

Bull Run Hunt Point to Point Races

The Bull Run Hunt made a bold decision to change their race date this year for their annual point to point races at Brandywine Park, south of Culpeper, Virginia. Traditionally the races have been held the first Sunday in May, but this year they were run on Sunday, March 21. The May date had attracted a good crowd because of the country fair atmosphere at the races, but the entries had always suffered as most point to point horses were already on the shelf by that time. This year entries were slightly better, but the crowd seemed to be down. Unfortunately a fair comparison is not possible because of the adverse effects of the recession and the hard weather; so court is still out on the success of this experiment.

There were two trainers and riders that shared the spotlight at Bull Run. Trainer Teddy Mulligan saddled three winners at Bull Run after having two on Saturday at Piedmont with Jeff Murphy in the saddle in each instance. Trainer William Aylor, Jr. also had a big weekend with leading novice rider, Sam Cockburn riding his three winners - two at Bull Run and one at Piedmont.

The first race on the card was a flat race restricted to novice riders. Aylor Racing Stable's Harry's Crown (Sam Cockburn) was prominent early, but settled in behind Vika Monroe on her That Dream Cat. Monroe misjudged the finish and started to pull up after going past the finish line once not twice as was required. Cockburn quickly found himself on top, and he stayed there for the next mile winning by 2 lengths over Randleston Farm's Officer Pepper (Muiris Hinchion). Todd McKenna finished third on his Meet At Eleven.

In the next race it was team Mulligan and Murphy, who made their first trip to the winners' circle. The maiden flat race was a match race between Martin P. Fleming's The Editor, Murphy up, and FoxxView Farm's Loud And Proud with Scarlett Lovett in the irons. They raced as a team much of the way, but when Murphy let out a notch on The Editor at the head of the stretch, the result was not in doubt. The final margin was an easy 9 lengths.

In the third race it was team Aylor and Cockburn's turn. Aylor Racing Stable's Meshwaar had run second in the amateur novice rider hurdle race at Warrenton a week earlier, and that effort set him up well for that series' second stop at Bull Run. The 2009 champion in this division, W. Gary Baker's Chilean-bred Marino Feliz (Ben Garner), was making his first start this season, and he quickly sprinted away from the start to a twenty or more length advantage. With six furlongs to run Marino Feliz started to come back to the field, and Meshwaar was on the move. When they went out of sight three furlongs from home Marino Feliz still had the lead but when they came back into view with a quarter mile to run, there was a new leader, Meshwaar. He continued to widen and won by 20 lengths as Marino Feliz faded to third, and Jake Dunning and Church Ghost got up to run second.

The next two races went to Mulligan and Murphy. The open flat race was another two horse affair between WFC Stables' Eamonn (Murphy) and Indian Run Farm's Swimming River (Ben Garner). Swimming River made all the running to the stretch where Eamonn, who had shadowed him all the way, took control and moved out to win by 1 1/4 lengths.

Teddy Mulligan saddled his own Liverpool Gloves to win the maiden hurdle race. This race attracted a five horse field and Warren Owens' Xoxoxo (Sam Cockburn) set the pace. Murphy rated Liverpool Gloves far off the pace, started to rally with six furlongs to run and made the lead approaching

the second last fence a quarter mile from home. He went on to win by 2 1/2 lengths over Michael Smith's Mask and Wig (Carl Rafter), and Xoxoxo held on for third.

Finally the Aylor/Mulligan stranglehold was broken, when Dot Smithwick sent out Mary Fleming Finlay's Hey Doctor to win the novice timber race under last year's novice rider champion, Jacob Roberts. Hey Doctor left the start on top and never relinquished that position. Keystone Thoroughbred's Heros Among Us attended the pace throughout the running and finished second six lengths behind Hey Doctor. There was a Stewards' inquiry following the race, and Heros Among Us was subsequently disqualified for cutting a flag. FoxxView Farm's Untamed Hero (Scarlet Lovett) was moved up to second.

The draft horse race is always popular at Bull Run and attracted the biggest field of the day after the light and heavy drafts were combined. Lani Newcomb's heavy draft, Granite (Sam Cockburn), and Kathy Broaddus' light draft, Corian, quickly separated from the others and dueled to the final furlong. At that point Corian started to pull away and won by 3 1/2 lengths with Granite second and Lilyberry LLC's Coral third ridden by Logan Clore.

Rosie Campbell, the field master, led the five entries in the Junior Field Master Chase about one and a quarter times around the timber course. At the head of the stretch she released the two ponies and three horses for their dash to the wire. In the horse division Alex Bazdar took the lead immediately on her Orlik and she finished 3 lengths ahead of Tate Shaw on Ice is Nice with Dalton Clore's Moonlight Search third. In the large pony division, Madeleine Lohr was quickest away on her Minuet, but it soon became clear that she had problems. Her saddle slipped, and she was unseated with three sixteenths of a mile to run leaving the race to Camryn Clore on Little Bit of Magic.