Middleburg Hunt Point to Point 5-1-2022

On Sunday, May 1 the Middleburg Hunt held their annual point to point races over the very popular Glenwood Park Race Course near Middleburg, Virginia. As always, a festive crowd was in attendance to enjoy seven races.

Local trainer, Neil Morris had another big day winning two races. He started out winning the novice rider flat race with La Hara Partners' La Hara whose rider, Parker Hendriks also doubled. La Hara went to the front with about a mile to run, and led the rest of the race. He won by 1 ¾ lengths over Irvin S. Naylor's Family Tree (Sophie Henelius), who made a bid on the turn for home but could not sustain it. Jeremy Gillam's The Monk (Felix Astudilla) finished well to be third.

Trainer, Niall Saville and rider Thomas Garner won both divisions of the maiden flat race. Stormyvale Farm's Bay Be won the first division with a front running trip to win easily by 5 ¼ lengths over Alexander Gordon-Watson's Morning March (Felix Astudilla) with Camille deStanley's Blue Mandate (Emme Fullilove) third. Freya Gerlach's Boppin Road won the second division. He trailed the field down the backside, but found a different gear and went from last to first to beat Hickory Made Stable's Made to be Lucky (Paul Cawley) by 1 length. Made to be Lucky was in a good spot racing into the stretch but couldn't hold on when Boppin Road came by. Sam English's owner ridden Roman Rhythm finished third.

The maiden timber race was next, and this race was an adventure. Gary Fischer & Jay Meister's Andale (Hunter Holm) set much of the pace but fell three fences from home. William Santoro and Sharon Sheppard's Mr. Fine Threads (Erika Taylor) inherited a comfortable lead but misjudged the number of times to go around and went off course. Gordonsdale Farm's Overdrawn (Dylan McDonagh) and Willie White's Night Sounds briefly followed Mr. Fine Threads but righted their course and finished in that order. Overdrawn's winning margin was 32 lengths.

The two maiden hurdle races were next with short fields in both. In the first Upland Flats Racing LLC's Pleasecallmeback (Parker Hendriks) stalked Merriebelle Stable LLC and Jeffrey S. Amling's Real Story (Brett Owings). With a mile to run Real Story went off course. Pleasecallmeback took over and won handily by 2 ½ lengths over Gregory D. Hawkin's Saigon (Gerard Galligan). In the other division Hey Teacher Partners' Hey Teacher (Parker Hendriks) refused the third fence leaving three runners. Mrs. J.W.Y. Martin's Gundry (Brett Owings) fell three fences from the finish while leading land left a two horse race that was won by Stephanie W. S. Harper's Golazo (Colin Smith) by 5 lengths over S. Rebecca Shepherd's Ahnaf (Barry Foley). The winning trainer was Alicia Murphy.

It was fitting that the feature race, the Middleburg Bowl open timber was the most exciting race of the day. Peter and Sarah Jay's Be Counted (Colin Smith) led for most of the race with Riverdee Stable's Lonely Weekend (Thomas Garner) in his shadow. These two jumped the last fence as a team and raced that way through the stretch. The placing judges reviewed the film and determined that Be Counted was the winner by a short nose. Todd Wyatt trained both horses, and this was apprentice rider, Colin Smith's second consecutive winning race.

Neil Morris closed out the Virginia Point to Point season sending PathFinder Racing's In Effect (Gerard Galligan) out to win the open flat race. This race was another thriller. After being rated off the pace that was set by Mrs. S. K. Johnston's Eagerly (Paul Cowley) and The Fields Stable's Circus (Barry Foley). In Effect and Eagerly charged down the stretch with In Effect winning by a nose. Circus was third.