

Foxfield Spring Races 4/24/2010

The last Saturday in April has become the busiest day of steeplechase racing in America. The participants are spread between the Foxfield Spring Races in Charlottesville, the Queen's Cup in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Atlanta Hunt Meeting in Georgia and The Maryland Hunt Cup. The Maryland Hunt Cup has its own unique field of four mile timber horses and amateur riders and is not really a problem, but the three other meets are in direct competition for horses and especially riders. Of those three meets Foxfield fared the best as none of the races had less than five starters, and the racing was excellent.

Magalen O. Bryant's Ptarmigan won the featured Daniel Van Clief Memorial, a 2 1/8 mile allowance race for fillies and mares. Ptarmigan came into the race fresh off a maiden win at the Stoneybrook races in Southern Pines and was stepping up in class. She proved that this level was no problem as she romped under Jeff Murphy to win by 14 1/4 widening lengths. Octoraro Stables LLC's Jellyberry set the pace under Paddy Young with Ptarmigan in a good position not far off the pace. The second time around on the turn for home, Ptarmigan went to the front and steadily drew away in the stretch. Jellyberry faded to third and The Manner Born finished second with Tom Foley up. Ptarmigan is trained by Doug Fout and was bred his mother, Mrs. Paul Fout, who passed away several years ago.

Trainer Tom Voss and rider Paddy Young had their first of two wins when the opener, a 2 1/8 mile Sport of Kings maiden hurdle race went to Cashel Stables' Irish-bred Ballet Boy. For most of the race he stalked Betsy B. Mead's Royal Bentham, who set the pace under Jeff Murphy with Carl Rafter and Move Up Stables' Quiet Approval close to follow. Ballet Boy moved to the leader at the last fence, jumped to the lead and held off Quiet Approval in the stretch. Royal Bentham finished third.

Voss and Young's second win was in the three mile Grover Vandevender maiden timber race with Robert A. Kinsley's News Flash. Paddy Young allowed Ben Garner to set the pace on Kinross Farm's Ole Boy the first two times around the course. Magalen O. Bryant's G'Day G'Day (Jeff Murphy) took the lead on the final turn but couldn't hold off News Flash who won by a length and a half. G'Day G'Day was second, and Mary Fleming Finlay's Hey Doctor earned third money with apprentice Jacob Roberts. Two weeks earlier News Flash had won the novice timber race at the Loudoun Hunt Point to Point and was set up perfectly for this win.

Matt McCarron won two races on the card taking the training flat race with Frances M. Dulaney's Mariah's Promise for trainer Michael Harris and the maiden claiming hurdle race with Kinross Farm's With Bells On.

In the training flat McCarron put Mariah's Promise on top at the start, and that's where they stayed for the 1 1/16 miles. The final margin was 6 3/4 lengths as the winner had no trouble holding off Octoraro Stable LLC's Dynaskill (Paddy Young) and Joseph W. Henderson, III's Triple Dip (Liam McVicar).

In the nightcap, a 2 1/8 mile maiden claiming hurdle race, McCarron also put With Bells On's speed to good use. She dueled for the lead with Kathy McKenna's Music Tune (Carl Rafter). These two set a very quick pace, and Music Tune had had enough when they turned for home. With Bells On got a breather racing to the last while Lonesome Glory LLC's Lonesome Nun was rallying under Paddy Young. At that fence a hat trick for Young seemed realistic, but With Bells On found another gear upon landing and drew away to win by 4 1/2 lengths. Mary Fleming Finlay's Rosemont Runner (Jacob Roberts) was third. Winning trainer Neil Morris had also prepped With Bells On at the Loudoun Point to Point.