



MONDAY REPORT

A weekly report from the National Steeplechase Association

Monday, April 8, 2019

Orchestra Leader conquers ratings handicap at inaugural The Cup Runneth Over meet

Steeplechase owners love their horses. Many of those horses almost qualify as family members; the owners spend time with them, on occasion ride them, and then give them good homes after their racing days are over.

It's also fair to say that Keri Brion really, really loves her horses. Assistant trainer to Jonathan Sheppard, she heads up the Team Ollie partnership, whose leading light is none other than Ollie, the loving stable name of Orchestra Leader.

Now 10, Orchestra Leader is a warrior. He has made 58 career starts, and he added his 11th win on Saturday when he prevailed by three-quarters of a length in the \$25,000 ratings handicap at the inaugural The Cup Runneth Over at Springdale Race Course in Camden, S.C.

The ratings handicap, for horses rated at 115 or lower, attracted a full lineup, and Orchestra Leader was the obvious horse to watch after winning feature races in the past, especially at the Foxfield Spring Steeplechase, where he won the Daniel Van Clief Memorial in 2015 and 2016.

But the question remained: Did the old warrior still have the will and ability to win? After all, he had been pulled up in his final three jump starts last year for Team Ollie. His best finish was a third at Iroquois in a ratings handicap. Team Ollie had acquired Orchestra Leader after he was claimed for \$20,000 from his last prior winning race, an optional claiming hurdle at Foxfield Fall in 2017.

Brion had first ridden Orchestra Leader in 2016, when he finished second in the Van Clief, and she was in the saddle when the gelding won the 2017 Van Clief for the late Bruce Smart and trainer Jimmy Day. Virginia-based Day made Brion the regular rider for Orchestra Leader, who was claimed in May 2017 by Rosbrian Farm from a High Hope optional claimer; Day also trained him after the 2017 Foxfield Fall claim before Brion moved Ollie to Sheppard for the current racing season.

Orchestra Leader's final three jumps starts last year depressed his rating to 115 and qualified him for the handicap at Springdale. Brion, who still carries a five-pound apprentice bug, took some weight off the highweight's back and rode



Team Ollie's Orchestra Leader and Keri Brion led the ratings handicap field over the final fence.

Catherine French

him with confidence.

She placed him a short distance behind and outside early leader Giza after the first few fences, and they briefly took the lead on the clubhouse turn of Springdale's outside turf course. Jumping well, Orchestra Leader took the lead for good entering the final turn and was challenged into the last by Gil Johnston's Ack Feisty.

Orchestra Leader opened daylight at the last as Ack Feisty continued his run. Woodslane Farm's Pik Em, ridden by Willie McCarthy, made a sudden late surge to seize second place but never was a threat of catching the winner. Ack Feisty finished third, a length behind Pik Em and a neck in front of Rosbrian's Barhanpour.

"There are no words to describe how amazing this little horse is!!," Brion posted on her Facebook page. "Thank you to all the partners in Team Ollie who have never given up on him. I am over the moon with this little horse; we both needed this so bad."

The ratings handicap attracted a capacity crowd of 14 starters, and the other four races

also were at or near capacity. A meet designed for steeplechase horsemen, The Cup Runneth Over was created in mid-March after the Georgia Steeplechase abruptly canceled its meet scheduled for April 6.

The Cup Runneth Over was sponsored by the National Steeplechase Association and the Carolina Cup Racing Association.

On the inside

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Go Jump Racing!



The Cup Runneth Over Undercard



Catherine French

Mark W. Buyck Jr.'s *Two to Go*, ridden by Michael Mitchell, began to edge away from his opponents in the training flat race. Arch Kingsley Jr. trained the winner.

Annicalola scores maiden victory

In her final start of 2017, Gil Johnston's Annicalola was in deep. Then a four-year-old, she clearly had talent, but she was a maiden going against winners and stakes winners in Saratoga's Mrs. Ogden Phipps Stakes. Moreover, she was ridden by Forest Boyce, a skilled flat jockey with little experience over fences.

It didn't go well. While setting the pace on the far outside, Annicalola delivered a jump that knocked Boyce out of her irons, and she was pulled up shortly afterward.

The Arch mare missed last season, and she returned with a vengeance Saturday in the \$20,000 maiden hurdle for fillies and mares at The Cup Runneth Over. She won by 4¼ lengths, the largest victory margin of the day, and she delivered the fastest 2 1/8-mile time of the three maiden hurdles, 3:54 3/5 on turf rated as good.

Ridden by Michael Mitchell, Annicalola was in tight at the last with owner-trainer William Wofford's Choklitcoverdonut, ridden by Gerard Galligan, and KMSN Stable's Inverness, with Keri Brion in the saddle. Both riders claimed foul, but the claims were disallowed.

Choklitcoverdonut finished second, three-quarters of a length ahead of Inverness. Beverly Steinman's Market Alley finished fourth, 4¼ lengths farther back.

The filly-mare maiden hurdle attracted a field of 10, with two others on the also-eligible list for the first 2019 race limited to females.

Annicalola gave trainer Jack Fisher his third win of the season and tied him with Kathy Neilson for the lead by wins. He widened his lead in the purses standings and now has 2019 earnings of \$74,750.

Change Maker takes maiden claimer

Stephany W.S. Harper's Change Maker, always in a strong position under Sean McDermott, easily drew clear in Springdale Race Course's stretch on Saturday and won The Cup Runneth Over's \$15,000 maiden claiming hurdle.

Stonelea Stable's Naval Gazer, disqualified to second at Aiken Spring in a similar race, closed well for second. Sharon Sheppard's Moorland took third in a field of nine.

Trained by Alicia Murphy, Change Maker ran the maiden claimer's 2 1/8 miles in 4:09 4/5.

Debra Kachel's Capo Dei Capi, a training flat winner at Aiken Spring, set the early pace while Change Maker cruised along in third while maintaining the inside position. As the front-runner began to weaken on the first run down the backstretch, McDermott guided his mount to the front and then geared down the pace as the field moved into the backstretch the second time.

Change Maker opened a daylight lead after then final fence, and Naval Gazer under Kieran Norris closed well to be second, 2¾ lengths

Repeat Repeat repels charge by Jump Ship

Making his first start over fences, Bon Nouvel Chasers' Repeat Repeat will not need to repeat a maiden start after repelling a late charge by Why Not Racing's Jump Ship in The Cup Runneth Over's \$30,000 Sport of Kings maiden hurdle on Saturday.

Petticoats Loose Farm's Gaye Breeze, who drew into the field after a late scratch, finished third in a capacity field of 10 for the 2 1/8-mile race at Springdale Race Course. Khafayya finished fourth.

Trained by Julie Gomena, Repeat Repeat set a steady, solid pace under Kieran Norris, with Gaye Breeze accompanying him down the backstretch the final time. A five-year-old Arch gelding, Repeat Repeat looked solidly in control as he jumped the final fence and set sights on the finish line.

But Jump Ship, ridden by Richard Boucher, was just getting into high gear after the last. At the last fence on the backstretch, the veteran jockey was on the outside, and he shifted toward the inside as he picked up horses and began his move.

Nearing the last, Boucher shifted him to the inside position and took aim on the leader. Jump Ship steadily made up ground, but Repeat Repeat was still running and prevailed by a neck. Gaye Breeze finished third, a half-length farther back. Repeat Repeat ran the distance in 4:05 on turf rated as good.

A four-time winner on the flat, Repeat Repeat always has been at his best on or near the lead. Three of those wins came last year and bracketed a first-place finish at Gulfstream Park in which he was disqualified. After a disappointing Monmouth Park start, he was claimed for \$16,000 last August from a Delaware Park race in which he finished seventh.

behind the winner. Moorland was six lengths farther back, and Beverly Steinman's Be Somebody finished fourth.

The victory in the afternoon's opening race gave McDermott the undisputed lead in the jockey standings with four wins in the 2019 season's first three meets. He also is atop the earnings table with \$79,900, \$4,100 ahead of Jack Doyle, who has three wins for the season but was blanked at Camden. McDermott is having a flying start after a slow spring season last year in which he won three races through May.



Next Up

My Lady's Manor kicks off timber-racing season

My Lady's Manor, one of Maryland's oldest racing traditions, will have two important enhancements for its 109th sanctioned running on Saturday. The purse of its signature race, the My Lady's Manor, has been increased by two-thirds to \$50,000, and all of the day's races at the Monkton course will be limited to amateur jockeys.

The My Lady's Manor, a three-mile race over timber fences, is the kick-off contest for the storied Maryland Timber Triple Crown, which continues with the Grand National on April 20 and the Maryland Hunt Cup on April 27. Together, the three races will offer \$200,000 in purses, and all races will be limited to amateurs. "We are very proud of the changes that we've instituted for this year," said Ross Pearce, co-chairman of the My Lady's Manor meet with champion trainer Jack Fisher. "We

are honored to be a recipient of a Maryland Sports Commission grant for this year, and we have doubled down on that \$7,500 grant by increasing the My Lady's Manor purse by \$20,000."

Pearce noted that the Maryland Sports Commission is committed to advancing amateurism in the Free State, and the changes for the 2019 meet support that principle. "My Lady's Manor began as an amateur event long before its first sanctioned running in 1909," he said. "By limiting all of our races to amateur jockeys, we honor tradition and encourage young Maryland riders to pursue their dreams of racing over fences."

Both Pearce and Fisher rode as amateurs and were successful jockeys before transitioning to their current endeavors. Fisher, a Monkton resident, has been the National Steeplechase

Association's champion trainer for the last seven years.

Pearce, whose family traces back to some of the earliest settlers on the historic My Lady's Manor land grant, had a long career as a trainer and now is a Maryland Racing Commission steward at the state's flat tracks.

The My Lady's Manor meet annually attracts a crowd exceeding 25,000 and comprises three or four races, with projected purses of \$100,000. The signature My Lady's Manor race kicks off the meet and the pursuit of the Maryland Timber Triple Crown.

Among the seven nominees to the My Lady's Manor is two-time reigning timber champion Doc Cebu, who is owned by Charles Fenwick Jr., Michael Hankin, and Charles Noell. Now nine, the Hard Spun gelding is trained by Jack Fisher.



STEEPLECHASE STANDINGS THROUGH APRIL 6

OWNERS BY EARNINGS						JOCKEYS BY WINS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
DASH Stable	2	1	0	1	\$33,500	Sean McDermott	10	4	2	2	\$79,900
Irvin S. Naylor	4	2	0	0	32,500	Jack Doyle	11	3	0	2	75,800
Katherine S. Neilson	2	1	1	0	24,300	Richard Boucher	5	2	1	0	27,200
Sheila J. Williams	2	1	0	0	21,000	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
Morning Star Farm	3	1	0	0	18,000	Keri Brion	2	1	0	1	17,000
Why Not Racing LLC	2	1	1	0	17,400	Thomas Garner	7	0	2	0	8,600
Mrs. S.K. Johnston Jr.	4	1	0	1	16,250	Ross Geraghty	9	0	2	0	14,550
Team Ollie	1	1	0	0	15,000	Gerard Galligan	5	0	1	1	8,000
Stephany W.S. Harper	1	1	0	0	9,000	Willie McCarthy	6	0	1	1	9,000

TRAINERS BY WINS						HORSES BY EARNINGS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Fisher	9	3	1	1	\$74,750	Ice It	1	1	0	0	\$30,000
Katherine S. Neilson	5	3	1	0	54,900	Soluble (Ger)	2	1	1	0	24,300
Lilith Boucher	4	2	1	0	26,400	Storm Team	1	1	0	0	21,000
Julie Gomena	8	1	2	0	26,650	Indigo Heart	1	1	0	0	18,000
Ricky Hendriks	14	1	2	0	35,450	Aggressive (Ire)	1	1	0	0	18,000
Jonathan Sheppard	8	1	1	2	22,750	Repeat Repeat	1	1	0	0	18,000
Alicia Murphy	1	1	0	0	9,000	Orchestra Leader	1	1	0	0	15,000
Neil R. Morris	7	0	1	3	13,750	Amnicalola	1	1	0	0	12,000
Richard L. Valentine	7	0	1	1	12,200	Change of View	1	1	0	0	12,000
William G. Wofford	1	0	1	0	3,600	Pamzine	1	1	0	0	12,000