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## **FERROZZO WINS 2017 NHC TOUR**

### ***Cook Wins Second Half; Myers Leads Rookies***

**LEXINGTON, Ky. (Wednesday, January 17, 2018)** – National Horseplayers Championship (NHC) Tour “First Half” leader **Mike Ferrozzo**, of Eagan, Minn., hit the board in just enough of the right spots down the stretch, tallying **18,825 points** overall and holding off late charges from several veteran handicappers to win the **2017 NHC Tour**, which ended Saturday. Ferrozzo earned \$100,000, a trophy, and the chance to play for a \$2 million bonus at NHC 19, Feb. 9-11, at Treasure Island Las Vegas.

**Christopher Dewey** of Troy, N.Y., finished second with 18,721 points, good for a \$50,000 payday, followed by **Roger Cettina**, the two-time NHC runner-up from Rumson, N.J., with 18,021 points, worth \$25,000.

The top 20 finishers on **The LUXAIR JETS Leaderboard** shared \$285,000 of prize money. An additional \$100,000 in NHC Tour prize money went to the top five “First Half” and “Second Half” finishers on separate six-month leaderboards, each of whom receive a \$10,000 entry to the 2018 Breeders’ Cup Betting Challenge (BCBC). Ferrozzo’s “First Half” score plus his overall win bring his 2017 NHC Tour earnings to \$110,000.

“It feels like I’ve had a thousand pounds lifted off my shoulders,” said Ferrozzo, who took the lead in the last weekend of 2017 with a strong placing at Hawthorne Race Course but had to sweat out the results of the last few online Tour events. “I was pretty apprehensive for a couple weeks there. I can’t believe I won the whole thing but I guess I did. I’m totally elated.”

Overall NHC Tour standings are determined by totaling a player’s top six scores from eligible qualifying contests, which must include at least one live, on-site event. Any of the top 150 finishers on the NHC Tour not previously qualified – which applied to 49 players – earned automatic berths to next month’s **NTRA National Horseplayers Championship (NHC) Presented by Racetrack Television Network, STATS Race Lens™ and Treasure Island Las Vegas**. The top 40 NHC Tour finishers will compete for a \$25,000 Tour Bonus, which goes to the individual within that group with the highest finish at NHC 19.

Ferrozzo’s six scoring contests for NHC Tour purposes included a March win at Hawthorne worth 3,508 points; two wins on consecutive weekends in July on HorsePlayers.com (3,750 points and 2,556 points); a third in October on HorseTournaments.com (2,617 points); a second on HorsePlayers.com on Breeders’ Cup Friday (2,451 points); and a second at Hawthorne on Dec. 29 (2,443 points).

After winning the First Half, Ferrozzo slipped down the leaderboard and felt he had lost too much ground to compete for the overall championship. He kept plugging away, though, hoping to protect a top 20 finish and still get a check.

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## *Ferrozzo Wins 2017 NHC Tour*

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"I had a few decent finishes, seconds and thirds, and passed a few people," Ferrozzo said. "Then I tried to pass a few more, just making baby steps, and then I realized, holy smokes, I'm in third place. I've got to go for this! I may never be here again!

"The whole thing culminated with going to Hawthorne. I was at the track for 18 hours and it was snowing all day and all night. There was snow all over the place and I was just looking at myself and laughing, like, what am I doing here? But that contest put me into first."

Ferrozzo, 59 (b. April 13, 1958), an IT projects manager specializing in healthcare, was a Final Table participant at NHC 16 in 2015. He is already deep into his NHC preparations, studying replays and making notes on trips and biases. The goal is to arrive in Las Vegas with a list of horses Ferrozzo expects to perform better next time out, and hope that several of them show up in the entries the second weekend of February. With a \$2 million bonus available exclusively to him should he win NHC 19, on top of the \$800,000 first-place prize, Ferrozzo is willing to put in as much homework as he can find time for.

"It's a once in a lifetime chance," he said.

The NHC Tour top five was rounded out by **David McCarty** of Del Mar, Calif., in fourth with 17,375 points, good for \$17,500 in prize money, just ahead of 2014 NHC Tour champ **Eric Moomey** with 17,321 points, worth \$10,000. McCarty and Moomey also were among the "First Half" top five.

NHC Tour results will become official upon completion of a review period and audit that concludes Wednesday at 9 a.m. The NTRA's internal audit was completed Tuesday. Full standings for the NHC Tour and bonus divisions can be accessed online via the NTRA website at <https://www.ntra.com/nhc/leaders>.

The 2018 NHC Tour kicks off Feb. 10, the Saturday of NHC 18, with an online contest, the details of which will be announced in coming weeks. NHC Tour membership is \$50-\$95 and participants can sign up online at [www.ntra.com/membership](http://www.ntra.com/membership).

### **Cook Wins "Second Half"**

**Terry Cook** of Towson, Md., who won two Saratoga Challenge contests on consecutive days at the Spa in August and the Aqueduct Challenge in November, rode his New York Racing Association dominance to land atop the NHC Tour "Second Half" leaderboard, based on results posted after August 1, with 13,014 points. All of the top five "Second Half" finishers earned \$10,000 BCBC berths. The others were **Nick Fazzolari** (11,903 points), **Philip Lam** (11,283), **Jim Sebes** (11,193), and **Edward Osterhaut** (11,155).

### **Myers Tops Rookie Standings**

**Charles Myers** (21,971 points) of Redford, Mich., earned a \$5,000 "Rookie" bonus as the leading player that signed up for the NHC Tour for the first time in 2017. The rest of that \$15,000 prize pool went to **Scott Boudreaux** (16,076 points; \$4,000 bonus), **Carol Johnson** (13,054; \$3,000), **Gary Fenton** (11,968; \$2,000), and **Karl Barth** (9,905; \$1,000).

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The NHC Tour is a yearlong bonus series offering additional prize money and qualifying berths to the DRF/NTRA National Handicapping Championship. Tour members receive NHC Tour points for top finishes in NHC qualifying events held during the year. In addition to potential prize money and berths in the NHC, benefits for NHC Tour members include automatic enrollment in the Horseplayers' Coalition. The Coalition seeks legislative and regulatory solutions to tax and business issues that impact pari-mutuel racetracks and their customers and provides grass roots support for the NTRA's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill. Tour members also are automatically eligible to participate in NTRA Advantage, offering preferred pricing on products and services from leading suppliers, including John Deere, Nationwide, UPS, and OfficeMax/Office Depot.

For more information on the NHC and NHC Tour, visit [www.ntra.com/nhc](http://www.ntra.com/nhc).

#### **Past NHC Tour Winners**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>First prize</i>
2008	Sam Brooks	Jarrettsville, Md.	\$100,000
2009	Bryan Wagner	New Orleans	\$100,000
2010	Tom Noone	Redondo Beach, Calif.	\$75,000
2011	Paul Shurman	Dix Hills, N.Y.	\$75,000
2012	Mark Streiff	Mission Viejo, Calif.	\$75,000
2013	Brent Sumja	San Anselmo, Calif.	\$75,000
2014	Eric Moomey	Trenton, N.J.	\$75,000
2015	Jonathon Kinchen	Austin, Texas	\$75,000
2016	Cheryl McIntyre	Massillon, Ohio	\$75,000
2017	Mike Ferrozzo	Eagan, Minn.	\$100,000

#### **About the National Horseplayers Championship**

In its 19th year, the NTRA National Horseplayers Championship (formerly known as the NTRA National Handicapping Championship) is presented by Racetrack Television Network, STATS Race Lens and Treasure Island Las Vegas. Equibase is the official data provider of the NHC and NHC Tour. The NHC is world's richest and most prestigious handicapping tournament of the year for horseplayers and is the culmination of a year-long series of NTRA-sanctioned local tournaments conducted by racetracks, casino race books, off-track betting facilities, and horse racing and handicapping websites, each of which sends its top qualifiers to the national finals. Each year, the NHC winner joins other human and equine champions as an honoree at the Eclipse Awards. The most recent NHC offered record prize money and awards totaling more than \$2.9 million. NHC 19 will be held February 9-11, 2018, at Treasure Island Las Vegas.

#### **About the NTRA**

The NTRA, based in Lexington, Ky., is a broad-based coalition of more than 100 horse racing interests and thousands of individual stakeholders consisting of horseplayers, racetrack operators, owners, breeders, trainers and affiliated horse racing associations, charged with increasing the popularity, welfare and integrity of Thoroughbred racing through consensus-based leadership, legislative advocacy, safety and integrity initiatives, fan engagement and corporate partner development. The NTRA owns and manages the NTRA Safety and Integrity Alliance; [NTRA.com](http://NTRA.com); the Eclipse Awards; the National Handicapping Championship; NTRA Advantage, a corporate partner sales and sponsorship program; and Horse PAC®, a federal political action committee. NTRA press releases appear on [NTRA.com](http://NTRA.com), Twitter ([@ntra](https://twitter.com/ntra)) and Facebook ([facebook.com/1NTRA](https://facebook.com/1NTRA)).