

Racing for Life!

The 32nd Running of The Willowdale Steeplechase Races

Celebrate Spring in Steeplechase Style

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Kennett Square, PA: The Willowdale Steeplechase returns on Saturday, May 10, 2025, celebrating its 32nd year as a spring tradition for families, friends, and racing enthusiasts across the region. Nestled on 160 acres in Chester County’s scenic horse country, Willowdale offers a day unlike any other, with rolling hills, fast horses and brave jockeys. Spectators will witness some of nation’s finest steeplechase action as horses compete for \$115,000 in purse money.

“Willowdale is more than just a race—it’s a community celebration,” says Chairman Dixon Stroud. “It’s a day to enjoy the beauty of the countryside, experience thrilling jump races, reconnect with old friends, and show off your best hats—all while supporting two incredible causes.”

The event’s beneficiaries are the Stroud™ Water Research Center, which advances the understanding and protection of freshwater systems, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine’s New Bolton Center, a proud member of the One Health initiative, linking human, animal, and environmental health. Together, they exemplify Willowdale’s motto: “Racing for Life”—safeguarding life through education, conservation, and care. Net proceeds of the event will be distributed to the two beneficiary organizations.

Willowdale’s races are run across two challenging courses set against natural rolling landscape. The hurdle races will run over natural hedges, while the timber course features solid post-and-rail timber fences, hedges, an open ditch, and water jumps.

The courses are set in a natural amphitheater enabling spectators to see most of the action from any location. General admission ticket holders can freely explore the property to view the races and mingle with friends.

The Willowdale Turf Club is a new exciting offering for 2025. It is perfect for those who want to enjoy the day without the hassle of packing a picnic. The catered Turf Club Tent provides a relaxed atmosphere with delicious food and beverages. Wayvine winery from Nottingham is serving its various wines, and the Pennsylvania Distilling Company from Malvern is developing Signature Cocktails for the Races. **Whether you’re adding tent access to your Tailgate Package for a stress-free lunch or pairing it with your General Admission ticket, the Turf Club Tent is a new opportunity to experience races in style.**

Wild Wicked West at Willowdale is this year’s Hollywood-inspired tailgate contest theme where participants can showcase their creativity. The Best Dressed and Best Hat contests will entertain both participants and onlookers alike.

The day begins at 10:30 AM with the crowd-favorite Jack Russell Terrier Races, followed by Pony Races at 11:30 AM, where tomorrow's jockeys take their first strides. The first of six thrilling jump races start at 1 PM.

Between races, guests can stroll through an antique car display, browse boutique shops, savor delicious offerings from food and ice cream trucks, or grab a cup of gourmet coffee. The Kids Alley offers a variety of activities for our younger guests. There is a course set up for stick pony jumping, a coloring contest, and hands-on educational displays presented by Penn Vet's New Bolton Center and the Stroud™ Water Research Center.

Willowdale offers something for everyone, blending high-stakes racing, outdoor fun, fashion, and community spirit. Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 10, 2025, and join us at the Willowdale Steeplechase for an unforgettable day in the country—while supporting the vital work of our incredible beneficiaries.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.willowdale.org or call the office at 610-444-1582.