



UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN TEAM FOUNDATION • VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1 • SPRING 2015

USA EASY VICTORY AT WELLINGTON NATIONS CUP

BY KENNETH KRAUS

Following a hard earned second place finish during the 2015 Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup in Ocala, FL the previous week, the tides turned for the United States during the \$100,000 Nations Cup in Wellington. With zero faults on the scorecard in the first round and only two rails down in round two, the hometown team was four faults better than second place finishers Canada and eight in front of Ireland who finished in third. It wasn't really as close as those scores might indicate. How good were they in this history making win? Good enough that anchor rider McLain Ward wasn't even needed in either round. His only appearance in the ring on Friday night was for the United States victory gallop and for his spot atop the podium when the night's prizes were awarded.

According to Ward, that kind of runaway victory, where the final rider was able to take a pass in both rounds has only happened one other time in recent memory and that was many years ago at the Nations Cup in Rome, Italy. "I think you're right," Ward said. "I remember we did it in Rome one time, many years ago but never here. Margie and I were on the team and Allison (Robitaille) and Anne (Kursinski) and I don't think Anne went either round, but that's the only other time I ever remember this happening."

Chef d' Equipe Robert Ridland agreed. "For sure it's rare and never here," he said. "But it absolutely factored into the strategy because the jump-off was still very real at the end and that's why it was great that we were able to rest McLain the first round, even if we had to use him in the second round, he would have been fresher in the

jump-off than anyone in the class because he would have had one less round."

The night's opening round saw Todd Minikus and Two Swans Farm's Babalou 41, Candice King with Bellissimo LLC's Kismet 50 and Margie Engle and Elm Rock Partners LLC's Royce all produce beautifully ridden, pressure packed fault-free rounds. With the three clean performances on the score sheet,

Ward's ride on Double H Farm's HH Carlos Z became unnecessary.

Although they could not duplicate the clean score sheet from round one, the United States came back with a strong second round, highlighted by an important double clear from Todd Minikus, the first to go. Four fault rides from Engle and King followed and the United States could not



Todd Minikus, Margie Engle, Robert Ridland, Candice King and McLain Ward

Photo by Emily Ridem / Phelps Media Group



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NEW USEF DIRECTOR OF SPORT WILL CONNELL

Dreams of Medals for Americans

In selecting Will Connell as its new Director of Sport Programs, the United States Equestrian Federation has implemented a maxim that has long benefited the business world: Find someone who is doing the job supremely well elsewhere and hire him to do the same for your organization.

Although there will be some variation from his long-term post on the other side of the Atlantic, Connell is basically charged with the same mission – building and maintaining top-caliber teams. Since his arrival in Gladstone in October 2014, his primary focus has been formulating a plan that incorporates all the elements required for success in equestrian sport (starting with athletes, horses, owners, coaches and trainers).

In fact, that is precisely what Connell has done so successfully for Great Britain. For the past 11 years, he served as Performance Director for the British Equestrian Federation. He managed the UK Sport-funded World Class Program for eventing, dressage, jumping and para-dressage. He was Chef d'Equipe for the British Young Rider Eventing team from 1997 to 2001; a British Eventing Steward, and Deputy Equestrian Director of Olympia, The London International Horse Show. He also served 17 years in the Royal Horse Artillery (RHA) and was Commanding Officer of the King's Troop RHA.

In his new role, Connell will be USEF's Chef de Mission at the FEI World Equestrian Games, Pan American Games and Olympic Games. On a day-to-day basis he will oversee the USEF coaching programs and lead the USEF discipline directors, as well as overseeing all aspects of sport programming across the eight international disciplines, nine national disciplines and 11 breeds recognized by the USEF.

Connell likes to add one digit to that. "I call it nine FEI disciplines – eight and the central program," he said. "You need to have that glue that bonds all eight disciplines together to get cross-discipline benefits. I'd rather talk about it all being 'one sport' than individual disciplines," he added.

While he feels that the developing horse programs and developing athlete programs already in place are "fantastic," Connell wants to take things a step further. "We need to have cohesion across the disciplines that we can develop and package so we can persuade people to support areas, that until now, were being operated in a solitary fashion," he said.



For example, he pointed to human sports science and medicine, a cross-discipline program that USEF is starting to grow with the U.S. Olympic Committee. The goal, he said, is to create a central bank of expertise and develop a network of practitioners who are accredited to work with programs such as "fit to ride." He explained: "We're not trying to make riders into marathon runners. We're trying to make them into riders who can absorb the pressure and flexibility of being on a horse." The same approach, he said, applies to equine sports science and medicine. "We need to get all the team vets pulling together and communicating. We need to expand that network of people and be able to reach into research and development and into other areas of equestrian to deliver."

The reason, he said, is "because we're talking fractions between Gold medal and no medal. Nothing replaces that need for a world-class horse or world-class rider. That's a given; you need that. But the difference between medal and no medal is so tiny that we need to be exploring all of these options. I'd love to see a coach development program for our leading coaches so that we're all helping our coaches continue to develop and reinvent themselves. I don't think any coach can stand still and still be truly world-class."

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Cover Headline Photos Courtesy of the USEF Foundation Archives, Karl Leck, Waltenberry, SusanJStickle.com, Terri Miller, www.hippoevent.at, GenieSS Inc., Lauren Giannini

NATIONS CUP

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be caught as they put a final score of only eight faults on the board. The victory for the U.S. came over Canada's 12-fault effort and Ireland's 16-fault score.

Todd Minikus, the team leader with tonight's all-important double clear rounds, was thrilled with the way things played out. He commented, "Obviously, Quality Girl has been my number one horse for the past two years and I asked Robert permission to use Babalou in this Nations Cup and he was kind enough to agree with me that it was okay. Although she's quite green, I think she has a big future and I wanted her to get this exposure and this experience which worked out quite well for her."

With only one rail down during the two rounds of competition, Candice King was also pleased with Kismet's performance. "Coming in tonight I talked with Robert and we made a good plan and my biggest thing was having her conditioned and ready for tonight," she said. "I was very excited and I know what the team event is about, so I tried to come in here as strong as we could and put in a good solid performance like we did and I'm very happy with how it went."

Margie Engle, also only had one rail during the evening, and stated, "Royce went great. He felt like he was actually going to be better the second round, but I got a little past the fence," she admitted. "He rode better in the second round, but overall he felt very good."

McLain Ward, who only enjoyed the victory gallop as his one riding assignment tonight, said, "It was a great team and I was there if I was needed and I'm very thankful for them, they made my work very easy."

"We've always said that winning our own Nations Cup is one of our biggest priorities," said U.S. Show Jumping Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland. "We won it two years ago and we won it again tonight. We had a good performance two weeks ago and now we have two Nations Cups here in Florida. We've won the points in the league, but this is where we've had a Nations Cup with long-standing tradition, great crowds, and what was really gratifying was to do these relatively back-to-back Nations Cups with eight different riders and eight different horses. We've always said that



Margie Engle and Royce

winning our own Nation's Cup is one of our biggest priorities," said U.S. Show Jumping Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland. "We won it two years ago, and we won it again tonight. We had a good performance two weeks ago, and now we have two Nations Cups here in Florida. We've won the points in the league, but this is where we've had a Nation Cup with long-standing tradition, great crowds, and what was really gratifying was to do these relatively back-to-back Nation's Cups with eight different riders and eight different horses. We've emphasized for so long the incredible depth that the United States has. We had four different riders at each Nations Cup, who all performed well, and we saw that depth in action. Continuing to build that is what we're trying to go for in the future. I couldn't be happier."



Todd Minikus and Babalou 41



Candice King and Kismet 50

All photos by Emily Riden / Phelps Media Group

USET Foundation Officers and Trustees

At the Annual Meeting of the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation Board of Trustees, Sunday, January 25 in Wellington, FL, the Trustees elected Brownlee O. Currey, Jr., Chairman of the Board; S. Tucker S. Johnson, President & CEO; W. James McNerney, Jr., Vice President; Philip E. Richter, Treasurer and Elizabeth Juliano, Secretary. These individuals will serve as the Officers of the corporation for a four-year term.

BROWNLEE O. CURREY, JR.

Chairman of the Board
Franklin, TN and Wellington, FL

Brownlee serves as President of the Nashville Banner Publishing Company in Nashville, TN as well as Currey Investments. He has served as Chairman of the Board of the Osborn Communications Corporation's principal subsidiary (now known as Star Communications, Inc.) since 1989. In addition to serving as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the USET Foundation, Brownlee also sits on the Board of Trustees for Vanderbilt University, the National Foundation for Facial Reconstruction and the International Tennis Hall of Fame. His equestrian involvement includes owning "Touch of Class," the horse ridden by Joe Fargis to Individual Gold and U.S. Team Gold at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, CA. His son Christian has represented the United States in Nations Cup competition, and daughters Francis and Stephanie compete in the hunter divisions. Brownlee resides with his wife, Agneta, in Franklin, TN and Wellington, FL.



S. TUCKER S. JOHNSON

President and CEO
Hobe Sound, FL

Tucker was re-elected President and CEO. His involvement with the USEF and USET Foundation has spanned two decades, including serving on the Executive, Budget, Finance and Investment Committees for the Foundation. Tucker's name is closely associated with High Performance equestrian sport for the United States as a top Four-In-Hand Driver for many years, capping off his competitive career by winning the Individual Bronze and Team Silver at the 2010 World Equestrian Games in Lexington, KY as well as winning numerous other international awards. He was the recipient of the prestigious Whitney Stone Cup twice, in 2001 and again in 2011. Tucker and his wife Charlotte reside in Hobe Sound, FL along with their three children, Sam, Freddie and Emma.



W. JAMES McNERNEY, JR.

Vice President
Lake Forest, IL

Jim is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Boeing Company. He is active in a variety of business and philanthropic organizations including serving as a member of the Executive Committee and former Chair of the Business Roundtable, an association of Chief Executive Officers of leading U.S. companies. Jim also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Center for Strategic and International Studies based in Washington, DC, Northwestern University and the Field Museum in Chicago. Additionally, he serves on the Board of Directors for Proctor and Gamble and IBM. Jim's involvement in the equestrian community is through his family's long-standing participation in show jumping. He and his wife Haity support show jumping with a focus on young rider development. Their daughters, Julia and Hilary, are both active competitors in the hunter and jumper divisions. They also own young and Grand Prix jumpers ridden by Kent Farrington. Jim, Haity and their daughters reside in Lake Forest, IL.



PHILIP E. RICHTER

Treasurer
New York, NY

Philip is the President of Hollow Brook Wealth Management LLC, a New York City based private wealth management firm that he co-founded in 2002. Philip competes successfully in the Amateur-Owner Jumpers and has been a member of the USET Foundation Board of Trustees since 2012 serving on the Finance and Investment Committees. Philip sits on the Board of Directors of the Lake Placid Horse Show and is a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Hampton Classic Horse Show. He is also a member of the Coaching Club and serves on its Audit Committee. Philip is a graduate of Boston College and holds an MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business. He is the son of National Advisory Committee member, Judy Richter and grandson of Philip Hofmann, a founding member of the USET. Philip and his wife Sarah Willeman reside in New York City.



Photo by Phelps Media Group

NEW OFFICERS

continued

ELIZABETH B. JULIANO

Secretary

Gates Mills, OH and Wellington, FL

Betsy is the Chief Executive Officer of Litigation Management, Inc. (LMI), a company she founded in 1984 which acquires, reviews, analyzes and summarizes thousands of pages of medical records to provide defense counsels with summaries and analysis. Betsy owns Havensafe Farm with locations in Gates Mills, OH and Wellington, FL and is an active dressage competitor along with owning several international level prospects ridden by Chris Hickey. Betsy devotes considerable attention to philanthropic and public service as a member of the Defense Research Institute, Food and Drug Law Institute and American Bar Association. She is also President of the Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center Board of Trustees, Vice Chairman of the Hiram College Board of Trustees as well as serving on the Executive Committee of the Western Reserve and Land Conservancy and the Greater Cleveland Partnership Board of Trustees.



Photo by Meg McGuire

Newly-Elected Trustees

BEEZIE MADDEN

Cazenovia, NY and Wellington, FL

Beezie began competing at the Grand Prix level in 1985. She and her husband John operate their stable, John Madden Sales, in Cazenovia, NY. Beezie has set the standards for show jumping in many ways. She was the first woman to pass the \$1 million mark in earnings, and in 2004 she became the first woman and the first American rider to reach the top three in the Show Jumping world-ranking list. Beezie is an Individual Olympic Bronze medalist and a member of the two gold medal U.S. Show Jumping teams from the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games. She is also the only four-time USEF Equestrian of the Year.



Photo by Erin Gilmore

JULIET REID

Washington, DC

Juliet has been active in equestrian sport in various roles. She and her brother, Chester Weber, collaborated for the first time in 2012 to bring show jumping to the existing Live Oak International Driving Show at their family horse farm, Live Oak Plantation, in Ocala, FL. She also served as President of the Washington International Horse Show from 2008 to 2014. Juliet continues her involvement through her daughter Chloe, who is a promising young show jumping rider having won a Team Gold medal at NAJYRC and was a member of the USA Nations Cup Team in Bratislava. Chloe also won the Individual USEF Junior Jumper Championship. Juliet, her husband Sam, Chloe and son Harry live in Washington, DC.



SIGNE OSTBY

Woodside, CA

Signe's business background is extensive having worked as a Brand Manager for Proctor & Gamble from 1977 – 1980, Clorox 1980 – 1982, Software Publishing Corporation as VP of Marketing 1982 – 1988 and Woodside Consulting, a High Tech Strategic Marketing Company from 1989 – 1993. Signe's personal interests include restoration ranching, breeding grand prix jumpers, knitting and selling yarn from her herd of Alpacas and Cormo sheep, gardening, bridge, riding the trails in Woodside, finding a cure for Multiple Sclerosis and investing in organizations that can significantly improve public education. Signe is a Trustee of the Environmental Defense Fund and the Center for Brand and Product Management at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She lives in Woodside with husband, Scott, and has three children, David, Karl and Annie Cook. Both Karl and Annie have represented the U.S. in international show jumping competition.



GOLD MEDAL CLUB MEMBERS

Continue to Support USET Foundation Mission



Jim McNerney, Brownlee O. Currey, Jr.
and Jane Forbes Clark



Jim McNerney, Brownlee O. Currey, Jr.,
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Weeks, Eve Lloyd Thompson,
Jennifer Burger and Philip Richter



Jim McNerney, Brownlee O. Currey, Jr.,
Lorraine Ferrell, Ellin Miller, Elizabeth Powers,
Barbara and Michael Simpson

On Sunday, January 25, 2015, the USET Foundation hosted the Gold Medal Club Reception where they recognized GMC Members that have made the USET Foundation a priority in their charitable giving for 10, 15, 20, 25 and 35 years. The Gold Medal Club is the lifeblood of the USET Foundation, accounting for nearly 80% of individual contributions each year and is comprised of members who contribute at least \$1,000 annually.

The GMC members have been a vital and essential source of support to the U.S. equestrian teams. For 10 years, the following GMC members have continued to generously support the USET Foundation: Mr. and Mrs. Edward S. Bonnie, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Burger, the Equus Foundation, Claudia Wilson Frost, Benjamin H. Hardaway, Mr. and Mrs. Klaus Heidegger, Sheila C. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence J. Kanavy, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Langer, Karen Long Dwight and Barbara Ridder Irwin, the Seip Family Foundation, Eve Lloyd Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Weeks and Kathleen and Katie Whaley.

Receiving the 15 Year Award were Mr. and Mrs. Phillip D. Allen, the American Quarter Horse Association, Katrina H. Becker,

Paul Miller, Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Louis Piancone, Joy L. Slater, Squadron A Association and Phelps Witter, Jr.

The 20 Year Awards were presented to Patricia Colagiuri, Mary Ferguson, Lorraine Ferrell, Sandra A. Frazier, Mrs. William P. Gilbert, the Grimshaw-Gudewicz Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Miller, Mr. and Mrs. James F. Powers, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen T. Rojek and Mr. and Mrs. Michael Simpson.

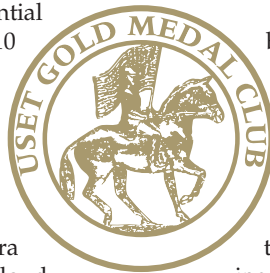
Linda Sue Harrison and Mary Alice D. Malone have been members of the Gold Medal Club for a remarkable 25 years.

Receiving the USET Foundation's 35 Year Award were Jane Forbes Clark and William C. Steinkraus. They are the Foundation's first Gold Medal Club members to reach this truly incredible milestone.

The USET Foundation would not be able to achieve their mission to support the competition, training, coaching, travel and educational needs of America's elite and developing international, high-performance horses and athletes in partnership with the United States Equestrian Federation without the generous support of each and every member of the Gold Medal Club.



– Rebecca Walton



Betsy Juliano, Caroline Moran
and Bonnie Jenkins



BG and Suzanne Porter



Bonnie Jenkins and Haity McNerney



Katherine and Mark Bellissimo



Robin Parsky and Jacqueline B. Mars



Lorraine Ferrell and Sherry Adams



Norman and Jeanie Dello Joio



Philip Richter and Chrystine Tauber



Greg Gingery, Leslie Simpson, Barbara Simpson,
Michael Simpson and Tuny Page

OWNERS, SUPPORTERS AND JUNIOR RIDERS



Rally Behind Team USA

Preceding a landslide victory by Team USA in this year's \$100,000 Nations Cup at the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF), fans, owners and followers came out in force to show their support of the United States Equestrian Team at the Team USA Nations Cup Pep Rally Reception.

Hosted by the USET Foundation and the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) on Friday, February 27, the pep rally reception brought U.S. fans together to enjoy an all-American picnic dinner, drinks and camaraderie, to generate team spirit prior to the start of the Nations Cup.


Many of the guests in attendance for the pep rally also showed their support and confidence in the American team by pledging a contribution to the Show Jumping High Performance programs for each clear round that a U.S. rider jumped during the evening's Nations Cup.

During the Team USA Pep Rally Reception, USET Foundation Executive Director, Bonnie Jenkins, and USEF President, Chrystine Tauber, recognized the owners of the U.S. team horses, as well as the riders who would compete for the United States the following day in the Children's, Junior and Young Rider Nations Cup Team competitions.

Leading up to the pep rally, dozens of young pony riders created posters for the "Team USA Poster Contest." The young riders got to know more about the United States Nations Cup riders and the U.S. team while showing their creative side and making posters showing their "Team USA spirit" or representing their "Favorite Team Horse."

The Young Rider Nations Cup team served as the panel judges for the contest, and all winners received a beautiful USET Foundation duffle bag and blanket as well as a copy of *Hunter Seat Equitation* by George H. Morris.

Events like the pep rally and the Team USA Poster Contest are the perfect opportunity to introduce these young riders to the high performance side of the sport and the opportunity to represent the United States on the International stage.

 – Emily Riden



Jane Forbes Clark and Chrystine Tauber



Hunter and Jeannie Harrison



Pony kids support Team USA!



Pony riders creating their Team USA posters

Photo by Emily Riden / Phelps Media Group

DRIVING DERBY HOEDOWN SUPPORTS PONY TEAM USA



Katie Whaley with Tommy and Tanner

Supporters of the U.S. Pony Team had an exciting time this weekend at The Grand Oaks Resort in Weirsdale, FL, where they raised funds for the 2015 Pony World Championships, scheduled to take place from September 2-6, in The Netherlands.

The special fundraiser, hosted by Katie Whaley and Jennifer Matheson, in conjunction with the United States Equestrian Team Foundation, raised over \$10,000, with all proceeds benefiting the U.S. Pony Team.

"I was thrilled with the support from the driving community," Whaley explained. "It showed that if we work together we can start building a strong financial base to help ensure the future of our sport."

The weekend kicked off on Saturday night with the Hoedown, which included a silent and live auction. The Hoedown tied into Sunday's Driving Derby, where guests could bid on teams of drivers that were competing the next day. After the auction, people got out of their seats and onto the dance floor.

On Sunday, March 1, drivers took part in the Driving Derby competition, which had two levels: Training (walk and trot only) and Preliminary (open to all above training level).

Purchased by Kate Whaley during the Hoedown, Team Dorthalyse had the winning combination for the day. The team members included Alison Landes, Eloise Nelson and Katie Whaley, who all had top performances during the day's competition.

"The event was very positive," Jennifer Matheson said. "It gave drivers a chance to experience a new form of competition that was just recognized by the American Driving Society. I saw a lot of smiling faces coming out of the arena, everyone enjoyed themselves and that means more than anything else."

This fundraiser was officiated by driving event organizer, Ellen Ettenger, and Four-in-Hand Pony Driver, Boots Wright. The funds raised during the event will provide support for the drivers competing at the 2015 Pony World Championships.



– Caroline Nickolaus



Doris Leacy, Barbara Sims and Perry Raburn



Scott Adcox and Sunrise Commander

PORTER FAMILY HOSTS RECEPTION

For George H. Morris Horsemastership

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TRAINING SESSION

BG and Suzanne Porter have been wonderful supporters of the USET Foundation and of equestrian sport in the United States for years. This year during the George H. Morris Horsemastership Training Session, they graciously opened the doors of their home in support of some of the sports' brightest rising stars.

On Friday, January 2, 2015, the Porters hosted dinner for the riders, families and supporters of the George H. Morris Horsemastership Training Session at their lovely home and Sleepy P Ranch in Wellington, FL.


This year's participants in the five-day training session included Bowers Cone, Mitch Endicott, Jennifer Gates, Hannah Heidegger, Geoffrey Hesslink, Sydney Hutchins, Lucas Porter, Wilton Porter, Sophie Simpson, Spencer Smith, Carly Williams and Cody Wooten.

Following a delicious dinner provided by the Porters, Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins spoke on behalf of the

USET Foundation to recognize the hosts. Jenkins stated, "On behalf of the USET Foundation, I would like to extend sincere thanks to Suzanne and BG Porter for hosting tonight's final dinner for the families and riders participating in the GHM Horsemastership Training Session."

Morris and USEF Director of Show Jumping, Lizzy Chesson, then joined Jenkins to present each participating rider with a gift from the USET Foundation in recognition of their achievements and as a lasting way to commemorate the experience.

Morris also shared a few words about how impressed he was with the level of talent found within the group of participants, as well their dedication and commitment to the sport, as was evident through their five days of intensive riding, horse care and instruction.

There is no doubt that with the talented group of riders participating this year, the future looks very bright for the United States.  – *Emily Riden*



Lizzy Chesson, George H. Morris, Bonnie Jenkins, Suzanne Porter and BG Porter



The Wooten Family with Bezie Madden and George H. Morris

Back Row Left to Right: Lizzy Chesson, Wilton Porter, Hannah Heidegger, Jennifer Gates, Sydney Hutchins, Cody Wooten, Geoffrey Hesslink, Sophie Simpson, Lucas Porter, Spencer Smith, Bowers Cone, Mitch Endicott, Carly Williams and Bonnie Jenkins. Front row: Suzanne Porter, George H. Morris and BG Porter



Photos by Emily Riden / Phelps Media Group

FUTURE SHINES BRIGHT

for 2015 Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy Winner

LILLIE KEENAN

There are very few awards that young rider Lillie Keenan has not already won, but on January 25, the 18-year-old rider from New York, NY, added another honor to the list.

The Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy is presented to a young rider each year in one of the Olympic disciplines who exemplifies both sportsmanship and horsemanship. Keenan shines in both areas.

In 2014, Keenan advanced to the highest levels of the sport, competing in her first Nations Cup in Bratislava and winning the Medium Tour 3* and a 1.40m class in Ascona. She has competed in five World Cup Grand Prix events and finished 5th at the National Horse Show Grand Prix against some of the best in the world. Keenan also won the Individual Gold medal at the North American Young Riders Championship in 2013.

"It's an award that I've known about for a long time," Keenan said. "I really feel like it's the pinnacle of awards for a young rider. This award is not about one moment in the ring, it's about you as a horseperson and representing the sport and that is why it is so meaningful to me. When someone is recognizing you for what you have been striving to be, it's not just about doing well in the ring, it's about the path towards becoming a professional in the business."



USET Foundation Vice President, Jim McNerney, Chairman, Brownlee O. Currey, Jr., and James Sardelli, Hermès Equestrian Manager presented the Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy to Lillie Keenan

Photo by Emily Riden / Phelps Media Group


Entering this year, Keenan pushed herself toward competing on a professional level. "This was my last year as a junior and I decided I wanted to try and move out of the junior divisions and show in more of the professional classes," she described. "I got selected for my first Nations Cup team. I traveled to Europe with four other riders and I got to show at two events. I had great results there and it was really an eye opening experience. I went from doing the equitation, hunters and jumpers in 2013, which was one of the most successful years I've had. I knew going into this year it would be hard to top that for goals. It wasn't so much about winning, it was really about starting my career as a professional and moving up into a new division."

Keenan achieved many accomplishments this year, but riding for her country is the one she found to be the best. "This year my greatest accomplishment was showing on the U.S. Team in Bratislava," she said. "To just wear the red coat, I can't even put into words how exciting that was. As a junior you are pitted against your friends. It's an individual sport, but at the top level it's really about winning

Gold medals for our country. Having that experience was invaluable and I really hope I can do it again soon."

Keenan has a team behind her that she is thankful for and believes her success would not be possible without them. "I need to thank Andre Dignelli, it's rare that a junior will stay with one trainer their entire junior career, and I did," she said. "I owe everything that I have won to him and my parents, who are supporting me. I have been lucky to have a family that is really supportive. It's about the team, and I have an incredible team behind me."

"I have been lucky to be partnered with Hermès as a brand over the past year," Keenan said. "To be able to win an award that was originally created for their son, means a lot. I just want to thank them for their support and partnering with me."

Keenan enters 2015 as a professional rider and plans to balance her riding career with her studies at Harvard College. She plans to spend the first half of the year continuing to work with her younger horses, getting into bigger shows, showing at more international competitions, and then in the fall she will go to college.  – Andrea Robbins



Lillie Keenan and Pumped Up Kicks

Photo by Rebecca Walton / Phelps Media Group

CHESTER WEBER

Drives Away With 2015

WHITNEY STONE CUP

Currently ranked the FEI No 1. Driver in the World, Chester Weber of Ocala, FL added another accomplishment to his list when he accepted the USET Foundation's 2015 Whitney Stone Cup. During the Foundation Gold Medal Club Reception on January 25th, Weber accepted the prestigious honor, which is presented annually to an active competitor who displays consistent excellence in international competition and high standards of sportsmanlike conduct while serving as an ambassador for the United States and equestrian sport.

Winning the Silver medal at the 2014 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Normandy, France and winning at Aachen, Saumur, Windsor, and Live Oak are just a few standouts from Weber's outstanding list of accomplishments this year. His win at Live Oak made history by claiming his 11th USEF National Four-in-Hand Championship.

"It's a huge honor," said Weber. "I've been around the Foundation and the sport for many years and I have a great deal of respect for the people that have won this award in the past. Looking at the list, it's very humbling. I could not be prouder of my entire team and the horses for achieving this honor."


This year Weber fulfilled a personal goal that he has had since he was young. Weber grew up looking up to people who had won at Aachen and had their name permanently on the wall, which very few Americans had done. Weber was the first American to win the Four-in-Hand driving at Aachen and now has his name permanently on the wall just like the people he looked up to while growing up.

An important factor contributing to Weber's success and winning this award was his supportive team. "I am really proud of the horses and the entire team, from vets to the blacksmiths, everybody for making this happen. I am humbled to be the driver but I see my sport as a real team sport and it takes a village to get this done."



Jim McNerney, Brownlee O. Currey, Jr. and Chester Weber

In 2010, Weber partnered with owner Jane Forbes Clark, creating an unstoppable partnership. "The whole thing is a partnership and Jane always has lots of wisdom," Weber said. "She has been doing horse sport at the top levels for decades and she really always has great advice when you find yourself in situations that are pivotal. She keeps her eye on what the real goal is, and championships are what she is about, and what we're about."

Clark was pleased with Weber receiving the 2015 Whitney Stone Cup award. "I am so happy for Chester that he has been awarded The Whitney Stone Cup," Clark said. "It is a wonderful tribute to his commitment to great horsemanship, winning, and the United States Equestrian Team!"  – Andrea Robbins



Chester Weber at the Alltech 2014 World Equestrian Games, Normandy, France

WILL CONNELL

continued from page 2

In his view, equine sports science medicine offers avenues that could help coaches and athletes, such as saddle fitting and performance analysis. "We're not trying to get riders to run on pressure plates, but giving leading coaches and leading vets evidence-based analysis to back up a whole bay of experts," he said. "These are little things, but they pull a team together."

Team-building, he said, also requires a shared mindset, an eyes-on-the-prize mentality. But first, he said, "We have to define what success means. Does that mean you have to win every Nations Cup in show jumping? You better be developing riders for another four years' time. One of America's greatest successes last year was show jumping's second place in Aachen. So being on top of the podium is not actually the definition of winning – until it becomes the definition of winning."

For example, he said, "If you go to the Olympics thinking you're going to be fifth or sixth and you come home with a Bronze medal, you've actually over-achieved. If you go to the Olympics thinking you're on for Gold and you come home Bronze, you've under-achieved."

Show jumping, he said, offers a good example. "In Rio, you will have probably between eight and 11 teams that realistically have a chance to win a medal – that's the honest truth," said Connell. "And it will be a fluctuating journey through that competition. And it's not over until the last horse has finished jumping, so one has to be able to keep one's morale up until it's over."

In London, he recalled, the British team did its show jumping round in the morning because it was currently out of the top 10. "But we finished up Gold," he said. "If we had come out of that first day's speed competition going, 'Oh blimey, how depressing,' then that could have been game over. But it wasn't because we talked about it, and we knew that could happen." (The result was the British team's first Olympic show jumping medal since 1984 and its first Gold since the 1952 Games in Helsinki, 60 years before.)

With Tokyo less than 2,000 days away, Connell feels the focus should be "better defining the road to Tokyo – because we're already in Rio, really – and looking ahead to post-Tokyo." He has identified five key areas for the U.S. to build its program around:

1. TALENT

"That's not just the horse. It's rider, horse, management, farrier, saddler, everything. They all have to be the best in the world."

2. VISION

"If you don't know where you want to go, you don't have a cat's chance in hell of getting there. So we have to decide what our vision is. Is it that every rider has to win medals in Tokyo? If so, tell me how many nations over the years have won medals in every discipline in the Olympic Games. Very few. So let's begin to define a realistic range of vision."

3. COMMITMENT

"Deciding where we want to go and accepting that there will be ups and downs along the way is part of the strategic long-term plan. There certainly will be ups and downs along the road, so we need a vision that is achievable. Teams that have sustainable success are those that are able to get through the difficult times. The British para team is undefeated, and I can tell you there have been difficult times. But they succeeded because they have a commitment to their vision, and it is a commitment that involves everybody."

4. ENVIRONMENT

"I don't know how a team succeeds if it has a poor environment. I have experienced it personally, where we have gone to championships and the environment has not been right, and the results reflected it. You need a positive environment in every aspect – physical, mental, everything. You have to ask yourself: Is the look and feel right? What makes the right environment for the Dutch may not be the same for the Americans. What creates that environment crosses so many areas. Everything has to be right."

5. RESOURCE

"I can talk the talk, but a lot of what I'd like to put in place can't be done without resources. Resource is funding, but it's also time, human resource, office resource, IT resource, everything. To get resources, I think we have to better show what our plan is, what it costs, and be able to tell people specifically, not generally: 'This is what we need to make the environment right in Tokyo.'"



– Darlene Ricker



Samuel Reid and Will Connell

Photo by Emily Riden / Phelps Media Group

USA SECURES SECOND PLACE

in \$200,000 HITS Ocala Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup



Georgina Bloomberg and Juvina



Beezie Madden and Simon

Droves of spectators turned out at HITS Ocala Post Time Farm on Friday, February 13, as the venue hosted its first ever \$200,000 Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup. For the USA, points for the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup Finals in Barcelona, Spain were up for grabs. The team had high points and low points, but in the end they dug deep, and with a little luck on their side, they placed second behind Ireland. With Canada in third, the U.S. secured the valuable points they needed to guarantee a trip to Spain.

The first round resulted in 15 clear efforts out of 24 entries, two of which belonged to the United States thanks to Georgina Bloomberg with Gotham Enterprizes' Juvina and Beezie Madden with Abigail Wexner's Simon. Lauren Hough and Ohlala, owned by the Ohlala Group, had a miscommunication coming out of the triple combination resulting in four faults, and Cherry Knoll Farms' Cedric refused with Laura Kraut going into the triple combination to be the drop score with four jumping faults and two time faults.

With so many clear in the first round, the teams were tightly bunched, with Ireland, Columbia and Canada leading without any faults to their name. The Irish were the most impressive of the leaders, as none of their riders incurred a single fault during the first round. Meanwhile, the United States and Venezuela were tied for fourth with four faults.

The course designer returned to the ring after the first round and raised the heights of the fences, creating a more difficult test

for the riders, and only six riders went clear in the second round. Hough was the first to return for the U.S. Team and had the second fence down with Ohlala, but Bloomberg put in a second faultless round with Juvina to help them climb in the standings.

Cedric and Kraut had another uncharacteristic round, this time coming out of the triple combination to be the drop score again. The U.S. Team was not out of the running yet though. The always consistent Madden proved why she was in the anchor position, easily clearing all of the obstacles with Simon to finish with a second clear round, bringing the team's final total to eight faults.

At the end of the day, the pressure was on for Canada's Eric Lamaze and Zigali P.S. A clear round would mean a tie with the U.S. for second. It was not to be though. As the middle part of the triple combination hit the dirt, Canada lost the chance to top the U.S., finishing with a 12-fault total and tying with Columbia.

For Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland of the U.S., the day did not play out as planned, but the result was still what was needed to lead the Furusiyya FEI Nations Cup standings over Canada and Mexico to qualify for the Finals. "Sometimes these Nations Cups early in the year when you're coming off of a break have some unforeseen things happening. For us, the number one priority was to try to do as well as we could for points toward the Furusiyya. We accomplished that objective. Yes, we would have liked to have won, but the better team won today."

– Rebecca Walton



Lauren Hough and Ohlala



Laura Kraut and Cedric



*DiAnn Langer, Charlie Jacobs, Jr., Yasmin Rizvi,
Catalina Peralta and Sheer Levitin*



*DiAnn Langer, Lucas Porter, Madison Goetzmann,
Lauren Fischer and Kelli Crucioti*



*DiAnn Langer, Spencer Smith, Shawn Casady,
Chloe Reid and Michael Hughes*

U.S. TEAMS CLAIM SWEEPING VICTORIES in Hollow Creek Farm FEI Nations Cups

Home court advantage certainly helped the United States during CSIO weekend at the Winter Equestrian Festival as they made a clean sweep of all three Hollow Creek Farm FEI Nations Cups. In the Young Riders, Juniors and Childrens Nations Cups, the United States was a force to be reckoned with, posting clear round after clear round to win all three events.

Saturday afternoon saw some exciting competition in the first round of the FEI Young Rider and Junior Nations Cups. The first round of the Childrens Nations Cup was cut short abruptly, after only seeing a handful of riders. The rain, that had threatened all afternoon, turned into a sudden and long lasting deluge, resulting in the show being cancelled for the rest of the evening. This moved the rest of the Children's first round and all three of the second rounds to Sunday morning, where riders were greeted

with characteristically sunny skies. Childrens riders competed first, followed by the Juniors and concluding with some of the most talented pairs in the Young Rider ranks.

Competing as the last division of the Nations Cups for the day meant that the Young Rider team had a bit of added pressure from the successes of their earlier statesmen, but they all rose to the challenge to walk away with the victory. As Chloe Reid explained, "Every time when you get to compete on a team, especially for the United States, it's an amazing honor."

The first round of the \$10,000 Hollow Creek FEI Young Rider Nations Cup saw the United States finishing on the only fault-free team score. Shawn Casady with Cavallo Farms, LLC's Twister, Spencer Smith with Wyndmont's IV Ever, and Chloe Reid with her own Athena all posted clear efforts. Their rounds were good enough that anchor rider Michael Hughes and his mount Christina Fried's Luxina were not needed during the Saturday afternoon round.

The second round showed the domination of the United States once again. Smith finished the Nations Cup with two double clear efforts. Both Casady and Reid had one rail down to earn four faults. Hughes rose to the occasion as the anchor rider and finished double clear. The team finished on four faults totaling from both rounds, walking off with the victory with a huge margin between first and second places.

In the press conference DiAnn Langer, the Chef d'Equipe for the United States team, spoke very highly of the program and the successes the riders put forth today. "It's been a great week all the way through. The teams were just the best of the best, and we go through quite a process to get to the teams, we look at a lot of results before we choose them. I came into this competition feeling very confident, but then again you never know. But they all came through; I'm so excited and very pleased."

The first round of the \$2,500 Hollow Creek FEI Junior Nations Cup saw many of the riders getting a bit wet in the rain. That did not stop the United States riders from dominating the com-



Michael Hughes and Luxina

petition, where both Kelli Cruciotti with Serenity Equestrian Ventures' Chamonix H and Madison Goetzmann with John Madden Sales Inc.'s Wrigley posted double clear rounds. Lauren Fisher had to deal with the steady rain and completed the track leaving all the fences up, but incurred one time fault with her own Offenbach Du Granit. Lucas Porter had his score dropped, as he finished with one rail on Sleepy P Ranch LLC's Phineas.


In the second round, Kelli Cruciotti was the seventh in the ring and the first to go for the Americans, finishing with a faultless clear round in a time of 68.68. With Fisher, Cruciotti and Porter all going clean around the course, the United States claimed the top spot quite handily above second place Ireland.

Fisher was enthusiastic stating, "I think riding on a team is the best thing you can do to prepare yourself for real Nations Cup classes. You also get to make great new friends, learn about how the team works and what it takes to be at the top level."

The Childrens division started off the morning in the International Ring. Both the United States and Brazilian teams put forward impressive showings, finishing without any faults in the first round.

For the United States, Yasmin Rizvi competed first, showing the way with Peacock Ridge, LLC's Delilah in a fault free round. Catalina Peralta continued the success, posting another clear round on Frances Land's Merlin. Charlie Jacobs, Jr. had one rail down on CMJ Sporthorse, LLC's Campesino IV and would be the drop score as Sheer Levitin finished on zero penalties with her own Nabuco.

With the two top teams tied at zero moving into the second round, the pressure was on. The United States again posted three clear rounds, from Rizvi, Peralta and Levitin. Jacobs had an unlucky rail down to finish on four faults. The team set a fantastic tone for the rest of the day with three clear rounds resulting in a fault free finish to claim victory.

Jacobs described his emotions at the conclusion of the event. "It feels pretty great to win. There were some amazing rounds put in by other teams. I definitely thought there was a lot more pressure...[but that's] the beauty of riding on a team. If you mess up, you always have your teammate there to help you out. So I think it feels really good to ride as a team and not just as an individual."  – Shannon Bowers



Lauren Fisher and Offenbach Du Granit



Sheer Levitin and Nabuco



Catalina Peralta and Merlin



Charles Jacobs, Jr. and Campesino IV



Madison Goetzmann and Wrigley



Shawn Casady and Twister

Photos by Shannon Bower / Phelps Media Group

BRIAN LOOKABILL BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE

at American Equestrians Got Talent Finale



Brian Lookabill and guitarist Josh Young



Brian Lookabill's voice is familiar to many equestrians from his career as a horse show announcer, and attendees of the American Equestrians Got Talent (AEGT) Finale on the evening of March 15 were treated to an exhibition of his true range and skill as a singer. Thirteen finalists selected through a series of auditions performed on the big stage at the Global Dressage Festival facility in Wellington, FL, in hopes of earning the title of America's Most Talented Equestrian. After two very competitive rounds, Lookabill walked away with the victory.

The finalists, all of whom are part of the equestrian community, put on acts ranging from dancing and singing to fire baton twirling and stand-up comedy for an appreciative audience watching from the VIP tent and bleachers as well as from all over the country via the Chronicle of the Horse live stream.

Both attendees of the event and those watching on the live stream could make

an impact on the outcome by voting on their smartphones, making donations to the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation for each vote. Funds raised at the event, along with the \$35,000 raised by The Grille Fashion Cuisine at the nine auditions leading up to the Finale, support USEF High Performance Programs through the USET Foundation.

The event is dedicated to supporting

dressage but has a wider influence as well: 10 percent of funds is split between all of the other FEI disciplines, and 10 percent goes to show jumping since the winner, Lookabill, was competing on behalf of that sport.

After the first round, featuring performances from all of the contestants, the top four returned for a final round to determine the winner. Six judges – Mark Bellissimo,



Ki-Juan Minors



Teaghan James



Taylor Hughes



*Kerrigan Gluch, Chelsea Reed, Nina Boyer,
Kim Boyer and Justine Boyer*



Bonnie Jenkins and Robert Dover



Liza and Karen MacMillan

Carmine Gialanella, Tami Hoag, P.J. Rizvi, Leslie Streeter and Chrystine Tauber – were on hand to critique the performances, and their selections counted for 50 percent of the result in both rounds. The other 50 percent was determined by audience voting.

Lookabill, Taylor Hughes, Teaghan James and Ki-Juan Minors were the front-runners after the first round and squared off against each other in the second round. All four qualified for the Finale as solo singers, and while they made various use of back-up singers, dancers or instrumentalists, the focus was on their vocal skill and power.

Several of them opted to show off their range by choosing two very different songs as their first and second numbers. Lookabill started things off with an upbeat rendition of Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk" and then brought guitarist Josh Young into the mix for a stripped-down performance of Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You."

"I thought that it would be smart to show some different facets of my ability," Lookabill said. "The first song was to get the audience up and into it and have fun, and then I wanted to do a song that is timeless yet still very popular. I could put a twist on it as a man doing it because it's a women's song with a lot of range."

"I'd like to salute Robert Dover, Sara Ike of the USET Foundation, and Annie Cizadlo, who did a fantastic job of getting everything organized," he added. "Thank you to everyone for their support."

Lookabill took home the \$5,000 top prize sponsored by Robert Ross, P.A., Luxury Equestrian Realtor for Keller Williams, clinching the win over Minors in a tight race. Minors earned the \$2,500 second prize courtesy of Visse Wedell, and On Course Consignment sponsored the \$1,000 third prize, which James won. The fourth place prize of \$500, sponsored by Oded Shimoni Dressage, went to Hughes.

A live auction was held between the performances and featured several incred-

ible items: luxury trips offering up-close experiences at the 2015 Central Park Horse Show in New York City, Pan American Games in Toronto (CAN) and FEI World Breeding Dressage Championships for Young Horses in Verden (GER); a four-day cruise to the Bahamas on a 115' yacht; a head-to-toe outfit for horse and rider including an exclusive Hermès coat and Custom Saddlery saddle; and a day with each of the Team USA dressage coaches.

"I am completely thrilled with the event last night," said Robert Dover, Chef d'Equipe of the U.S. dressage team and organizer of AEGT. "I am so appreciative to everyone: all of the sponsors, the volunteers, the people who came out to support the event and those who watched it live at Chronicle of the Horse online. I'm really excited about the large amount of money raised for the USET Foundation and our athletes and programs." – *Mary Adelaide Brakenridge*



Brownlee and Agneta Curry with George Tauber



Rebecca Hart, Annie Peavy and Becky Reno



Katherine, Paige and Mark Bellissimo



Roberta, George and Noel Williams



Farah, PJ and Zayna Rizvi



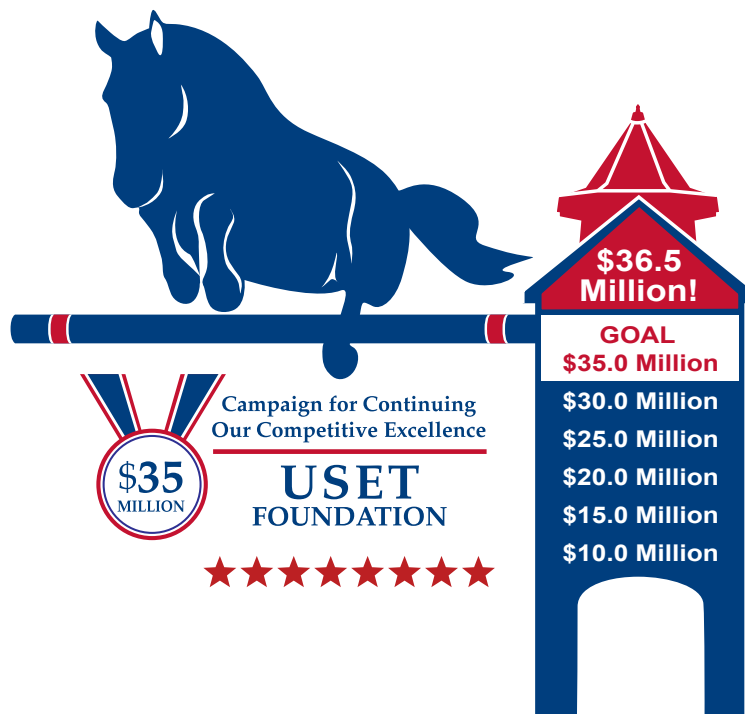
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