



UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN TEAM FOUNDATION • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 3 • FALL 2008

U.S. Equestrian Team Claims Three Medals At 2008 Olympic Games

BY MARY HILTON • JENNY ROSS • JENNIFER WOOD

The USET Foundation congratulates the United States equestrians who competed in the 2008 Olympic Games in Hong Kong, China. The U.S. athletes brought home three medals – Team Gold in Show Jumping, Individual Silver in Eventing, and Individual Bronze in Show Jumping.

"The USET Foundation is very proud of all of the American athletes at the Olympic Games," said USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins. "We thank our donors who helped make these medals possible."

Show Jumping Team Gold and Individual Bronze

The Gold Medal winning U.S. team was made up of Laura Kraut and Cedric owned by Happy Hill Farm and Peter Wetherill; Will Simpson and Carlsson vom Dach owned by El Campeon Farm; McLain Ward and Sapphire owned by Ward, Tom Grossman and Blue Chip Bloodstock; and Beezie Madden aboard Authentic owned by Abigail Wexner. Madden also claimed the Individual Bronze Medal. Anne Kursinski and Champ 163, owned by Legacy Stables, was team alternate. Chef d'Equipe George H. Morris led the squad.

With nine nations vying for team medals, after two rounds Norway secured Bronze, and it was the U.S. versus Canada in a jump-off for Gold. The U.S. with four riders had the advantage of a drop score, while Canada with only three riders – Eric Lamaze, Jill Henselwood, and Ian Millar (Mac Cone withdrew Ole) – had no drop score.

In the fast-paced tiebreaker, first to go was Ward aboard Sapphire, finishing fault-free. Next, Henselwood and Special Ed led off Canada with four faults. Kraut and Cedric kept the pressure on with a clear round. Lamaze and Hickstead opened up the opportunity for Canada with a clean trip. Then Simpson and Carlsson vom Dach sealed the outcome with a clear round. With three clears for the U.S., there was no possibility for Canada to win. Canada's Millar and U.S. rider Madden did not have to jump-off. In an ecstatic pass in front of the roaring grandstands, Simpson pumped his fist in the air, knowing he and his teammates had won the Team Gold. Canada settled for Team Silver.

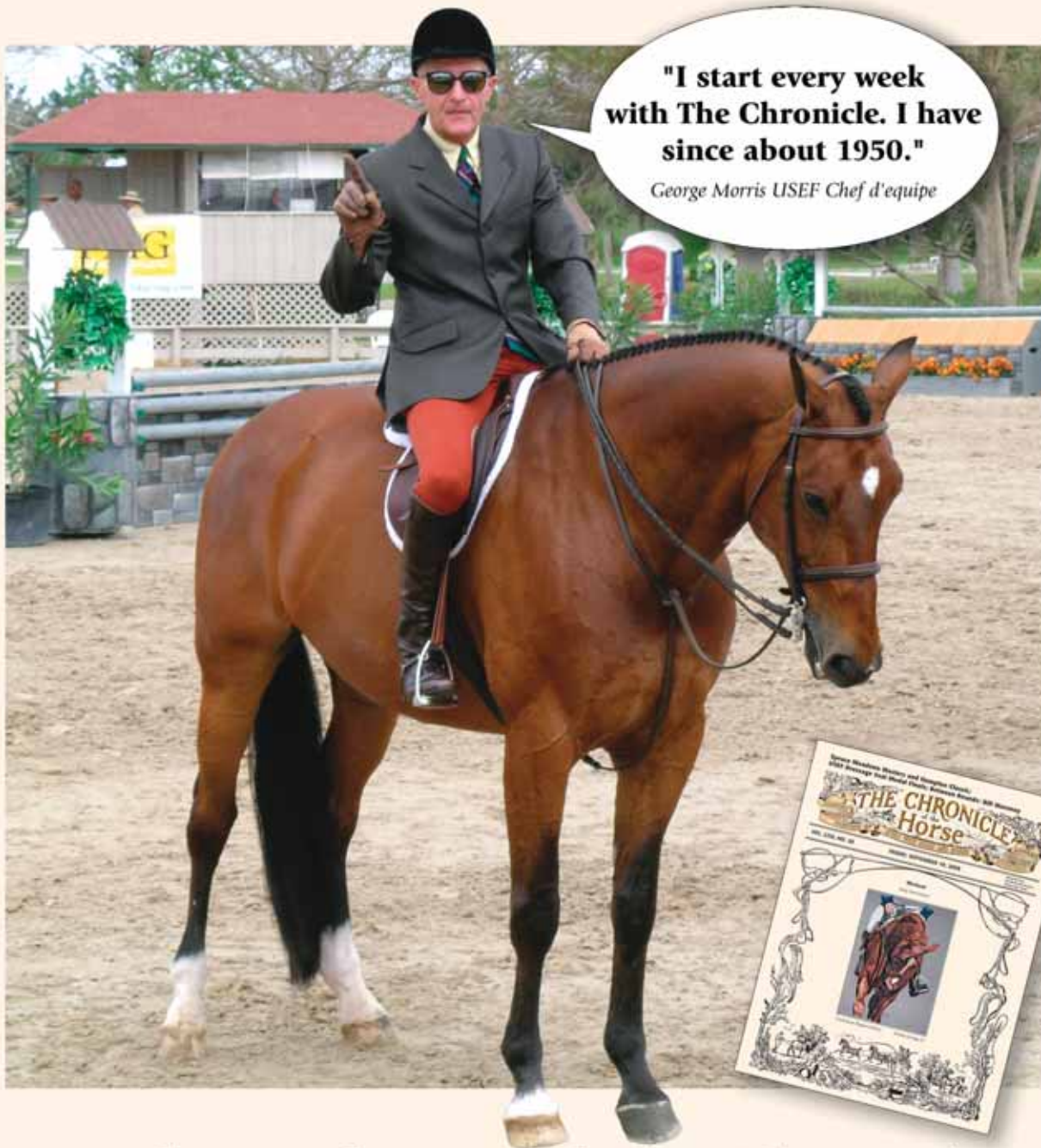
Horses and riders had two days rest before the top 34 competitors geared up for the Individual Show Jumping Final. Although Simpson qualified, only three riders per country were allowed to compete in the Olympic Individual Final. Kraut, Madden, and Ward were qualified with fewer faults than Simpson.

In the first round, Kraut and Cedric had a hoof on the tape at the water jump and a rail down. With eight faults, Kraut and Cedric finished in a six-way tie for 23rd place. Ward and Sapphire had a rail for four faults and Madden and Authentic went clear.



Olympic Gold Medal Show Jumping Team (l-r) Will Simpson, Laura Kraut, Beezie Madden, and McLain Ward

Photo by Susan Slickle.com/Thelapsports.com



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Dear Friends,

This year marks the first full quadrennial for the USET as a Foundation with its sole purpose to fundraise for America's high performance programs. It has been exciting to see the Foundation mature and the programs grow due to the generous support of donors to the USET Foundation.

This quadrennial we experienced incredible accomplishments in our fundraising and the international arena. International competition and training opportunities implemented over the four years led to an Olympic Gold Medal for our Show Jumping Team of Beezie Madden, McLain Ward, Will Simpson and Laura Kraut, a Silver Individual Medal in Eventing for Gina Miles, a Bronze Individual Medal for Beezie, and fourth place in Dressage for Steffen Peters, missing Bronze by mere hundredths of a point. At Spruce Meadows, our Show Jumping Team won the Nations' Cup and at Lipica CSIO our Show Jumping Developing Rider Team also won the Nations' Cup. At the Four In Hand World Championships, Chester Weber won Individual Silver. At the World Championships, the U.S. Reining Team of Pete Kyle, Craig Schmersal, Jordan Larson, and Tom McCutcheon captured Team Silver, and Jordan and Craig won Gold and Bronze Individual Medals respectively. The World Vaulting Championships produced U.S. Team Bronze. It's no surprise these achievements coincided with the \$2,700,000 the USET Foundation provided to the Federation this year, bringing our total over four years to \$8,895,000. This is only possible because of the generous donors to the USET Foundation!

All seven international disciplines participated in either the Olympic Games or a World Championship this year, illustrating the awesome task and responsibility we have at the USET Foundation to keep pace with increasing funding demands.

This fall the USET Foundation had the opportunity to meet some wonderful supporters in California. Signe Ostby and Scott Cook, parents of talented show jumpers Karl and Annie Laurie Cook, hosted a party in their beautiful home. With several Olympic stars – Will, Gina, and Steffen – residing in the area, and the honor of having Beezie Madden and George Morris also in attendance, we celebrated the Olympic Games success and talked to guests about how the USET Foundation helps athletes and high performance programs. I thank the Cook family for their gracious hospitality!

A few weeks ago, we were reminded of the bright future of our United States Equestrian Teams when we hosted the USEF Talent Search Finals East at Gladstone and witnessed the impressive rising talent. Sophie Benjamin claimed the prestigious victory followed by Jacqueline Lubrano, Matt Metell and Victoria Birdsall. It was truly our pleasure to welcome all the riders, their families, and trainers to our historic facility.

The results have been rewarding, but our efforts at the USET Foundation must continue in earnest. American riders are already planning their programs for the 2009 World Cup Finals, the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, the 2011 Pan American Games, and the 2012 Olympic Games. We need your support to continue providing funding that makes a difference and puts our athletes on the podium.

As this newsletter comes out, the U.S. Endurance Team is in Malaysia for their World Championships and we hope to bring great news in our next issue.

Wishing you all the best for a wonderful holiday season – and please remember our U.S. Equestrian Team as you consider your year-end charitable giving.

With best regards,

Bonnie B. Jenkins
Executive Director



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Eventing Individual Silver Medalist
Gina Miles



Debbie McDonald and Brentina



McLain Ward and Sapphire



Phillip Dutton and Connaught



Karen O'Connor and Mandiba



Laura Kraut and Cedric



Rebecca Holder and Courageous Comet



Will Simpson and Carlsson vom Dach



Show Jumping Individual Bronze Medalist
Beezie Madden in victory gallop



Amy Tryon and Poggio II

United States Equestrian Team for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games – (l-r) Debbie McDonald, Steffen Peters, McLain Ward, Will Simpson, Laura Kraut, Beezie Madden, Phillip Dutton, Rebecca Holder, Anne Kursinski, Amy Tryon, Gina Miles, Karen O'Connor, Michael Barisoni, and Courtney King-Dye at Sha Tin Equestrian Venue in Hong Kong, China.



OLYMPIC GAMES

Continued from page 1

The top 22, including Ward and Madden, moved on to the second round. Ward went clean and Madden had a rail. Only Canada's Lamaze aboard Hickstead and Sweden's Rolf-Goran Bengtsson riding Ninja went clean in both rounds and they jumped off for the top medals. They both finished in 38.39 seconds, but Lamaze was clear, winning Individual Gold while Bengtsson had a rail and took Individual Silver.



Beezie Madden and Authentic

Seven riders, including Ward and Madden, had a total of four faults in the first two rounds and jumped off for Bronze. Ward aboard Sapphire, after finding a shortcut across some bushes, had the final jump down for four faults and finished in sixth place. Madden and Authentic utilized Ward's shortcut, made a huge effort at the second to last oxer, and skipped speedily to the final jump. They crossed the timers to the roar of the crowd who saw that the pair had moved into the lead with zero faults in 35.25 seconds. Madden on Authentic claimed the Individual Bronze Medal.

"It was exciting as a Bronze Medal can be, jumping off with seven people," Madden said. "This whole week we've had a fantastic team and everything has been a team effort. I feel like they're all a part of this individual medal."

Eventing – Individual Silver

The U.S. Eventing team claimed seventh place in the field of 11 nations. Gina Miles aboard McKinlaigh delivered a consistent performance in all three phases, including two stellar stadium jumping rounds, to secure Individual Silver.

The team was comprised of Phillip Dutton and Connaught owned by Bruce Duchossois; Rebecca Holder and Courageous Comet owned by Becky and Thomas Holder, Jr.; Gina Miles and McKinlaigh owned by Laura Coats and Thomas Schulz; Karen O'Connor and Mandiba owned by Joan Goswell; and Amy Tryon and Poggio II owned by Amy and Greg Tryon and Mark Hart. Captain Mark Phillips was Chef d'Equipe.

The U.S. team started off strongly in the dressage phase at Sha Tin Equestrian Venue. With 69 riders competing over two days, Holder and Courageous Comet were the highest ranked American duo, placing fifth with 35.70 penalty points. Miles and McKinlaigh placed 10th on 39.30. Dutton and Connaught ranked 14th with 40.60. O'Connor and Mandiba were 16th notching 41.90. Tryon and Poggio II were 24th, garnering 46.50 penalty points. After dressage, Australia was in the lead with 102.80, Germany was sitting second with 110.50, and the U.S. ranked third with 115.60 penalties.

In the cross-country phase at Beas River, the U.S. dropped from third to seventh place. Tryon fell off Poggio II and was eliminated from further competition. Miles and McKinlaigh jumped clear but added 16.8 in time faults, putting the duo in fifth place after cross country with a combined total of 56.10 penalty points. Holder had a run-out with Courageous Comet and then inadvertently crossed her track to pick up 60 jumping penalties and 22 time penalties, putting her in 48th place after the phase with 117.70 penalties. O'Connor also had a run-out with Mandiba and ran into difficulty at the second-to-last fence, resulting in 40 jumping penalties and 44.80 time penalties, landing her in 54th place overall with 126.70 penalties. Dutton and Connaught jumped clean but incurred 19.60 time faults, putting them in 14th place overall with 60.20 penalties. After cross-country, Germany was leading with 158.10, Australia was second with 162.00, and Great Britain was third with 173.70. The U.S. was seventh with 234.00 penalties.

In the stadium jumping phase at Sha Tin, eventers jumped two rounds. In the first round, the remaining 52 horses jumped to determine the team medals. Then, in the Olympic Games format, the top 25 horses, with a maximum of three from each country, returned to compete in the second round, which determined the individual medals.

In the first round, Miles and McKinlaigh jumped clear, adding nothing to their 56.10. Dutton and Connaught



Gina Miles and McKinlaigh

had two rails, adding eight penalties for a total of 68.20. Holder and Courageous Comet also had two fences down, adding eight penalties, totaling 125.70. O'Connor and Mandiba had one rail for four jumping penalties and added one time penalty, notching 131.70 total penalties.

After three phases the U.S. earned a combined total of 250 penalty points and finished seventh in the team competition. Germany won Team Gold with 166.10, Australia captured Team Silver with 171.20, and Great Britain earned Team Bronze with 185.70.

Vying for individual medals in the second round, Dutton and Miles were among the top 24 qualified to compete. Dutton went clear, but the score did not count as he was disqualified because Connaught's hind boots exceeded the weight limit mandated by a new FEI Rule. Dutton and Chef d'Equipe Phillips were unaware of the rule. Miles and McKinlaigh jumped clean again and finished in second place overall.

Hinrich Romeike riding Marius for Germany won Individual Gold with 54.20. U.S.A.'s Gina Miles with McKinlaigh captured Individual Silver with 56.10. Kristine Cook aboard Miners Frolic for Great Britain claimed Individual Bronze with 57.40.

"I'm thrilled," said Miles. "I've worked for this moment for a really long time and have worked on developing this horse from the very beginning, so what an honor to ride him in the arena at the Olympic Games."

Dressage

Representing the U.S. was Debbie McDonald aboard Brentina owned by Peggy and Parry Thomas; Steffen Peters on Ravel owned by Akiko Yamazaki; and Courtney King-Dye with Mythilus owned by Harmony Amateur Sports Foundation. Michael Barisone and Neruda owned by Jane Suwalsky were team alternate. Klaus Balkenhol served as Chef d'Equipe.

The U.S. dressage squad finished fourth in the team competition. In the final for individual medals, two of the 15 competing were Americans, with Peters finishing fourth and King-Dye placing 13th.

Unexpected was the performance in the Grand Prix by McDonald and Brentina who had an uncharacteristically tense test that resulted in a score of 63%. "She started spooking at something on the side. I have no idea what it was," said McDonald. "I couldn't put my leg on her or anything. She just wanted to get out of there. It totally took me by surprise."

Peters, riding under pressure as anchor and the last competitor in the Grand

Prix, needed 73.6% added to King-Dye's 70.458% and McDonald's 63% to clinch Team Bronze. In a valiant effort, Peters and Ravel scored 70.0%. The U.S. earned a combined overall score of 67.819%.



Steffen Peters and Ravel

Germany won Team Gold with 72.917%, the Netherlands claimed Team Silver with 71.75%, and Denmark earned Team Bronze with 68.875%.

The combined score of the Grand Prix Special and the Grand Prix Freestyle determined individual medals. Out of 47 riders that contested the Grand Prix, 25 qualified to compete in the Special, including Peters and King-Dye. Peters and Ravel earned 71.80% and finished fourth. King-Dye and Mythilus scored 70.80% for eighth. Fifteen riders moved on to the Freestyle, including Peters and King-Dye. Peters and Ravel delivered a spectacular ride and finished third with an impressive 76.50%. Peters and Ravel earned an overall score of 74.15% and were edged out of the Individual Bronze by 3/100s of a point, finishing the Olympics in fourth place. King-Dye and Mythilus earned 69.55% for their freestyle and earned a total of 70.175% for 13th place overall.

Peters commented on his Olympic experience, saying, "It feels wonderful. There was a ton of discipline involved. We worked really hard. I worked really hard. At the end of the day, discipline is the bridge between dreams and accomplishment. That paid off today."

Anky van Grunsven of the Netherlands won Individual Gold with 78.680%, Isabell Werth of Germany with Satchmo claimed Individual Silver with 76.650%, and Heike Kemmer aboard Bonaparte for Germany took Individual Bronze with 74.455%.

Barely being edged out of both a team and an individual medal was disappointing, but then a month after the Olympics, the disappointment went deeper when the U.S. dressage team was disqualified due to a positive drug test for Mythilus.

Mythilus tested positive for Felbinac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug classified as "Medication A" Prohibited Substances under the FEI Equine Prohibited List. After a hearing, the FEI Tribunal announced its decision, stating it believed that neither King-Dye "nor anyone on her behalf or related to the USEF had knowingly administered the medication to the horse." However, disqualification of King-Dye and the U.S. team was automatic and not a sanction.

All in all, in the total equestrian medal count at the 2008 Olympic Games, the United States retained its world-class status as one of the top three equestrian powers in the world. The final tally of equestrian medals showed Germany on top with five (3 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze), the U.S. second with three (1 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze), and Canada third with two (1 Gold, 1 Silver).



Courtney King-Dye and Mythilus

Ms. Jenkins noted, "The 2008 Olympic Games proved that the U.S. has a deep well of talent, experience, and resources for success internationally. We know our work at the Foundation has just begun to make sure that our athletes have the necessary support over the next quadrennial to build on these achievements and reach even greater levels of success. We're looking forward to the future as our U.S. athletes and equestrian teams start preparations for the 2009 World Cup Finals for dressage and show jumping, the 2010 World Equestrian Games and the 2012 Olympic Games." ■



U.S. Debuts Team and Places 11th At 2008 FEI World Singles Driving Championship

The U.S. sent a three-member team and one individual – all competing for the first time in a World Championship – to Jarantow, Poland, for the fifth annual FEI World Singles Driving Championship on August 28-31. The U.S. made an impressive debut, achieving 11th place in team competition against 17 nations. Individual driver Leslie Berndt, who also served as team alternate, notched 27th place in a field of 66 drivers.

Comprising the team was Donna Crookston driving her own RG Cowboys Black Cadillac; Robin Groves driving Thor's Toy Truck owned by Lana Wright;



William Peacock and Beau in Dressage

and William Peacock with Beau owned by Proud Meadow Farms. Individual Berndt drove Koopman's Lightning Rod owned by Ann McClure. Ed Young served as Chef d'Equipe. Eric S. Stauffer, USEF Managing Director of High Performance Driving, was Team Leader.

"The Singles Team and Individual had a tremendous performance for their first international competition," said Stauffer. "I was extremely happy with their overall performance. I know for sure that we now have four more experienced single drivers that have a better understanding of what it takes to compete at the international level. Each and every one of our drivers caught the bug that is international competition. You hope that they have a positive experience and crave for more and I am sure that was achieved."

In Dressage, Peacock and Beau scored 55.30 penalty points for 19th place. Groves and Thor's Toy Truck scored 61.18 for 35th place. Crookston and Cowboys Black Cadillac notched 66.95 for 49th place.



Leslie Berndt and Koopman's Lightning Rod in Dressage

Allowed one drop score, the U.S. team finished with 116.48 penalty points and was sitting in 11th place. Individual driver Berndt and Koopman's Lightning Rod scored 55.81 penalties for 21st place.

In the Marathon, Crookston notched 99.80 penalties for 40th place. Groves had 104.13 for 47th. Peacock had 110.85 for 55th place. With one drop score, after two phases the U.S. team had accumulated 320.41 penalties and stood in 13th place. Individually, Berndt garnered 104.92 Marathon penalties for 50th place and was in 34th place overall.

In the Cones, Groves and Thor's Toy Truck never touched a ball, notching 1.67 in time penalties for a remarkable sixth



Donna Crookston and RG Cowboys Black Cadillac in the Marathon

place. Groves moved up an impressive 18 places to finish in 25th place overall. Peacock and Beau also delivered a stellar Cone performance leaving all the balls in place and garnered only 4.76 in time penalties for 12th place, finishing 36th overall. Crookston and RG Cowboys Black Cadillac had two balls down and incurred

7.22 time penalties and six cone penalties for a total of 13.22, which placed her 45th, and ultimately gave her 50th place overall. With one drop score from the Cones, the combined scores from all three phases gave the U.S. team an overall total of 338.44 penalties for 11th place in the 2008 World Singles Driving Championship. France won Team Gold with 294.46 total penalties, Germany captured Team Silver with 295.24, and Switzerland earned Team Bronze with 296.28.

Individually, Berndt had two balls down for six penalties plus 1.24 in time penalties for a total of 7.24 and secured 24th place in Cones. Overall, Berndt totaled 167.97 penalties and finished in



Robin Groves and Thors Toy Truck in the Marathon

27th place overall. Jan Van Den Broek of The Netherlands won Individual Gold with 137.04 penalties. Ann-Violaine Brisou of France claimed Individual Silver with 144.65. Jan Moonen of The Netherlands captured Individual Bronze with 144.89.

"This Championship should show to other single drivers that it is possible to represent their country in international competition," noted Stauffer. "It is an honor and an experience of a lifetime to represent the U.S. I challenge some of the more experienced Intermediate drivers to make the step up to the Advanced level and start to prepare for possible selection to the 2010 Single Championship."

– Mary Hilton



Individual Silver Medal for Chester Weber At FEI World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship U.S. Team Claims Fifth Place

The 19th FEI World Four-in-Hand Driving Championship was held September 3-7, 2008, in Beesd, The Netherlands, and hosted 59 drivers representing 20 nations. Sixteen nations fielded teams, including the U.S., which sent its strongest Four-in-Hand Drivers – James Fairclough, Tucker Johnson, and Chester Weber. In individual competition, Weber claimed the Silver Medal. In team competition, the U.S. claimed fifth place. Ed Young served as Chef d'Equipe.



On the podium for the Individual Medal presentation, (l-r) Silver Medalist Chester Weber, Gold Medalist IJsbrand Chardon, and Bronze Medalist Boyd Exell.

down for 6.28 penalties, giving him 19th place in Cones and a total of 164.09 penalties for 16th place overall.

Next to last driver to go, Weber dropped two balls and had .06 seconds in time faults, giving him 6.06 total penalties and 17th place for Cones – provisionally putting him in first overall. Then IJsbrand Chardon of The Netherlands delivered a penalty-free trip, winning the final phase and the Individual Gold Medal with a total of 131.19 penalties. Weber totaled 139.71 and earned Individual Silver. Boyd Exell of Australia with a total of 140.47 penalties claimed Individual Bronze.

The U.S. team accumulated 303.80 penalties overall and finished the FEI World Four-in-Hand Championship in fifth place. The Netherlands won Team Gold with 277.74. Germany claimed Silver with 292.67. Hungary earned Bronze with 293.71.



James Fairclough won the Presentation Competition on opening day for the best turned out carriage and horses.

Each U.S. driver brought five horses. Fairclough's team was comprised of his own Larredo, plus four horses owned by Jane Forbes Clark – Charlie Brown, Kavango V. Falkenstein CH, Tibaldi, and Tuskegee. Johnson brought his own Spotlight and Williams, plus Der Consul owned by John Attenborough; Merano 138 owned by Michael Freund; and Spitfire owned by K. Hansueli. Weber owns all five of the horses he brought to the Championship – Boy W, Grumus, Jamaica, Para, and Rolex W.

The U.S. produced a stellar start when Fairclough won the Presentation Competition on opening day for the best turned out carriage and horses. Weber placed second and Johnson was fourth. Though not part of the competition scores, the award carries prestige and was an auspicious start for the Americans.

In Dressage the next morning, the U.S. won again when Weber drove one of the most impressive tests of his career, notching just 32.13 penalty points. "That is actually the lowest score ever recorded for that test, breaking the previous record that held from Riesenbeck," noted Eric S. Stauffer, USEF Director of High Performance Driving.

Weber topped the leader-board provisionally and retained his first place finish the following day. Johnson earned 45.57 penalties for sixth place and Fairclough scored 57.4 for 56th place. The U.S. ranked first heading into the Marathon with 77.70 penalties.

In the Marathon, Weber clocked in with 101.52 penalties for 13th place, giving him 133.65 penalties total, which dropped him to second place overall. Johnson notched 112.24 penalties for 23rd place, and totaled 157.81 penalties for 17th position overall. Fairclough encountered challenges at the fifth obstacle and was eliminated. The U.S. team dropped to fourth place overall with a total of 291.46.

In the Cones, leading off the Americans, Fairclough had two balls down for 15.79 penalties, notching 44th position. Fairclough was not ranked in the overall placings due to his elimination in the Marathon. Johnson also had two balls



Tucker Johnson drives his team in the Cones.

"It was a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful event," said Stauffer. "Chester Weber winning the Individual Silver Medal was absolutely fantastic."

Stauffer, who was named USEF Director of High Performance Driving in May 2008, observed, "Just coming into this position and watching Chester improve his Marathon from Live Oak to the Championship has to be the highlight. With his dedication and work ethic, I see bright things in his future. Looking ahead to WEG 2010, the Four-in-Hand world was put on notice – Chester Weber has the desire and commitment to be a world champion." ■ – Mary Hilton



Chester Weber in Dressage won the phase with a record-breaking score.

U.S. Sixth In Samsung Super League Series

Samsung Super League with FEI 2008 Final Standings

1. Germany	67.00
2. Great Britain	45.50
3. Netherlands	44.50
4. Belgium	37.50
5. Ireland	31.83
6. USA	27.83
7. Switzerland	24.58
8. Sweden	13.75



Nicole Simpson rode SRF Dragonfly to a clear second round in Barcelona.

At the Samsung Super League's sixth leg in Hickstead, England, the U.S. squad underwent a dramatic makeover from the teams that competed at Aachen and Rotterdam. Olympians Beezie Madden, McLain Ward, Laura Kraut and Anne Kursinski were on their way to Hong Kong. In their place, veteran Super League campaigners Nicole Simpson and Lauren Hough were joined by rookies Hillary Dobbs and Michael Morrissey.



Hillary Dobbs aboard Quincy registered a clear first round at Dublin.

The greenness of this young team and an uncharacteristic first round for Simpson added up to trouble. Simpson garnered 28 faults on SRF Dragonfly, Dobbs had four rails with Quincy B, and Morrissey's round ended with elimination aboard Crelido. Hough and Quick Study were the only bright spots, coming home with only a single error. The team ended round one with 48 faults.

In round two, Simpson went clear with Dragonfly. Dobbs had a single rail and a time fault. Hough had eight faults. Morrissey scored his second elimination. The team's 13 faults gave them a two-round total of 61 faults for an eighth place

finish at Hickstead, but they retained their fourth place ranking on the tour.

Chef d'Equipe Melanie Smith Taylor summed it up, saying, "We all really wanted to win this one for George [Morris] and all of the team members who have participated so far in the Super League. It wasn't meant to be, so we put this behind us, keep our sense of humor and move on. Fortunately, it didn't change our standing in the Super League, when all was said and done."

The seventh event of the tour in Dublin, Ireland, marked an improvement for the U.S. After the first round, the Americans with eight faults sat second to the British team's seven.

Following four-fault rides from Hough on Quick Study and Simpson with SRF Dragonfly, Dobbs registered a clear with Quincy B. Charlie Jayne, who replaced Michael Morrissey, had the drop score of eight with Urbanus.

When the second round finished, both Hough and Simpson had logged eight-fault rounds and Dobbs added a four-fault ride, giving the U.S. a fourth place finish at Dublin.

"It was great to see this improved result," said Taylor. "Hillary's wonderful little Quincy B was fantastic and seemed to recover nicely from all the travel that slowed him down at Hickstead. Now, we work towards a great finish at Barcelona."

At the finals in Barcelona, the U.S. team delivered a shaky first round, despite the arrival of Olympic Team Gold Medalist Laura Kraut and her Olympic mount Cedric. Simpson and SRF Dragonfly started with six fences down. Georgina Bloomberg added 20 more faults aboard

Curius. James Benedetto, making his first Super League appearance, came up with a four-fault performance on Kannan S Gigi Z. Kraut and Cedric delivered an impressive clear trip. The Americans racked up 24 faults. The Germans were on top with four faults while Belgium and The Netherlands shared second place with eight apiece.

The U.S. riders charged back in round two. Their excellent rally though, was too little, too late. Simpson came up with a clear round. Kraut jumped clean but added a single time fault. Benedetto collected 11 faults. Bloomberg's 12 faults were dropped. The Americans' two-round total was 36 faults for an eighth place



Laura Kraut and Cedric jumped two clear rounds in Barcelona.

finish at Barcelona. With just four faults, Germany won and secured the 2008 Super League crown.

For the 2008 Samsung Super League with FEI, the United States finished in sixth place overall. ■ — Kenneth Kraus



Photo by Andrea Bonaga

Individual Gold Medalist Jordan Larson aboard Lena Gallo

U.S. Reiners Claim Team Silver, Individual Gold, and Individual Bronze at World Championship

The U.S. Reining Team returned from the FEI World Reining Championship, held September 11-14, 2008, in Manerbio, Italy, with the excellent results of Individual Gold, Team Silver, and Individual Bronze Medals. They competed against teams from 10 nations.

"There was excitement and a lot of happiness," said Courtney Barnett, USEF Director of Reining. "There is no joy like winning a Gold Medal, knowing you and your horse gave it your all. The Team Silver was great because they are used to riding individually so it was a team effort that got them their medal."

Representing the U.S. were four topnotch reiners – Pete Kyle riding A Bueno Poco Dunit owned by Sandra Holt; Craig Schmursal aboard Mr Dual Rey owned by Casey Holly; Jordan Larson with Lena Gallo owned by Lapke Quarter Horses; and Tom McCutcheon on Ruf Hearted Jac owned by Sarah Willeman. The FEI World Reining Championship was the first event in which all four riders competed together as a team.

In the team round, Kyle and A Bueno Poco Dunit scored 222; Schmursal and Mr Dual Rey earned 221; Larson and Lena Gallo notched 220.5; and McCutcheon with Ruf Hearted Jac scored 219. With one drop score, the U.S. totaled 663.5 points. Italy took Team Gold with 667.5, edging the U.S. into Team Silver Medal (663.5), and Germany earned Team Bronze with 662.5.

"Traditionally we have always gotten a medal," said Barnett. "We went into the competition thinking about a medal and being on the medal podium. We weren't assuming we would get the Gold or Silver. We were thinking about doing our best and knowing history was on our side to get a medal."

Riders needed to score 216 or higher in the Team competition in order to qualify to compete for the Individual medals. All four American riders qualified.

Larson and Lena Gallo took home the Individual Gold with a score of 228. Dario Carmignani of Italy riding Arc Magic Enterprise took the Silver with 227. U.S. rider Schmursal aboard Mr Dual Rey tied with Italy's Gennaro Lendi aboard Playing It Out for Individual Bronze with scores of 225.

Barnett expressed her gratitude to the USET Foundation and to USEF High Performance Reining Committee Chairman Jerry

Kimmel. "Jerry has done an amazing job helping to fundraise to get the team over to Italy," said Barnett. "He is an essential part of our team and I don't know what we would do without him."

Barnett noted that financial support from the USET Foundation allowed the Reining Team's veterinarian and Chef d'Equipe to travel overseas with them.

"Our vet, John Newcomb, took care of our horses from the second they got on the plane until they got home," Barnett pointed out. "The same went for Jeff Petska, our Chef d'Equipe. He took such great care of our riders. He kept them going in the right direction. Without the funding, we would not have been able to perform as we did. The team truly appreciates the support."

– Jenny Underwood



Photo by Andrea Bonaga

Silver Team Medalists (l-r) Chef d'Equipe Jeff Petska, Tom McCutcheon, Craig Schmursal, Pete Kyle, and Jordan Larson



Photo by Andrea Bonaga

Individual Bronze Medalist Craig Schmursal and Mr Dual Rey

United States Wins Team Bronze Medal At World Vaulting Championships

U.S. vaulters during
team performance.
Photo by R. Weber Photography

In the final day of competition at the World Vaulting Championships in Brno, Czech Republic, the U.S. Team took home a Bronze Medal, while two U.S. women placed in the top 10 in the Individual competition.

Dark Side of the Moon, a composite team made up of vaulters from FACE, Mt. Eden, Woodside, and Shooting Stars vaulting clubs, finished in third place, with the Germans once again taking the Gold, and the Austrian team taking the Silver. U.S. team members included Megan Benjamin, Emily Hogye, Mari Inouye, Devon Maitozo, Elizabeth Osborn, Rosey Ross, and Annalise VanVranken, as well as equine partner Leonardo and longeur Lasse Kristensen of Hvejsel, Denmark.

The U.S. fielded a strong and experienced squad for the 2008 World Championships. Four of these seven members, Benjamin, Maitozo, Ross and VanVranken, were members of the Silver Medal winning team at the 2006 World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany. Ross is a three-time team medal winner, having won a Bronze with Team USA/CoastLine at the 2004 World Championships in Stadl Paura, Austria. Maitozo and Benjamin are both former World Equestrian Games Vaulting Champions (Maitozo in 1998 and Benjamin in 2006).

In the women's competition, both Woodside's Liz Osborn and Mt. Eden's Mary McCormick had strong finishes, with Osborn placing eighth overall and McCormick notching a very close ninth. Both vaulted on Pikkolo 19 longed by



Elizabeth Osborn on Pikkolo was the highest placed U.S. individual at the 2008 World Vaulting Championships.

Marion Shultz of Germany. Woodside's Ali Divita was 16th. The U.S. men did not compete in the men's competition at the World Championships.

FEI Vaulting Committee Head Emma Seely (Mt. Eden Vaulting Club) was in Brno to speak on behalf of the FEI and give out medals at both the Junior European Championships and the World Vaulting Championships.

The U.S. vaulting athletes were in Europe for eight weeks before the Vaulting World Championships to compete at CVI (internationally rated) competitions.

USEF Director of Vaulting Activities Pam Lane said, "We only have a CVI rated competition once every other year in the United States, so it is imperative for the U.S. vaulters to go to Europe for competition. There they compete against the best in the world and the judges get to see them."

In addition to the three individual vaulters and alternate, and the seven team members and their alternate, the U.S. Vaulting team sent a USEF Team Leader, Chef d'Equipe, Team Veterinarian, longeur, and groom to the World Championships.

"It takes a lot of effort and a lot of coordination," Lane said. "All of this could not have happened without the support of the USET Foundation. We're very grateful to them."

Winning the Bronze Medal at the World Championships means more to the U.S. team than just a top placing. "It's overwhelmingly important for the sport," Lane expressed. "It's difficult for the sport in the United States. To win the Bronze Medal means we get respect from the European teams. Medals help us gain publicity and donations to our program. Winning the Bronze Medal shows that our sport is going in the right direction. We're using our time and our finances wisely."

Lane is looking forward to future successes for the U.S. vaulting team. "Our great athletes are young and up-and-coming," Lane noted. "We're right there at the top of the competition in the world. We have high hopes for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games." ■

— Jennifer Wood



U.S. Bronze Medal Team (front row, l-r) Elizabeth Osborn, Emily Hogye, Mari Inouye, (second row, l-r) Devon Maitozo, Rosalind Ross, Annalise VanVranken, Megan Benjamin, and (back row) longeur Lasse Kristensen are honored on the podium in Brno, Czech Republic.



USET Foundation Provides \$50,000 Grant To Paralympic Team

This summer the USET Foundation provided a grant of \$50,000 to the U.S. Paralympic Equestrian Dressage Team that competed September 7-11 at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Hong Kong, China.

USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins explained, "The Paralympic grant was a special one-time grant to help the U.S. Paralympic Team have the support they needed for the safe participation of the Para-Equestrian athletes and their horses."

Ms. Jenkins noted that the U.S. Olympic Committee had provided \$148,000 to the U.S. Para Equestrians, but the team needed further funding to cover some of the necessary expenses. One of the main items that the grant covered was the inclusion of a veterinarian as part of the delegation and to ensure the well being of the horses.

"It came to our attention early in the summer that they were having difficulty finding funds to make sure that they could bring a veterinarian and to ensure that the proper aides and staff support were there to help the athletes," Jenkins noted. "The USET Foundation Executive Committee felt that this was an important



U.S. Paralympic Equestrian Dressage Team (front row) Lynn Seidemmann, Keith Newerla, (back row) Rebecca Hart, Robin Bueckmann, and Barb Grassmyer at Opening Ceremony.

and meaningful way we could help them achieve competitive excellence at the 2008 Paralympic Games."

Dr. Stacey Kent was the veterinarian that traveled with the team to China. Missy Ranshousen served as Chef d'Equipe and coach. Sharon Schneidemann accompanied the team as assistant coach.

Competing in Hong Kong for the 2008 U.S. Paralympic Team-Equestrian were Barbara Grassmyer riding her own Mibis; Rebecca Hart on her own Norteassa; Lynn Seidemmann aboard Rhett owned by Kathryn Groves; and Robin Brueckmann on her own Radetzky. Keith Newerla aboard Walk On The Moon

owned by David O'Connor competed as an individual.

USEF Director of Para Equestrian Pam Lane noted that the grant to the Para Equestrian Team was extremely beneficial and the athletes are grateful for the USET Foundation's support. "The Para program is still in some developmental stages," Lane said. "Everyone made a solid effort in Hong Kong, and this was a great international experience in helping us to prepare for the World Equestrian Games in 2010." ■ – Rebecca Walton

Walter Strauss (1919 – 2008)

Walter Straus, a former Director of the United States Equestrian Team and an Honorary Trustee of the USET Foundation, passed away on July 22 at the age of 89. A trainer, competitor, judge and leader in the equestrian community, he will be greatly missed.

Originally from Stuttgart, Germany, Straus was the son of a Calvary officer. From age seven, he was a life-long horseman. As a young soldier, he served the United States during World War II and was a decorated hero.

Straus was active in the Texas horse community, where he served three terms as president of the Texas Hunter/Jumper Association and 15 years on the Executive Committee. On a national level in the 1980s, in addition to his work with the United States Equestrian Team, Straus served as president of the U.S. Eventing Association (1988-1990) and president of AHSA Zone VII (1988-1991).

Straus was the founder of Three Day Farm and operated two Texas locations – Bedford and Fairview. Straus sold Three Day Farm in 1992 so that he could follow his passion for teaching.

Straus was a licensed judge in dressage, eventing, hunter, jumper, and hunt seat equitation. He was also an international Pentathlon judge. Straus officiated as a steward, technical delegate, and judge at numerous competitions, including

the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games and the 1987 Pan American Games.

In 2001 Straus was honored as the recipient of the USEF Pegasus Medal of Honor. In 2005 Straus was recognized for his devotion and accomplishments with the USEF Jimmy A. Williams Lifetime Achievement Award.

Executive Director of the USET Foundation Bonnie Jenkins said, "As an Honorary Trustee of the USET Foundation and a Director of the USET for many years, Walter Straus generously gave his time and expertise in guiding our U.S. Equestrian Teams."

Straus is survived by his daughters Jeanie Brazelton and Diane Erne, his son Eric Straus, and his grandchildren Blair and Paige Brazelton, and Jessica and Jack Straus. His wife, Lois, predeceased him in 1985. A private family funeral was held in Dallas, TX. Donations in Walter Straus's name can be made to the USET Foundation, the U.S. Eventing Association, and the Salvation Army Dallas Chapter. ■ – Rebecca Walton



Walter Strauss received the 2005 USEF Jimmy A. Williams Lifetime Achievement Award.

Photo Courtesy: USEF Archives/Ceoff Oliver Bugbee



United States Strikes Gold at Spruce Meadows

In one of the most successful two-week spans in the history of American show jumping, the United States followed up its Olympic Team Gold Medal at Hong Kong with an impressive victory in the BMO Nations' Cup at the Masters at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Canada.

Riding the strength of double clear rounds from both Todd Minikus and Richard Spooner, the United States completed the two-round competition with only four faults to score the win over The Netherlands and the home team from Canada.

Nine teams went to the post for the two rounds of competition in the \$350,000 BMO Nations' Cup, the world's richest team jumping event. And, it was a record crowd of 63,115 that was on hand to watch the United States emerge victorious.

The United States came out of round one with only a single blemish on the score sheet. In addition to the clear rounds from Spooner on Cristallo and Minikus with Pavarotti, Lauren Hough riding Quick Study and Rich Fellers aboard Flexible each had one rail down in round one. The four-fault score trailed the Germans who were foot perfect in the first go.

But it was the Americans who were faultless in the all-important second round. In addition to clean trips from Spooner and Minikus, it was Fellers who gave the United States its key third clear and a zero on the scoreboard for round two.



Nations' Cup winners at the Spruce Meadows "Masters" Tournament (l-r) Rich Fellers, Richard Spooner, Lauren Hough, and Todd Minikus. (Front row) Bill Downe, President and Chief Executive Officer, BMO Financial Group, accompanied by his wife, Robin, presents U.S. Chef d'Equipe George Morris (center) with the BMO Nations' Cup Trophy.

Photo by Conly Tetley



Rich Fellers aboard Flexible

Photo by Conly Tetley



Richard Spooner enjoys the Nations' Cup victory gallop

Photo by Conly Tetley



Todd Minikus with Pavarotti

Photo by Conly Tetley



Lauren Hough riding Quick Study

Photo by Conly Tetley

The Germans faded to fourth while the Americans were winning their second Gold Medal in as many weeks.

"Pavarotti was just amazing here," said an elated Minikus. "For the United States, it's fabulous to follow up the Hong Kong Gold Medal with a win in Calgary. This is just another example of the depth of riders we have in this country."

Hough concurred. "We have a great depth of riders and horses," she said. "George [Morris] has done a fantastic job and our country has fantastic depth in terms of riders."

Olympic Team Gold and Individual Bronze Medalist Bizzie Madden commented on the success of her fellow American riders in The Masters at Spruce Meadows and the overall accomplishments of United States show jumpers. "We have the two most recent Olympic Team Gold Medals, the Silver Team Medal at the World Equestrian Games, the Individual Silver at the World Equestrian Games, and we have two Individual Olympic medals over the last two Games," she stated. "People say that the Germans and the Europeans dominate the sport, but I guess really, it's North America that can make that claim, right?" ■ — **Kenneth Kraus**

Signe Ostby and Scott Cook Host USET Foundation Party in California



Robin Parsky, Signe Ostby with gift from USET Foundation, and Scott Cook

Signe Ostby and her husband Scott Cook, parents of successful junior/young rider show jumpers Karl and Annie Laurie Cook, hosted 50 guests for a USET Foundation party on September 9 at their Woodside, CA, home. Guests learned about the USET Foundation's role in helping this country's high performance programs and celebrated the United States equestrian team's success at the 2008 Olympic Games.

In attendance were USET Foundation President and CEO Jane Forbes Clark, USET Foundation Executive Director

Bonnie Jenkins, and five Olympic athletes – Beezie Madden, Gina Miles, George Morris, Steffen Peters, and Will Simpson.

Upon entering the beautiful home, guests stopped along the winding hallway to enjoy the stunning Olympic photography on display, then gathered on the stone terrace, surrounded by vineyards, gardens, stables, and spectacular mountain views. Ostby delivered a welcome speech, noting how proud everyone was of the athletes for delivering outstanding performances at the Olympics and for bringing home medals. Ostby pointed out that three of the Olympians are Californians – Miles, Eventing Individual Silver Medalist, trains, shows and coaches Pony Clubbers at the Horse Park in Woodside; Peters, dressage competitor, rode Ravel owned by Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang of Woodside; and Simpson, show jumping Team Gold Medalist, rode Carlsson vom Dach for the Gondas of Thousand Oaks.

Dinner was served in the courtyard and guests were seated at tables draped in gold damask and identified with Olympic equine partners' names on the placards – Authentic, Carlsson Vom Dach, Ravel, McKinlaigh and Sinjon. An Olympic athlete and a member of the USET Foundation were seated at each table.

From the podium, Clark recognized the Olympians' contributions as "incredible athletes, and amazing ambassadors." Clark noted, "Watching them ride, watching them coach, reminds all of us why we are here tonight, why we support the Foundation, and why the United States equestrian team is a force in the international equestrian world."

Clark thanked guests Lou Gonda and his daughter, Eva, and Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang, and stated, "Without the owners of these horses, the medals would not be possible."

Clark explained the role of the USET Foundation in supporting the competition, training, coaching, and travel of America's elite and developing international high performance horses and athletes in conjunction with the United States Equestrian Federation. Each year the Foundation provides the Federation with a grant that covers approximately 60% of all high performance program support. The United States equestrian team does not receive government funding. Funding for the athletes to be competitive and stay at the top level comes primarily from individuals.



Will Simpson, Jane Forbes Clark, and Beezie Madden

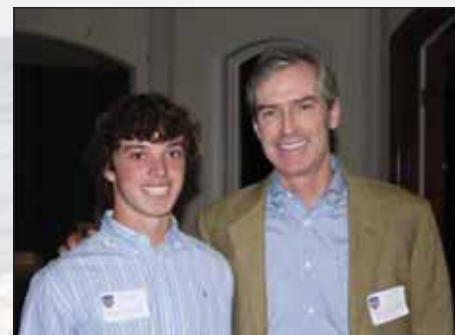
Chef d'Equipe Morris emphasized that the U.S. must start building for the next quadrennial now in preparation for the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Lexington, the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara, and the 2012 Olympic Games in London. "We have to start building right now, both in our training and in our funding," Morris said.



Akiko Yamazaki, Steffen Peters, and Jerry Yang



Beezie Madden, Steffen Peters, Will Simpson and Gina Miles



Alec and Ken Lawler



Akiko Yamazaki and her birthday cake



Will Simpson and Dana Phinney



Beezie and John Madden



Lou Gonda and Gerry Parsky



Nonie Ramsay and Robin Parsky



Tom and Stacey Siebel



Alec Lawler, George Morris, and Annie Laurie Cook



Tom and Robyn Shanahan



Jay Hoag, Signe Ostby, and Mikey Hoag

The evening culminated with the athletes personalizing their Olympic experience.

Madden said it was a fantastic feeling to stand at the top of the podium with her Olympic teammates and offered her thanks and praise to her support system – owner Abigail Wexner, the veterinarians, farriers, grooms, team managers, and George Morris.

Miles talked about what it was like being at her first Olympic Games, noting that it was an honor to be in Hong Kong representing the U.S. and California. She thanked everyone for helping her achieve her dream.

Peters offered his gratitude, noting, “Thanks especially to Jerry and Akiko and the supporters of the USET Foundation. We couldn’t do it without you.”

Simpson thanked West Coasters for their support, saying, “It was fantastic and especially to Lou and Eva, the Gonda family, for seeing me all the way through the amazing experience.”

Beezie’s husband, John Madden, capped the night when he told guests, “I want you to see all these athletes’ medals. I want you to hold them for as long as you want to. Every one of you owns a piece of them. I can’t tell you how much we feel that, and we want you all to know that.” ■ – Alden Corrigan



Beezie Madden and Bonnie Jenkins

Member Drive Paves Way to Hong Kong For U.S. Olympians

Supporters Essential for Future Success

Earlier this year, the USET Foundation conducted a special Olympic-year Member Drive. A letter was mailed to all Foundation members asking for a show of support from every state in the nation. "Our goal was to show the U.S. athletes that they have at least 100 members from each state supporting their efforts and cheering for their victories," said USET Foundation Director of Annual Support Michele Zanzonico. "The response was strong – all 50 states were represented and we are extremely grateful for everyone's participation and commitment to our athletes."

The funds raised by the drive contributed to supporting U.S. athletes competing in Hong Kong at the 2008 Olympic Games. "These donations helped bring home the Team Gold in Show Jumping, the Individual Silver in Eventing, and the Individual Bronze in Show Jumping," Zanzonico noted. "The Member Drive helped these riders represent the United States of America and reach their Olympic goals, so I consider the entire effort a great success."

The USET Foundation's donor list spans the nation, with supporters reaching out from New Jersey to California. "There are areas in the country where equestrian activities are more highly concentrated," Zanzonico pointed out. "Therefore, support from those areas is often greater. However, in order for the Foundation to be successful in achieving our mission, we need contributions from each and every member, from each and every corner of the United States."

When members donate to the USET Foundation, they are investing in success. Just this year, the Foundation contributed to numerous international accomplishments. Along with the impressive achievements at the 2008 Olympic Games, U.S. athletes earned Team Bronze at the World Vaulting Championships, Individual Silver at the World Four-in-Hand Championship, and Team Silver, Individual Gold and Individual Bronze at the World Reining Championships. Without the loyal support of its generous donors, the USET



Foundation would be unable to provide the funding that is critical for the United States' high performance sport programs. By participating in this year's Member Drive, donors became part of a collaborative effort that led U.S. teams to international victory.

"Our Member Drive fundraising solicitation this year gives bragging rights to California and New York!" emphasized USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins. "Our sincere thanks go out to all those in California, New York, and the other states that made the USET Foundation

part of their giving this year. We could not be more appreciative of everyone's participation in this annual support program. I hope we can encourage equestrian enthusiasts across the nation to not only show their support of our U.S. equestrian teams, but also to rally others in their communities to do the same."

With 2009 just months away, the USET Foundation is already focusing on the future of the nation's high performance sport

programs. Events such as the 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup™ Jumping and Dressage Finals and the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ are just a few of the upcoming competitions that U.S. athletes are working toward. The USET Foundation is determined to make those dreams a reality for our nation's best. Through continuous donations from members, the Foundation is able to keep the competitive and financial momentum going strong.

After showing the world that the United States of America is tops in Show Jumping, the USET Foundation knows our nation's talent does



not stop there. Dressage, Driving, Endurance, Eventing, Reining, and Vaulting athletes are also on their way to the international winner's circle, and the USET Foundation thanks all of the contributors who are committed to getting them there. The devotion and financial support of USET Foundation members are what carry the competitive spirit and energy of the past into the exciting and uncharted future of equestrian sport. ■ – *Jenny Ross*

USET Foundation Announces Planned Giving Link On Its Website

Heritage Society

The USET Foundation is pleased to announce the addition of a Planned Giving link on its website, www.uset.org. "This enables our existing and prospective donors to receive information regarding planned giving as an additional vehicle for gifts, bequests and contributions by joining the Heritage Society," says Paul Long, Assistant Director of Development.

PLANNED GIVING

The term "planned giving" refers to charitable gifts that require some planning before they are made. These gifts can be advantageous to the donor by providing significant tax benefits and/or income for life while at the same time providing a gift for a well loved cause such as the United States Equestrian Team Foundation.

BEQUESTS

The most common type of planned gift is a bequest. If you decide to leave assets from your estate to the USET Foundation by a provision in your will or a codicil to your will, this is a bequest. You can bequeath a specific amount of money, a percentage of your estate, or a specific property such as marketable securities. Your estate will receive a charitable estate tax deduction at your death, when the gift is actually made. A bequest enables you to make a significant gift to the USET Foundation while retaining full control of your assets throughout your life and can reduce your estate taxes.

You may obtain a Letter of Bequest Intention by contacting the USET Foundation.

THE HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Heritage Society honors those loyal individuals who have included a gift to the United States Equestrian Team Foundation in their will or estate plans. Their thoughtful support through bequests, trusts, insurance and other vehicles will provide for the future of the team. If you have made provisions for the USET Foundation in your estate plans please let us know so we can include you in future Heritage Society events and mailings. ■



Janet Foy (Dressage Judge):

"I put the USET Foundation in my will as the sport of Dressage has added immeasurable joy to my life. I would like to give back to the sport something other than just my volunteer work. I hope that the money from my estate will help the sport of Dressage in the future and enable our country to send the best teams possible to the Olympics as well as assist our Developing Riders."

uset.org

Planned Giving
through the
Heritage Society
[CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

Brownlee O. Currey, Jr. (USET Foundation Trustee):

"If you have a cause you are passionate about, like the mission of the USET Foundation, a charitable gift through an estate plan is an excellent way to provide support. My gift to the USET Foundation will serve as a building block for future U.S. equestrian teams and that is important to me."



Photo by Equimage



Photo by Cheryl Bender

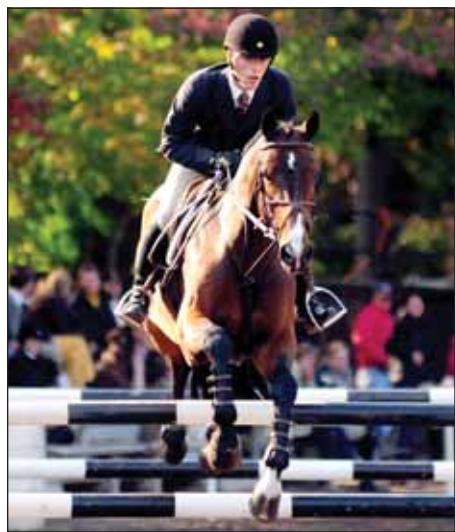
Sophie Benjamin Wins Talent Search East Finals At Gladstone

The USET Foundation's fabled Gladstone headquarters building was the backdrop for the 2008 Platinum Performance U.S. Equestrian Federation Show Jumping Talent Search Finals East, an appropriate setting for a competition geared to discovering riders with the potential to ride for America.

The championship drew 94 riders aged 21 and under – one of the largest fields in its 26-year history.

The lead in the October 4-5 test changed hands several times before 18-year-old Sophie Benjamin, a Californian who attends Princeton University in New Jersey, earned the biggest honor of her riding career.

"It meant a lot to be showing here at Gladstone," said Sophie, who was all smiles as she finished each of her rounds. "I just really wanted to go out there and represent myself as a rider to my best ability and I felt like I did that. I'm just so proud of my horse," she added, referring to Sir Neel, a Dutchbred chestnut, who won the Grappa Trophy as Best Horse of the finals. He is related to both Authentic and Sapphire who were half of the U.S. Gold Medal Olympic show jumping teams in Hong Kong and Athens.



Matt Metell, Talent Search East runner-up on Rhythm & Blues.



Talent Search East Finals Winner Sophie Benjamin on Sir Neel.

Photo by Nancy Jaffer

included several trot fences, a bounce, a counter-canter along a curve, and a long hand-gallop.

In the next morning's all-important third segment that counted double, jumping a 13-obstacle course, participants had to deal with a water jump and staying within a time allowed along a testing route. Sophie's friend, Jacqueline Lubrano, took the lead there. Matt Metell, who had won the Monarch International North American Junior Equitation Championship at the Capital Challenge the previous weekend, was second with a go-for-it trip one point behind the leader, while Sophie was another point behind him.

What counted most, however, were the cumulative scores for all three phases that qualified riders for the grand finale, the Final Four, based on the World Championships format where each participant tackles the same course on their own and the others' horses. Although Jacqueline finished on top with the cumulatives, while Sophie was second, Victoria Birdsall third and Matt fourth, each started as equals in the last test over a relatively brief course that included eight numbered jumping efforts.

It was a very close competition, with little except the discretion of judges Anne Kursinski, a longtime member of the U.S. team, and perennial Zone II Young Riders' coach Ralph Caristo to separate the candidates. Sophie's total for the final was 350 points, to 344 for Jacqueline, who was

just one point ahead of Matt, while Victoria finished fourth with 333.

Anne, the reserve rider in Hong Kong, told the competitors that the Sunday morning course was modeled on the second round of the Nations' Cup at the Olympics. Because she was watching the group with an eye toward their possibilities for international competition, she noted that what she liked about Sophie was "her loose, forward riding to the jumps. She really went to the jumps, not playing it conservative or safe."

Winning at Gladstone made victory even more special for Sophie. "There's so much history here," she said of the team's home. Sophie was impressed by the legacy of Gladstone, "the fact that this place is still here and the USET Foundation is supporting riders."

The winner trains with Susan Artes and Karen Healey in California, while in New Jersey, she is based at Beacon Hill. Trainers Stacia Madden, Max Amaya, Krista Freundlich, Heather Senia and Custis Ferguson all contributed to her victory.



Paul Long of the USET Foundation presents Sophie Benjamin with her trophy as last year's winner, Nikko Ritter, and Lindsey Woolley of Platinum Performance look on.

Photo by Nancy Jaffer

Beacon Hill had five riders in the top 10, not only Jacqueline and Sophie but also Carolyn Curcio, fifth; Christy DiStefano, seventh; and Jessica Springsteen, eighth, while Heritage – Andre Dignelli, Pat Griffiths and Kirsten Coe – trained Matt and Victoria, as well as ninth-place Reed Kessler. Maria Schaub, who finished sixth, is trained by Frank Madden and 10th-placed Michael Hughes – at age 12 the youngest competitor – works with Missy Clark and John Brennan. ■ – Nancy Jaffer

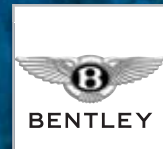
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