

Summer Racing at Colonial Downs

The Colonial Downs race track in New Kent County hosted steeplechase races on three Sundays during their race meet. Starting on June 13, there were two 2 1/4 mile hurdle races every other week. The highlight was the \$68,000 David L. Zeke Ferguson Grade 3 hurdle stakes run on July 11. This race attracted a strong field, but Rodman W. Morehead, III's Class Bopper was much the best and won easily under Richard Boucher.

In the race, Class Bopper went to the front when the flag dropped, and he never relinquished the lead. When Kenneth and Sarah Ramsey's Slip Away (who won this race a year ago) scratched, Class Bopper became the only speed in the race, and this certainly worked in his favor. When last seen running over hurdles in November, Class Bopper won the novice hurdle stake at Pine Mountain in the silks of his breeder, Mede Cahaba Stable and Stud. Trainer Lilith Boucher made good use of several prep races on the flat to have Class Bopper ready to win in stakes company at first asking over fences this year. Irvin S. Naylor's Dr. Bloomer (Darren Nagle) attended the pace much of the way, but fell short by ten lengths while finishing second. Peggy Steinmann's Dark Equation rallied to take third money under Jeff Murphy. As a Virginia-bred Class Bopper was eligible for an additional \$18,000 from the Virginia Breeders Fund, which boosted his earnings in the race to \$48,000.

Jonathan Sheppard, who is the leading all time steeplechase trainer in America and is atop the standings this season, added another win in the opening race on the card with his Barnstorming. Entered to be claimed for \$20,000 in this maiden effort, Barnstorming made a shambles of the field winning by 8 1/2 lengths. He was reserved off the early pace by Danielle Hodsdon, who launched a rally as the field turned for home. They took the lead over the last fence and drew away. EMO Stable's Power Game took the lead under Roddy Mackenzie on the turn, but was no match for the winner in the stretch while finishing second by 3 1/2 lengths over Irv Naylor's Jack Twist (NZ) (Darren Nagle).

June 13

Mrs. George Sensor's Riddle made a triumphant return to the races in the open claiming race on June 13. He had been sidelined by various injuries and had not run over fences since 2007. That year he was a hurdle stakes winner at Little Everglades and two years prior he had won a novice hurdle stakes at Morven Park. The betting public saw this considerable drop in class and made him the second choice in the betting. Trainer Arch Kingsley, Jr. had him ready to for a winning effort, and he didn't disappoint his followers as he won by ten lengths. Danielle Hodsdon sent him to the front, and he held that position throughout the race. Todd J. Wyatt Stable's Closertoyourheart (Matt McCarron) pulled alongside Riddle at the last fence but fell leaving Riddle to coast home all alone. Fox Ridge Farm's Fogcutter (Ross Geraghty) was second and EMO Stable's Indy Run (Roddy Mackenzie) was third. There is a long standing description of "horses for courses" and this holds true for Riddle, who had also won twice at Colonial Downs in 2005.

The secondary race was for maidens entered to be claimed for \$25,000 - \$20,000, which turned out to be a good spot for Mrs. Thomas Voss' Farndale. Xavier Aizpuru settled him off the early leaders, but was close to the pace the final time around. When asked while racing to the last turn, he responded and went to the front near the head of the stretch and won drawing away. Tom Voss trained the winner,

who won by 9 1/4 lengths. High Hope Stable's Century Gold with Jeff Murphy up for trainer, Arch Kingsley, Jr. was an easy second over Riverdee Stable's Treasure Map and Matt McCarron.

June 27

Ernie Oare's EMO Stable is in the midst of a good meet at Colonial Downs. They have won six races, and one of these was in the open claiming hurdle race on June 27. Indy Run had finished third in the open claiming race two weeks earlier, but hooked a bit of a ringer, when Riddle stole the race. This field was much more to his liking as he had the lead at every call. When the field turned for home, Teddy Mulligan's Eamonn was the first to make a run at the leader, but he couldn't sustain his rally and dropped back to third at the wire. Kenneth and Sarah Ramsey's Rubicon closed with a rush under Danielle Hodsdon, but missed by a neck.

Hodsdon had had better luck in the opener winning the maiden claiming hurdle race on Timber Bay Farm's Mattituck Inlet for trainer Jonathan Sheppard. Mattituck Inlet was reserved slightly off the pace while saving ground on the inside. He jumped the last to take the lead and won in a driving finish by 3 3/4 lengths. Brookhill Farm's Coupe de Ville (Darren Nagle) rallied for second place and Coppertree Farm's Manassa Mauler (Ross Geraghty) finished third.