



# MONDAY REPORT

A weekly report from the National Steeplechase Association

Monday, November 4, 2019

## Amschel draws away to victory in Montpelier's Noel Laing Handicap

Irv Naylor's Amschel, always racing comfortably under Graham Watters, jumped powerfully to the lead at the last fence of the Montpelier Hunt Races' \$40,000 Noel Laing Handicap, gave up some ground on the final turn, and easily repelled Stooshie to win by 3¼ lengths on Saturday.

Woodslane Farm's Pik Em, winner of the Far Hills Races' Appleton ratings handicap on Oct. 19, closed ground late to finish third, three-quarters of a length behind Rosbrian Farm's Stooshie, in a field of eight.

Straylight Racing's Invocation finished fourth, another 2¼ lengths farther back, and Gill Johnston's Set to Music finished fifth. Amschel ran the Noel Laing's 2½-mile distance in 5:20 on turf rated as good.

Trained by Cyril Murphy, Amschel made his first appearance in a year with a sixth-place finish in the Appleton, and he clearly benefited from his comeback race in New Jersey two weeks earlier. The five-year-old carried the 158-pound co-highweight based on his three-race winning streak last year in Ireland.

He was sidelined after a third-place finish in Far Hills' 2018 Foxbrook Champion Hurdle. In his return race exactly a year later, he passed tired horses in the Appleton, in which Stooshie finished third.

Buttonwood Farm's All the Way Jose, ridden by Willie McCarthy, took the lead shortly after the first of 11 trips over the historic Montpelier course's natural brush fences, with Rather Be Racing's Kremlin and Stooshie in his wake.

Watters placed Amschel in fifth position early, and he moved into the fourth spot as Mark W. Buyck Jr.'s Grade 1 winner Show Court began to back up after the seventh fence. Kremlin took the lead from All the Way Jose at the next to last fence, but Stooshie and Amschel overtook them in the run to the last.

Stooshie and Jack Doyle reached the fence with a slight advantage, but Amschel put in a strong jump for Watters and seized the lead. Amschel opened daylight on his only challenger, but he



Douglas Lees

*Rosbrian Farm's Stooshie and Jack Doyle took the inside path into Montpelier's stretch in the \$40,000 Noel Laing Handicap, but Irv Naylor's Amschel had plenty of energy remaining for jockey Graham Watters and won by 3¼ lengths.*

gave up some of his advantage when his mount wheeled wide into the short stretch, and Doyle took the inside path with Stooshie.

But Watters had more horse, and Amschel began to draw away in midstretch.

Pik Em, ridden by Michael Mitchell, closed ground late to claim third money. Trained by Jack Fisher, Pik Em came into the Noel Laing from a notable upset victory in the Appleton, in which he went off at 24.40-to-1. Both Stooshie and Amschel had been longshots, with Stooshie at 8.40-to-1 and Amschel at 15.60-to-1.

### On the inside

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**Go Jump Racing!**



## With two wins, Doyle takes lead for jockey title

With victories at the Montpelier Hunt Races and the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup, Jack Doyle eased into the lead for the 2019 National Steeplechase Association jockey championship, one win ahead of Michael Mitchell.

Doyle won the second division of Montpelier's maiden claiming hurdle on Saturday aboard Kristian J. Strangeway's I Am Not Here for trainer Todd Wyatt, and he was aboard another Irish-bred, Kinross Farm's Just Wait And See, to win the Arthur O. Choate Jr. Memorial timber allowance at Unionville on Sunday for trainer Richard Valentine.

Mitchell, who had led the jockey standings since the spring, was shut out over the weekend after pulling ahead by one win at the International Gold Cup on Oct. 26.

Doyle, 2015's leading jockey by purse earnings, occupied a similar position last year. He led the standings by wins from the beginning of the year but was overtaken by Darren Nagle in the final weeks of the 2018 season.

Mitchell continues to have a healthy lead by purse earnings over Doyle, who is second in the money standings going into the final two meets.

Nagle, coming back from a work-related injury and again having a strong autumn season, picked up two wins at the Virginia meet, both for trainer Jonathan Sheppard.

He scored in the first division of Montpelier's maiden claiming hurdle aboard Sheppard's Attracting, who made a late move to win by 1¼ lengths over Merriebelle Stable's Dream Verse.

He also rode Sherry Fenwick's Anticipating, who scored a narrow victory over Decisive Triumph in the Montpelier Cup, a Sport of Kings maiden hurdle.

Eve's City, bred and owned by Magalen O. Bryant, overtook pacesetter Down Royal and won the inaugural Marion duPont Scott Memorial allowance hurdle for fillies and mares by 1¾ lengths.

Ross Geraghty rode Eve's City for trainer Doug Fout, who also trained the dam of Eve's City, 2010 female champion Ptarmigan.

Trainer Arch Kingsley Jr. kicked off Montpelier with back-to-back wins, first with Mark W. Buyck Jr.'s Tolaga Bay in the NSA's only dirt race, the Montpelier Foundation Cup training flat race. Skylar McKenna rode the winner.

Kingsley then struck with Buyck's Aydoun, who surged to a three-length victory in a ratings handicap for horses ranked at 110 or lower. Archie Macauley rode the winner.



Tod Marks

*Mystic Strike jumped the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup's final fence ahead of Grand Manan.*

## Mystic Strike surges to victory in Pennsylvania Hunt Cup

Upland Partners' Mystic Strike began the year with a major victory, and he closed out the 2019 season with a win in the year's final timber classic, Sunday's \$40,000 Pennsylvania Hunt Cup.

Jockey Mark Beecher placed Mystic Strike behind the pace of Armata Stables' Grand Manan, and the 10-year-old Smart Strike gelding closed powerfully approaching the last fence to win by 2¼ lengths over the pacesetter.

Irv Naylor's Super Saturday, who finished third in the International Gold Cup eight days earlier, picked up another third-place check, 4¼ lengths behind Grand Manan. Blair Wyatt's Witor finished fourth, a neck farther back in a field of six, and It's Nothing finished fifth for Move Up Stables and Sally Reed.

Trained by Todd McKenna, Mystic Strike completed the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup's four miles in 9:07 3/5 and raised his 2019 earnings to \$57,000 with the Unionville classic's \$24,000

first-place purse.

Winner of the My Lady's Manor in his first start this year, Mystic Strike came into the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup with a big question mark after being pulled up in the Genesee Valley Hunt Cup on Oct. 12.

Beecher, who had ridden Mystic Strike in the My Lady's Manor, placed him in second position as perennial front-runner Grand Manan laid down a steady pace while leading by as many as eight lengths in the race's closing stages.

Kinross Farm's Just Wait And See came back from a fourth-place finish in the International Gold Cup's Steeplethon Stakes eight days earlier to claim an 8¾-length victory in the Pennsylvania Hunt Cup's Arthur O. Choate Jr. Memorial. Richard Valentine trained the winner.

Skylar McKenna rode Charles Fenwick Jr.'s Royal Ruse to a 2¾-length score in the Lewis C. Ledyard maiden timber. Royal Ruse was trained by Sanna Neilson.



# Looking ahead

## Aflac Supreme Hurdle draws 13 nominees

The National Steeplechase Association enters the final two weekend of the 2019 season with the Steeplechase at Callaway Gardens in Georgia on Saturday and the Steeplechase at Charleston in South Carolina on Sunday, Nov. 17.

The 35th annual Steeplechase at Callaway will feature the \$75,000 Aflac Supreme Hurdle, the year's final stakes race for novices, or horses in their first seasons of racing over fences.

First time will be noon for the racing program at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Va.

The 2¼-mile Aflac Supreme Hurdle attracted a strong list of 13 nominees.

Among the nominees is the reigning novice champion, Hudson River Farms' Iranistan, who is trained by Racing Hall of Fame member Jonathan Sheppard. Now five, Iranistan came back after a nearly 14-month absence in Far Hills' Grand National (Gr. 1), in which he led early and was pulled up on Oct. 19.

Iranistan began his 2018 championship season with three straight open-lengths victories, in-

cluding a six-length score in the Iroquois Steeplechase's Marcellus Frost Champion Hurdle. He went to the sidelines after a second-place finish in the A. P. Smithwick Memorial (Gr. 1) and a third-place finish in the New York Turf Writers Cup Handicap (Gr. 1), both at Saratoga Race Course.

Several nominees for the Aflac Supreme Hurdle are coming out of the Far Hills' Foxbrook Champion Hurdle on Oct. 19.

Trainer Jack Fisher, who has shattered the National Steeplechase Association record for purse earnings with more than \$1.5-million, nominated Sheila Williams' and Northwoods Stable's Storm Team, who finished third in the 2½-mile Foxbrook.

Fisher also nominated Riverdee Stable's City Dreamer, who was fifth in the New Jersey race. In May, City Dreamer won this year's Marcellus Frost Champion Hurdle.

Finishing fourth in the Foxbrook was Irv Naylor's Chief Justice, who is pursuing his first


U.S. victory for trainer Cyril Murphy. After a fourth in the Marcellus Frost, the four-year-old finished third in Belmont Park's William Entenmann Memorial Novice Stakes on Sept. 19.

Naylor's Elucidation also was nominated to the Aflac Supreme Hurdle. The Irish-bred five-year-old most recently finished fifth in a Shawan Downs ratings handicap for Murphy.

Trainer Ricky Hendriks nominated Crocodile Pockets Syndicate's Lethal Steps, who finished eighth in Far Hills' Harry E. Harris Stakes for four-year-olds before a third-place finish in the International Gold Cup's David Semmes Memorial (Gr. 2) on Oct. 26.

The Pennsylvania-based trainer also nominated Rosbrian Farm's newcomer The Holy One, who was pulled up in the Grand National.

Also coming out of the Far Hills meet is Jeffrey Amling's and Merriefield Farm's My Afflect, who finished fifth in the Appleton ratings handicap. Trained by Mark Beecher, My Afflect finished sixth in the Marcellus Frost.



# STEEPLECHASE STANDINGS

THROUGH NOV. 4

### OWNERS BY EARNINGS

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Bruton Street-US	39	9	7	6	\$614,500
Riverdee Stable	22	5	5	2	298,350
Hudson River Farms	19	5	1	4	291,550
Mrs. S.K. Johnston Jr.	48	10	6	7	274,750
Michael Buckley	1	1	0	0	270,000
Irvin S. Naylor	70	7	11	10	256,950
Rosbrian Farm	24	5	5	1	211,750
Ballybristol Farm	17	4	5	1	154,000
Wendy Hendriks	7	1	2	1	140,850
Sharon E. Sheppard	20	4	3	3	138,750

### JOCKEYS BY WINS

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Doyle	90	20	13	10	\$580,750
Michael Mitchell	81	19	12	10	683,550
Willie McCarthy	54	10	10	5	416,900
Sean McDermott	70	9	8	11	473,850
Thomas Garner	51	7	5	6	404,750
Ross Geraghty	58	7	8	6	371,400
Barry Foley	61	5	6	11	185,300
Hadden Frost	15	5	3	0	142,050
Darren Nagle	36	5	2	4	111,300
Richard Boucher	21	5	1	2	96,050

### TRAINERS BY WINS

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Jack Fisher	135	36	22	15	\$1,527,050
Jonathan Sheppard	95	19	7	14	663,750
Leslie F. Young	57	11	15	6	384,550
Ricky Hendriks	79	9	11	11	451,050
Katherine Neilson	60	8	6	9	209,300
Neil R. Morris	38	6	4	6	153,550
Lilith Boucher	15	5	1	2	92,750
Doug Fout	55	3	3	9	151,400
Mark Beecher	33	3	2	2	88,150
Todd Wyatt	24	3	4	5	75,250

### HORSES BY EARNINGS

	Sts	1st	2nd	3rd	Earnings
Brain Power (Ire)	1	1	0	0	\$270,000
Winston C	4	2	0	1	197,500
Scorpiancer (Ire)	4	1	1	0	177,000
Snap Decision	6	4	2	0	176,400
Gibralfaro (Ire)	5	2	1	0	144,000
Surprising Soul	4	1	1	0	133,000
And'amu (Fr)	4	3	1	0	115,500
Schoodic	6	5	1	0	109,500
Moscato (GB)	4	1	0	2	105,000
Senior Senator	2	2	0	0	90,000