



High Performance Pathway Produces **HISTORIC RESULTS** *at CHIO Aachen*

JUMPING

Despite rescheduled competitions in 2021, including the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, as well as the Mercedes-Benz Nations Cup CSIO5* at the World Equestrian Festival CHIO Aachen in Aachen, Germany, the U.S. jumping team prevailed at championship events, earning team silver at the Tokyo Olympic Games, a podium finish at Spruce Meadows, and a historic win at CHIO Aachen on September 16, 2021, the first time the NetJets® U.S. Jumping Team has topped the Mercedes-Benz Nations Cup CSIO5* since 2005.

After a brilliant display of talent under the lights at the World Equestrian Festival CHIO Aachen, the team of young jumping stars Lucy Deslauriers and Brian Moggre, as well as Tokyo Olympic silver medalists, Laura Kraut and Jessica Springsteen, produced solid rounds to finish on a team total of four faults, besting the Swedish team who finished in second place with a total of eight faults and the third-place team from France who finished with a total of 12 faults.

"Winning in Aachen is the pinnacle. It's as simple as that," said U.S. Jumping Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland. "These were four of our final six riders for Tokyo, so [selecting the team] was pretty simple. We just went straight down the shortlist."

Because Deslauriers and Moggre were shortlisted for the Tokyo Olympic Games, they were able to attend the pre-export quarantine (PEQ)—which was held at the showgrounds in Aachen—and that experience played a critical role in the team's ultimate success at CHIO Aachen. "It was invaluable," Ridland continued of having Moggre and Deslauriers partake in the preparation in Aachen for the Olympic

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Laura Kraut and Baloutinue

Photo by Shannon Brinkman



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Dear Friends,

As I reflect on this past year, I feel an immense sense of pride for our U.S. equestrian teams. Despite the challenges and changes 2020 presented to us, 2021 ushered in historic accomplishments for our sport. Patience and perseverance on the part of the athletes and their teams, along with continued commitment to sustaining the excellence of the US Equestrian (USEF) High Performance Pathway and Development programs, have paid off in spades.

On the heels of a momentous 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, the depth of our equestrian programs was showcased with podium finishes in jumping and eventing, and a strong fourth-place performance from young dressage talent, at the prestigious World Equestrian Festival CHIO Aachen.

For the first time since 2005, the NetJets U.S. Jumping Team took home the gold medal in the Mercedes-Benz Nations Cup CSIO5* at CHIO Aachen. To me, this victory demonstrates the value and effectiveness of the USEF Pathway and Developing programs. Lucy Deslauriers and Brian Moggre, who were at the top of the shortlist for the Olympic Games, along with Jessica Springsteen, who earned her first Olympic medal in Tokyo, are all prime examples of young, talented athletes who have leveraged all the Pathway has to offer. Coupled with years of hard work and determination, these young show jumpers have joined the discipline's group of elite athletes.

Similarly, eventer Will Coleman became the first American to win individual gold at CHIO Aachen while the Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team earned a brilliant second-place finish in the FEI Nations Cup™ CCIO4*-S there, the highest-ever result by a U.S. eventing team at the competition. Notably, Coleman's teammates, Sydney Elliott and Ariel Gald, were recipients of the USET Foundation's Jacqueline B. Mars International Competition & Training Grant, while Tamie Smith was a recipient of the USET Foundation's 2021 Karen E. Stives Endowment Fund Grant, which supported these athletes' travel to and from competition at Aachen.

I was impressed by the Dutta Corp. U.S. Dressage Team's efforts in the Dressage Nations Cup CDIO5* at CHIO Aachen, where they earned a respectable fourth-place finish. For Anna Buffini, Ben Ebeling, and Jennifer Schrader-Williams, this was their first appearance riding on a U.S. team in international competition and I have no doubt that this experience was a formative one as they continue to progress along the high performance pathway.

I also want to commend Paralympian Beatrice de Lavalette on receiving the FEI Against All Odds Award, an honor given to a person who has pursued their equestrian ambitions despite a physical handicap or extremely difficult personal circumstances. Beatrice's courage and fortitude are admirable, and I'm proud that she is able to serve as an ambassador not only for para dressage, but for U.S. equestrian sport more broadly.

As the philanthropic partner to USEF, supporting the Pathway and Developing programs across disciplines remains core to our mission. With World Championships for dressage, driving, eventing, jumping, and vaulting in 2022, the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, France, on the horizon, and the return of a home Games in Los Angeles in 2028, a concerted focus on our horse and athlete pipeline is more important than ever.

As I reflect with appreciation and look ahead with great optimism, I want to express my gratitude for the USET Foundation's supporters and friends. It thanks to you that we're able to maintain prominence in our beloved sport.

Wishing you and yours a very happy and healthy holiday season and new year.

Sincerely,

W. James McNerney, Jr.
Chairman, President and CEO



The United States Equestrian Team Foundation (USET) is a philanthropic partner of US Equestrian (USEF). The USET Foundation funds U.S. teams and programs through charitable gifts and donations and makes grants to USEF annually.

AACHEN

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Games. "I've always believed that it's easier to hit the ground running at a major competition if you've been there before and know what to expect. Most riders believe that Aachen is the Wimbledon of our sport, so to be based at the Aachen facility in a comfortable, low-stress situation before the tens of thousands of spectators would eventually show up a month later, was a tremendous leg up for them. More importantly, getting the opportunity to share the final Olympic preparation experience with their veteran teammates was immense."

The road to podium finishes at CHIO Aachen and other prominent competitions was a result of a multi-year focus on the high performance pathway. "The road to silver in Tokyo, as well as podium finishes shortly thereafter at Spruce Meadows and Aachen, started with our young team winning the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Wellington CSIO4* in Wellington, Florida, earlier in the year," explained Ridland. "Without the depth of seasoned young riders that the U.S. has developed, there was no way we could have that kind of late-season success, particularly with Aachen moving to September due to COVID-19."

"The win at Aachen confirmed that the season's opening win in Wellington was no fluke," continued Ridland. "The victory was one for the history books; not only did the Americans win for only the sixth time since the first Nations Cup at Aachen in 1929, but four of the five riders on the team were in their 20s."

Springsteen of Colts Neck, New Jersey, and her Tokyo Olympics mount Don Juan van de Donkhoeve, a 12-year-old Belgian Warmblood stallion owned by Stone Hill Farm, led the team off as the first combination to contest the 1.60m track set by Frank Rothenberger (GER) in the impressive stadium. Springsteen guided the stallion to a strong first round effort, initially finishing with a time fault that was removed after the time allowed was adjusted by the ground jury.

The team's second clear-round effort was secured by Deslauriers of New York, New York, and her longtime partner, Hester, a 16-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding owned by Lisa Delsauriers. Moggre of Flower Mound, Texas, and Balou du Reventon, a 16-year-old Oldenburg stallion owned by Ann Thompson, wowed the crowd, with the stallion showing off his carefulness and athleticism with Moggre expertly piloting the duo to the team's third consecutive clear-round effort in the first round.

Kraut of Royal Palm Beach, Florida, and her Tokyo Olympics mount Baloutinue, an 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by St. Bride's Farm, anchored the team in the first round and finished with a total of four faults, which served as the drop score for the team, moving them onto the second round with a score of zero.

Springsteen finished her second round with eight faults, followed by Deslauriers who dropped just a single rail during their second trip around the track, rolling the top rail on the middle oxer of the triple combination.

Moggre's ride in the second round pushed the team closer to the top of the podium, marking the only double-clear effort of the four team combinations. The weight of the ultimate podium finish fell to the anchor combination of Kraut and Baloutinue, who needed to cross through the timers fault-free to ensure the team took the win over Sweden. Using her wealth of experience navigating difficult tracks at Aachen over the years, and with Baloutinue still feeling fresh after the first round, Kraut guided the impressive gelding to a fault-free effort, leading the team to victory.

"Aachen is something I have dreamed of since I was a little kid, so to be here with a great horse and great teammates could just not be any better," said Moggre. "I never have had a horse before that has gone and jumped great things. I only had young horses and my junior jumpers moving up, so it was a lot of pressure to put on myself to step up to the plate, but he's so reliable and so kind, that I couldn't ask for anything more. I just love him so much."

For Ridland, the team's successes over the past five years are an indication of what's to come for the U.S. jumping team. "Based on the results of our plan throughout the past two Olympic cycles, I'd have to say we can expect more of the same," he concluded.



Jessica Springsteen and Don Juan van de Donkhoeve



Lucy Deslauriers and Hester



(Below) Brian Moggre and Balou du Reventon

All photos by Shannon Brinkman

EVENTING

On September 18, 2021, the Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team achieved their best results ever in the CCI04*-S at CHIO Aachen. The team, which included Will Coleman, Sydney Elliott, Ariel Grald, and Tamie Smith, took second place in the FEI Eventing Nations Cup—the highest result by a U.S. team at the prestigious event. Two recipients of the Jacqueline B. Mars National Competition & Training Grant, Elliott and Grald were supported in their travel to and competition at the CHIO Aachen as part of the Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team—alongside past grant recipients Tamie Smith and Will Coleman.

Additionally, Coleman of Gordonsville, Virginia, and Off The Record, a 12-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding owned by the Off the Record Syndicate, took first place individually, becoming the first American combination to top the eventing podium at Aachen.

Coleman and Off The Record put in stellar performances across all three phases, beginning with a 29.7 in the dressage. The pair had a smooth jumping round in the stadium, posting one of only three double-clear rounds and moving up the leaderboard from 11th to third place heading into the final phase. They closed out the week with the best cross-country ride of the day, adding only 0.8 time penalties, giving the pair a personal best score of 30.50 and putting them 2.2 penalty points ahead of second-place finisher Laura Collet and Dacapo of Great Britain.

"[The win] is a testament to all the people who are part of my team," said Coleman. "That

includes my family, my owners, my wife, my vet, my farriers, and all the people who helped me in training. This is a reward for all of them, and it's just very satisfying and humbling at the same time."

As alternates for the U.S. eventing team for the Tokyo Olympic Games, Coleman had the opportunity to train in Aachen earlier this summer during the team's pre-export quarantine (PEQ).

"When I came here for PEQ, I decided to try to make that experience as formative as I could for this horse, and I think it was," said Coleman. "I do think it helped him, the fact that he was here for 10 days without being under any major stress. I think it played a part in his ability to come here and perform."

Reflecting on his win, Coleman kept the result in perspective, but had high praise for his teammates and the team experience at Aachen.

"Hopefully [this win] means something [to supporters of American eventing]," he said. "It's just one event, and if we're trying to build something that's sustainable and lasting and repeatable, maybe this is a step in the right direction. I think everybody that was here this weekend representing the United States did a fantastic job. I'm very proud to be associated with this group of riders. I was really proud of all of them today, how they rode and the way they supported one another. It was a really fun trip to be a part of. I think if there's one thing to take away from it, it's the power of that and the value of a team being really there for one another."

Tamie Smith of Murrieta, California, and Mai Baum, a 15-year-old German Sport Horse gelding owned by Alexandra Ahearn, Ellen Ahearn, and Eric Markell, posted a 25.2 to stand in second place after the first phase. With no jumping penalties and just 7.2 time penalties in cross country and two rails in jumping, the pair finished in tenth place on a score of 40.40.

Ariel Grald of Southern Pines, North Carolina, and Annie Eldridge's 12-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding Leamore Master Plan, fresh off a third-place finish in the CCI5*-L at Luhmühlen earlier in the summer, had only 0.4 time penalties added to their score in jumping. A clean cross-country effort with 10.4 time penalties secured a 16th place finish overall with a total score of 45.6.

Sydney Elliott of Benton, Louisiana, piloted Carol Stephens' 11-year-old Oldenburg gelding, QC Diamantaire, through a solid effort with just one rail in the jumping and no cross-country penalties to complete their European debut on 55.40.

The U.S. team finished on a team total of 116.5, just 0.3 penalties behind the first-place finishers from Great Britain.



Ariel Grald and Leamore Master Plan



Sydney Elliott and QC Diamantaire



Tamie Smith and Mai Baum



Will Coleman and Off The Record

DRESSAGE

On September 19, 2021, the Dutta Corp. U.S. Dressage Team finished just off the podium in Nations Cup competition at the CHIO Aachen, taking fourth place on a combined total of 63 points. Germany took first place on 22 points, the Netherlands earned second place with 40 points, while Great Britain



Anna Buffini and FRH Davinia la Douce

rounded out the top three with 47 points. CHIO Aachen served as the final team competition of 2021 for The Dutta Corp. U.S. Dressage Team, which saw strong performances from Anna Buffini and FRH Davinia la Douce, Ben Ebeling and Illuster van de Kampert, Charlotte Jorst and Kastel's Nintendo, and Jennifer Schrader-Williams and Millione.

Competition began on September 17, with the FEI Grand Prix CDI05*, which saw both brilliant and educational moments for the team to build on moving into the remainder of the competition. Charlotte Jorst of Reno, Nevada, and Kastel's Nintendo, an 18-year-old KWPN stallion owned by Kastel Denmark, were the highest-placed U.S. combination on a score of 71.913 percent. Jennifer Schrader-Williams of Olympia, Washington, and Millione, an 18-year-old Danish Warmblood gelding owned by Millione Partners LLC, finished just behind Jorst with a 71.674 percent.

The two youngest athletes on the team Anna Buffini of San Diego, California, with FRH Davinia la Douce, a 14-year-old Hanoverian mare owned by Buffini, and Ben Ebeling of Moorpark, California, and Illuster van de Kampert, a 13-year old Belgian Warmblood gelding owned by Sasha Cutter for Nuvolari Holdings, LLC and Amy Ebeling, fought through challenging moments in their tests, but were ready to bounce back to deliver for the team in the Special and the Freestyle.

For Buffini, Ebeling, and Schrader-Williams, this was their first appearance representing the U.S. Dressage team in international competition and the learning experience will help them continue to progress within the high performance pipeline and pathway program for years to come.

Both Buffini and Schrader-Williams contested the FEI Grand Prix Special CDI05* with improved marks, as Buffini guided FRH Davinia la Douce to fourth place individually with a score of 71.787 percent, and Schrader-Williams and Millione took sixth, with a 71.723 percent. Both Ebeling and Jorst competed in the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle CDI05*, with Jorst and Kastel's Nintendo scoring a personal best from the judging panel with a 79.105 percent to take seventh place individually. Ebeling and Illuster van de Kampert earned a 76.325 percent from the panel, which placed them just outside of the top ten in 11th place. — *By Kara Scro and US Equestrian Federation*



Charlotte Jorst and Kastel's Nintendo



Ben Ebeling and Illuster van de Kampert



Jennifer Schrader-Williams and Millione

NEW WINNERS CROWNED

2021 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions

The U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions, which ran from August 25 through August 29, 2021, at HITS Chicago at Lamplight Equestrian Center in Wayne, Illinois, hosted 14 national championships across divisions for various levels from children's to professional divisions.

Alice Tarjan is Unstoppable in USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship

Twelve combinations rode the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle to determine the winners of the USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship. Alice Tarjan stamped her place atop the overall leaderboard, claiming the top two spots with Candescant and Donatella M. Tarjan of Oldwick, New Jersey, and Candescant, her 11-year-old Hanoverian mare, won the class with a score of 77.165% and finished with an overall score of 73.434%. Tarjan and Donatella M, her 10-year-old Oldenburg mare, earned reserve champion honors with an overall score of 71.975%. Tarjan is a member of the Kundrun USEF Dressage Development Program with both horses.

"These are drastically different horses," said Tarjan of her two top horses. "They are both very honest, but Candescant was not so easy to train and I had to think out of the box. She's got a lot of movement, so to try to balance that, make it look harmonious, and keep her moving is a challenge. Donatella is a perfect angel, and she tries and tries, and gives so much effort."



Alice Tarjan and Donatella M



Alice Tarjan and Candescant

Dreams Come True: Kat Fuqua and DreamGirl Win Adequan®/USEF Junior Dressage National Championship

Eleven pairs competed in the FEI Junior Individual Test of the Adequan®/USEF Junior Dressage National Championship to determine the title winner. The scores were extremely close at the top of the leaderboard, but Kat Fuqua of Atlanta, Georgia, and her own DreamGirl, a 13-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare, ended up the national champions with an overall score of 69.793%. Of the two days of competition, Fuqua noted that she gained confidence after the first day and was able to put in a stellar test on the second day to seal the win. "[On the first day], I was really happy; it was just a really solid test and I didn't have any major mistakes," she shared. "On the second day, I think I stepped it up a little bit because I was more comfortable so I rode with a little more power, so I think I improved."

"We imported DreamGirl from Holland about a year and a half ago," continued Fuqua. "Last year, I did the Children's [division] with her and she was third overall [at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions]. Now, we have been doing the Juniors and I think our partnership has really grown. She is just the sweetest horse ever and I have a lot of fun with her."

Fuqua continued on to say she knew DreamGirl was meant to be from the minute she first laid eyes on her: "When my trainer went to Holland to try her, she had been doing Prix St. Georges/I. We watched the videos of DreamGirl and just loved her, and we knew she was the one. I think that we have a good partnership. She really tries her best for me."

"This is my first win at a dressage championship. It's so exciting," she concluded.



Kat Fuqua and DreamGirl

Photo by Leslie Potter/US Equestrian

Geven Is Two for Two in Pony and Children

Ten pairs rode their FEI Pony Individual Tests in the USEF Pony Rider Dressage National Championship. Tessa Geven of Cataula, Georgia, and her own Tullymor's Houdini, an 18-year-old Connemara gelding, won the class with a score of 70.135%, which contributed to their overall winning score of 70.424%.

"It's exciting, especially since this is supposed to be my last show on this pony because I am getting too tall," said Geven of being a national champion. "This is a very emotional experience right now, and I'm really taking it in."

Geven's winning ways didn't stop there. She went on to compete alongside 11 other

combinations in the FEI Children Individual Test for a shot at top honors in the USEF Children Dressage National Championship. Piloting Carden Burdette's 14-year-old Hanoverian gelding Sir Frederico, Geven earned her second major win of the show, finishing with an overall score of 74.787%.

Despite not having the opportunity to ride Sir Frederico as much as her pony, Tullymor's Houdini, Geven is grateful for the ride and credits the horse's good nature for their success.

"I would like to thank Carden Burdette for letting me ride her horse," said Geven. "He is very good and very sweet."



Photo by Susan Stiddle.com

Additional champions by division included:

- ◆ USEF Intermediaire I Dressage National Championship – Dawn White-O'Connor of San Diego, California, and Four Winds Farm's Hudson M
- ◆ Adequan®/USEF Young Adult Brentina Cup Dressage National Championship – Chase Shipka of Wellington, Florida, and her own Gladstone Zee T
- ◆ Markel/USEF Young Horse Four-Year-Old Dressage National Championship – Katryna Evans of Bailey, Colorado, and Dr. Cesar Parra's Fontenay
- ◆ Markel/USEF Young Horse Five-Year-Old Dressage National Championship – Marcus Orlob of Annandale, New Jersey, and Alice Tarjan's Glory Day
- ◆ Markel/USEF Young Horse Six-Year-Old Dressage National Championship – Madeleine Bendfeldt of Davie, Florida, and Pegasus Equestrian Davies, Inc.'s Sonata MF
- ◆ Markel/USEF Developing Horse Grand Prix Dressage National Championship – Alice Tarjan of Oldwick, New Jersey, and her own Serenade MF
- ◆ USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals 14-18 – Kasey Denny of Williston, Florida, and Amy Denny's Hemingway KW
- ◆ USEF Dressage Seat Medal Finals 13 & Under – Olivia Martz of Gig Harbor, and her own Norra

– Adapted from US Equestrian press releases



BOYD MARTIN AND ON CUE

on Top With Two Major Victories

Boyd Martin of Unionville, Pennsylvania, and On Cue earned two top finishes within the short span of six weeks. The pair first claimed the blue ribbon in the USEF Advanced Horse Trials National Championship, held at the United States Eventing Association American Eventing Championships (AEC) that ran August 31 through September 5, 2021, in Lexington, Kentucky.

On Cue, a 16-year-old Selle Francais mare he co-owns with Christine, Thomas, and Tommie Turner, is one of two horses Martin rode in the Advanced division at this year's AEC, and after dressage, he was in the lead on his other mount, Long Island T, a 2006 Oldenburg/Thoroughbred gelding owned by the Long Island T Syndicate. However, a fall on the cross-country course took Long Island T out of the running.

Martin and On Cue sat in eighth place after the cross-country phase and moved up to fourth after adding only 6.4 time penalties to his dressage score of 27.3. Ultimately, Martin

and On Cue produced two fault-free efforts in the show jumping phase to claim the top prize.

"I was thrilled with On Cue," said Martin. "She's just everything you dream of in a horse. She's a mover, she's a galloper, she's sensitive, she's careful, she's brave, and I'm just blessed to have her.

"It seems to be my habit. I fall off the first horse, limp to the barn, then hop on On Cue and go around like a rocket," said Martin. "[Long Island T] honestly gave me the round of my life, and at the third to last jump, I got him to a horrible distance, and I just popped off him. That was a bit of a rough one, but On Cue is such a special cross-country horse that it didn't faze me. I was really confident that she'd jump around well. She's all class and I'm very grateful that Christine Turner has placed her with me. She's everything I could look for in a horse."

Doug Payne of Rougemont, North Carolina, finished in the reserve champion spot with Quantum Leap, the 10-year-old Rheinland Pfalz-Saar International gelding he



Boyd Martin and On Cue

co-owns with his wife, Jessica. The pair had a double-clear jumping round after a clean cross-country outing in which they added only 5.6 time penalties to their score. The two solid jumping phases moved them up from 14th after dressage for their second-place finish overall.

Liz Halliday-Sharp of Ocala, Florida, who is based in Lexington, Kentucky, for part of the year, also had a double clear jumping round to finish third with Cooley Quicksilver, the Monster Partnership's 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding.

Martin and On Cue landed a second win, this time in the Maryland 5 Star CCI5*-L, held at Fair Hill in Elkton, Maryland, on October 17, 2021. Not only did the pair become the inaugural winners of this new event, but they became the first American combination to win an event at CCI5*-L level since 2008. After finishing dressage in third place with a 25.0, the pair held their spot with a double-clear cross-country day. They turned in one of only seven double-clear show jumping rounds, which pushed them up the leaderboard into the top spot.

"I really was just hoping to finish in the top five, and On Cue just really gutsed it out today," said Boyd. "Lady Luck was on our side. We bumped and thumped a few poles; I never heard one come down. I couldn't believe it when I got a clear round. Today was On Cue's day, and it's great to win it."

Boyd said he got the ride on "Cue" as a sales prospect for Christine Turner, but he liked the horse so much, he convinced Turner to let him keep working with her to see how far she could go.



Boyd Martin and On Cue at the Maryland 5 Star



Boyd Martin and On Cue at the USEA American Eventing Championships


"Coming into this thing, I thought I had a chance just because she's been so good this year," said Boyd of On Cue. "She's elegant; she's a real mare. She looked good at [the Land Rover Kentucky Three-Day Event] earlier this year, and then was the backup horse for the Olympics, so I knew I had a fit animal."



Doug Payne and Quantum Leap

Oliver Townend of Great Britain with Angela Hislop's 16-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding Cooley Master Class had an uncharacteristic and very expensive rail in the show jumping, dropping them down to second place by just one-tenth of a penalty point. New Zealand's Tim Price had a fast round with Trisha Rickards, Tim Price, and Nigella Hall's 15-year-old British Sport Horse gelding Xavier Faer, but with a rail down they ended in third place on a total score of 28.3. The three podium finishers at the Maryland 5 Star have been in the top three together before, and Townend expressed sincere appreciation for his competitors.

"This sport is tough. To be sat with Boyd and Tim is a privilege for me, because they're riders that I have a huge amount of respect for," Townend said. "They're both working boys. They're very normal lads and for all three of us to be in the position we're in is a huge privilege. It goes to show that normal people, if you work hard, you can make it to the pinnacle of this sport. That's the message I want to get out to any kid who's thinking, 'I can't do it because I don't come from a wealthy background.' It is possible, and I'm very proud of Boyd and Tim and myself for continuing to work hard." – Adapted from US Equestrian

press release 



Liz Halliday-Sharp and Cooley Quicksilver

All photos this page by Leslie Potter/US Equestrian

Meet Heather Killen, Horse & Country

As part of its mission, the USET Foundation provides resources that make competitive excellence possible for U.S. equestrian teams. A critical component to the mission is fostering support among the equestrian community. With this in mind, the USET Foundation recently partnered with leading international equestrian sports network, Horse & Country (H&C), to leverage H&C's likeminded commitment to the promotion of horse sport in the U.S. and abroad.

For Heather Killen, the CEO of H&C, the opportunity to combine her passions was simply irresistible. Killen first discovered horses as the antidote to a fast-paced executive career as the Senior Vice President of International Operations for Yahoo! in the mid-1990s.

"I was spending way too much time on planes and in front of my laptop and desperately needed a way to exist outside of my brain," said Killen, who is now based in London.

After a stint in California's Bay area, she returned to the United Kingdom and picked up riding again. H&C was a single, satellite-de-

livered channel when Killen got involved some 10 years ago. Under her guidance, H&C's streaming service, H&C+, is now available on more than 30 platforms around the world and carries hundreds of days of live competitions as well as training, documentary, and entertainment content, all curated for fans of equestrian sport. When she's not planning H&C's next daring exploit, Killen can be found at her farm in the Lower Normandy region of France where she breeds sport horses for jumping and eventing.

"I still need that antidote," she said. "When I walk into the barn all the worries go away."

With many top U.S. events already carried by H&C, the network is continuing to rapidly expand its offerings of both national and international equestrian content.

H&C+ is currently available on web, iOS and Android mobile and connected TV apps, Amazon Fire, Roku, and Comcast's Xfinity and Flex platforms. Visit www.horseandcountry.tv to learn about new programming and to subscribe. — by Jennifer Ward



Heather Killen and her husband Matt Rothman

Photo courtesy of Heather Killen

Jacob Arnold Earns 12th at 2021 FEI Driving World Championship for Pairs

The Land Rover U.S. Driving Team participated in the 2021 Driving World Championship for Pairs in Kronenberg, the Netherlands, which took place September 8 through September 12, 2021. Jacob Arnold, James Miller, and Paul Maye earned an eighth-place finish for the team, with a score of 386.06 penalty points, under the guidance of Chef d'Equipe Marcie Quist. Arnold was honored as the top U.S. finisher in 12th place out of almost 100 competitors.

Arnold of Goshen, Kentucky, partnered with Steve Wilson's Kenji V, a six-year old

Dutch Warmblood gelding; Kian, a six-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding; and Pluto Revans, a 15-year-old Lipizzaner gelding, to secure a 12th-place finish with a final score of 178.04 penalty points. Arnold used a new pairing of horses, Kenji V and Kian, for the dressage phase, and they had a lovely test to earn a score of 52.84 penalty points. He and his horses impressively tackled Jeroen Houterman's marathon course, tallying 120.29 penalty points over the tough track. The cones course was challenging with no drivers finishing with a double-clear round. Arnold and his horses

delivered a smooth round with only 4.91 time penalties to finish 10th in the cones phase and clinch their overall 12th-place finish.

"I was really pleased," said Arnold. "I couldn't have been happier with Steve Wilson's six-year-olds. It was their absolute first competition together where they had to do dressage and cones. The fact that I had to pull that out at a world championship, my expectations were far lower than 12th place overall."

Paul Maye of Fairfield, Virginia, drove the Harmony Amateur Sports Foundation's Harmony's Java, a seven-year-old Dutch Harness Horse gelding; Harmony's Domonic, an 11-year-old Dutch Harness Horse gelding; and Harmony's Ziezo, a 10-year-old Irish Cob gelding, to a 65th-place finish with a final score of 218.07 penalty points. Maye had a respectable dressage test with a score of 64.96 penalty points and a strong marathon phase, tallying 139.36 penalty points. Maye closed out the competition with a solid cones round, collecting 13.75 time penalties on the tough course.

James Miller of Lakewood Ranch, Florida, piloted Gentleman, his 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding; Flavian, his 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding; and Agussto's Armoei, Misdee Wrigley Miller's 16-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding, to a 71st-place finish with a final score of 227.16 penalty points.

Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Jacob Arnold with Kenji V and Kian

Photo by Krisztina Horvath/Hoefnet

LAND ROVER U.S. EVENTING TEAM DELIVERS A ONE-TWO PUNCH

On the heels of its historic silver medal at CHIO Aachen, the Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team ended its 2021 competition season with another second-place finish, this time at the FEI Eventing Nations Cup™ The Netherlands CCIO4, held at the Military Boekelo Enschede in Enschede, The Netherlands, on October 10, 2021.*

The team consisted of Jennie Brannigan, Sydney Elliott, Matt Flynn, and Tamie Smith, all of whom were recipients of the 2021 USET Foundation Karen E. Stives Endowment Fund Grant, which assisted in each horse-and-rider combinations' travel to the competition.

Smith of Murrieta, California, and Danito, an 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by Ruth Bley, started off strong, earning an impressive 24.7 to slot them into third individually following the dressage phase. Elliott of Bossier, Louisiana, and QC Diamantaire, an 11-year-old Oldenburg gelding owned by Carol Stephens, received a 26.7 from the judging panel. Brannigan of West Grove, Pennsylvania, and FE Lifestyle, an 11-year-old Warmblood gelding owned by Nina and Tim Gardner, scored a 32.1 to place them just ahead of teammates Matt Flynn of Ocala, Florida, and Wizzerd, a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by A. Patrick Flynn, Kathleen Flynn, and Merry Go Round Farm, who received a 32.2.

In the cross-country phase, Elliott and QC Diamantaire hit the optimum time and crossed through the finish with no faults added to their dressage score, keeping them on a 26.7. Smith and Danito put in another notable performance for the team, adding just eight-tenths of a second in time to their score for a 25.5. Brannigan and FE Lifestyle were the team's

second combination to nearly make it under the optimum time, adding just four-tenths of a second to their dressage score to move into the final day on a 32.5. Though Flynn had an uncharacteristic fall on the course and was eliminated, the team moved forward to the stadium jumping phase on a team total of 84.7.

On the final day of competition, Elliott and QC Diamantaire finished in fifth overall after dropping a single rail during their stadium jumping round for a final score of 30.7. Smith and Danito added 9.2 penalties to their score, finishing on a 34.7 and tenth place overall, while Brannigan and FE Lifestyle added just a rail and eight-tenths of a second in time to complete the weekend on a 37.3 for fifteenth place. The team finished on a final total score of 102.7 to earn the second podium finish of the U.S. eventing team's fall tour. Great Britain took home the gold medal with a final score of 90.4 while Germany earned the bronze medal with a score of 127.7.

The result of back-to-back silver medals at Aachen and Boekelo was thrilling for the team and the athletes felt that the success was large in part due to team unity and positive synergy. With all riders chasing the seconds to get the optimum time on cross country, the team feels like they're hitting their stride and prepared to continue the medal-winning streak into 2022 and beyond. – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Jennie Brannigan, Tamie Smith, Sydney Elliott, Chef d'Equipe Erik Duvander, and Matt Flynn

Photo by Libby Law Photography



NETJETS® U.S. JUMPING TEAM

Second Place Finish at Spruce Meadows BMO Nations Cup CSIO5*

The NetJets® U.S. Jumping Team walked away from the BMO Nations Cup competition at the 2021 Spruce Meadows 'Masters' Tournament CSIO5* in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with a silver medal following two rounds of jumping on September 11, 2021. The team of four riders, Natalie Dean, Alex Granato, Bliss Heers, and McLain Ward, tackled challenging jumping tracks set by two-time Olympic course designer Leopoldo Palacios (VEN). Despite sitting in third place after the initial round, the team dug in to deliver respectable second rounds to earn their spot on the podium under the guidance of Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland.

Bliss Heers and Bridgeside Farms LLC's Antidote de Mars, an 11-year-old Selle Français stallion, logged the top performance putting in the only clear round for the U.S. team in the first round and tallying just one time fault in the second round.

"To be on a Nations Cup team is an amazing opportunity," said Heers. "To be here at Spruce Meadows in particular, jumping one of the biggest classes in the world, that's another honor on its own. To come out second in the Nations Cup was incredible, and to support my team and jump clear, the feeling is unbelievable. I have to say thank you to Robert Ridland for giving me the opportunity to jump at such a venue."

In her Senior Nations Cup debut performance, Dean of Palo Alto, California, put in respectable rides, with just one time fault in the opening round and four faults in the second round on Chance Ste. Hermelle, a 13-year-old Belgian Sport Horse mare owned by Marigold Sporthorses LLC.

Though Granato of Wellington, Florida, and his mount uncharacteristically retired in round two, veteran anchor rider McLain Ward of Brewster, New York, helped clinch the silver medal with HH Azur, a 15-year-old Belgian Sport Horse mare owned by Ward and Double H Farm. The pair had eight faults in the first round but came back stronger in the second round clocking only one time fault.

The U.S. team was in third place after round one with nine faults and added six faults in round two to finish in second place with 15 total faults. Team Canada 1 took home the gold medal having accrued eight total faults, while the Canada 2 team earned bronze with 16 total faults.

Fielding Nations Cup teams in back-to-back five-star Nations Cup events was something that Ridland and US Equestrian (USEF) have planned for all year, as the following week's World Equestrian Festival at Aachen CHIO in Germany would be another major event.

"We said at the beginning of the year that starting out we were in preparation for the Tokyo Olympic Games, but I said we can't just focus on Tokyo," Ridland pointed out. "It's very important, but so is everything else. Two weeks after Aachen is the FEI Nations Cup Jumping Final in Barcelona. By the time we finish Barcelona, a very large number of riders will have been a part of team events this year. That's what is so important, to think for the future. We are already in the early stages of the evaluation process for the World Championships next year in Denmark. We couldn't come back from Tokyo and rest on our laurels." – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Bliss Heers and Antidote de Mars

NETJETS® U.S. JUMPING TEAM

Fifth Place Finish at 2021 Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Final

The 2021 Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ CSIO5* came to a close on October 3, 2021, in Barcelona, Spain, at the Real Club de Polo de Barcelona. Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland led the NetJets® U.S. Jumping Team, Lillie Keenan, Laura Kraut, Schuyler Riley, and Spencer Smith, to a fifth-place finish in the final. Thanks to solid performances in the opening round, the U.S. team returned for the second round on a clean slate against seven other teams.

Keenan of New York, New York, and Skyhorse, a 14-year-old Belgian Sport Horse gelding owned by Chansonette Farm LLC, finished with eight jumping faults and one time fault while Riley of Wellington, Florida, and Robin de Ponthual, a 16-year-old Selle Francais gelding owned by Katherine Gallagher finished with just four faults.

In his second Senior Nations Cup appearance, and his first with mount Quibelle, a 12-year-old Hanoverian mare owned by Gotham Enterprizes LLC, Spencer Smith of Wellington, Florida, put in a brilliant clear round.

Anchor rider Laura Kraut of Royal Palm Beach, Florida, and her Tokyo Olympic Games mount Baloutinue, an 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by St. Bride's Farm, had two unlucky rails at the first and last fences to finish on eight faults.

Ultimately, the U.S. team finished on 12 total faults for fifth place. The Netherlands won on a clear total score, Ireland was second with one total fault, and Belgium was third with four total faults.

"It's been quite a run," said Ridland of the U.S. team's international results since the summer of 2021. Following the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, the U.S. fielded teams Spruce Meadows BMO Nations Cup CSIO5*, CHIO Aachen at Mercedes-Benz Nations Cup CSIO5*, and the Longines FEI Nations Cup Final in Barcelona. "To be honest, we're ecstatic. There were so many riders, young and veteran, when you look back at the schedule. We always aim for the podium and in three of the four events, we were there, and we were pretty close here in Barcelona. Every one of those riders contributed."

Ridland commented that the ability to name 14 different riders to the NetJets® U.S. Jumping Team over the four major team events in the latter half of 2021 will serve the U.S. well as athletes look toward podium success on the largest international stages in 2022 and beyond.

"Everybody is very proud of the riders' efforts and the last few months leading up to this event," he continued. "We were able to make last-minute switches, and so many riders and owners have been game to help and be there. We are already in selection procedures for next year's World Championship, where we have to defend our title, but we won't be on home soil. That's why it's so exciting and gratifying that we've been able to use so many riders of the future in this very crucial segment we just went through. It's so important that we have the next generation of riders at these events, like at Aachen, in our future. We have a lot of big events ahead of us!" – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Spencer Smith and Quibelle

Photo by Libby Lane Photography

ZOE BROWN VICTORIOUS

PLATINUM PERFORMANCE/USEF SHOW JUMPING TALENT SEARCH FINALS – WEST

Zoe Brown bested a field of 44 competitors to top the Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – West at the Rancho Mission Viejo Riding Park in San Juan Capistrano, California, on September 26, 2021. Brown impressed the judges and climbed to the top of the leaderboard when she showed off her exceptional riding abilities through four phases of technical competition.

Talent Search Finals comprises four phases: flatwork, in which riders are evaluated on the rail in groups of seven or eight; gymnastics, with a course that requires quick turns and lengthening and shortening of the horse's stride while maintaining rhythm and balance; show jumping over a grand prix-style course that includes a liverpool and water jump; and a ride-off where the top four competitors complete a course with their own horse, then switch mounts to ride the same course on each of the other three top horses. This year's competition was judged by Jack Towell and Jack Hardin Towell.

The 16-year-old rider from Redwood City, California, was aboard The Original, a 2014 Belgian Warmblood gelding owned by Harley Brown, her father and trainer. Brown and "O.G." started off strong with a sixth place standing after the flat phase and came back to win the gymnastic phase and move to the top of the standings heading into the final phase. After a Phase III shakeup at the top of the leaderboard, Brown came back with four strong rides in Phase IV to secure the win.

"I was most nervous for the flat phase, so once I got that out of the way, the pressure was eased a little bit," said Brown. "I was not expecting to go out and win the gymnastics phase, so I just had to keep my cool and keep calm under pressure."

At just seven years old, The Original is already proving to be an exceptional equitation mount. He was named Best Horse by the judges at this year's Finals, an honor that comes with The Gulliver Trophy, donated by Karen Healey.

"My parents found him for me at the end of last year," said Brown. "Thermal was my first show with him and we had a really great start together and clicked well. It hasn't been easy with him getting used to the equitation ring, but he's already a pro. He's pretty special."

Ella Dyson of San Luis Obispo, California, catch-rode Constance and Elisa Broz's 14-year-old Holsteiner gelding, Cetello, to a reserve champion placing. Dyson is trained by Cassie Belmont of Belmont Training Stable. Another Cassie Belmont student, Elisa Broz of Freedom, California, finished in third place with Constance Broz's 13-year-old Holsteiner gelding, Clooney 62. Rounding out the top four



Zoe Brown and The Original

was 19-year-old Trent McGee from Granada Hills, California, with Kristina Cain's seven-year-old Oldenburg gelding, C. Everest. McGee is trained by Archie Cox.

USEF Show Jumping Young Rider Chef d'Equipe and Technical Advisor DiAnn Langer was on the grounds to observe the riders throughout the competition. Langer explains that Talent Search is an essential part of the U.S. Jumping pathway program as it helps identify riders from the youth and equitation ranks who have the qualities that make good team riders for the future.

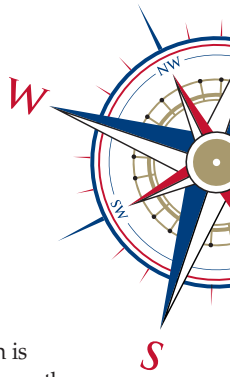
"Talent Search is an important part of the pathway because it really tests a rider's potential to analyze the course on their own, to be able to handle the gymnastics, and most importantly, how they are on the flat," she said. "We really want a workmanlike rider who is able to make things happen, and how you find it is by setting up situations like this, with the flat, the gymnastics, and the jumping and then the changing of horses."

The USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Program encourages young and junior riders to develop the skills needed to become an effective jumper rider, preparing them to become the next generation of top international riders representing the United States.

– Adapted from US Equestrian press release



(L-R) Zoe Brown and The Original, Olivia Brown, Platinum Performance representative Jenny Redig, 2020 Talent Search Finals-West Winner Skylar Wireman, USEF Director of Jumping Coordination Rachel Denning, Judge Jack Hardin Towell, USEF Show Jumping Young Rider Chef d'Equipe and Technical Advisor DiAnn Langer, and Judge Jack Towell





NATALIE JAYNE CLINCHES WIN

PLATINUM PERFORMANCE/USEF SHOW JUMPING TALENT SEARCH FINALS – EAST

The Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – East took place October 8 through October 10, 2021, at the historic United States Equestrian Team Foundation headquarters at Hamilton Farm in Gladstone, New Jersey. After four phases of intense competition, Natalie Jayne of Elgin, Illinois, piloted Charisma to the top honors with a final cumulative score of 365.

Dominic Gibbs of Colorado Springs, Colorado, finished in second place with a final score of 359. Audrey Schulze of Saddle River, New Jersey, took third with a phase four score of 336, while Luke Jensen of Denton, Texas, rounded out the top four finishers on a 335.

Jayne and Charisma, a 14-year-old Warmblood gelding owned by Heritage Farm, Inc., started their week with an impressive and correct flat phase, earning a 90 from the judging panel of Chris Kappler and Michael Tokaruk. Jayne and Charisma received an 82.5 in the gymnastics phase, keeping them inside of the top six combinations leading into the final day. Producing a nearly mistake-free trip in the jumping phase and earning an 89, the pair was called back for the final work-off phase to determine the ultimate winner. Trained by Andre Dignelli and Heritage Farm, Jayne has competed in Talent Search Finals – East previously and wanted to make this year count.

“My horse Charisma was awesome in the ride-off. I wanted to have a really nice solid round and I know him obviously way more than I know the other horses, so I really just wanted a nice smooth round and then go from there with the other rides,” said Jayne, as she discussed her ride-off strategy. “I loved all of the other horses, but Mac One III was probably my favorite. He’s just so soft and his jump is amazing, and I loved him, but they were all awesome to ride.”

Judges Kappler and Tokaruk discussed the competition from their perspective and why they incorporated certain challenges and questions to see how the riders would respond and adapt.

“I thought this was a very strong group with a lot of top riders and with the format, we had a lot of opportunities to see what they could do with the different questions we asked in the flat, in the gymnastics, and in the jumping phase,” said Tokaruk. “The cream rose to the top in the final phase, and it was very close. For us, it came down to the final round and Natalie had the best round when she needed it in the moment.”



(L-R) Judge Michael Tokaruk, Judge Chris Kappler, USEF Show Jumping Developing Chef d'Equipe Anne Kursinski, USEF Show Jumping Youth Chef d'Equipe DiAnn Langer, Natalie Jayne and Heritage Farm Inc.'s Charisma, Andre Dignelli, Patricia Griffith, Lynn Jayne, 2020 Talent Search Finals-East winner Elli Yeager, and USEF Sport Programs Assistant Michelle McQueen

Having represented numerous international teams for the U.S. Jumping program, Kappler elaborated on the talent and character it takes to compete at the highest levels of the sport. He also noted that the talented group of riders competing in the Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – East demonstrated that USEF is providing the right foundation for younger riders to successfully progress along the high performance program pathway.

“They all rode [the final four] rounds so

well. I set up a nine stride in a long line to see who could really tell where they were on new horses and they all rode it within inches,” said Kappler. “They’re all solid riders and it’s great to see the quality of riding in that final. They did a great job, and it was a really great competition. I think they’re all candidates for future U.S. teams. It’s a hard sport and these riders have all done the grind and done their jobs and they have team qualities that we could rely on in team settings in the future.” – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Natalie Jayne and Charisma

U.S. JUNIOR TEAM

Brings Home FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Gold

The U.S. Junior Jumping Team secured the gold medal in the FEI Jumping Nations Cup CSIOJ competition in Kronenberg, the Netherlands, that took place September 22 through 25, 2021. Chef d'Equipe Anne Kursinski led the four junior athletes to the top of the podium with a total team score of four faults. Spain took second place with a total score of five, and Belgium earned the bronze, also with a total score of five. In addition, the U.S. Young Rider Jumping Team took sixth in the FEI Jumping Nations Cup CSIOY competition. The event presented junior and young riders with an opportunity to experience international team competition in a championship atmosphere.

Following the initial round, the U.S. Junior Jumping Team sat in third place thanks to strong performances from Virginia Bonnie of Upperville, Virginia, and Nina Bonnie's Efodea, an 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare, Ansgar Holtgers Jr. of Wellington, Florida, aboard Gut Einhaus, LLC's Elina, a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare, Caroline Mawhinney of Woodside, California, riding her own Stella Levista, a 13-year-old Hanoverian mare, and Zayna Rizvi of Wellington, Florida, on Peacock Ridge LLC's Excellent, an 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding. Although the team finished with a total score of four, they began with a clean slate of zero for the final round of competition.

The team stepped up to the challenge in the last round with Mawhinney and Bonnie both securing clear rounds for the team. Though Holtgers and Rizvi added four faults to their individual scores, the ability to drop one of the four-fault tallies secured their first-place finish. Of their podium success, Kursinski noted that the team's performance and learning from the experience will be beneficial for the continued development of the program's pipeline of young talent.

"The juniors were extremely motivated and focused. It was really a great experience for them," said Kursinski. "We qualified for the final round in the top six and they all came back and were very strong. It was great to watch.

"They rode well, the horses jumped well, and the best thing is truly experiencing the team experience," Kursinski continued. "At home it's always individual, but to represent the United States internationally, you really feel it. There were 12 international teams and for them to be out there representing their country and feeling proud of their accomplishments reinforces the model that we've seen work for our program. For the future success, it's about getting them started earlier and into this international environment."



Chef d'Equipe Anne Kursinski, Ansgar Holtgers Jr., Virginia Bonnie, Caroline Mawhinney, and Zayna Rizvi

Junior team member Holtgers and Conblue, an 11-year-old Oldenburg Springfeler gelding, took second place in the Emmers Equestrian Park Grand Prix CSIOJ, with the pair finishing in 42.65 seconds, just narrowly behind Aurelia Guisson and No Limit vh Legita Hof Z of Belgium who took the win. Rizvi and Excellent rounded out the top five in the class, adding four faults in their jump-off round and finishing with a time of 42.67 seconds.

The U.S. Young Rider Jumping Team which included Tali Dejong of Golden, Colorado, and Heavenly Star, her nine-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare, Riley Delbecq of Duck Key, Florida, and Julesraimus de Barisy, her own 12-year-old Belgian Warmblood gelding, Mimi Gochman of New York, New York, and Celina BH, an 11-year-old Holsteiner mare owned by Gochman Sport Horses, and Caelinn Leahy of Maple Park, Illinois, and Cold Play 31, a 12-year-old Westphalian gelding owned by Steven Schaefer, finished in sixth place in the CSIOY team competition. Gochman and Celina BH, who delivered consistent clean efforts in both team classes, continued their fault-free rounds to win the Ashford Farm Grand Prix CSIOY, crossing through the jump-off timers in a speedy 42.08 seconds, nearly two seconds faster than the second-place finisher.

"This team was great," said Kursinski of the Young Riders. "The competition was very strong and that's a part of why we invest in bringing future talent to these competitions." – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Mimi Gochman and Celina BH

Divita and Woolson Earn Top Honors in 3* Divisions at USEF/AVA Vaulting National Championships

Elite vaulting competition took place September 18 and 19, 2021, in Hesperus, Colorado, at the 2021 USEF/AVA Vaulting National Championship. After the championships were canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, athletes and their horses were thrilled to have the opportunity to compete again. Tessa Divita and Geoffrey Woolson took home the top prizes in the USEF/AVA 3* Individual Female Vaulting National Championship and the USEF/AVA 3* Individual Male Vaulting National Championship, respectively.

USEF/AVA 3* INDIVIDUAL FEMALE VAULTING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Tessa Divita, a resident of Portola Valley, California, of Portola Valley Vaulters, earned the USEF/AVA 3* Individual Female Vaulting National Championship with Pino Del Rio, Julie and Edward Divita's 17-year-old Westphalian gelding, and her mother and longeur Julie Divita. Tessa scored an impressive 8.290 for her overall score to clinch the national title.

"This [national championship] was especially exciting for me for two reasons," explained Divita. "I injured myself earlier in the year, and this competition was one of the first ones that felt like I was back to myself. The bigger reason is that this is the last national championship that I had yet to win for vaulting. I had won all of the other divisions, so this was the crowning achievement for me. I had won Copper, Bronze, Silver, C Team, B Team, and A Team before, but not this one."

In addition to her meaningful win, Divita earned her highest-ever compulsory, technical, and freestyle test scores at the national championship.

"I love [Pino del Rio]," said Divita of her longtime vaulting partner. "He is so wonderful. He is so trustworthy, and I know that when I go into the competition arena with him, he is always going to be a good teammate and he cares about performing as much as I do."

Divita is looking forward to her next vaulting goals. She was the reserve U.S. individual female athlete at the FEI Vaulting World Championships for Seniors in Budapest, Hungary. The experience has her hoping to qualify for the 2022 ECCO FEI World Championships in Herning, Denmark.

Emily Rose, a resident of Santa Cruz, California, of Pacific Coast Vaulters earned reserve champion in the USEF/AVA 3* Individual Female Vaulting National Championship with El Doctro, the 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding she co-owns with longeur Carolyn Bland. Third place went to Siddhartha Kreaden, a resident of Sunnyvale, California, of Pacific Coast Vaulters, with Checara, the 14-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare she co-owns with longeur Bland.



Tessa Divita and Pino Del Rio

USEF/AVA 3* INDIVIDUAL MALE VAULTING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Geoffrey Woolson of Pacific Coast Vaulters claimed his first USEF/AVA 3* Individual Male Vaulting National Championship title with the help of El Doctro and longeur Carolyn Bland with an overall score of 7.513. Woolson, of Tujunga, California, won national champion titles at the Bronze and Silver level, but this is his first title at the top tier of U.S. vaulting.

"The most special thing is getting that trophy and seeing all the names of previous American greats, some of which I have vaulted under [their coaching] or with, and to add my name to that same trophy," said Woolson. "And, of course, to try and set a good example for up-and-coming vaulters as well I think is an important thing to do."

Woolson had a big year in 2021, winning the Garrod's Spring Classic 3* Individual Male division with El Doctro and longeur Bland in May before heading overseas. In August, he earned the team bronze medal as part of the U.S. Squad and finished 19th in the Individual Male division at the FEI Vaulting World Championships for Seniors. Woolson returned home shortly before the national championships and quickly got reacquainted with El Doctro.

"We reconnected fast and obviously made it work," explained Woolson. "This was [El Doctro's] first real year of competition. He was a little spooky at times, but he was able to give me some good rounds, so I am definitely proud of him for that."

Woolson plans to have a quiet end of the season, but he is thankful to all of his supporters this past year and is thinking ahead toward next year. "I have some big goals I want to accomplish individually," said Woolson. "Now, it is about keeping up the fitness and moving into the new year because that is the same thing my competitors are doing, so I have got to make sure I am up to that same level with them." – Adapted from US Equestrian press release



Geoffrey Woolson and El Doctro

All photos this page by Lindsey Lamell Photography

Beatrice de Lavalette Sparkles Against All Odds

On November 17, 2021, U.S. Paralympian Beatrice de Lavalette of Loxahatchee, Florida, was announced as the recipient of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) Against All Odds Award during the FEI Awards 2021 celebration in Antwerp, Belgium. Each year, this honor is given to a person who has pursued his or her equestrian ambitions despite a physical handicap or extremely difficult personal circumstances.

For de Lavalette, whose legs required amputation due to injuries sustained in the March 2016 terrorist attack at the Zaventem Airport in Brussels, Belgium, the award not only acknowledged her own abilities, but also showcased all that para athletes can accomplish.

"It means so much to get that recognition for all the work that I have put in during the past five years [since sustaining the injuries], and especially in the last year before the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo," said de Lavalette. "It felt really good because it meant that people thought that I deserved recognition."

"For me, it's really important to be able to showcase what para athletes are capable of," she continued. "Some of the [para dressage athletes] have spasms they can't control, and they still ride incredibly well. We all have different disabilities and different ways of riding, but each athlete rides their horse to such a high level of riding, and that is really, really cool. Shining a light on that with the award is really important to me."

Crediting many people, de Lavalette is grateful for their unwavering support and encouragement as she navigated her new reality as a para dressage rider with a goal of going to the Paralympics. "Shayna Simon, my trainer, is absolutely incredible and I honestly would not be the rider that I am today without her. Additionally, without U.S. Para Dressage Chef d'Equipe Michel Assouline and US Equestrian (USEF) Para Dressage Program Director Lorraine Johnson, I wouldn't be able to do what I want to do."

"I definitely had a huge village around me," she continued. "My parents and friends were so supportive, and my teammates were so great

from the beginning. They knew I wanted to go to the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, and they were all great in helping me get to where I wanted to be."

"I also want to thank the FEI because without it, top-level [para dressage] competitions wouldn't exist," de Lavalette remarked. "Giving me the award was incredible and being recognized by the higher level of competition was really an honor."

The young Paralympian has her eyes on the 2022 World Championships in Denmark and soon after, the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris, her former hometown. "I'm going to Paris," she concluded confidently. "I'm so excited that dressage is going to be at Versailles. I grew up five minutes from there so it will be a total full circle to have all of my friends and family there." – *By Kara Pinato Scro*



Beatrice de Lavalette and Sabrina Ibáñez, FEI Secretary General

Photo courtesy of FEI

U.S. Team Finishes Strong at 2021 FEI Endurance World Championship for Young Riders & Juniors

The U.S. Endurance Team surpassed more than 15 other nations to earn fifth place, its best finish since 2015, at the 2021 FEI Endurance World Championship for Young Riders & Juniors in Ermelo, The Netherlands, on Friday, September 10, 2021. The team, led by Chef d'Equipe Lisanne Dorion, consisted of Charlene Dugan of Muncy, Pennsylvania, Alex Shampoe of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Meghan Wert of Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, as well as 15 crew members and eight dedicated support staff members. Each horse-and-rider combination completed the 120-kilometer ride, which included four different loops.

In the only major international championship of the year for U.S. Young Rider and Junior endurance athletes, this event was a welcomed opportunity for the nation's top up-and-coming talent to test their skills against international riders in a competitive championship environment. More than 20 countries comprised of 74 total combinations contested the ride with 38 pairs ultimately passing the final horse inspection. Each horse was required to pass a mandatory veterinary inspection focused on soundness and metabolic recovery rate at the conclusion of each loop to continue forward with the ride, with two checks occurring before combinations set off on their final loop.

Providing a pathway to future senior championships, the U.S. Endurance Team finished all three team combinations, with Shampoe earning 14th place as the highest-placed American and finishing the ride

in 6:23:44 with Promissin Gold, an eight-year-old Arabian mare owned by Valerie Kanavy. Dugan rode Southern Justice, a nine-year-old gelding owned by Sally Jellison and Dessia Miller, to 32nd place, completing their fourth and final loop at 7:27:40. Wert and Dude Free Gold, a 13-year-old Arabian gelding owned by Valerie Kanavy, took 34th place, completing their ride in 8:01:50.

"It is a privilege and delight to see how these Young Riders and their equine partners rise to the occasion and the thoughtful support of family, friends, crew, and USEF, who all made this outing to the World Championship an experience to treasure and remember," said Dorion. "A huge thank you to everyone who has helped these Young Riders achieve their goal of competing here."

This was the first international championship for Dugan and Wert and the second for Shampoe, with the team producing one of the top results within the program to date.

"My experience at this championship was better than I could have imagined," said Shampoe. "With only three U.S. starters, we knew we all needed to finish to achieve a team completion. Along with that, we all had our own hopes for individual speeds and placing. The support from USEF was amazing. Training the three horses together and riding with Charly and Megan this summer made the team completion icing on the cake."

– *Adapted from US Equestrian press release*

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