Special Edition

The Fair Hill Bugle

Fair Hill Foundation Newsletter

Fair Hill Foundation Lauds Governor Moore's Preakness Action

Eclipse Sportswire photo

"The Fair Hill Foundation enthusiastically endorses Governor Wes Moore's decision today to exercise the right of first refusal to acquire Preakness intellectual property, securing the future of the Preakness in Maryland for generations to come," Foundation President Charles C. Fenwick, Jr. said. "Governor Moore's action further strengthens the Thoroughbred business model in Maryland.

"The Governor's commitment accrues to the benefit of Thoroughbred racing across the State, including Maryland's rich steeplechase tradition, and also accrues to Fair Hill at the same time," Fenwick added. "This action builds on the momentum already underway at this world-class, historic equestrian venue built by William du Pont, Jr. in 1930s in the beautiful northeast corner of the State."

In a June 19, 2026 press release, the State of Maryland formally announced its intention to exercise its right of first refusal to match an $85 million offer made by Churchill Downs, Inc. to acquire the intellectual property rights to the Preakness Stakes and the Black-Eyed Susan. By exercising this right, the State of Maryland will secure ownership of these iconic racing assets, ensuring that Maryland remains in firm control of the state's multi-million horse racing industry, for decades.

"The Preakness Stakes is more than just a race; it is a cornerstone of Maryland's history, culture, and economy," said Gov. Wes Moore. "Our administration has made historic investments to revitalize Pimlico Race Course and secure the long-term sustainability of the Maryland horseracing industry. This decision secures a vital asset for our state, allows

Maryland to shape its horseracing destiny, and by leveraging the Preakness's iconic status and partnering with industry experts to enhance the fan experience, preserve Maryland's position as a key power player in the Triple Crown for generations to come."

"The decision to exercise the State's right of first refusal follows a strategic evaluation of the offer made by Churchill Downs. With the State already holding ownership of Pimlico Race Course, the pending purchase of Laurel Park Race Course, and overseeing the management of the Preakness, this decision to acquire the IP rights completes the State's control over the essential assets of the race," the release adds.

Fair Hill Steeplechase Racing Returns in Triumphant Fashion After Six-Year Hiatus

National Steeplechase Association Published on June 17, 2026

Tod Marks photo

Editor's Note: The Fair Hill Foundation is pleased to share the following story from the National Steeplechase Association about the May 25 Fair Hill Turf Showcase day of steeplechase and timber racing.

FAIR HILL, Md. – The return of steeplechase racing to Fair Hill proved to be a resounding success as horsemen, fans, sponsors, and community stakeholders gathered to celebrate the sport's long-awaited return to the historic Fair Hill Natural Resources Area.

After a six-year hiatus during which the turf course underwent extensive renovation and maturation, racing officially returned to Fair Hill for the first time since 2019. While the

Tod Marks photo

world-class surface has been utilized in recent years for schooling both flat and jump horses, the 2026 race meeting marked the first pari-mutuel steeplechase racing over the course since its redevelopment.

The day was met with overwhelming enthusiasm from the local community and represented not only a return to tradition but also the beginning of an exciting new chapter for steeplechase racing in Maryland.

The nine-race card attracted 83 horses competing for $315,000 in purses, delivering a full day of competitive racing and showcasing the depth and quality of the National Steeplechase Association circuit. Among the featured events were the $50,000 Valentine Memorial, the $50,000 Louis S. Duffey Memorial, and the Louis Neilson III Memorial Maiden Timber Stakes.

Fans lining the rails and horsemen in attendance enjoyed a memorable day of sport on one of the nation's premier turf racing surfaces. The event demonstrated the tremendous potential of Fair Hill as a destination for future Thoroughbred racing.

The racing program was the result of a collaborative effort between the Maryland Jockey Club, the National Steeplechase Association and the Maryland Racing Commission. In addition to the regulatory oversight provided by those organizations, the day was made possible through the generous support of community members, the Fair Hill Foundation, the Cecil County Breeders Fair, Cecil County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and presenting sponsor Brown Advisory.

Beyond the racing itself, the event served as an important test of the newly renovated turf course. Managed in part by Ruppert Landscaping and Boekholder & Associates, the course performed exceptionally well despite significant rainfall leading into race day. Full fields generated considerable traffic throughout the afternoon, yet the surface maintained its integrity and consistency.

Horsemen and jockeys praised the quality of the footing, noting the exceptional traction and minimal kickback provided by the course. Most importantly, the horses appeared to thrive on the surface, with competitors returning safely after a demanding day of racing.

"The return of racing to Fair Hill was everything we hoped it would be and more," said Al Griffin, President of the National Steeplechase Association. "The support from the community, the quality of competition, and the outstanding performance of the turf course all point toward a bright future for Thoroughbred racing at Fair Hill." Charlie Fenwick, Jr., President of the Fair Hill Foundation, emphasized the importance of that collaborative effort, noting, "We should celebrate the successful collaboration and

Shannon Brinkman photo

commitment of numerous partners working toward a common goal. As we look ahead, our focus must remain on maximizing the pari-mutuel opportunities before us and positioning for continued growth."

As the final race concluded, there was a shared sense that Fair Hill's return to racing marked the beginning of a new era. Organizers extend their sincere gratitude to every stakeholder, volunteer, sponsor, horseman, official, and fan whose efforts contributed to a wonderful and safe day of racing.

With a successful return now in the books, the racing community looks forward to future opportunities to showcase the sport at one of the finest turf racing venues in North America.

Click here to watch an interview with Fair Hill Foundation President, Charlie Fenwick and Co-Chairman Emeritus, Jay Griswold and the inaugural running of the Louis Neilson III Timber Race at Fair Hill on May 25.

About Fair Hill Racing

Located within the historic Fair Hill Natural Resources Area in Cecil County, Maryland, Fair Hill has long been recognized as one of the premier equestrian venues in the United States. Its world-class turf course, training facilities, and commitment to excellence make it a cornerstone of Maryland's rich horse racing tradition.

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The Campaign for Fair Hill