



MONDAY REPORT

A weekly report from the National Steeplechase Association

Monday, April 29, 2019

He did it! *Senior Senator takes third Hunt Cup*

Making history is never easy, and it certainly wasn't a canter in the park for Irvin N. "Skip" Crawford's Senior Senator, who inscribed his name in the annals of timber racing with his third victory in the \$100,000 Maryland Hunt Cup on Saturday.

For a while, it looked as though his third win in four years would be relatively easy. He was leading in the four-mile race's latter stages and jumping well.

Then adversity struck. But Senior Senator showed his mettle and his courage, all within the historic race's final six furlongs, and he drew away after the last to a four-length victory over Drift Society.

The victory retired the Hunt Cup's challenge trophy for owner Crawford, who has gone to the winner's stand the last two years and in 2016. The victory also established indelibly that Joseph G. Davies is the premier Hunt Cup trainer of his generation.

This year's Hunt Cup win was Davies' fourth straight; he won in 2017 with Gerry Brewster's Derwins Prospector, who ran in this year's Hunt Cup and finished sixth of nine starters. Senior Senator ran the Hunt Cup's four miles in 9:16 4/5 on turf rated as good.

With the victory, Senior Senator became the first three-time Hunt Cup winner since Joy Valentine's imported Cancottage in 1983. Seven others have won the race three times since its inception in 1894.

For a while, it appeared that Senior Senator would have no trouble securing that historic third win. He went to the lead at the break and jumped well over the first part of the course.

He appeared to make a modest mistake at the seventh fence and stumbled slightly on landing, but from that point he was jumping confidently and soaring over the Hunt Cup's testing fences.

Bruton Street-US's Drift Society, a true Hunt Cup horse with a second-place finish in 2017 and a third last year, had one trick up his sleeve. Jockey Hadden Frost asked for some speed at the 19th fence, and Drift Society quickly opened two lengths on Senior Senator.

Poretz certainly did not panic, but then disaster



Eric Poretz let out a shout as Senior Senator scored his third Hunt Cup victory.

Douglas Lees

nearly struck as they crossed the tanbark-covered road that bisects the course. Senior Senator slipped and slid as though he was on ice, and he nearly went crashing to the ground in a cloud of flying mulch.

Somehow—somehow—Senior Senator stayed on his feet despite going to his knees and Poretz stayed in the saddle. They still had Drift Society and Frost to contend with, however, and again neither horse nor jockey panicked.

Senior Senator took the next-to-last fence in stride, slashed Drift Society's advantage, and flew over the last to retake the lead. He quickly drew clear and held off the game Drift Society.

On the inside

Riverdee Stable's Gibralfaro drew clear in Brooklandwood Race Course's stretch and won the \$100,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase2
Maccabee surged to victory in Foxfield Spring's Daniel Van Clief Memorial.3

Go Jump Racing!



Queen's Cup Steeplechase



Tod Marks

Gibralfaro headed for the finish line in the \$100,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase.

Another week, another triple for Fisher juggernaut

The first six weeks of trainer Jack Fisher's 2019 season have been as good as the opening weeks of his 2018 season were—yes, we can say it now—bad. To be sure, he won his seventh straight title by wins, but he had to come from far behind to secure the championship.

This year is very, very different. Fisher started strong and has gotten stronger. He had three wins at the Middleburg Spring Races on April 20 and added another hat trick at the Queen's Cup Steeplechase on April 27. Just for good measure, he had a good second in the Maryland Hunt Cup with Drift Society.

His major score was the \$100,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase for novices, which he won with Riverdee Stable's Gibralfaro. (See story at left.) When the sun set on racing in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, he had 11 wins for the year; last year at this point, he had two. He has purse earnings of \$339,100, and his closest competitor is nearly a quarter-million dollars behind him.

The Queen's Cup offered a record \$200,000 for its 24th running in suburban Charlotte, and Fisher took home more than 60% of that total.

As he had done in Middleburg, Fisher bookended a stakes victory with wins in supporting races. To get the afternoon going, Fisher took the top two spots in a \$30,000 ratings handicap with Duodecim Stable's All for Us and DASH Stable's Whitman's Poetry. Willie McCarthy rode All for Us, who won by 3/4 lengths in 4:03 1/5 for 2 1/4 miles.

Fisher then won the afternoon's final jump race, the \$30,000 EasyFix Steeplethon over mixed obstacles, with Gil Johnston's Hanno, who was ridden by 10-pound apprentice Quinn Scala to a one-length win over Ride Away.

by the top of the lane and then grabbed the lead from Storm Team at the second-to-last fence.

Gibralfaro charges to facile victory in \$100,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase

Riverdee Stable's Gibralfaro accelerated sharply on Brooklandwood Race Course's final turn, overtook leader Storm Team at the head of the stretch, and drew clear to a 1 3/4-length win in Saturday's \$100,000 Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase, the marquee race of the 24th annual Queen's Cup Steeplechase near Charlotte, N.C.

A late move by My Afleet claimed second money, and Storm Team finished third in a field of nine novices, or horses in their first seasons of racing over fences. The Queen's Cup was the first race of the year for American Steeplechasing's rising-stars division.

Michael Mitchell rode Gibralfaro for trainer Jack Fisher. The Irish-bred, imported for the 2018 season, ran the 2 3/8 miles in 4:14 2/5 on firm turf.

Bruton Street-US's Lord Justice, also trained by Fisher, established the early pace and withstood an error at the fourth fence to maintain his advantage over Storm Team, ridden by top Irish jockey Danny Mullins.

Mitchell had Gibralfaro in midpack and well covered up as his Fisher stablemates made the running on the front. When Lord Justice committed another error four fences from the finish, Storm Team took the lead midway down the backstretch.

Gibralfaro appeared to be outrun nearing the final turn as Storm Team led toward the two fences in the homestretch, but Gibralfaro accelerated suddenly to draw into contention

Mullins kept Sheila Williams' and Northwoods Stable's Storm Team under pressure, but Gibralfaro drew clear, and My Afleet moved strongly from the back of the field to grab the place spot under Kieran Norris. Storm Team finished third, and Riverdee's City Dreamer, also trained by Fisher, finished fourth.

Irish-bred Gibralfaro had won last spring's Tryon Block House, and he made his 2019 debut at the Queen's Cup after second-place finishes in novice stakes, a division of Far Hills' Foxbrook Champion Hurdle and the Aflac Supreme Hurdle at the Steeplechase at Callaway, last fall.

Corky Lemon takes maiden hurdle

Jockey Sean McDermott is showing this spring that he is a master of pace, and he used all those skills aboard Smallwood Stable's Corky Lemon in the Queen's Cup's \$40,000 maiden hurdle. The Denis of Cork gelding burst to the lead at the start, set a lackadaisical pace for the first 1 1/2 miles of the 2 1/8-mile race, and then drew away on the final turn.

The Queen's Cup announcer, Mark Johnson, noted that McDermott had Corky Lemon strolling on the lead, and indeed he was. Then McDermott showed his opponents that Corky Lemon had plenty left in the tank as they began

to pull away from Bet the Pot midway down the backstretch the last time.

By the time Corky Lemon jumped the last two fences, the race was all but over, and he won by 5/4 lengths. Bruton Street-US's Snap Decision closed well under Willie McCarthy to take second from Armata Stables' You're No Better. Jonathan Sheppard's Bet the Pot, who had tracked Corky Lemon's pace, finished fourth.

Trained by Nancy Ruch, Corky Lemon had tried steeplechasing for the first time at the Carolina Cup and finished a well-beaten sixth in a \$25,000 maiden claiming hurdle.

Foxfield Spring Races

Maccabee's late run wins Van Clief Memorial

The Maccabees were warriors who drove Greek invaders from ancient Judea in the Second Century B.C., and certainly the racehorse who bears their name is a warrior.

Mason Hardaway Lampton's Maccabee already has made three starts this season, and he has two victories from those efforts for the Boucher family, trainer Lilith and jockey Richard.

He's one of those horses who gives you a thrill late in the race, and he did it again on Saturday at the Foxfield Spring Races. He uncorked a strong move to the final fence and drew away with authority to win the \$25,000 Daniel Van Clief Memorial ratings handicap by 5¼ lengths.

Owner-trainer Bethany Baumgardner's Mavourneen, who had taken the lead two fences out, finished second, 2¼ lengths clear of Beverly R. Steinman's Bullet Star, who set the pace for much of the 2 1/8-mile race over National Fences. Ann Jackson's Flash Jackson finished fourth in a field of 10.

Maccabee, a six-year-old Street Hero gelding, was well back early before attacking in the race's latter stages. He ran the distance in 4:04 4/5 on firm turf.

In his previous victory at the Aiken Spring Races on March 23, Maccabee made a late run that was reviewed by the stewards after he finished second by a nose. He was carried out



Betsy Burke Parker

Mason Hardaway Lampton's Maccabee, ridden by Richard Boucher, overtook own-trainer Bethany Baumgardner's Mavourneen at the last fence of the Van Clief.

nearly to the outside fence by his opponent and was awarded the victory in a maiden claiming hurdle.

He came back in two weeks at The Cup Runneth Over meet and finished seventh in a

ratings handicap similar to Foxfield's.

He carried 147 pounds, six pounds fewer than highweights Flash Jackson and L'Aigle Royal, who was pulled up. Both highweights had apprentice riders with five-pound allowances.

Market Alley rallies for distaff maiden hurdle victory

Beverly Steinman's Market Alley worked her way steadily through a field of maiden fillies and mares, jumped to the lead three fences out in the Foxfield Spring Races' \$20,000 maiden hurdle, and resisted a last move by That's That to claim her first career victory by 1½ lengths.

Clarke Ohrstrom's Furiosa, well placed throughout the 2 1/8-mile race, finished third in a field of nine. Market Alley ran the distance in 4:14 1/5 on firm turf.

Timothy Younie's Patmos, making her first start over fences after a full flat career in her native Ontario, had inherited the lead after front-running Lady Jane landed awkwardly over the fourth fence. Patmos tired after Market Alley and jockey Barry Foley overtook her and finished eighth.

Trained by Doug Fout, Market Alley won in her fourth start over fences; she had finished fourth in her previous jump starts. She was beaten 9 1/4 lengths in a similar maiden race for fillies and mares at the Carolina Cup on March 30. The Flower Alley mare was bred in Kentucky by her owner and finished second in a Laurel Park maiden flat race last summer.

Jump to Juneau takes to timber

In his prior start, Jump to Juneau had finally won over fences in a maiden claiming hurdle at the Montpelier Hunt Races in November.

Between seasons, he obtained a new owner, Kinross Farm, and a new trainer, Neil Morris. He also found a new calling, racing over timber.

With Barry Foley in the saddle, the six-year-old took the lead before the last fence and just held off a belated charge by El Jefe Grande to win the \$10,000 Grover Vandervender Memorial maiden timber by a neck.

Dr. K'eogh finished third. Jump to Juneau ran three miles in 5:44 1/5 on firm turf.

Lead Investor is money in the bank

Taking the Lead Stable's Lead Investor opened daylight after the final fence and drew clear to a resounding 8 1/2-length victory in the Foxfield Spring Races opener, a \$15,000 maiden claiming hurdle.

Naval Gazer, who had run second for most of the race, led over the last but offered little resistance to Lead Investor's charge up the middle of the stretch. Morning Star Farm's Shoreline, who had led to the last, finished third in a field of eight.

Lead Investor ran the 2 1/8-mile distance in 4:05 4/5 on firm turf.

Lead Investor is trained by Racing Hall of

Fame member Jonathan Sheppard and was ridden by Aaron Sinnott. He was a maiden on the flat and finished fifth in his first career start over fences at Charleston last November. The five-year-old gelding is by Tizway, a son of champion Tiznow who the 2011 Metropolitan Handicap (Gr. 1). Spendthrift Farm exported Tizway to South Korea in 2011.

In the afternoon's training flat race, trainer Neil Morris took down the top two spots when his PathFinder Racing's Glad Moon scored by 3 ¾ lengths over Gil Johnston's Mutasaawy. The Fields Stable's End of an Era finished third.

Glad Moon ran 1 1/16 miles in 1:45 flat.



Next Up

Virginia Gold Cup, Winterthur kick off May

With the arrival of May, the National Steeplechase Association heads into the final four weeks of the spring season and the first of its two Sunday programs during the month.

First up on the first Saturday in May is the 94th running of the Virginia Gold Cup, which annually draws the largest crowd on the NSA circuit, topping out at 70,000 fans. The race program at Great Meadow Race Course in The Plains offers \$420,000 in purses in a card featuring races over timber, hurdles, and mixed obstacles as well as three flat races. First post time is 12:30 p.m.

On Sunday, the action swings to Delaware for the 41st annual Winterthur Races, which features the \$41,000 Winterthur Bowl over timber fences. First post time is 2 p.m.

The Virginia Gold Cup's signature race, the \$100,000 Virginia Gold Cup, drew a strong

list of nominees that included two-time timber champion Doc Cebu.

Owned by Charles Fenwick Jr., Michael Hankin, and Charles Noell, Doc Cebu clinched his timber-racing title the last two seasons at Great Meadow with victories in the International Gold Cup, and he will attempt the Virginia Gold Cup's four miles for the first time in his career.

Also for the first time, he will be coming into a race after being unplaced in his prior start. He struck the top rails of the next-to-last fence of the My Lady's Manor on April 13 and stumbled on landing, dislodging jockey Hadden Frost.

The Virginia Gold Cup nominees include the first two finishers in the My Lady's Manor, Keystone Thoroughbreds' winner Mystic Strike and Blair Wyatt's Witor, who finished 1 1/4 lengths back. Todd McKenna trains Mystic Strike, win-

ner by disqualification of the 2017 Radnor Hunt Cup, and Todd Wyatt trains Witor for his wife.

Also on the My Lady's Manor program, Frank Bonsal Jr.'s Stand Down finished second in the John D. Schapiro Memorial amateur apprentice timber race. The Virginia Gold Cup nominee had won the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup in his previous start.

The Virginia Gold Cup's hurdle feature, the \$75,000 David Semmes Memorial (Gr. 2), attracted a nomination for Rosbrian Farm's New York Turf Writers Cup (Gr. 1) winner Optimus Prime. In his most recent start, the French-bred demolished a quality field in the International Gold Cup's David L. "Zeke" Ferguson Memorial (Gr. 2).

Nominated to the 3 1/4-mile Winterthur Bowl were 2016 timber champion Two's Company and last year's winner, Kings Apollo.



STEEPLECHASE STANDINGS

THROUGH APRIL 28

OWNERS BY EARNINGS						JOCKEYS BY WINS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Bruton Street-US	13	2	3	3	\$113,800	Michael Mitchell	18	5	3	3	\$175,150
Irvin L. Crawford II	2	2	0	0	90,000	Jack Doyle	20	5	2	2	121,600
Riverdee Stable	3	1	0	1	67,000	Sean McDermott	18	5	2	5	119,600
Irvin S. Naylor	15	3	2	0	61,100	Richard Boucher	8	3	1	0	42,200
Mrs. S.K. Johnston Jr.	9	3	0	2	55,100	Eric Poretz	7	2	3	1	106,900
DASH Stable	3	1	1	1	38,900	Hadden Frost	5	2	1	0	44,500
Sheila J. Williams	3	1	0	1	31,000	Aaron Sinnott	5	2	1	0	44,500
Armata Stables	9	0	2	3	30,100	Barry Foley	16	2	0	3	37,200
Upland Partners	2	1	0	0	30,000	Kieran Norris	15	1	4	1	53,850
Smallwood Stable	2	1	0	0	24,600	Gerard Galligan	12	1	2	2	38,400

TRAINERS BY WINS						HORSES BY EARNINGS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Fisher	33	11	4	5	\$339,100	Senior Senator	2	2	0	0	\$90,000
Katherine S. Neilson	19	4	3	3	101,800	Gibralfaro (Ire)	1	1	0	0	60,000
Leslie F. Young	10	3	2	2	51,300	Moscato	1	1	0	0	45,000
Jonathan Sheppard	17	3	1	3	58,300	Storm Team	2	1	0	1	31,000
Lilith Boucher	5	3	1	0	41,400	Ice It	1	1	0	0	30,000
Joseph G. Davies	12	2	2	1	109,500	Mystic Strike	1	1	0	0	30,000
Ricky Hendriks	25	1	4	3	56,850	Corky Lemon	2	1	0	0	24,600
Julie Gomena	15	1	4	0	37,550	Soluble (Ger)	2	1	1	0	24,300
Neil R. Morris	11	1	1	3	22,750	Maccabee	3	2	0	0	24,000
Todd Wyatt	7	1	1	2	24,250	Special Relation (Ire)	1	1	0	0	21,000