

RAPPAHANNOCK HUNT POINT TO POINT SATURDAY MARCH 7, 2020

In 2008 the Rappahannock Hunt Races were celebrating their 58th Annual Point to Point at the Bleu Rock Inn near Washington, Va. Eleven years later they ran the 59th running. It was a long time coming but it was worth the wait. Last year longtime hunt member, Larry Levy approached Oliver Brown, MFH offering land on his farm near Boston, Virginia to build a race course. The site is an incredible viewing course in a natural bowl, but was very raw with an incredible amount of work needing to be done in a very short time. Larry Levy was up to the challenge and the inaugural point to point over The Hill Course took place on Saturday, March 7. It took an incredible amount of hard work but it paid off. A big crowd was on hand to enjoy five races over timber and on the flat.

The first race over the course was a maiden timber race, which attracted five starters. Armata Stables' Highway Prince (Eddie Keating) was on the pace throughout the race and was narrowly best by a head over Rosbrian Farm's Swansea Mile (Archie MacAuley), who came flying and just missed. Larry Levy's Easy Exit (Emme Fullilove) finished third. Katherine Neilson saddled the winner.

Two lady riders went to the start in the lady rider timber race with Skylar McKenna on Irvin S. Naylor's Withoutmoreado and Erin Swope on her Sweet Talking Guy Withoutmoreado led the first two times around with Sweet Talking Guy in his shadow. Sweet Talking Guy took the lead the last time around but could not hold off Withoutmoreado, who regained the lead and won going away by 1 ½ lengths. Katherine Neilson was the winning trainer in the daily double and is Skylar McKenna's mother.

Katherine Neilson went for her third win in the amateur and novice rider timber race with Irvin S. Naylor's Hollywood Strike (Eddie Keating), but had to settle for second behind her sister, Sanna Neilson's Lawn Ranger. Sanna was also the winning trainer and the mother of the victorious rider, Parker Hendriks. For Parker this was his first win in open company and looked like a veteran. Hollywood Strike was always on the pace but could not hold off Lawn Ranger, who took the lead the last time around and won going away by 5 lengths. Katherine and Sanna Neilson brought a trailer full of horses from Unionville, Pennsylvania and were rewarded for their efforts.

The open flat race was split with six starters in the first division and five in the second. In the first half Terry Whittier's Georgie Hyphen (Willie McCarthy) led all of the way and was never seriously challenged. As the field turned for home Mrs. S. K. Johnston, Jr.'s Emerald Rocket made a late rally but was not a threat to the winner. Rosbrian Farm's Veneer of Charm (Michael Mitchell) was third. David Bourke was the winning trainer.

Silverton Hill LLC's Bodes Well (James Slater) won the second division in front running style for trainer Leslie Young. He won by 3 lengths over Rosbrian Farm's Good and Proper (Elizabeth Scully) with Rosbrian Farm's Sixty Five (Archie MacAuley) finishing third.

Through the first four races trainer, Ricky Hendriks had saddled five horses with two seconds, two thirds and a fourth. He was looking for a winner from the three horses he saddled for the maiden flat race. They couldn't keep him out of the winners' circle all day, and Rosbrian Farm's Stooshie (Archie MacAuley) broke the winless streak. Stooshie was always on the pace and held off ROTA Racing's Star Glitter (Skylar McKenna) to win by 2 lengths. Another Hendriks' runner, Armata Stables' You're No Better (Courtney Dankanich) finished third.

Congratulations to Larry Levy, Oliver Brown and the members of the Rappahannock Hunt. What a great success.