

Fairfax Hunt Point to Point 4-18-2010

The Fairfax Hunt attracted good fields for its point to point on April 18 at Morven Park near Leesburg. The cool temperatures made for great racing conditions but did encourage some spectators to stay within striking distance of their cars. Luckily for the crowd the wind was less of a hindrance at ground level than it was on the second level of the judges' stand.

The featured hurdle race on the card was the historic Guest Cup sponsored by Wells Fargo Advisors. A strong field of nine went to the post, and the sentimental favorite had to be Fairfax MFH, Randy Rouse's One Sea. At the drop of the flag, What A Warrior, who belongs to Fairfax Hunt race committee member Tom Hulfish, assumed pace setting duties under Carl Rafter. Roddy MacKenzie settled One Sea in the middle of the field, and for most of the race they remained in these spots with the field tightly bunched. With a half mile to run, One Sea had moved within two lengths of the lead and was ready to pounce. He jumped to the lead at the last fence and drew away in the run to the wire to win by four lengths. What A Warrior faded to fourth with Whitewood Stable's Blue Rider (Matt McCarron) and Flying Horse Farm's Farah T Salute (Willie Dowling) rallying for second and third. One Sea has been a consistent performer at the sanctioned meets in Virginia for the past few years, and this was a promising 2010 debut.

The co-feature on the card was the JR's Bowman Bowl open timber race that brought out a four horse field. Darren Nagle put Irvin S. Naylor's Excentrikbydesign on the lead at once, and for most of the race he controlled the pace with Vicki Bower's Wazee Moto (Paddy Young) and Indian Run Farm's Swimming River (Carl Rafter) close behind. Rod Cameron's Midnight Classic (Matt McCarron) trailed and was pulled up the last time around. With six furlongs to run Paddy Young made a run at the leader on Wazee Moto. He got on even terms briefly but Nagle asked Excentrikbydesign to respond, and he did regaining sole possession of the lead. With three furlongs remaining Young made another move at the leader with Wazee Moto, and they took sole possession of the lead approaching the final turn. Once again Excentrikbydesign responded to the challenge and regained the lead when the field turned for home. Wazee Moto held on well through the final quarter mile and chased Excentrikbydesign to the wire where only a half length separated the first two with Swimming River third. Desmond Fogarty trained the winner.

Paddy Young had better luck earlier on the card in the maiden hurdle race with Hickory Tree Stable's Irish-bred Slaney Rock, who is trained by Paddy's wife Leslie. Slaney Rock was never worse than third while racing close to Hilltop Farm's Lenny, the pace setter with Michael Cooney up. Midway down the backside with a mile and a half to run, Slaney Rock assumed command and dictated the remainder of the race. He finished well up the hill to the wire and had no trouble holding off James Piper's Call You In Ten, who closed well under leading rider Jeff Murphy. Kinross Farm's Feland's Law also finished well to be third with Willie Dowling up.

Eleven runners were under starter Peter Walsh's orders in the open flat race that opened the card. Twelve horses had left the paddock, but Randy Rouse's Across was scratched after running off from his rider who had dismounted to reset his tack. After a lengthily delay the race began, and Vicki Fuller's Legendary Pacer went to the front immediately under Carl Rafter. They remained on the pace throughout the race and had enough left in the stretch to hold off Caves Farm's Grantor to win by a half

length. Grantor's rally under Jacob Robert's was too little too late. Winning trainer Don Yovanovich continues to hold a hot hand this season with horses racing on the flat.

The other two races on the card were for horses that had never won on the flat, and Gordon (Gordie) C. Keys started the day with two maidens in the entries. By the end of the day rider Jeff Murphy had seen to it that these two had lost their maiden eligibility at the point to points.

In the 1 1/4 mile open maiden race, Key's Whatadance was rated slightly off the pace, took the lead mid way around the final turn and easily held off Kinross Farm's entry of Rain Stopped Play (Matt McCarron) and Schoolhouse Rules (Jacob Roberts). The Kinross Farm first time starters finished well but Whatadance won by 2 1/4 lengths over Rain Stopped Play.

In the 1 1/4 mile Virginia Bred maiden flat race, it was Key's I'm A Wahoo's turn. When Paddy Young put Celtic Venture Stable's Rockmani on top at the start, Murphy was content to stalk the leader with I'm A Wahoo. As the field turned for home, Murphy saved ground on the inside and with a furlong to run had the lead. Rockmani held on well for second but was no match for the winner, who won by 2 1/2 lengths. This completed a double for trainer Simon Hobson, Keys and Murphy.