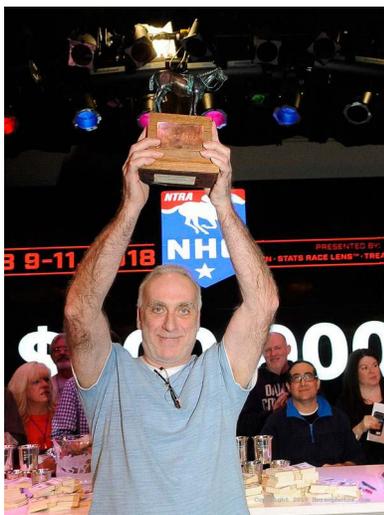


LITTLEMORE HANGS ON IN NHC 2018

by Lucas Marquardt

On stage in the Treasure Island ballroom, Canadian Chris Littlemore breathed a literal sigh of relief yesterday as War Heroine (Lonhro {Aus}) dug in to take the Sweet Life S. at Santa Anita. The longtime leader, Littlemore had watched his advantage steadily dwindle during the final day of the National Horseplayers Championship in Las Vegas. But Littlemore picked War Heroine at 9-2 in the final mandatory race and, in the process, won the near \$3 million NHC in exciting fashion. Littlemore will take home \$800,000 for his efforts, as well as an Eclipse Award as Horseplayer of the Year.

"I didn't like the races that much today, and I got lucky that a lot of chalk came in, and that kept me on top," said Littlemore, who began the day with a commanding \$57 lead over



Chris Littlemore | Lucas Marquardt

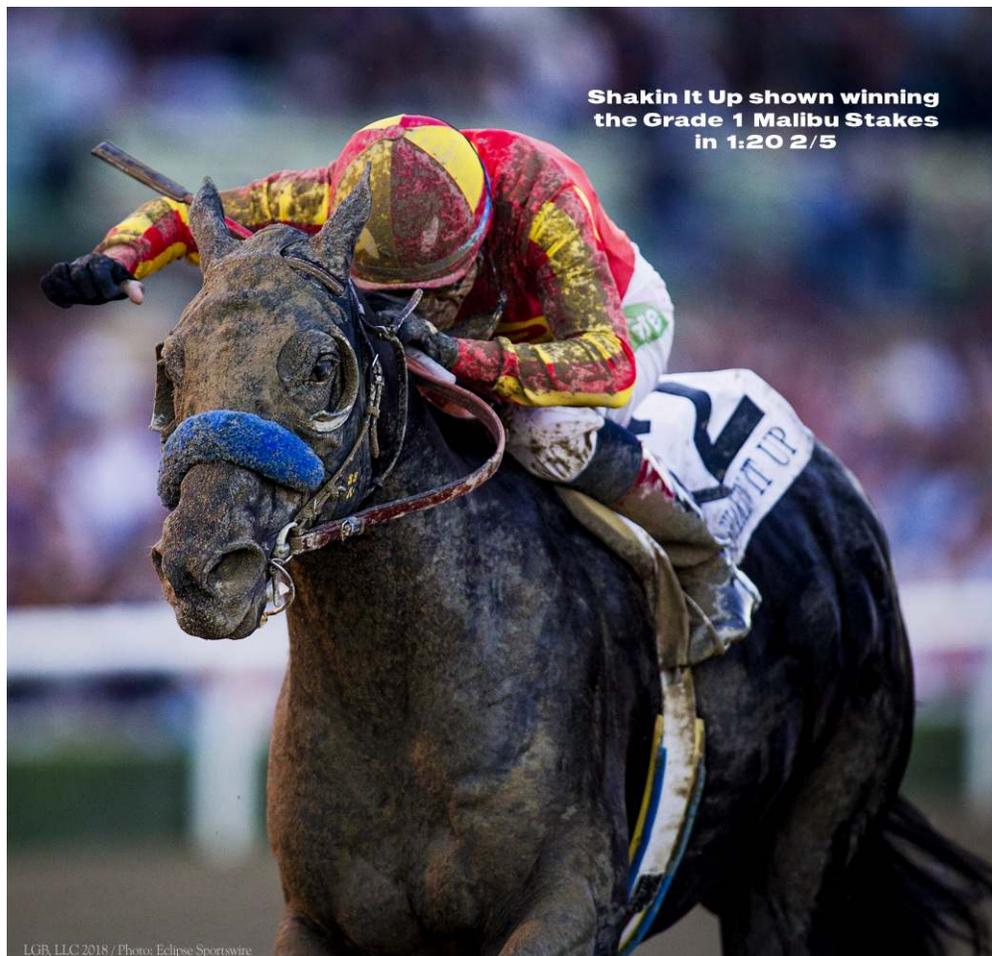
second-placed Keith Fenton. "I didn't have a good day today, but I just kept picking away."

After an extended drought in the semi-final round, Littlemore was still on top as the field of 70 was whittled down to 10 at The Final Table. He picked up \$5.60 by selecting the place horse in the first of the seven mandatory races in the final, which helped him regain confidence.

"Any time you score, it changes your mindset," he said. "You feel better about yourself and how you're looking at the races. As the day wore on, I just kept missing, but did have a place score on a 25-1 that nearly won, which would've been huge."

Still, after six final-round races in the book, Littlemore's lead had dropped to \$16.80. Everything came down to the Sweet Life S., where War Heroine was stepping on to the turf for the first time.

"I was fortunate that no big long shots came in to overtake me," he said. "I picked the right horse in the last one, and that got me through." **Cont. p2**



Shakin It Up shown winning the Grade 1 Malibu Stakes in 1:20 2/5

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