

## Virginia Gold Cup Races 5-1-2010

Jack Fisher's address is in Monkton, Maryland but on the first Saturday in May he owns the four miles and twenty three fences of the Virginia Gold Cup at Great Meadow near The Plains. He has rewritten the history of the Virginia Gold Cup as a trainer, winning the race ten times entering this year's running. When entries closed it was clear that Fisher was favored to add another to his total, but the big question was which of his two entries would accomplish the ultimate goal and win the Virginia Gold Cup. Arcadia Stable's 2008 NSA timber champion Bubble Economy had won the race in 2008 and had been second in 2009. His other entry, Arthur Arundel's Seeyouattheevent had won his second International Gold Cup directly at Bubble Economy's expense last fall and had won this year's Middleburg Hunt Cup in an impressive effort. Unfortunately Seeyouattheevent came out of the race at Middleburg with an injury that did not respond in time for this year's Gold Cup, and he was scratched from the race leaving Bubble Economy to carry the hopes of the Fisher stable.

Paddy Young had the mount on Bubble Economy and for most of the race was content to allow him to settle in the middle of the eight horse field. With five furlongs to run Bubble Economy jumped the water jump in fifth place but was well within striking distance. In the next quarter of a mile the complexion of the race changed suddenly with the speed horses tiring from their efforts. Bubble Economy found himself on top entering the turn and looked to be an easy winner. For most horses this would be a great place to be, but not for the favorite. He prefers to run at a horse and when he lost ground at the last fence he got his wish. H. Bruce Fenwick's Bon Caddo had rallied from last under Patrick Worrall and took the lead in mid stretch. Worrall, who is a two time winner of the Gold Cup himself as a rider, had Bon Caddo on top approaching the finish. Bubble Economy, though, was not to be denied. He responded to Young's urging and came back again to regain the lead just before the wire. Only a short half length separated them with Fisher adding number eleven to his incredible win total in Virginia's timber classic.

Paddy Young is holding a hot hand this season riding for some of the sport's leading trainers, and the Gold Cup was his second win on the card. He rode Robert A. Kinsley's The Whacker for another Maryland trainer, Tom Voss in the Steeplethon and negotiated the challenging course in good order. He kept The Whacker off the pace in the eight horse field and was able to stay out of trouble as three in the field took falls. Indian Run Farm's Swimming River was another survivor under Bernie Dalton, and these two dueled through much of the last quarter mile. The Whacker led over the last fence and held off Swimming River in the run to the finish. The final margin was a half length.

The result of the maiden hurdle race softened the disappointment for Arthur Arundel and rider Willie Dowling, who had seen their chance for the Gold Cup evaporate when Seeyouattheevent was scratched. In the hurdle race Fisher sent out Arundel's Commodore Bob, who ended the two and one half mile race with a visit to the winners' circle. Dowling rated Commodore Bob off the pace, but started to move with a half mile to run. He joined the leaders on the turn for home and took the lead over the last opening up by enough to allow him to hold off Mrs. Timothy Gardner's Class Century, who came flying under Carl Rafter and just missed by a half length.

Arundel was not the only Virginia owner who had success on the card. The last two races also went to local owners, Julia Thieriot and Charles Strittmatter's Clorevia Farm. Julia Thieriot's Fantastic Foe

triumphed in the optional allowance hurdle race and Clorevia's Star For Tina broke his maiden in the finale.

Carl Rafter rated Fantastic Foe off the early pace. With less than three furlongs to run, he started a rally that took him to the lead at the last fence. He drew away and won easily by 4 1/4 lengths over Randleston Farm's So Amazing (Ire), who rallied for second under Liam McVicar and Randy Rouse's One Sea, who held on well for third with Roddy MacKenzie up. Trainer, Mairead Carr completed the celebration for owner, trainer and rider who all make their homes in the Old Dominion.

A full field of 13 maiden claimers went to the start in the last race, and Clorevia's Star For Tina was the easy victor winning by six and one half lengths. Xavier Aizpuru had kept him off the pace in the field until the final three furlongs where he moved into contention. He took the lead at the head of the stretch and steadily separated from the field. Aylor Racing Stable's consistent Meshwaar was second under Tom Foley, and EMO Stable's True Blue Fingers was third for Roddy MacKenzie. Edward L. Graham was the winning trainer.

Earlier in the day's events juniors had an opportunity to follow field master Gregg Ryan around an infield course in the field masters chase and then sprint to the wire. Marylander Meriwether Morris won the large pony division on Black Pearl, and Mary Motion won the horse division with Orpington. This was Orpington's ninth win without a loss in the field masters chases. By the way, guess who trained Orpington in his earlier career over hurdles - Jack Fisher.