



#NHC2018 CHARACTERS TO FOLLOW

The National Horseplayers Championship annually attracts a wildly diverse group of players, which inevitably includes characters of all stripes. From sports and media celebrities to CEOs to eccentric personalities with unusual hobbies and interests, the NHC embraces all types! Here are some of the notes from this year's Bio Book that caught our eye.

Behold, the menagerie of horseplayers...

Don Allen is a logger.

Steve Arrison is an animal shelter manager.

Jason Avila loves his cats and says that if he wins he will buy them all gold flea collars.

Karl Barth is a social forecaster.

James Beaumier is recently engaged and wants to win enough to pay for an extra-long honeymoon in July.

Mary Buser has had 55 pet rats over the last 20 years. If she wins she will realize her dream of retiring to her own rat farm.

George Chute is a two-tour Vietnam vet who says he's "very lucky to have returned without too much damage."

Anson Clark owns fireworks outlets in Arkansas.

Kevin Costello wrote his master's thesis on Uncertainty Analysis and is all too aware of the irony that an expert on that subject is a devoted horseplayer.

Basil Devito is a well-known pro wrestling executive and was commissioner of the short-lived XFL pro football league.

Stephen Diaz is a master carpenter at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

Chris Fallica is a researcher on ESPN's College GameDay known as "The Bear" and is featured on air weekly giving picks.

Gary Fenton is managing partner of Little Red Feather racing (2004 Breeders' Cup Mile, Singletary).

Matt Garofalo is a New York City doorman.

Jim Goodman is director of mutuels and simulcasting at Keeneland.

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Marshall Gramm is an economist, economics professor, and horse owner.

Bob Ike is a longtime public handicapper in Southern California.

Craig Kaufman is a poker tournament director.

Michael Kavana is a research scientist.

Chris Larmey is head of our NHC Players' Committee and a great advocate for horseplayers.

Jon Lindo is the owner and producer of the Thoroughbred L.A. radio program hosted by Jay Privman and a SoCal press box fixture.

Julie Loboyko is a graphic designer whose interests include horse racing, Pop Art, and German Expressionism.

Wendy Long was one of the first female sportswriters in Canada and is a member of the British Columbia Sports Hall of Fame.

Joe McKay was a longtime jockey agent and handicapper well-known in Maryland racing.

Shilo Merwitz is a railroad inspector.

John Nichols is a clocker (times racehorse workouts) in Kentucky.

Justin Nicholson is a co-founder of the Equestricon horse racing fan convention.

Tom Quigley ("TQ") is a SoCal racing mainstay who hosts handicapping seminars at Santa Anita, where he is the VIP player concierge and a beloved goodwill ambassador. He was the founder of HorsePlayer Magazine, which was a key NHC partner in the tournament's early years.

Bill Rendino is retired from the New York City Fire Department.

Linda Rodriguez is a former California Ballet Company dancer, turned ballet teacher, turned professional horseplayer.

Vic Stauffer is the track announcer at Oaklawn Park who accepted the position on the condition that he be given this weekend off to compete in the NHC.

Matt Strutzel is a 37-year-old with a wife and six kids.

Tony Zhou is a trader who took a leave from his job as an investment banker to develop his own proprietary software for picking horses, which he has used to great success in the contest world.

Top Players to Watch

Players to watch based on past success include our defending champion (**Ray Arsenault**), the 12 other past winners that are back again (**Paul Matties, John O'Neil, Jose Arias, Jim Benes, Michael Beychok, John Doyle, Brian Troop, John Conte, Richard Goodall, Stanley Bavlisch, Steve Wolfson Jr., and Judy Wagner**), the 2017 NHC Tour Champion (**Mike Ferrozzo**), and the handful of players competing for bonuses tied to other successes (**Nisan Gabbay**, \$3 million BCBC-NHC bonus; **John Ukleja** and **Paul Langley**, \$1 million bonuses for Hawthorne Park wins; and **Ed Peters**, \$500,000 bonus as winner of The BIG One at Laurel Park).