



MONDAY REPORT

A weekly report from the National Steeplechase Association

Monday, May 27, 2019

Amnicalola powers to Coggins win

Horsemen for generations have been searching for horses that possess the look of eagles, that glint in the eye that identifies class and ability.

Handicappers rarely get the opportunity to look a horse in the eye and peer into its inner being. The bettor, however, often goes by the look. It's the glow of good health and top condition, and it often defines a horse that is ready to run a lifetime-best race.

When they see the look, experienced handicappers head for the betting windows; value often lies in the look.

One example was Swale before the 1984 Kentucky Derby (Gr. 1). Everyone was looking at the filly Althea and not focused on Claiborne Farm's dark bay or brown Seattle Slew colt, who was glowing as he walked onto the Churchill Downs track.

Sent off at 3.40-to-1, Swale opened five lengths at the furlong pole and won by 3/4 lengths. Five weeks later, he won the Belmont Stakes (Gr. 1) but shortly thereafter was struck down by a mysterious heart condition.

Much more recently, trainer Ricky Hendriks sent out longshot Swansea Mile in the 2017 A. P. Smithwick Memorial (Gr. 1) at Saratoga. The Irish-bred's coat was gleaming, and he was worth a couple bucks at 28.50-to-1. Swansea Mile pulled the surprise of the summer and won by two lengths under Michael Mitchell.

On Saturday, Mitchell was aboard the horse with the look, Gil Johnston's Amnicalola. Her bay coat glistened in the afternoon sun as she calmly walked the paddock at the Fair Hill Races. All four starters in the \$50,000 Iris Coggins Memorial looked good, including the racy-looking 11-to-10 favorite Sarah Joyce. But Amnicalola was exceptional.

The question was whether she was good enough to back up her good looks. In her previous start two weeks earlier, the maiden hurdle winner had been pulled up in the Iroquois Steeplechase's Margaret Currey Henley.

At the conclusion of 2 1/4 miles on the emerald Fair Hill course, the Arch six-year-old mare proved that she indeed had the performance to back up her good looks. She powered past Sarah Joyce after the next-to-last fence, led by a half-length over the last, and won by 2 3/4 lengths.

The Fields Stable's multiple stakes winner Sarah Joyce finished second, 9/4 lengths ahead



Tom Marks

Michael Mitchell drove Amnicalola to the wire in Fair Hill's Iris Coggins Memorial.

of owner-trainer Bethany Baumgardner's Mavourneen. The Fields Stable's Dawn Wall, last year's upset Coggins winner, finished a distant fourth.

Sent to starter Chris Daney as the 2.40-to-1 third betting choice, Amnicalola ran the Coggins distance in 4:18 2/5 on firm turf.

The Coggins field was halved by four scratches, including Joseph Fowler's contender Down Royal, second in the Henley. The five-year-old was withdrawn after her jockey, Bernie Dalton was injured in a fall at the last fence in the afternoon's first race. He was treated for a broken jaw and a concussion at Christiana Hospital at nearby Newark, Del.

Baumgardner, who also rides Mavourneen, sent her mount to the lead at the start, while Jack Doyle kept Sarah Joyce a length or two behind her. Mitchell placed Amnicalola in the third spot, another couple lengths farther back.

Sarah Joyce tackled Mavourneen, the Coggins' 3.10-to-1 fourth betting choice, on the final turn but could not shake her immediately. At the second to last fence, Sarah Joyce gained the lead, and Mitchell worried a bit that Amnicalola might not have enough room to catch her before the wire.

But when Mitchell asked the question, Amnicalola answered emphatically. She blasted through the stretch, overtook Sarah Joyce over the last, and quickly drew clear for a career-best victory. The look had paid off.

Trained by Jack Fisher, Amnicalola paid \$6.80 to win. She was the second straight winner for Fisher and Mitchell, who paired up Rather Be Racing's Our Legend for a half-length victory in the previous race, an allowance hurdle for four-year-olds. Finishing second was Mrs. Johnston's Knockholt, also trained by Fisher.

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Go Jump Racing!





Tod Marks

Robert Kinsley's *No Wunder* and Jack Doyle, right, headed for the wire in the *Valentine Memorial* as *Hinterland* stumbled slightly at the last fence of the ratings handicap.

No Wunder breaks through for win in \$40,000 Valentine Memorial

Robert A. Kinsley's *No Wunder* always has run well at Fair Hill, and he returned to the northern Maryland racecourse on Saturday for a notable 2¾-length victory in the \$40,000 Valentine Memorial ratings handicap.

The British-bred *Rock of Gibraltar* eight-year-old had won his maiden victory over fences at the Fair Hill Spring Races in 2017 and went on to a runaway handicap win at Saratoga Race Course over a subsequent Grade 1 winner.

In his following race, Belmont Park's William Entenmann Memorial Novice Stakes, he was nearly upended in a freak incident and lost jockey Jack Doyle. His races were a patchwork after that incident, but still trainer Elizabeth Voss persisted.

The persistence paid off, finally. After a sixth-place finish in the Queen's Cup MPC 'Chase on April 27, *No Wunder* returned to Fair Hill and put together a thoroughly professional performance to win for the first time since his August 2017 score at Saratoga.

His recent form made him the 5-to-2 third betting choice for the five-horse Valentine

Memorial despite his maiden win over the course and a good second in last year's Valentine Memorial. He carried 148 pounds, six fewer than Mark Buyck Jr.'s *Show Court*, a Grade 1 winner last year at Saratoga.

Doyle, *No Wunder*'s regular jockey since his first appearance over fences, parked him behind the early pace set by Morning Star Farm's *Indigo Heart*, the 2.10-to-1 favorite. *Show Court* tracked *Indigo Heart*'s pace in second, while *No Wunder* was third and *Sonny Via*'s *Hinterland* ran fourth.

When the serious running began on the final turn, *Indigo Heart* began to tire, and *No Wunder* and *Hinterland* challenged two fences from the wire. *No Wunder* and *Hinterland* battled to the last, where *No Wunder* put in a strong jump to lead by a head while *Hinterland* appeared to stumble slightly on landing.

No Wunder widened through the stretch and completed the 2¼ miles in 4:12 flat on firm turf. *Hinterland* continued well to lock up second, 12 lengths clear of *Irv Naylor*'s *Bobabout*. *Show Court* finished fourth.

Teodoro notches maiden victory for Rosbrian Farm

Rosbrian Farm and its team scaled the heights last year, when George and Mandy Mahoney's operation was the National Steeplechase Association's leading owner, principal trainer Ricky Hendriks contended for the wins and earnings titles, and Ross Geraghty ruled as the champion jockey by purses.

The current spring season has been less kind, although they combined for *Optimus Prime*'s noteworthy victory in the Virginia Gold Cup's David Semmes Memorial (Gr. 2) on May 4.

At the Fair Hill Spring Races on Saturday, Rosbrian secured its third victory of the 2019 season when *Teodoro* rolled to a 14-length score in a \$30,000 maiden hurdle. Geraghty rode the Irish-bred for Hendriks, who had a second winner of the card when his Morning Star Farm's *Shoreline* won a maiden claiming hurdle by 9¾ lengths.

By the prominent Ireland-based sire *Teofilo*, *Teodoro* has tons of talent, but it has not translated seamlessly into racing over fences. Raced on the flat by Laurence Bellman and Caroline Ingram, he won *Haydock's Rose of Lancaster Stakes* (Eng-Gr. 3) last August and finished fifth in his U.S. debut in Belmont Park's *Joe Hirsch Turf Classic* (Gr. 1).

Two further stakes starts at the Fair Grounds over the winter showed that the five-year-old would not prosper in American flat racing, and he was acquired by Rosbrian as a jump-racing prospect.

He raced greenly in his jumping debut at the Middleburg Spring Races on April 20. *Teodoro* opened a long lead on the field of maidens while jumping erratically, fought off a late challenge, and led by a length at the final fence. But he had nothing left when KMSN Racing's *Sportsweat* came flying at the end and won by 2¼ lengths.

Although still a work in progress, *Teodoro*'s jumping was much better at Fair Hill, and he rated on the lead for Geraghty thorough the first 1½ miles of the 2¼-mile race. He opened seven lengths on the field around the final turn and doubled that margin through the stretch for a victory as easy as its 14 lengths implied.

He ran the distance in 4:09 4/5 on firm turf and equaled the course record set by *Kensington Court* in 2016. Favored at 1.70-to-1 by the festive Fair Hill crowd, *Teodoro* paid \$5.40 to win.

Sharon Sheppard's *Khafayya*, who had tussled with *Teodoro* in the Middleburg Spring race and finished third, finished second at Fair Hill. Gil Johnston's *Brianbakescookies* was another three-quarters of a length farther back in third. Seeking Albert finished fourth.

Fair Hill's Friday Program

Schoodic dominates novice timber for third win

The Fair Hill Spring Races offered a twilight racing program on Friday. It was a step out of the ordinary for the historic Maryland track, which in recent years has featured a Saturday card to kick off Memorial Day weekend.

One aspect of the afternoon was in fact commonplace for the spring of 2019. Jack Fisher went to the winner's circle twice for the two Friday timber races that count in the National Steeplechase Association standings. Fisher collected his 19th and 20th victories of the 2019 season. While he had a subpar season last spring, Fisher won his seventh consecutive title by victories, with 22 wins. He equaled his 2018 tally with two more wins on Saturday.

Fisher, whose roots are in timber racing, won with two horses who have competed ably in Grade 1 races over hurdles and now have transitioned to post-and-rail racing. Woodslane Farm's Overwhelming won a \$10,000 allowance timber race limited to amateur apprentice jockeys, and Dolly Fisher's Schoodic remained undefeated over timber with his victory in a \$25,000 race for novices, or horses in their first seasons of racing over timber fences.

Schoodic was most impressive in his third win over timber after a maiden score at My Lady's Manor and a devastating 16¾-length romp in the Iroquois Steeplechase's Mason Houghland Memorial allowance on May 11.

Over hurdles, the Tiznow gelding had speed and ability when he chose to use them, such as his victory in the 2017 David Semmes Memorial (Gr. 2). Most often, he chose not to use his talents when owned by breeder Edith Dixon.

Timber has made a difference for Schoodic, now nine. Now owned by the trainer's mother, Schoodic settles nicely in his races, bides his time, and then drops the hammer. Paired with



Catherine French

Dolly Fisher's Schoodic rolled to an easy victory in Fair Hill's \$25,000 novice timber race, his third win in three starts over fences.

leading jockey Michael Mitchell, Schoodic settled behind horses in midfield for much of the three-mile novice race.

Mitchell tipped Schoodic out in Fair Hill's stretch, showed him some daylight, and Schoodic did the rest. He glided to the lead under no pressure from Mitchell and drew away easily to a 6¼-length victory over Charlie Fenwick's late-running Royal Ruse. Fletched ran a strong race to finish third.

Schoodic ran the three-mile distance in 5:56 4/5 on firm turf.

Woodslane's Overwhelming is, like Schoodic, a nine-year-old by a prominent flat sire, Hard Spun, and he also has held his own in Grade 1 hurdle racing. Although he never won at graded

level—he won the 2018 Tryon Block House allowance hurdle—he was Grade 1-placed when third in last summer's A. P. Smithwick Memorial at Saratoga Race Course.

Overwhelming finished fifth in the Virginia Gold Cup's Steeplethon on May 4 but emerged a tighter horse for the Fair Hill race.

Brett Owings bided his time with Overwhelming while Riverdee Stable's Biedermeier set the pace with Kiplin Hall's Lambeau Field. Overwhelming launched his attack in the stretch, but Biedermeier and jockey Paul O'Neill battled tenaciously before giving way in the final furlong.

Overwhelming drew clear in the final strides and won by 1¼ lengths over Biedermeier.

It's father vs. son, and son triumphs in flat race

Steeplechase racing frequently is a family affair. It's not uncommon to see fathers and mothers being assisted by their children in caring for the horses and running them at the races.

Less common is a parent competing against an adult child, but the Hendriks family had a face-off in the first of two amateur apprentice jockey flat races at the Friday twilight card. In that race, son McLean Hendriks came out on top over his father, prominent trainer Ricky Hendriks, aboard Ballybristol Farm's Silver Crescent.

In the second training flat race, trainer Hendriks' Morning Star Farm was the winner with its Good and Proper.

Both races required the photo-finish camera to sort out the winners. Silver Crescent prevailed

by a head over Morning Star's Diplodocus, and Good and Proper was a mere nose in front of Willow Oak Stables' Master Gunner.

Father and son must have been reading the same playbook in the first race, because Silver Crescent and Diplodocus broke on top in a six-horse field and established a dawdling pace. Diplodocus, ridden by Archie Macauley, led for most of the way, with Silver Crescent pasted on the leader's flank for a mile of the 1¼-mile race.

Leslie Young-trained Silver Crescent asserted himself in the stretch and fought past Diplodocus to gain the lead. But Diplodocus refused to surrender and battled tenaciously to the wire. Irv Naylor's Hollywood Strike finished third, six lengths farther back.

Silver Crescent ran the distance in 2:18 1/5. To show how effectively McLean Hendriks and Macauley cranked down the pace, the second training flat race went in 2:13 2/5, nearly five seconds faster.

Trainer Hendriks put Good and Proper in the hands of 10-pound apprentice Elizabeth Scully, and she got the job done by allowing her mount to do the heavy lifting and win by a nose.

Back in the field early as Naylor's Elucidation set the pace, Good and Proper advanced through the stretch and found the front in the final 20 yards as Scully gave him a hand-ride to the wire.

Master Gunner, ridden by Bethany Baumgardner, fought valiantly to finish second, five lengths ahead of Elucidation.



Next Up

Jump racing shifts to pari-mutuel tracks

The National Steeplechase Association racing shifts to the pari-mutuel tracks next month with a visit to Monmouth Park on June 21 and continues through Labor Day with racing programs at Saratoga Race Course and Colonial Down in Virginia.

In all, the 15 racing dates encompass 22 scheduled races and will offer \$1,165,000 in purses to NSA horsemen.

The Colonial Downs dates, new with the reopening of the New Kent race course in August, will spotlight jump racing with 10 races on the meet's five Saturday programs.

The summer begins at the New Jersey shore at beautiful, historic Monmouth Park, which has been revitalized with the addition of sports gaming. The Friday program will feature a \$30,000 maiden hurdle and a \$35,000 ratings handicap for horses ranked at 125 or lower.

Horsemen getting ready for Saratoga's jump race will have an opportunity at Parx Racing on Monday, July 1, in a \$25,000 allowance flat race for hurdlers. In the past, this race has been split when the entry box overflows.

Saratoga, the epicenter of Thoroughbred racing each summer, will open earlier this year to accommodate construction adjacent to Belmont Park on Long Island. The first steeplechase race at the Saratoga Springs landmark this summer will be a \$65,000 allowance hurdle on Wednesday, July 17.

The following week will feature two stakes races. The \$75,000 Jonathan Kiser Novice Stakes will be run on Wednesday, July 24, and the \$150,000 A. P. Smithwick Memorial (Gr. 1) will be the following afternoon.

Jump racing will be in the Saratoga spotlight each Wednesday in August, with the Mrs. Ogden

Phipps for fillies and mares on Aug. 7 and the Michael G. Walsh Novice Stakes on Aug. 21. The next afternoon will feature Saratoga's signature steeplechase race, the \$150,000 New York Turf Writers Cup Handicap (Gr. 1).

Colonial Downs will offer 15 racing dates in August and September, with racing on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays as well as a Labor Day program on Monday, Sept. 2. The steeplechase action begins on Saturday, Aug. 10, with a \$30,000 maiden hurdle and a \$25,000 ratings handicap hurdle.

Two races each Saturday will offer a variety of conditions and will conclude with the \$50,000 Randolph D. Rouse Stakes for fillies and mares on Sept. 7, which is closing day for the 2019 season. Steeplechase racing will complement the Aug. 31 card, which will feature the Virginia Derby and the Virginia Oaks.



STEEPLECHASE STANDINGS THROUGH MAY 27

OWNERS BY EARNINGS						JOCKEYS BY WINS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Bruton Street-US	25	4	6	5	\$267,250	Michael Mitchell	41	15	5	5	\$406,450
Mrs. S.K. Johnston Jr.	24	6	4	5	160,000	Sean McDermott	42	9	4	9	342,000
Riverdee Stable	9	2	2	2	144,200	Jack Doyle	42	7	4	5	245,150
Irvin S. Naylor	33	4	5	5	123,150	Richard Boucher	12	4	1	1	68,700
Rosbrian Farm	13	3	3	0	108,350	Ross Geraghty	27	3	6	3	152,450
Irvin L. Crawford II	2	2	0	0	90,000	Hadden Frost	10	3	2	0	72,550
Ballybristol Farm	7	2	2	0	88,250	Eddie Keating	15	3	1	5	74,100
DASH Stable	5	2	2	1	65,900	Aaron Sinnott	13	3	1	0	52,000
KMSN Stable	6	2	0	1	50,750	Eric Poretz	11	2	3	1	113,850
Woodslane Farm	9	2	2	0	43,350	Willie McCarthy	28	2	7	3	105,400

TRAINERS BY WINS						HORSES BY EARNINGS					
	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings		Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Fisher	72	22	13	8	\$766,950	Senior Senator	2	2	0	0	\$90,000
Jonathan Sheppard	33	7	1	7	184,100	Scorpiancer (Ire)	2	1	0	0	90,000
Katherine Neilson	35	6	5	5	155,500	Andi'amu (Fr)	2	2	0	0	78,000
Ricky Hendriks	40	5	5	6	171,150	City Dreamer (Ire)	2	1	0	0	78,000
Leslie F. Young	20	4	4	3	126,500	Gibralfaro (Ire)	2	1	0	0	64,500
Lilith Boucher	8	4	1	1	66,400	Moscato (Fr)	2	1	0	1	60,000
Joseph G. Davies	16	2	2	1	114,700	Sportswear (GB)	2	2	0	0	48,000
Neil R. Morris	20	2	2	4	58,450	Corky Lemon	3	2	0	0	45,600
Mark Beecher	16	2	1	1	58,700	Optimus Prime (Fr)	1	1	0	0	45,000
Julie Gomena	31	1	6	3	73,950	Schoodic	3	3	0	0	42,000