Fisher and Frost regrouped and won the next two races on the program. The victories added to Fisher's lead in the trainer standings. He now has five wins from only 13 starts. It took him another month to get to five wins last year.

The 12-time champion trainer won the Streett with one of his greatest challenges, Schoodic. Now owned by his mother, Dolly Fisher, Schoodic possesses a wealth of talent, but he is very stingy with it. He owns a Grade 2 victory over hurdles, but in many of his races he willfully refused to serve up his best.

The Streett was the Tiznow gelding's first venture over timber, and at times he was tussling with Frost, jumping haphazardly, or acting distracted. He possesses sufficient speed that he was always close to the pace set by Our Town, and he hooked up with Bruton Street-US's Satish in the stretch.

Schoodic decided it was time to run, and he dug in under Frost's persistent urging. He fought his way to the lead and prevailed by a head over Leslie Young-trained Satish. Awesome Adrian came on to finish third.

Schoodic hardly set any speed record in the Streett. He ran the three miles in 6:48 on turf rated as good, which was the slowest time of the day by more than 20 seconds.

The My Lady's Manor maiden timber invariably is split with an abundance of entries, and in past years it has been noted as divisions of the Streett. This year, the Manor directors decided to name the second race in memory of Tom Voss, who died in 2014 and was inducted into Thoroughbred racing's Hall of Fame in 2017.



Douglas Lees

Dolly Fisher's Schoodic, inside, battled past Satish to win the John Rush Streett Memorial maiden timber race, above. Awesome Adrian, left, finished third. Hyggelig Haven's Political Theatre defeated pacesetter Renegade River, below at far left, in the Thomas Voss Memorial. Third finisher Some Response is in the center. Jack Fisher trained both winners, who were ridden by Hadden Frost.



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Fisher took the inaugural Tom Voss Memorial with Hyggelig Haven's Political Theatre, who scored by a length over pacesetter Renegade River. Armata Stables' Some Response took third, 11 1/4 lengths farther back after his attack fell short in the stretch.

Kiplin Hall's Renegade River led for most of

the race under Paul Cawley and showed no indication of wanting to give up the lead. Political Theatre, always close, doggedly ran down the pacesetter before opening his one-length margin in the final strides.

A seven-year-old Irish-bred gelding, Political Theatre ran the distance in 6:21 4/5.



Next Up

First doubleheader with Middleburg, Grand National

The National Steeplechase Association will feature its first doubleheader of the 2019 season on Saturday with two racing traditions, the 99th Middleburg Spring Steeplechase and the 117th annual Grand National.

The Middleburg Spring races at Glenwood Park always attract top competitors and full fields. Middleburg also will feature the year's first graded stakes race, the \$75,000 Temple Gwathmey Handicap (Gr. 2).

That 2 1/2-mile race over National Fences attracted a start-studded group of 10 nominations, including an Eclipse Award winner, three other Grade 1 winners, and a novice champion.

Jack Fisher, already drawing clear of his fellow trainers in the standings, nominated the two champions, both owned by Bruton Street-US: 2017 Eclipse winner Scorpiancer and 2017 novice champion Moscato. Scorpiancer would be

making his first start since winning the 2017 Temple Gwathmey and Calvin Houghland Irquois (Gr. 1). Moscato also missed the 2018 season and last raced at Belmont Park, where he won the William Entenmann Novice Stakes.

The three Grade 1 winners are Show Court, All the Way Jose, and Portrade. Mark Buyck Jr.'s Show Court won last summer's A. P. Smithwick Memorial at Saratoga Race Course.

Buttonwood Farm's All the Way Jose took the 2017 Lonesome Glory Handicap at Belmont Park, and The Fields Stable's Portrade blazed to victory in the 2016 New York Turf Writers Cup. Portrade gave Scorpiancer at fight in the 2017 Temple Gwathmey and finished second.

Scorpiancer is the highweight at 158 pounds, and also in the mix is Apple Equipment's Winner Massagot, runaway winner of last fall's Noel Laing Handicap at Montpelier.


Middleburg Spring also will feature the \$30,000 Middleburg Hunt Cup.

The historic Grand National, middle jewel of the Maryland Timber Triple Crown, also drew a strong list of nominees headed by Irvin "Skip" Crawford's Senior Senator, who will be vying to retire the Grand National Challenge Cup for his owner with a third straight victory.

Trained by Joe Davies, who swept the Grand National's three races last year, Senior Senator added his second Maryland Hunt Cup victory after last year's score in the Grand National.

Also among the Grand National's nominees is Raven's Choice, who finished second to Senior Senator in last year's Grand National. Owned by Ann Jackson, Raven's Choice won the 2015 Maryland Hunt Cup by disqualification.

First post time is 1 p.m. at Middleburg, and the Grand National kicks off at 3:15 p.m.



STEEPLECHASE STANDINGS THROUGH APRIL 13

OWNERS BY EARNINGS						JOCKEYS BY WINS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Irvin S. Naylor	7	2	0	0	\$35,800	Sean McDermott	10	4	2	2	\$79,900
DASH Stable	2	1	0	1	33,500	Jack Doyle	11	3	0	2	75,800
Upland Partners	1	1	0	0	30,000	Richard Boucher	5	2	1	0	27,200
Katherine S. Neilson	2	1	1	0	24,300	Hadden Frost	3	2	0	0	24,000
Sheila J. Williams	2	1	0	0	21,000	Mark Beecher	2	1	0	0	30,000
Morning Star Farm	4	1	0	0	19,000	Kieran Norris	8	1	2	0	25,650
Bon Nouvel Chasers	1	1	0	0	18,000	Michael Mitchell	10	1	1	3	28,150
Why Not Racing LLC	2	1	1	0	17,400	Keri Brion	2	1	0	1	17,000
Mrs. S.K. Johnston Jr.	4	1	0	1	16,250	Paul O'Neill	2	1	0	0	7,000
Team Ollie	1	1	0	0	15,000	Eric Poretz	3	0	2	0	12,800

TRAINERS BY WINS						HORSES BY EARNINGS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Fisher	13	5	1	2	\$103,750	Ice It	1	1	0	0	\$30,000
Katherine S. Neilson	9	3	1	1	63,4700	Mystic Strike	1	1	0	0	30,000
Lilith Boucher	4	2	1	0	26,400	Soluble (Ger)	2	1	1	0	24,300
Ricky Hendriks	15	1	2	1	36,450	Storm Team	1	1	0	0	21,000
Julie Gomena	8	1	2	0	26,650	Indigo Heart	1	1	0	0	18,000
Jonathan Sheppard	8	1	1	2	22,750	Aggressive (Ire)	1	1	0	0	18,000
Todd Wyatt	3	1	1	0	22,750	Repeat Repeat	1	1	0	0	18,000
Todd McKenna	1	1	0	0	30,000	Orchestra Leader	1	1	0	0	15,000
Alicia Murphy	2	1	0	0	9,000	Schoodic	1	1	0	0	12,000
Neil R. Morris	7	0	1	3	13,750	Amnicalola	1	1	0	0	12,000