



## PERFORMANCE ON A GLOBAL STAGE



### PATHWAY TO THE PODIUM

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE USET FOUNDATION

2026 FEI Dressage World Cup™ Final reserve champion Christian Simonson with Indian Rock and FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final champion Kent Farrington with Greya

Photos by Shannon Brinkman

*In August 2026, the world’s best equestrian athletes will gather in Aachen, Germany, at one of the sport’s most famous venues for the FEI World Championships. Against this backdrop, with the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games on the horizon, the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation announces the public launch of its marquee Pathway to the Podium campaign.*

With only weeks until U.S. athletes step into the iconic arena in Aachen to contend for team and individual medals alongside the world’s best, and preparations for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games well underway, now is a pivotal moment to build support.

The Pathway to the Podium campaign aims to bring together every piece of the complex and nuanced puzzle of international success on the world stage for U.S. combinations. Since its quiet phase began in 2022, the USET Foundation has raised \$41 million toward its \$55 million goal, building strong momentum at a defining moment for U.S. equestrian sport.

The USET Foundation’s mission is to provide funding that helps support the US

Equestrian (USEF) High Performance and Pathway Programs, which guide athletes through their development, provide them with the tools they need to succeed, and support them once they begin representing their country in international competition.



*Having the right support staff — the team behind the team — around us, thanks to the funding, has been game changing,*

**CHRISTIAN SIMONSON**



Funds raised to date are already at work each year across four coordinated priorities: supporting USEF High Performance Programs, growing the USET Foundation’s endowment, expanding direct athlete grant opportunities to reduce financial barriers, and contributing to critical initiatives tied to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. The success of these combined efforts was on full display at the FEI World Cup™ Finals in April 2026, where U.S. athletes achieved remarkable results.



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Dear Friends,

As we look ahead to an extraordinary summer for U.S. equestrian sport, I am proud to share the public launch of the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's Pathway to the Podium campaign this spring. With just weeks until the 2026 FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany, this moment represents a timely call to action for our entire community to come together in support of sustained U.S. equestrian excellence.

Since quietly beginning in 2022, the Pathway to the Podium campaign has already raised an impressive \$41 million toward its \$55 million goal. These funds are not sitting idle — they are actively at work every day.

As the philanthropic partner to US Equestrian (USEF), our mission is to support U.S. athletes, horses, and teams across the seven international disciplines by strengthening USEF's High Performance Programs. This includes expanding opportunities for direct athlete grants to reduce financial barriers, building the USET Foundation's endowment, and investing in initiatives tied to the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Ultimately, this campaign is designed to deliver both immediate impact and long-term sustainability for U.S. equestrian success on the world stage.

At its core, Pathway to the Podium reflects a simple but powerful truth: success in equestrian sport does not happen overnight. It requires years of dedication, careful development, and a fully supported system that nurtures talent from its earliest stages to the pinnacle of international competition. That is where the USET Foundation's partnership with USEF is so critical.

With your support, we can bolster USEF's High Performance Pathway Programs — the essential pipeline that identifies, develops, and prepares horses and riders for international championships. These programs provide invaluable opportunities, from training sessions and international competition exposure to direct athlete grants and access to world-class expertise.

Just as importantly, they ensure that the team behind the team — including coaches, grooms, veterinarians, farriers, physiotherapists, and logistics specialists — has the resources needed to support equine well-being and competitive success at every stage.

The results speak for themselves. In recent years, the expansion of USEF High Performance Pathway Programs has contributed to consistent international success across disciplines, demonstrating that when we invest in the full pathway, we elevate not only individual athletes but also the entire U.S. equestrian program.

Unlike many other nations, the U.S. does not benefit from federal funding for equestrian sport. Our ability to compete — and to win — on the world stage depends entirely on the strength and generosity of our philanthropic community.

As we prepare for Aachen and the look ahead to a once-in-a-generation opportunity at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games, the importance of this moment cannot be overstated. Competing on home soil brings unparalleled pride and raises the bar. Our goal is clear: when U.S. athletes enter the arena, they do so as true podium contenders.

Thanks to early support for Pathway to the Podium, we already have remarkable momentum. The campaign's success to date is a testament to what can be achieved when our community rallies around a shared vision. For that, I offer my deepest gratitude.

But there is still work to be done. I invite each of you to join this effort — to invest in the athletes, horses, and programs that define and determine U.S. equestrian excellence. Together, we can ensure that the pathway remains strong, that opportunities continue to grow, and that our teams are fully prepared not only for Aachen and Los Angeles, but for generations to come.

This is our moment. This is our mission. This is our Pathway to the Podium.

Sincerely,

Bonnie B. Jenkins  
Executive Director



Photo by William Hauser

*All ranking information throughout newsletter current as of June 1, 2026*

*The United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation is the philanthropic partner of US Equestrian (USEF). Through generous donor contributions, the USET Foundation provides funding to USEF to support USEF High Performance Pathway Programs and athletes.*

## GLOBAL STAGE

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Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Christian Simonson and Indian Rock en route to finishing second at the 2026 Zen Elite FEI Dressage World Cup™ Final — backed up by their team behind the team supporting them from the kiss-and-cry.

### SIMONSON'S SUCCESS

U.S. dressage athlete Christian Simonson, who at age 23 finished second in the Zen Elite FEI Dressage World Cup™ Final on Indian Rock, is a shining example of how support from the USEF High Performance Pathway Programs can lead to spectacular results.

“None of this would be possible without having the right experiences at a young age as a result of being on the USEF Pathway and from USET Foundation funding,” stated Simonson. “I started with the FEI North American Youth Championships [NAYC] and then the Young Rider European tour, followed by the Pan American Games. Those experiences on the Pathway have been critical in enabling me to compete at the highest level. Any success I’ve had now is a result of those experiences.

“Having the right support staff — the team behind the team — around us, thanks to the funding, has been game changing,” he continued. “Having all those puzzle pieces together allows us to have a homogenous experience between our training back home and competing.”

“The USEF High Performance Pathway is designed to identify and nurture both horse and human equestrian talent,” noted US Equestrian Director of FEI/High Performance Sport Hallye Griffin. “In recent years, USEF expanded the footprint of its Pathway Programs, offering more opportunities for athletes and horses, which contributed to impressive, consistent international success across the FEI disciplines. These Pathway Programs are largely made possible thanks to USET Foundation funding. We’re grateful to the USET Foundation and its loyal donors for supporting the U.S. teams every step of the way.” ■

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*Unlike many nations, the U.S. does not receive federal government funding for equestrian sport. Therefore, the success of U.S. teams relies on sustained philanthropic support to ensure athletes and horses have access to the resources required to compete and succeed at the highest levels.*

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## POPE'S PATHWAY

In the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final, Kent Farrington took the win on the inimitable Greya, with Katie Dinan also finishing on the podium in third place riding Out Of The Blue SCF. In his World Cup Final debut, Jacob Pope rode Highway FBH to an impressive 12th place. His success further underscores the effectiveness and performance-boosting power of the carefully constructed USEF High Performance Pathway Programs.

“The USEF Talent Search Final helped immensely to be ready for the World Cup,” he explained. “In my last year as a junior, I won. It’s equitation, but it’s a jumper-based championship that helped me move on to what I’m doing now. While I was in college, I was on the gold medal-winning team at NAYC, which was pretty special, too. The USEF Pathway is an integral part of our sport, especially for riders coming up who want to compete for their country.

“Being able to go to Europe and having all that experience behind me — largely because of the USET Foundation funding to support USEF — was so important to my career trajectory and has set me up well,” he continued.

“Thanks to that, we have this network of support, which helps bring amazing people like USEF Jumping Development Chef d’Equipe Anne Kursinski, U.S. Jumping Team Chef d’Equipe Robert Ridland, USEF Managing Director of Jumping and Team Leader Lizzy Chesson, and USEF Director of Jumping Development Programs and Team Leader Erin Keating, U.S. Jumping Team Veterinarian Dr.



Jacob Pope and Highway FBH celebrated a top-12 finish at the 2026 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final.

Photo by US Equestrian

Heather Sherman, and U.S. Jumping Team Equine Therapist Janus Marquis with us on these trips,” added Pope. “It’s really important to have all those people to make sure we’re feeling ready and the horses are feeling their best. It allows us, as athletes, to really focus on the task at hand.”

“To be successful, it takes a village,” said USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie B. Jenkins. “Donors are integral to the village, and we’re so grateful for their unwavering commitment to supporting USEF High Performance Programs. We are proud of what the Pathway to the Podium campaign has accomplished to date and look forward to the wider community joining us on this journey.” ■



The Young Rider jumping podium at the 2025 NAYC, which was spearheaded by the gold medalists from Zone 10, Talise Baker-Matsuoka, Emmeline Adamick, Ariana Marnell, and Skylar Wireman. Zone 2 took silver, with bronze going to the Zone 4 team. NAYC forms the backbone of youth competition in jumping and dressage as part of USEF’s High Performance Pathway Programs.

Photo by Avery Wallace/US Equestrian

## DUDA'S JOURNEY

Funding from Pathway to the Podium currently supports and will continue to bolster a wide range of components across USEF's High Performance Programs and Pathway Programs, including training sessions, international competition opportunities, direct athlete grants, and support for the team behind the team, which includes coaches and Chefs d'Equipe, grooms, veterinarians, farriers, physiotherapists, and

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*The pathway to the podium is never linear. There are going to be ups and downs, and having the support of the USET Foundation through those highs and lows is what will get us there.*

MOLLY DUDA

”

logistics personnel who manage equine wellbeing safeguards, global travel, quarantine protocols, competition planning, and more.

“The USET Foundation funding has brought to life the USEF Pathways and athlete programs that have gotten me to where I am today,” affirmed U.S. eventing athlete Molly Duda, for whom the USEF High Performance Pathway Programs have provided a wide range of career-building opportunities.

“I feel incredibly lucky to have had the support all the way from my career as a young rider, up to and through the Developing and the Development 25 Program, and on to the European tours,” continued Duda, who won individual gold in the CCI3\*-L at the 2023 USEF Eventing Young Rider Championships.

“The next year, I was able to progress to the next step and was selected for the U.S. Eventing European Development Tour. You gain such an appreciation for all the things and all the people that go into the sport. Experiencing the pressure of going abroad, with a team behind you and being on the world stage, is something you can really only learn by doing. All those experiences have been absolutely instrumental in my career. It's been life-changing for me.”

“The pathway to the podium is never linear,” she concluded. “There are going to be ups and downs, and having the support of the USET Foundation through those highs and lows is what will get us there.” ■



Photo by Leslie Pottery/US Equestrian

Molly Duda and Disco Traveler at the 2025 Cosequin® Lexington CCI4\*-S. The eventing athlete cited support from USEF Pathway Programs, boosted by funds from the USET Foundation, as instrumental in her career progression.

## USEF HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM SUCCESS IN 2025

**\$1.25** million in direct athlete grants to at least 105 athletes

**31** Nations Cups contested

**28** athletes debuted on Nations Cup teams

**19** overall podium finishes

**11** athletes advanced up the USEF Pathway in their respective disciplines

**15** athletes participated in their first World Championship in non-Olympic disciplines



Photo by Hippo Foto/Dirk Caremans

## THE STAGE IS SET

Across two weeks of competition in six FEI disciplines, tens of thousands of spectators, officials, athletes, horses, and care teams will descend on Aachen, Germany, for the FEI World Championships, a comprehensive festival of top sport that crowns world champions and defines the competitive landscape for the next Olympic and Paralympic cycle.

For the United States, this year's championships arrive at a particularly meaningful time. With the 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics set to take place on home soil in Los Angeles, Aachen represents a crucial stepping stone for U.S. riders and horses as they build toward that once-in-a-generation opportunity.

Aachen is no stranger to hosting elite-level sport. Its annual CHIO competition is a highlight on the international calendar. It has been a happy hunting ground for U.S. athletes lately. In 2025, the U.S. jumping team won Nations

Cup gold and the U.S. eventing team earned silver.

The 2026 championships will feature the disciplines of dressage, driving, eventing, jumping, para dressage, and vaulting, bringing together athletes from dozens of nations in a multi-discipline celebration of the best of horse sport.

For fans and athletes alike, the FEI World Championships are a rare moment when stars from across the spectrum of equestrian sport converge — offering a compelling showcase of the best the horse world has to offer and serving as a proving ground for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and Paralympics.

As attention turns to Aachen this summer and to the upcoming home Olympic and Paralympic Games, the USET Foundation's Pathway to the Podium campaign is uniquely positioned to underscore the crucial importance of long-term investment in sustaining the legacy of our lasting impact.

### *Did you know?*

*Aachen last hosted a major championships — the World Equestrian Games — in 2006. The venue's annual CHIO show attracts 350,000 visitors.*

*The main stadium at Aachen has a capacity of 40,000 spectators.*

*At the 2025 CHIO Aachen, the U.S. team claimed gold in the highly competitive Nations Cup jumping competition, while the U.S. eventing team landed Nations Cup silver.*

## HISTORY REPEATING



Photo by Kit Houghton

*The 1984 Olympic gold medal U.S. eventing team of J. Michael Plumb, Torrance Fleischmann, Karen Stives, and Bruce Davidson*

The last time the Olympics were held in Los Angeles, in 1984, U.S. equestrian talent shone brightly. The home side jumping team of Joe Fargis, Leslie Burr-Howard (then Leslie Burr), Conrad Homfeld, and Melanie Smith Taylor (then Melanie Smith) won gold, and Fargis and Homfeld claimed individual gold and silver, respectively.

The U.S. eventing team of Bruce Davidson, Torrance Fleischmann, J. Michael Plumb, and Karen Stives also brought home gold, with Stives also collecting individual silver. Notably, the USET Foundation's Karen E. Stives Endowment Fund Grant was established thanks to her generosity, and is awarded annually to up-and-coming eventing horse-and-athlete combinations with perceived elite level potential to win medals at the Olympic and World Championship level.

One of the main goals of the Pathway to the Podium campaign is to amplify and build upon these historic achievements as Los Angeles prepares to host the Games again in 2028.

"There is nothing more powerful or patriotic than competing on home soil, but it also raises the stakes," noted USET Foundation Executive Direc-

tor Bonnie B. Jenkins. "We want to ensure that when our athletes step into the arena in Aachen and Los Angeles, they are not just participants, but true contenders for the podium. That is where funding from our Pathway to the Podium campaign comes into play. Developing horses and athletes takes time. Therefore, investment in the sport must be continuous.

"Our Pathway to the Podium campaign reflects a shared commitment across our community," said USET Foundation Chairman, President, and CEO Kristi Mitchem. "It's more than preparing for one championship — it's about building a sustainable, robust pathway that supports excellence today while simultaneously developing the champions of tomorrow."

Co-chaired by USET Foundation Trustees, Chairman Emeritus W. James McNerney Jr., Signe Ostby, and Secretary Akiko Yamazaki, Pathway to the Podium is designed to strengthen the full competitive pathway, from developing athletes to championship teams, ensuring that U.S. equestrian programs are fully prepared, supported, and positioned to succeed on the world's greatest stages.

This moment marks more than a countdown; it reflects a like-minded dedication to sustaining excellence. From developing athletes to seasoned veterans, and from youth programs to championship podiums, the path-

way is continuous and essential to U.S. equestrian success on the world stage in Los Angeles and well beyond. The USET Foundation invites the entire equestrian community to join this effort and help power an exceptional future for U.S. equestrian teams. This is our moment.

This is our mission. This is our Pathway to the Podium.

— By Alice Collins



Photo by Tish Quirk

*1984 Olympic team jumping gold medalists Melanie Smith and Calypso*



Photo by Kit Houghton

*The 1984 Olympic gold medal U.S. jumping team of Joe Fargis, Leslie Burr-Howard (then Leslie Burr), Conrad Homfeld, and Melanie Smith Taylor (then Melanie Smith)*

## TIMETABLE

- August 11: Opening Ceremony
- August 11-15: Dressage
- August 13-16: Eventing
- August 13-16: Vaulting
- August 18-23: Jumping
- August 20-23: Driving
- August 19-23: Para Dressage

## DRESSAGE

- August 11-12: Grand Prix
- August 14: Grand Prix Special
- August 15: Grand Prix Freestyle

## Format

The Grand Prix determines team medals, with the best three scores from a team of four counting. The top 30 combinations progress to the Special, which determines the first set of individual medals. The top 18 from the Special – with a maximum of three riders from any one nation – contest the Freestyle for the final individual medals.

## DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

TEAM: DENMARK

INDIVIDUAL: LOTTIE FRY (GBR)  
ON GLAMOURDALE

*At the 2017 Aachen CHIO, Laura Graves and Verdades triumphed over the world's best combinations in the CDIO5\* Nations Cup Grand Prix Special, winning with 81.824% and helping the U.S. team to the silver medal.*



*Aachen is renowned for its impressive opening ceremonies.*

Photo by Hippo Foto Media - Sharon Vandepuit



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

## EVENTING

August 13-14: Dressage  
August 15: Cross-Country  
August 16: Show Jumping

### Format

All combinations perform a dressage test over two days, with the results converted to penalties and carried forward. The cross-country phase follows, with a single round of show jumping on the final day to determine both team and individual medals. The best three scores from a maximum of four count toward the team result.

#### COURSE DESIGNERS

CROSS-COUNTRY: GIUSEPPE DELLA CHIESA (ITA)  
SHOW JUMPING: FRANK ROTHENBERGER (GER)

#### DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

TEAM: GERMANY  
INDIVIDUAL: YASMIN INGHAM (GBR)  
ON BANZAI DU LOIR

## JUMPING

August 19: First Qualifier  
August 20-21: Team Final  
August 23: Individual Final

### Format

Individual and team medals are decided over several rounds. The first round is against the clock, with the results converted to penalties and carried forward. Next are two rounds of team competition with the team medals (three counting scores from a maximum of four riders) decided after the second round. These rounds also serve as individual qualifiers. After a rest day, the top 25 combinations come forward for the first individual final round. The top 12 progress to the second round to determine the individual medals.

#### COURSE DESIGNER

FRANK ROTHENBERGER (GER)

#### DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

TEAM: SWEDEN  
INDIVIDUAL: HENRIK VON ECKERMANN (SWE)  
ON KING EDWARD



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

At the 2024 edition of the FEI World Championships, held at Pratoni del Vivaro, Italy, the U.S. Eventing Team of Chef d'Equipe Bobby Costello, Will Coleman, Lauren Nicholson, Tamie Smith, and Boyd Martin clinched silver.



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Victorious: Kent Farrington, Laura Kraut, McLain Ward, and Lillie Keenan won gold in the 2025 Aachen CHIO Nations Cup.

# AACHEN

## VAULTING

- August 13: Compulsory Test
- August 14: Technical Test and Pas de Deux
- August 15: Free Test Individual and Squad
- August 16: Pas de Deux and Team Final

### Format

All vaulters perform the compulsory test — a fixed set of exercises. Individuals then tackle the technical test, with the freestyle to music test determining individual medals. The pas de deux takes place across two rounds. The squad competition is a standalone contest for six vaulters on one horse, while the team competition follows a Nations Cup format, aggregating scores from individual male, individual female, and squad performances.

### DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

- INDIVIDUAL FEMALE – EVA NAGILLER (AUT)
- INDIVIDUAL MALE – THEO GARDIES (FRA)
- SQUAD – GERMANY
- TEAM – FRANCE
- PAS DE DEUX – DIANA HARWARDT/PETER KÜNNE (GER)

## DRIVING

- August 20-21: Dressage
- August 22: Marathon
- August 23: Cones, Team and Individual Final

### Format

This four-in-hand competition consists of three mandatory phases — dressage, the eight-obstacle marathon, and cones — to determine both team and individual champions. Teams consist of two to three drivers, with the best results determining the winner.

### DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

- TEAM – NETHERLANDS
- INDIVIDUAL – BOYD EXELL (AUS)

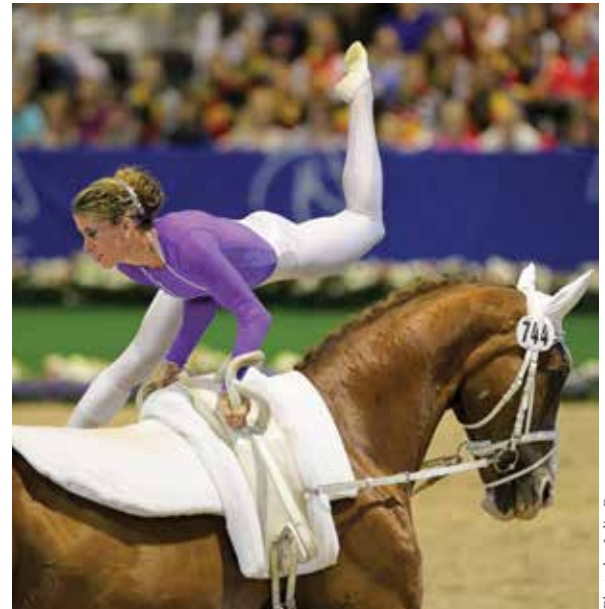


Photo by Julia Rau

*At Aachen in 2011, Mary McCormick, vaulting on Gustafsson, claimed the overall bronze medal in the individual female classification.*



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

*In 2014, Chester Weber became the first American to win the four-in-hand driving division at CHIO Aachen.*

## PARA DRESSAGE

- August 19: Individual tests, Grades I-III
- August 20: Individual tests, Grades IV-V
- August 21: Team tests, Grades I-III
- August 22: Team tests, Grades IV-V
- August 23: Individual freestyles, all grades

### Format

The para dressage championship consists of one set of team medals, and two sets of individual medals in each grade, totaling 11 sets. The Grand Prix A determines the first individual medals. Results from the Grand Prix B test only determine team medals, with a nation's best three scores counting. The top eight riders in each grade from the Grand Prix A qualify for the freestyle. Riders are classified from Grade I (most impaired) to Grade V (least impaired). Teams must include at least one Grade I-III rider and no more than two riders from the same grade.



*Fiona Howard and Diamond Dunes at the 2024 Paris Paralympics, where they emerged as triple gold medalists.*

### DEFENDING WORLD CHAMPIONS

TEAM – NETHERLANDS

INDIVIDUAL:

- GRADE I – RIHARDS SNIKUS (LAT) ON KING OF THE DANCE; SARA MORGANTI (ITA) ON ROYAL DELIGHT
- GRADE II – KATHRINE KRISTENSEN (DEN) ON GOERKLINTGAARDS QUATER
- GRADE III – TOBIAS THORNING JØRGENSEN (DEN) ON JOLENE HILL
- GRADE IV – SANNE VOETS (NED) ON DEMANTUR
- GRADE V – MICHÈLE GEORGE (BEL) ON BEST OF 8

# 2026 USET Foundation Awards

*Three of the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's most prestigious awards were presented to Akiko Yamazaki, Lillie Keenan, and Cassie Sanger at its "Aachen" benefit on January 16, 2026, at ROasis Riding Oasis in Wellington, Florida.*

## AKIKO YAMAZAKI

Yamazaki, a committed leader and champion of the USET Foundation for almost two decades, was recognized with the R. Bruce Duchossois Distinguished Trustee Award. She has served as a USET Foundation Trustee since 2010, and in recognition of her leadership and dedication, was elected an Officer of the Board in 2019, a role she continues to hold as Secretary.

Yamazaki has been a lead donor and steadfast advocate for the USET Foundation's mission, with particular impact in the dressage and vaulting disciplines where her support has helped advance athlete development and international excellence.

Today, she brings that same vision and commitment to her role as Co-Chair of the USET Foundation's Pathway to the Podium campaign, helping to lead the Foundation toward a defining moment for the sport as the U.S. prepares to host the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"It is a true honor to be recognized along with past recipients who have contributed so much to the equestrian sport in the U.S.," said Yamazaki, who is well known for her dedication to advancing U.S. equestrian sport at the highest level, particularly through her long-term collaboration with U.S. Olympic dressage athlete Steffen Peters. "It is a nice way to recognize and celebrate the long journey my team had with Steffen as our rider with my horses, which included participation in the past five consecutive Olympic Games, all the World Equestrian Games and World Championships in between, and multiple World Cup™ Finals. The award really belongs to my team."

Beyond her involvement with the USET Foundation, the Stanford graduate, based in Woodside, California, is a respected, globally recognized own-



Photo courtesy of Akiko Yamazaki

er of U.S. dressage horses and a grand prix-level competitor herself. As an owner for Peters, Yamazaki is known for horses including Ravel, with whom Peters won the 2009 FEI World Cup™ Final, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic team silver medalist Suppenkasper, Rosamunde, and Pan American Games gold medalist Legolas.

"Horses and horse sport are my lifelong passion," shared Yamazaki. "I was bitten by the bug when I was six years old, inspired by my mother, who was an equestrian. I was very fortunate to be able to support riders and teams who could participate at the highest level of the sport, which introduced me to a world beyond my own riding. Now, my daughters are high performance equestrians in dressage and vaulting. I am also supporting US Equestrian [USEF] clinics at my facility. It gives me a lot of joy to be on this journey with hard-working athletes and their horses."

Yamazaki provides strategic leadership in support of the USET Founda-

tion's mission to ensure U.S. equestrian teams have the resources necessary to excel in championship competition. She is a strong advocate for programs that invest in athlete development, international competition opportunities, and the long-term strength of U.S. dressage within the broader equestrian community.

"Through my service on the USET Foundation Board of Trustees, I have given to high performance sport at the highest level in support of programs and disciplines beyond my primary sport of dressage and my daughter's sport of vaulting," continued Yamazaki. "I hope that in doing so, I have been able to realize a hard-working athlete's dream and helped support their teams. Success in any equestrian discipline elevates the whole equestrian community."

"The USET Foundation has been able to raise significant support for high performance equestrian sport in a systematic and timely manner through well-planned and well-executed campaigns," she added. "The funds that the USET Foundation provides are critical for the success of the athletes and teams representing the USA. The 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is an inspiring goal for many, and the USET Foundation and its trustees are already hard at work building toward this exciting event. There is nothing like a home Games, so please join us in building and supporting the best teams possible for LA28!"

The R. Bruce Duchossois Distinguished Trustee Award pays homage to the late Mr. Duchossois by annually recognizing a member or members of the USET Foundation Board of Trustees who embody his leadership, generosity, and outstanding character. His life was celebrated by becoming the first recipient of the prestigious award at its inception in 2015.

## LILLIE KEENAN

The U.S. jumping athlete was presented with the 2026 Whitney Stone Cup, which acknowledges Keenan as an active competitor whose consistent excellence in international competition and sportsmanlike conduct as an ambassador for the sport exemplify the USET Foundation's and USEF's highest ideals and traditions.

"I didn't think I'd even be in contention with the caliber of the previous recipients — I was in awe to win," said the 29-year-old from New York, New York, who was also the recipient of the USET Foundation's Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy in 2015. "I hope I'm still quite early in my career with lots more to achieve for the U.S. team, so to already have this recognition is really surprising and motivating."

Keenan made her senior Nations Cup debut in 2014 at just 17 and has since established herself as an invaluable senior member of the U.S. Jumping Team. In 2025, she and Argan De Beliard jumped double clear to help the U.S.

clinch gold in the prestigious Aachen CHIO Nations Cup in Germany. She was also on the U.S. team that secured a historic win in the Longines League of Nations™ Ocala CSIO5\* at World Equestrian Center – Ocala in Florida.

"When I was young, there were so many people I'd run to the arena to watch — now I get to ride on teams with them," commented Keenan, who trains with three-time Whitney Stone Cup recipient McLain Ward. "It hit me that I could now be one of those people who stand as an example, and that feels special," she continued. "It's about more than just how you ride. It's your values, how you carry yourself, and how you run your business — it's everything."

"When I started with McLain seven years ago, he stressed that championship and team medals are the most important, and I've tried to follow in his footsteps, so that's what we've focused on. We see who wins all the big grands prix, which matters, but without a team, you don't get to go to championships."



Photo by Mackenzie Clark

Lillie Keenan and Argan De Beliard

The Cup is given in honor of Whitney Stone, who served as President and Chairman of the Board of USET, and was instrumental in the creation of a civilian team when the Army retired from competitive horse sports after 1948.

## CASSIE SANGER

The U.S. eventing athlete was recognized with the 2026 Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy. It is presented annually to a junior or young rider in an Olympic discipline who exemplifies the U.S. Equestrian Team's ideals of sportsmanship and horsemanship.

Sanger's award comes after a stellar year in 2025. She stepped up to the five-star level with her top horse, Redfield Fyre, contesting the CCI5\*-L in Lexington, Kentucky, in April. The pair put a second CCI5\*-L under their belts at Burghley Horse Trials in the United Kingdom in September — where she was the youngest rider in the field — finishing in the top 20 at both events. Sanger was also selected for the 2026 USEF Eventing Development Program with Redfield Fyre.

"It is such an honor to join the list of talented athletes who have received the Lionel Guerrand-Hermès Trophy before me," said Sanger, who is from Wilmington, Delaware. "It feels really

special to be thought of in this way, especially because this is not just an eventing award; it covers all the Olympic disciplines."



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Cassie Sanger and Redfield Fyre

As well as making her five-star debut, the 21-year-old Sanger moved her string of horses to England in 2025 to be based with Olympic gold medalist Ros Canter, while continuing to study journalism at the University of Richmond in Virginia, where she is a junior.

"Being in the UK and studying remotely online meant I could pour all my time into riding and being with my horses," said Sanger. "That benefited me as a horse person and in terms of competition results. I love the team stuff, so I'll continue to apply for those opportunities."

"The USET Foundation has been a huge part of my recent success," she concluded. "My first trip overseas was funded by the Karen E. Stives Endowment Fund Grant, and that was huge for me. Going abroad lit a fire in me, and it would not have been possible without the support. I am so grateful for the way they want to show up for riders and horses."

– By Alice Collins



# ..... Isabelle Bosley & Conner .....

## Receive 2026 Connaught Grant

In December 2025, the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation awarded Isabelle Bosley and Conner, Karen Martin's eight-year-old Oldenburg gelding by Casiro 3 x Concetto, the 2026 Connaught Grant in Memory of R. Bruce Duchossois. The grant was presented at the United States Eventing Association (USEA) year-end awards dinner in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Each year, the USET Foundation awards up to \$25,000 to an event horse seen as a potential future candidate to represent the U.S. team internationally.

The grant was established and is funded by Caroline Moran in memory of her dear friend, the late R. Bruce Duchossois, who was dedicated to encouraging the development of event horses in the U.S. The grant is named after Connaught, a horse owned by Duchossois and ridden by Phillip Dutton — Bosley's mentor — at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Conner and Bosley had a remarkable 2025. After winning the April CCI2\*-S at Stable View, South Carolina, the 28-year-old stepped Conner up to the three-star level and finished second in their debut CCI3\*-S at Fair Hill International, Maryland.

In June, they recorded their first win at the new level, leading the CCI3\*-S at Adamstown, Maryland, on 37.3 penalties. In October, the duo led the CCI3\*-L at the MARS Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill from start to finish, completing on their impressive dressage score of 24.8 penalties. They recorded no jumping faults in the show jumping phase in any of their five international starts in 2025.

"I thought that maybe Conner had a chance at getting this grant because he's had a pretty decent year," said Bosley. "I went to the USEA gala because he was Intermediate Horse of the Year, but when it was announced that we'd also been awarded the grant, it was still a surprise.

"It's such nice recognition for him and for Karen, his owner, who has been so supportive. She's allowed me to take time and not put pressure on the horse, so I'm particularly honored," she con-



Photo by USEA/Meagan DeLisle

Connaught Grant Committee member Joanie Morris presented Isabelle Bosley with the Connaught Grant at the end-of-year USEA awards ceremony.

tinued. "We've always thought that Conner is pretty cool, and to have that acknowledged by others is very special.

"There are so many expenses involved with eventing, and it's a constant battle to keep up and be competitive," she added. "It's hard when you are limited by financial constraints, so a grant like this makes a huge difference."

"We are delighted to award Isabelle

Bosley and Conner the 2026 Connaught Grant," said USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie B. Jenkins. "Supporting up-and-coming combinations is essential to building the future of our sport, and this grant reflects our commitment to helping promising partnerships gain the experience and resources they need."

Bosley plans to use the Connaught Grant for competitions, fees, and coaching with Conner. She trains regularly with two-time U.S. Olympic eventing gold medalist Phillip Dutton in West Grove, Pennsylvania, and in Wellington, Florida, in the winter. She takes lessons with U.S. jumping Olympian Lauren Hough, as well as sessions with other trainers, including Bettina Hoy and Brett Parbery.

"I certainly have big goals with Conner," revealed Bosley. "The 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games could be a possibility, but if not, then the Games after that. I'd also love to get on other U.S. teams. The sky's the limit with him. Grants like this are what keep us riders going and help shape our careers."

- By Alice Collins 



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Isabelle Bosley and Conner

# ..... Savannah Gwin ..... .....

## *Awarded Amanda Pirie Warrington Grant*

The 2026 Amanda Pirie Warrington Grant was awarded to U.S. eventing athlete Savannah Gwin of Temecula, California. The grant is bestowed annually by the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation through the Amanda Pirie Warrington Fund. Pirie's family established the fund in her memory to provide financial assistance to an eventing athlete identified as having the talent and ability to represent the U.S. on senior teams.

Gwin is the assistant rider at Next Level Eventing for Olympian Tamie Smith, who was the recipient of the 2019 USET Foundation Jacqueline B. Mars International Competition Grant and winner of the Land Rover Kentucky Three Day Event CCI5\*-L in 2023.

Gwin began working for Smith in California when she was 17. After graduating from high school, she spent two years training with David O'Connor on the East Coast before rejoining Smith's team four years ago. In 2021 and 2022, Gwin was named to the US Equestrian (USEF) Eventing 25 Emerging Athlete Program — one of the many USEF High Performance Pathway Programs the USET Foundation helps to support.

The now 24-year-old Gwin had a successful Young Riders career. After her horse Glock Pullman retired, she was without a competition ride. In January 2025, she was allocated the ride on Molly Duda's British-bred Oldenburg, De Facto (by Diarado x Now Or Never M). However, just a month later, Gwin suffered a serious accident.

"In February, I had a bad fall and fractured the base of my skull," said Gwin. "I partially tore some ligaments that basically hold your head onto your neck. It was a big blow, and I was told I'd be out for six months to a year, with the potential that I wouldn't ever be able to ride again. It was a really big setback, so getting the grant after a slow 2025 competition season was a shock.



*Savannah Gwin and De Facto*

Photo by Tina Fitch

"When I found out I'd won it, there were a lot of emotions because I had not expected it at all," she continued. "I feel overwhelming gratitude for this opportunity and to the people who have helped support me and make this crazy dream of riding horses a reality. Tamie has helped bring a lot of opportunities my way, and some of her owners — including the Dudas and Ruth Bley —

ty check about what it realistically takes to succeed in this sport. I've been trying to find my own way since. It takes a lot of work, but the journey has made me really fall in love with eventing.

"This is my first grant, and I'm overwhelmed with gratitude," she continued. "Most of it will go towards De Facto. It takes some pressure off and opens opportunities. My partnership with him is developing into something strong; I'm really excited.

"It's special that these opportunities exist," added Gwin. "It makes things possible that otherwise wouldn't be. It only takes one person, one thing, or the

USET Foundation stepping in to help jump-start things to make a difference. The support, experience, and opportunities provided through the grants and programs the USET Foundation supports give riders exactly what they need when their time comes to move up to senior teams."

Gwin aims to step up to CCI3\* level in 2026 with the 11-year-old De Facto, a transition that the Amanda Pirie Warrington Grant will help facilitate.

- By Alice Collins



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*The support, experience, and opportunities provided through the grants and programs the USET Foundation supports give riders exactly what they need when their time comes to move up to senior teams.*

**SAVANNAH GWIN**

”

now own horses for me. It's a big group effort to help make this possible."

The grant is intended for a recipient who will benefit from the opportunity to continue their training with top coaches and to compete against the world's best in eventing. As the recipient, Gwin will receive up to \$5,000 to help offset expenses in 2026.

"I had a great Young Riders career, but when my horse retired, my family stopped supporting me financially," explained Gwin. "I was faced with a reali-

# USET Foundation's 'Aachen' Benefit Gala Raises \$1.2M

The United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's benefit gala, "Aachen," raised nearly \$1.2 million in support of U.S. equestrian sport ahead of the 2026 FEI World Championships, which will be held in Aachen, Germany, in August.



*Lillie Keenan, recipient of the 2026 Whitney Stone Cup, doubled as an auction spotter during the gala evening.*



*Jerry Yang, Erin Nichols, 2026 R. Bruce Duchossois Distinguished Trustee Award recipient Akiko Yamazaki, and Diane Nichols*



*Collin McNeil*



*U.S. jumping athlete Alex Matz and Olympic eventing gold medalist Phillip Dutton*



*USET Foundation Trustee Toni Cupal*



*U.S. Paralympic gold medalist Rebecca Hart, Fernando Ortega, and USET Foundation Trustee Terri Kane*



*USET Foundation Chairman, President, and CEO Kristi Mitchem with Trustees Angela Vogel and Zacharie Vinios*



*USET Foundation National Advisory Committee member Dr. Diane Fellows and George Fellows*



Auctioneer Harry Santa-Olalla shared a joke with U.S. jumping athlete and USET Foundation Trustee Georgina Bloomberg.



Jack Meyer, USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins, USET Foundation Trustees Beth Meyer and Rowan O'Riley, with USET Foundation Chairman, President, and CEO Kristi Mitchem



U.S. dressage athlete Christian Simonson, Dr. David Da Silva, Olympic dressage team silver medalist Adrienne Lyle, Katie Duerrhammer, Gerard Duerrhammer, Phyllis Lind, and Jill Briggs



USEF Managing Director of Jumping Lizzy Chesson, USET Foundation Assistant Executive Director Kara Pinato, USEF Director of FEI/High Performance Sport Hallye Griffin, U.S. Jumping Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland, and U.S. Dressage High Performance Pathway Development Advisor and Youth Coach George Williams



Guests celebrated by waving handkerchiefs, a longstanding tradition at CHIO Aachen World Equestrian Festival.

All photos by Luxectine

# USET Foundation's Benefit 'A Night for Aachen' Garners Nearly \$500,000



The United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's benefit event, "A Night for Aachen," held on Friday, January 30, 2026, at the Desert International Horse Park (DIHP) in Thermal, California, raised \$485,000 to support US Equestrian (USEF) High Performance Programs ahead of the 2026 FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany. The evening featured a German-inspired beer garden, inspiring performances by California-based U.S. equestrian athletes, a silent auction and an exciting live auction driven by an enthusiastic West Coast community. The evening successfully secured vital financial support needed for training, coaching, mentorship, travel, and educational opportunities for the U.S.'s top riders and horses as they look ahead to an exciting season of high performance sport and the FEI World Championships.



Photo by DIHP/Emily Randolph

The Desert International Horse Park ownership group of Robert Meadows, Sandra Meadows, Jeremy Smith, Christina Smith, Catherine Harvey, and Kevin Harvey



Photo by DIHP/Emily Randolph

Jerry Yang, USET Foundation Trustee Akiko Yamazaki, Miki Yang, Benji Steinberg, U.S. vaulting athlete Caroline Morse, and Jana Morse



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

Diane Korsh, Carly Vasan, and USET Foundation Trustee Signe Ostby during the live auction



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

Dressage pas de trois with U.S. riders Tina Caldwell, Steven Paulson, and triple Olympic team bronze medalist Guenter Seidel



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

Dr. Lori Bidwell DVM at the champagne wall



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

Olympic eventing silver medalist Gina Miles and guests during the lively 25-item silent auction



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Youth Final young rider team gold medalist Skylar Wireman jumped a 2024 Paris Olympic fence during the live performance, which was later auctioned off.



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

U.S. equestrian athlete Emi Yang during her beautiful vaulting demonstration



Photo by DIHP/Emily Randolph

'A Night for Aachen' benefit committee member Lily Lee, her husband Tom Chang, and daughter Kennedy Chang

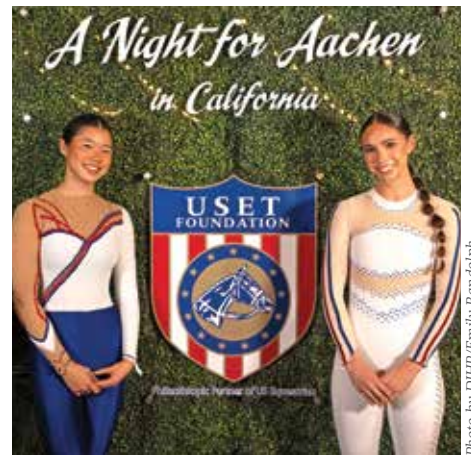


Photo by DIHP/Emily Randolph

Emi Yang and Kylynn Ghafouri, US Equestrian's 2025 Vaulters of the Year, performed at the benefit.



Photo by DIHP/Megan Giese Media

U.S. Olympic jumping team silver medalist Karl Cook addressed guests.



Photo by DIHP/Emily Randolph

Current world No. 1 jumping athlete Kent Farrington and the Berry family enjoyed the thrilling live auction.



# U.S. DRESSAGE TEAM WINS NATIONS CUP GOLD



Photo by US Equestrian

Meagan Davis, Anna Marek, Jordan LaPlaca, and Ashley Holzer

**D**uring the three-month 2026 Adequan® Global Dressage Festival in Wellington, Florida, The Dutta Corp. U.S. Dressage Team of Meagan Davis, Ashley Holzer, Anna Marek, and Jordan LaPlaca claimed the gold medal on March 19, 2026, in the Modon FEI Dressage Nations Cup™ CDIO3\* — the only leg held outside Europe.

With a final score of 205.631, the U.S. edged out Germany for the first time since 2021. The defending champions finished with the silver medal on a team score of 205.043. Canada completed the podium with 204.196 for bronze, one of the closest results in the history of the competition. Chef d'Equipe Christine Traurig blended Marek and

Holzer's experience with senior team debutants LaPlaca and Davis.

Wellington-based Holzer clocked up 67.652% on her own and Diane Fellows's 14-year-old *Hawtins San Floriana*, setting a solid bar for the team. LaPlaca and the 11-year-old *Gold Play*, his own and Nancy Hutson's *Grey Flanell* gelding, scored 65.131% for a test with some over-exuberance. Davis, from Loxahatchee, Florida, rode Scott Durkin's 13-year-old *Toronto Lightfoot*, by *Totilas*, to 68.544%. Team anchor Marek notched 69.435% on her sister-in-law Cynthia Davila's 16-year-old gelding *Fayvel*, by *Zizi Top*, to lock in the home side's historic victory.

"When a team comes together,

there's camaraderie and they all know what's at stake, it's pretty incredible what can be done," said Traurig. "Anna and Fayvel took the team home, and Ashley is extremely experienced in international competition. Meagan did a wonderful job, and it was a fabulous experience for Jordan and his extremely talented horse."

Marek of Dunnellon, Florida, said, "Christine chose me to go last, which is a big honor. You feel a bit of extra pressure as the anchor. This gold medal is huge because it was important to Cynthia for Fayvel to be on a team, so it's special to share this with her."

Holzer was riding *Hawtins San Floriana* on the *San Amour* mare's first Nations Cup team.

"She delivered when it really counted," she said. "When you feel that connection in the ring and your horse working for you, it's a special feeling."

LaPlaca, who is based in Ledyard, Connecticut, went on to claim a second gold medal, topping the Modon FEI Nations Cup CDIO3\* Grand Prix Special individually with a personal best of 71%, capping a breakthrough season with *Gold Play*. Marek and Fayvel scooped the bronze.

"I honestly expected none of this, and I'm a bit in shock," said LaPlaca, who, in late March, was named to the USEF Dressage Development Pathway Program list with *Gold Play*. "Riding for the U.S. team is not only a privilege, it's something I've dreamed about since I was a kid. It's what kept me inspired to learn, to teach, and to keep going. It's incredibly humbling and an honor I don't take lightly."

In the Modon FEI Nations Cup CDIO3\* Grand Prix Freestyle, Germany's *Frederic Wandres* won gold, while Holzer picked up a second medal of the weekend as well as the *Leading Lady Rider* title. She secured silver on *Hawtins San Floriana* with 74.35% to a patriotic Tom Hunt freestyle soundtrack.

– By Alice Collins 

# Owners' Spotlight



*A central pillar of the USET Foundation's Pathway to the Podium campaign (see cover story) is the recognition that every successful horse-and-rider combination is supported by a dedicated "village" working behind the scenes to optimize every detail. Owners are a vital part of that team behind the team and play a key role in overall success. Many are long-time supporters of the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation, valued partners whose passion for U.S. equestrian sport — and for the US Equestrian (USEF) programs they help fund — directly contributes to the nation's success.*

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## NANCY HUTSON

### GOLD PLAY'S OWNER

It was thrilling to have a horse selected to compete for the U.S. It was beyond my initial expectations for Jordan and Gold Play, despite both being so talented. I am gratified that the partnership has turned into this incredible match. The love and respect Jordan and Gold Play have for each other is unique.

I've been addicted to dressage for 50 years, mostly as an adult amateur. To be part of the sport at this level is so exciting. Jordan is such a gifted rider, and it is a privilege to help him achieve his dreams.

It was a marvelous experience to be part of the U.S. team with Christine Traurig as coach and Chef d'Equipe, who, along with all the other owners and riders, were so supportive of one another. Jordan and Gold Play's individual gold was fantastic, considering how little international experience they have. The power of team dressage is an amazing experience.

As a board member of The Dressage Foundation, I get to see a lot of enthusiasm and financial support for the sport. I am also a long-time member of the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's Gold Medal Club, having just received my 15-year award.

I support the USET Foundation because I think it is important for the U.S. to participate in our sport at the international and Olympic levels. I have been proud to see our teams at these events.



Jordan LaPlaca and Gold Play

Photo by Shannon Brinkman

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## CYNTHIA DAVILA

### FAYVEL'S OWNER

Anna and I had another horse, Duvel, compete on a Nations Cup team in 2023, and it was such an amazing experience that we couldn't wait to do it again. Fayvel also went to the 2024 World Cup Final, where I met all the wonderful USEF team staff. We were overjoyed when Fayvel was selected for his first team event.

When he started his test, I was blissfully unaware that, as anchor, it was all down to him to get a certain score to overtake the Germans and win gold for the first time in five years. When I heard the announcement that the U.S. had won the gold, it was a phenomenal moment that I'll never forget. If I'd known the real pressure Anna and Fayvel were under, I would have been even more nervous.

I joke to my family that they'll have to bury me in the USA-branded team kit I was given because it's such a privilege to earn it and wear it.

Winning an individual medal on top of team gold was fantastic because Fayvel isn't super experienced in the Grand Prix Special test, so you can imagine our surprise when we earned bronze. We drove home feeling on top of the world.

I love that U.S. dressage honors its owners as well as its amateurs, since I'm both, and makes us feel special at these kinds of events.



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

*Anna Marek and Fayvel*

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## DR. DIANE FELLOWS

### HAWTINS SAN FLORIANA'S OWNER

I've been with Ashley since 2003, when she was already a four-time Olympian. Thanks to her, we have had so many incredible moments with so many wonderful horses. Ashley never ceases to amaze us with her talent and expertise, and now we have the stunning Hawtins San Floriana — barn name Flo — who we acquired just before the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Ashley took her time getting to know her and making her feel comfortable in her new home. It was such a thrill to see them compete on the U.S. Nations Cup team. All of Ashley's meticulous care and training was showcased, and it was an honor to be part of the gold medal team. It is always exciting to see your horse compete, but there's something so very special about riding on a team for your country.

I have chosen this sport because the horses are the number one priority — their wellbeing, happiness, and performance are paramount. As a supporter of U.S. high performance dressage, I feel very proud to be part of a community passionate about developing the country's horses in a kind, systematic way. Of course, we want them to be the best they can be with the potential to win an Olympic gold medal. To get to that point, we must develop horses slowly.

It takes a village to bring together the athletes, horses, owners, sponsors, and support teams to focus on the best possible outcomes. The USEF team that runs the U.S. dressage



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

*Ashley Holzer and Hawtins San Floriana*

program and the USET Foundation that helps fund the USEF High Performance Dressage Programs are integral to this community. I've been in the sport for many years and it is a thrill. I feel a strong sense of community. We all support each other and that makes the sport so beautiful.

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## SCOTT DURKIN

TORONTO LIGHTFOOT'S OWNER

It's cliché, but being selected to be part of this Nations Cup team was a dream come true. It's not an easy get; it takes a lot of hard work, consistency, perseverance, and faith.

We were practically jumping out of our shoes at the kiss-and-cry — the energy was incredible. What really stood out was the strength of the team and the respect among the riders. Christine Traurig and the USEF dressage staff did an exceptional job of blending experienced riders and younger talent.

I've been training with Meagan for 17 years. From the moment she turned professional, I committed to working with her and haven't regretted it for a second. She has an innate sense of how to bring out the best in every horse.

This is one of the most exciting dressage seasons I've had in the many years I've been involved with the sport. For the first time, I was in a different role: instead of focusing on an individual result, I was fully invested in Meagan and her teammates. I was rooting for the group as a whole, hoping they could deliver their best, earn strong scores, and keep the team in the lead. They did exactly that.



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

Meagan Davis and Toronto Lightfoot

As a member of the USET Foundation's National Advisory Committee, it's so meaningful to be part of a group that serves as the backbone behind our riders' biggest dreams, helping them represent the United States on the world stage. As an owner, it gives me confi-

dence and connection to know we're all on this journey together.

I'm optimistic about the growth ahead for U.S. dressage. When we stay united, across all levels, and keep the focus on the horses and the sport itself, that's when we're at our strongest.

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## U25 Nations Cup

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In the Nations Cup Under 25 division, the U.S. team of Alicia Berger, Allison Nemeth, and Sophia Schults, under the guidance of Chef D'Equipe George Williams, came out on top of their head-to-head with Canada, sealing gold with 130.853 points to Canada's 119.559.

Berger headed up the Diamante Farms CDIO-U25 FEI Intermediate II, landing 65.5% on her family's 15-year-old Amper gelding, Aqua Marin. Nemeth finished second on her own Desperado 10-year-old gelding Leviathan, sealing the U.S. gold medal with the two counting scores needed.

Berger from Wellington, Florida, went on to record an individual gold medal double on Aqua Marin in the two grand prix level tests.

"I absolutely love being part of the U.S. team, so I was really excited when Aqua gave me a fantastic feeling in the Intermediate II, and we were able to help the U.S. secure top honors," she said. "In the freestyle, there were movements that felt like floating on a cloud."

Nemeth and Leviathan recorded an individual silver double, while Sophia Schults rode her own 14-year-old PRE Conocido HGF to a pair of individual bronze medals.

— By Alice Collins 



Photo by Emma Claire Collective/US Equestrian

Sophia Schults, Allison Nemeth, and Alicia Berger with Chef D'Equipe George Williams

# Artist TORI BILAS: From the Ring to the Page

*In a sport where beauty and tradition converge, equestrian artist Tori Bilas has established her own distinct perspective by capturing the spirit of the hunter/jumper ring on canvas. A lifelong horsewoman whose roots in the show world inform her work, Bilas has built a career capturing the emotional connection between horse and rider. She recently donated a custom pet portrait to the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation, which was gifted to USET Foundation trustee Rowan O'Riley in appreciation for hosting its "Aachen" benefit in Wellington, Florida, and was commissioned to draw three elite U.S. dressage, eventing, and jumping horses for unique USET Foundation stationery note cards.*



Tori Bilas

## **When did you first realize that your painting passion could become a career?**

My love for the sport and for art developed almost simultaneously; I could draw as soon as I could hold a pencil. But the more I got involved in a higher level of the sport, the more I wanted to level up my art. I always said I didn't want art to be my full-time job because it was too solitary. I enjoyed traveling to events as part of my equestrian media career, but that left me with less time to develop my artistic skills. The key was finding a balance — spend-

ing time alone at home, and taking art workshops and meeting fellow creative entrepreneurs.

## **How did you start painting custom pieces?**

I was a horse-obsessed kid with a natural gift for art from a young age. My childish horse sketches evolved into intricate drawings. When I was 13, I was asked to draw a friend's horse as a gift, and I realized how meaningful it was to create unique portraits. Now, that's the mainstay of my work. I see myself as an artist with an eye for detail who cannot

only paint a horse but can paint your horse, exactly as you see them.

As someone who loves animals, I get it when others feel the same way; capturing that love is a gift to me. Nothing compares to the reaction I get when someone sees the finished portrait of their beloved horse for the first time.

## **How did you go from riding to art?**

When I was in college, I took a year off from riding, and it taught me that I desperately needed horses in my life. Then I found my current horse, Brisbane. He was everything I thought I didn't want, but he was basically on clearance, so I went for it. He and I found something special in each other, and what was intended as a short-term lease turned into a long-term partnership and my introduction to the higher levels of competition.

Competing Brisbane gave me a high that can't be matched. The thrill of a double-clear round ending in a win or a top ribbon in great company is a unique sense of joy.

That feeling comes with a cost, both financially and otherwise, so I can't chase it all day, every day. But smaller, everyday joys are well within reach: I get to paint horse portraits and spend time at home with my horse. I can't imagine a better life balance.

## **The hunter/jumper discipline has such a distinctive aesthetic — how do you translate it onto canvas?**

Horses have been depicted in art throughout history in countless ways. Today, there is a huge market for equine art. Riders recognize the feeling when they see horse art that truly 'gets' their sport and what they do. The same goes

for when something doesn't hit the mark, like watching a riding scene in a movie where the vibes are off.

As an insider in this sport, I understand the importance of capturing the moments that define their disciplines and make community members feel seen. The horses need to look a certain way, and the equipment must appear clean and top notch. Ultimately, the goal is to create artwork that collectors never want to stop admiring.

### How do you capture personality in your pictures?

I like to learn as much as I can about the horse and gather multiple images if I can't meet them in person. This helps me understand not only what they look like but also their personality and mannerisms. Often, it's the silly or sweet moments that best capture their essence, like when they're begging for a treat or dozing on your shoulder. I make sure the photos I work from capture that essence.

For the horses I can photograph myself, I spend time interacting with them before I even take my camera out. I discuss the history between the horse and rider, both competitively and at home. Some horses are hams for the camera, others would rather snack than pose, but it's all valuable intel as I take, edit, and look through the photos.

### Why do you feel it is important to give back to the sport?

Something that's evident once you work deep inside the industry is how hard everyone at every level works to make dreams come true. Sometimes that's for themselves, but often it's for others. So many people do whatever it takes to help a combination excel. Giving back in small ways to support the development and success of U.S. riders and horses is the least I can do for all that the sport has given to me. I have so much admiration for the riders and their entire teams who helped them get there.

### How do you hope your art contributes to U.S. horse sport's legacy?

I grew up watching McLain Ward, Kent Farrington, and Laura Kraut dominate the sport. They were — and still are — my heroes, but I've also witnessed many young riders coming up through the ranks and heard their inspiring stories. I love watching riders make a name for themselves and become the next big stars.

I'm particularly proud of the fact that I have a piece of art of HH Azur (barn name Annie) hanging in McLain's Lake Placid home. He once told me he chose that space for it because it was "the house that Annie built." I was among their biggest fans during their peak competitive years, and I can only dream of the pairs I haven't yet captured.

### What has surprised you most in your career?

Even the most important people in the world admire fine art and crave it in their lives; art unites people in a unique way. When I was in college, I majored in studio art and would bring my drawing homework to the library. My peers, who were working toward developing cancer cures or becoming future politicians, were so impressed by the art I was creating. They were brilliant minds, and somehow still taken by my art, which has stayed with me. 🐾



Three bespoke note cards  
commissioned by  
the USET Foundation

Drawings adapted from photographs  
by Shannon Brinkman



A painting commissioned by Clara Propp as a gift for her sister Stella of her horse Grand Remo, who passed away in early 2026.

All photos by Amy Kolodziej

# Kent Farrington Wins

*In a historic result, two U.S. combinations finished on the podium at the 2026 Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 12. Olympic team silver medalist Kent Farrington led the competition from start to finish, ultimately taking his first-ever individual title on his own 12-year-old Greya. His U.S. compatriot Katie Dinan and Out Of The Blue SCF steadily moved up the standings over the week to claim third place. Daniel Deusser (GER) and Otello De Guldenboom finished second.*



*Kent Farrington and Greya*  
*Photo by Shannon Brinkman*



# FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final



U.S. athlete and current world No. 1 Kent Farrington headed up the podium at the 2026 FEI Jumping World Cup™ Final alongside second-placed Daniel Deusser (GER) and U.S. rider Katie Dinan.

Photo by Avery Wallace/US Equestrian

Farrington impressed throughout, claiming the opening round on Toulayna, his own and Rabbit Root Stables' 12-year-old Toulon x Parco mare. He rode Greya (by Colestus x Contender) in the remaining rounds, sitting atop the leaderboard at every stage. Both mares were looked after by groom Denise Moriarty.

The athlete from Wellington, Florida, was crowned champion on Greya with a total of just four faults, having tipped a rail in the first round of the two-round final competition. Greya has been an extraordinary competitor for Farrington, topping numerous five-star grands prix worldwide. Remarkably, the World Cup Final victory was the duo's first individual win at a major championship.

"This means a lot to me because I grew up watching the World Cup Final," said Farrington. "I didn't have access to major competitions, but I had access to video tapes of every single year of the



Katie Dinan and Out Of The Blue SCF

Photo by Shannon Brinkman

## WORLD CUP FINAL

*continued*

World Cup Final. I would study all the rounds and all the rides, hoping I could ride like that, so to be here winning it today is really special for me.

“It’s important to note that I rode two horses here and I couldn’t have done it without Toulayna on day one,”

he added. “I have two exceptional mares that put me in the position that I needed to win the title.”

Farrington talked of the fact that he has learned to deal with high-pressure situations, saying, “Ever since I was a little kid, I’ve always put a lot of pressure

on myself. At a certain point, there’s no more pressure to put on, so I just focus on the task at hand and being present and one with my horse. I was thinking about what I had to do and not worrying about the end result.”


Dinan and Out Of The Blue SCF — Grant Road Partners LLC’s 12-year-old Verdi TN x Cassini I mare bred in the U.S. by Spy Coast Farm and cared for by grooms Lou Boudin and Pepper Pritchard — delivered another impressive performance. Competing in their second consecutive World Cup Final together, they pushed up through the standings with a string of clear rounds as the show progressed, jumping a double clear on the final day.

“I’m in awe of my horse,” said Dinan, who is from North Salem, New York. “She was spectacular in the two final rounds, and I owe everything to her. The World Cup Final is a big deal. It’s a championship that we all aim for every year. I’ve been fortunate enough to have a handful of wonderful horses in my career, and my team has always prioritized the Final. My coach, Beat [Mändli], won it in 2007, and I remember watching it on TV. My first World Cup Final was in 2014 when Daniel Deusser won. It’s unbelievable to be on the podium with these superstars.”

“It’s always great to win the World Cup Final, but never better than on home soil,” said Chef d’Equipe Robert Ridland. “Most impressive, though, was that we showed a lot of depth with five U.S. riders finishing in the top 12.

“Across the board, our riders all rode extremely well. Kudos to the organizers for a world-class event and to Anderson Lima, who built masterful courses all week, he added.”

Demonstrating the depth of U.S. talent, Aaron Vale and Carissimo 25 finished seventh on 16 total penalties, and Lillie Keenan and Kick On, claimed 10th overall. Finals debutant Jacob Pope (see page 4) and Highway FBH impressed with a strong clear round to finish the weekend in 12th overall, while Laura Kraut and Tres Bien Z took 18th in the final standings.

– Adapted from US Equestrian press release 



Kent Farrington and Greya

Photo by Shannon Brinkman



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# Simonson Second at FEI Dressage World Cup™ Final



*Christian Simonson and Indian Rock*

*Photo by Shannon Brinkman/FEI*

*In their debut season on the World Cup circuit, U.S. athlete Christian Simonson and Indian Rock finished as reserve champions and scored a new personal best of 83.81% in the Zen Elite FEI Dressage World Cup™ Final in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 11, 2026. Their energetic Rocky movie-themed freestyle paid homage to Indian Rock's barn name, Rocky.*

Britain's Becky Moody and Jagerbomb took the win with a Beatles freestyle and another combination high score of 88.33%. Sandra Sysojeva (POL) and Maxima Bella rounded out the podium in third with 80.77%.

Simonson's runner-up finish on Zen Elite Equestrian's 13-year-old stallion Indian Rock (by Apache x Vivaldi) was a repeat of his qualifying grand prix result, marking momentous home rider placings in the annual individual championship.

The three U.S. athletes competing — all of whom are based in Wellington, Florida — all finished in the top 10. Kevin Kohmann secured ninth place with 76.73% on Diamante Farms' 17-year-old Dancier x Davignon gelding Dünensee, cared for by groom German Rodriguez. This was Kohmann and Dünensee's third consecutive FEI Dressage World Cup™

Final. Ben Ebeling rode Vantage Equestrian Group II LLC's 16-year-old Bellena (by Belissimo M x Welser), cared for by Olivia Colella, to 74.965% and 10th place.

The 23-year-old Simonson executed a powerful, precise freestyle on Indian Rock, cared for by Marina Lemay. They received plenty of nines from the judges, and even a 10 from the judge at C, Christof Umbach, for their entry and halt.

"We really wanted to show how powerful 'Rocky' is," said Simonson, who has been riding Indian Rock since late 2025. "At the end of my test, looking up and seeing this wall of people applauding Rocky and me was super special and something I will never forget. He's such a special horse and deserves every amount of praise.

"When I was 13, I wrote down all my biggest dreams," he

continued. “One of them was the Pan American Games and one of them was a World Cup Final, so I’m getting to live out my childhood dream in real time, which feels very surreal. I’m so lucky to have Adrienne [Lyle] guiding me each step of the way. If she says I can do something, I believe her. I feel like I could go through fire for her.

“When I first sat on Rocky, it was love at first sight,” recalled Simonson. “He’s like riding a cloud; in the piaffe and passage, you see all his legs moving, but it’s so bouncy and smooth. The last centerline piaffe/passage felt so amazing, and every moment he was right there with me, and I could really be present with him. We were dancing together.”

The pair used the experience of riding in the atmospheric arena in front of an extremely vocal and engaged crowd — a scenario impossible to replicate at home — to strengthen their mutual trust and to prepare for a summer campaign.

“After this show, Rocky will have some downtime, and

then we have the USEF Grand Prix Championship in May in Ocala [which is an observation event for the 2026 FEI World Championships in August],” added Simonson. “After that, we’ll see what the summer holds. It’s surreal to be on this journey already, so we’ll see how the rest of the summer goes, but it felt like we took a huge step together this week.”

Chef d’Equipe Christine Traurig said, “We accomplished a goal we set, which was to have our riders finish in the top 10. Ben and Kevin both have World Cup Finals experience, and they rode great in front of an enthusiastic crowd. Christian’s finish on the podium is a fantastic result for USA Dressage and continues to build momentum toward the World Championships and beyond. I’m so proud of our riders, their horses, the grooms, their personal trainers, and our owners. It was truly a great week to celebrate dressage here in the United States.”

– Adapted from US Equestrian press release 

Photo by Shannon Brinkman



Kevin Kohmann and Dünensee

Photo by Shannon Brinkman



Ben Ebeling and Bellena



Christian Simonson and Indian Rock

– Photo by Isabelle Whiteside/US Equestrian

# COLEMAN WINS KENTUCKY CCI5\*-L, SMITH TAKES CCI4\*-S



*Will Coleman and Diabolo*

*Will Coleman (USA) and Diabolo spearheaded a momentous day at the Kentucky Horse Park, topping the leaderboard of the 2026 Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI5\*-L presented by MARS Equestrian™ on April 26, 2026.*

It was the second time in just three years that a U.S. combination had won the event, following a 15-year drought without a home winner. The athlete from Ocala, Florida, and his five-star debutant Diabolo were impeccable throughout, adding only time penalties in the show jumping phase to their dressage score of 27.3, finishing with 28.1 penalties.

Caroline Pamukcu of Springtown, Pennsylvania, rode HSH Blake to second place overall, just behind Coleman and Diabolo, with a score of 28.6, while David Doel (GBR) and Galileo Nieuwmoed finished third.

Tamie Smith underscored the U.S.'s dominant weekend by taking the top spot in the Cosequin Lexington CCI4\*-S with Lillet 3.

As the highest-placed U.S. combination in the CCI5\*-L, Coleman and Diabolo also claimed the 2026 Defender/US Equestrian (USEF) CCI5\*-L National Championship presented by MARS Equestrian™ and were presented with the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's prestigious Pinnacle Cup Trophy.

"Winning a five-star is a surreal feeling and something we all dream about," said Coleman of his monumental victory. "It's one of the hardest things to do in equestrian sport, and I feel like we all deserve to win because this sport is such a hard game. It takes so long to really get good enough at it to possibly contend in one of these things."

In an exceptional debut at the level, Coleman and the Diabolo Group's 14-year-old Holsteiner gelding Diabolo (by Diarado x Aljano 2), cared for by Erin Jarboe, were unstoppable in their quest for victory, building on their results in each phase.

Coleman noted that his relationship with Diabolo has continued to grow and strengthen since adding him to his string in 2023.

"I always thought he would get there, but his route was unique," he said. "[My wife] Katie and I, our owners, coaches, and all the people involved, all had a high opinion of this horse and felt like he had a high ceiling. He struck me as a winner from the first time I laid eyes on him. This horse has a real eagerness to him that if we could channel it the right way, we always felt like he was capable of incredible things."

Starting the week with a very competitive dressage test, which put them in the top five, the pair was one of only four combinations to finish inside the time on U.S. course designer Derek di Grazia's challenging cross-country track.

"This horse has a real conscience. I always feel like he wants to do his best and, as a rider, that gives you tremendous peace of mind knowing that your horse is going to go in there



*Will Coleman and Diabolo*

and really try for you,” he explained. “He’s an amazing athlete, and I felt really good about him all day. He’s just a special horse. He hasn’t had many opportunities, but he’s made the most of the ones that he’s had.”

Coleman’s graciousness and appreciation for his horse, his support team, and his owners shone through. The victory marked a major milestone in the long journey to reach the top of a five-star podium. Winning a CCI5\*-L is a career-defining moment for any athlete, and Coleman’s result marked the first time an athlete-and-horse combination has ever won both the Kentucky CCI4\*-S (2024) and CCI5\*-L.

“I have so much respect for the sport, the horses, and the riders that it’s almost unfair that I’m the only one who gets to take home the win,” added Coleman. “Mostly, I’m overjoyed for my horse and all the people that are a part of his journey: my incredible owners, my family, my coaches, and our incredible staff that help us look after a large group of horses back at home. I wake up most days feeling like the luckiest guy in the world, and today I feel extremely lucky.”

Pamukcu ensured a close competition all the way to the end. She jumped a clear round on the final day to shore up a podium finish aboard her Paris 2024 Olympic Games partner, the 11-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding HSH Blake (by Tolan R x Kannan), who is owned by Mollie Hoff, Sherrie Martin, Caroline and Deniz Pamukcu, and cared for by Chloe Teahan.



*Caroline Pamukcu and HSH Blake*

All photos by Shannon Brinkman

## KENTUCKY *(continued)*

Their second-place marked Pamukcu's highest-ever CCI5\*-L finish, and they completed on a personal best score at the level of 28.6 penalties. In HSH Blake's five-star debut in October 2025, they were tantalizingly close to the podium, finishing fourth at the Maryland 5 Star CCI5\*-L. With their upgraded Kentucky result, Pamukcu noted that Blake only continues to improve as they gain more invaluable experience together.

"I'm really proud of both horses," said Pamukcu, who also finished 14th on HSH Tolan King. "It's a hard sport, and I have so much more to learn. Blake really helped me out a lot today, so all kudos to him. He's such a special horse."

As the second-highest-placed U.S. combination behind Coleman and Diabolo, Pamukcu and HSH Blake were recognized as reserve national champions in the 2026 Defender/USEF CCI5\*-L Eventing National Championship.

## TAMIE SMITH TOPS CCI4\*-S

In the CCI4\*-S, Smith, from Murietta, California, once again proved the supreme talent of Molly Duda's 10-year-old Holsteiner mare Lillet 3, who was cared for by Savannah Gwin, recipient of the USET Foundation's 2026 Amanda Pirie Warrington Grant (see page 13).

The Livello x Calido I daughter turned in impressive performances in all three phases. She and Smith were the only pair in the field to complete the show jumping phase with no jump-


ing or time faults. Their final score of 31.3 penalties was unbeatable. Coleman and the 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse mare Very Dignified (by Dignified Van't Zorgvliet), owned by Jerome Broussard, Gloria Callen, and Elizabeth Lendrum, came closest, taking second with 37.4. Mia Farley from Ocala, Florida, rode Karen O'Connor's 10-year-old Diarado gelding Invictus to round out the all-U.S. top three with a final total of 38.3.

"She was super," enthused Smith of Lillet 3. "I couldn't have asked her to be better. She came up just enough to rise to the occasion, didn't get too tense or

tight, and jumped amazingly. She keeps going from strength to strength. She was so rideable and tried her heart out; I don't even think she touched a rail.

"It's tricky when you're on sensitive mares because you have to figure out how much versus how little to do, and she's taught me well," she added. "I've been listening, and it's paying off."

With this year's Kentucky results, Smith and Coleman become the only two athletes in history to win both the CCI4\*-S and CCI5\*-L at Kentucky.

- Adapted from US Equestrian press release 



Tamie Smith and Lillet 3

# COMPETITION *Partners* PROGRAM

**N**ow in its third year, the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation's Competition Partners Program is an established collaboration to bring together top horse shows across the country in support of a shared mission: ensuring that U.S. equestrian high performance athletes have the resources they need to excel on the world's greatest international stages.

The program focuses on the cross-promotion of top-flight competitions and the USET Foundation's efforts to support high performance athletes across the disciplines.

Through the Competition Partners Program, participating horse shows become vital allies in advancing equestrian sport. By partnering with the USET Foundation, these events showcase their commitment not only to competition excellence but also to the long-term development of U.S. equestrian athletes, horses, and the broader equestrian community.

Horse show organizers who participate gain promotion through the USET Foundation and visibility as leaders within the sport while reinforcing the USET Foundation's mission of supporting U.S. athletes, pro-

moting U.S. excellence on the world stage, and building for future U.S. equestrian team successes. Whether through fundraising efforts, on-site activations, print promotion options, or awareness campaigns, the USET Foundation provides a downloadable toolkit to all Competition Partners.

The materials are designed to raise awareness of the vital role the USET Foundation plays, enabling shows to demonstrate to their communities and fans the importance of supporting athletes on their journey from national competition to international success.



Visit [www.uset.org/CP](http://www.uset.org/CP) to learn more or scan the QR code.



# NATIONS CUP VICTORY FOR U.S. AS WATCH PARTY FUELS TEAM SPIRIT



Photo by Jump Media

*McLain Ward, Marilyn Little, Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland, Callie Schott, and Karl Cook*

**T**he U.S. Jumping Team claimed a thrilling Nations Cup victory on February 28, 2026, in Wellington, Florida, cheered on by a spirited watch party.

The U.S. Jumping Team delivered an outstanding performance, capturing top honors in the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Wellington CSIO4\* team competition during the Winter Equestrian Festival (WEF) for the second consecutive year.

Backed by a sea of red, white, and blue throughout the arena — and an enthusiastic United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation and US Equestrian (USEF) watch party — the team of Karl Cook, Marilyn Little, Callie Schott, and McLain Ward rose to the occasion.

The U.S. squad's back-to-back victories in the prestigious Wellington Nations Cup contest took the host nation's victories to 11 over the 25-year history of this leg.

"This is always a very interesting Nations Cup for us because the pressure is on," said U.S. Jumping Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland. "It's a home Nations Cup, and it's a big deal for us. It's a great event, and every year you really feel the



Photo by US Equestrian

*The USET Foundation and USEF hosted a ringside watch party for supporters who had a premium spot to cheer on the U.S. Jumping Team as they claimed victory for the second straight year.*

support and the energy from the crowd and the atmosphere.”

Cook and Signe Ostby’s Caracole De La Roque (by Zandor Z x Kannan) were the pathfinders in the opening round, with the athlete from Rancho Santa Fe, California, notching a valuable clear. He was followed by senior team first timer Marilyn Little, from West Palm Beach, Florida. She and her own La Contessa (by License x Cornet’s Prinz) chalked up a second clear for the U.S. team. Wellington, Florida-based Schott jumped third, sealing the deal for a first-round team score of zero riding Southern Arches LLC’s Garant (by Warrant x Verdi TN). With a clean sheet after three riders, McLain Ward (Brewster, New York) and Michael Smith’s Jordan Molga M (by Toulon VDL x Dulf Van Den Bisschop) did not jump as they could not improve the team’s total.

The U.S. entered the second round tied for the lead with Ireland on zero faults. Cook and the 14-year-old mare Caracole de la Roque, cared for by Tessa Falanga, added four faults to the team total. Little and the 11-year-old La Contessa, cared for by Raven Alfieri and Francis Brito Doble, jumped fault-free in the second round. Schott and the 15-year-old Garant, cared for by Valdo Cruz, added another clear to the scoresheet. With two U.S. clears and Ireland sitting on four faults, the pressure shifted to Ward and the 12-year-old Jordan Molga M, cared for by Olga Kruglova. The relatively new combination pulled off another clear round to secure the U.S. win.

“I’m very lucky to have such a strong team — they put me in a pretty nice position,” said Ward. “It’s always a good feeling knowing you’re going to either jump off or win.”

The Irish team finished with a total of four faults for second place, while Canada took third with 13 faults.

USEF Foundation donors, supporters, and friends gathered ringside for a reception and watch party jointly hosted with USEF to cheer on the team, creating a lively display of unity and national pride. Guests waved flags and celebrated each round, embodying the spirit of partnership between athletes and the philanthropic community that helps support USEF High Performance Programs that power U.S. equestrian sport on the world stage.

– By Alice Collins 



*Callie Schott and Garant*

Photo by US Equestrian



*McLain Ward and Jordan Molga M*

Photo by Jump Media



*Karl Cook and Caracole De La Roque*

Photo by US Equestrian



*Marilyn Little and La Contessa*

Photo by Jump Media



$$78.85\% + 80.444\% + 84.934\% =$$

# Fiona Howard's GOLDEN TRIPLE

The all-female U.S. Para Dressage Team delivered outstanding performances at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival CPEDI3\* in Wellington, Florida, March 6-8, earning the gold medal. The U.S. results were highlighted by three world record-breaking performances by Fiona Howard, a personal best from Marie Vonderheyden, and multiple podium finishes.

Spearheaded by the brand-new Grade II combination of Howard riding teammate Kate Shoemaker's 10-year-old Vianne (by Vitalis x Ramiro's Bube), the team led by Chef d'Equipe Michel Assouline and Team Leader Lauren Johnson laid down a total of 446.238 points to second-placed Canada's 389.503 points.

"Three world records and a personal best in one show is a dream for any sports team," enthused Assouline. "It was also an excellent overall team result, with an impressive average score of 74.37%. In this cycle, building toward the 2026 FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany, in August, three U.S.-based CPEDIs have been offered to ensure the necessary qualification, plus two final observation events. All of this forms a clear pathway to the podium.

"The USET [United States Equestrian Team] Foundation plays a vital role in supporting the entire USEF [US Equestrian] Para Dressage program, which helps enormously in setting the stage and various pathways for athletes to fulfill their dreams of reaching the top," he continued. "This includes playing a part in enabling the essential support staff system, and everyone involved is extremely grateful for the USET Foundation's contribution."

“Because I'd never shown Vianne before, I didn't know what to expect, but Kate told me that I can totally trust her, and I trust Kate.”

FIONA HOWARD



Fiona Howard and Vianne

All Photos by Centre Line Media

## A PERFECT 10

The 27-year-old Howard, who is the world number one para rider across all grades, is based between Wellington and Germany. She only sat on Shoemaker's Olympic bronze medalist and able-bodied grand prix horse, Vianne, the week of the CPEDI. They set Grade II world records in each of their three appearances. Logging a winning 78.85% in the CPEDI3\* Para Grand Prix A test, they followed up with an 80.444% Grand Prix B test, with all three judges awarding at least 80%. They scored a perfect 10 from every judge for the stretching walk half circle. In their final test, they notched their third world record in as many days — 84.934% in the Grade II Freestyle — with a winning margin of more than 18 percentage points.

Not only was it the pair's competition debut, but Howard, who won triple gold at the 2024 Paris Paralympics on Diamond Dunes, was hospitalized for seven weeks after undergoing kidney surgery in December 2025.

Shoemaker — who was also on the team with her own 10-year-old Sezuan gelding, Supreme — is Howard's long-time coach, and the results were proof of the detail-oriented relationship the two have forged.

"Because I'd never shown Vianne before, I didn't know what to expect, but Kate told me that I can totally trust her, and I trust Kate," said Howard, who has dystonia, a neuromuscular disease that causes her muscles to contract and twist involuntarily. "I'm super grateful to Kate for the opportunity to ride this horse. It was an incredible week, and it's all testament to her training, her coaching, and to the three of us coming together as a team. To walk away with three world records is incredible.

"Each day, our confidence together grew, and that was reflected in the scores. I was having so much fun," added Howard. "We really didn't know what this whole season was going to look like, and I'm taking it day by day and just feeling thankful that I can do this."

## GRADE I GLORY

Howard was the overall CPEDI champion, with the reserve sash going to her locally based teammate, Vonderheyden, who dominated at Grade I. She rode Karin Flint's nine-year-old gelding Fan Tastico H (by Fürstenball x Weltmeyer) to a trio of high-scoring victories, culminating in a personal best of 78.489% in the freestyle, a significant milestone.

"The [freestyle] test was well organized compared to the first day," said the 34-year-old. "We are building good momentum, and we're a real team. Fan Tastico is a very nice guy and always open to everything."

Vonderheyden is a former FEI-level event rider for France, but a fall in 2015 left her with traumatic brain injuries and in a coma. Following multiple surgeries and therapies, she returned to the international ring in 2019 under the U.S. flag in the para ranks. Like Howard, she is also aiming for the World Championships in August.

Roxanne Trunnell from Palm Beach, Florida, was the fourth member of the winning U.S. team, riding Simone van der Schalk's 14-year-old Rumour Has It, by Romancero H, to a triple of Grade I third places.

— By Alice Collins 



Roxanne Trunnell and Rumour Has It



Marie Vonderheyden and Fan Tastico H



Kate Shoemaker and Supreme

# TAMIE SMITH'S CAROLINA TRIO

*FEI World Championship team silver medalist and Tokyo Olympic traveling reserve Tamie Smith scooped three FEI division wins at Carolina International CCI at Carolina Horse Park in South Carolina, on March 21, 2026. A few weeks earlier, Smith had traveled more than 2,000 miles from her home base in Temecula, California, with 16 horses for her annual East Coast trip.*

In the top division, the CCI4\*-S, Smith rode Molly Duda's 10-year-old Lillet 3 to the blue ribbon with 29.7 penalties after three impressive phases, topping a leaderboard of 39 starters. It was the fourth FEI win for Smith and Lillet 3 (by SIEC Livello x Calido I) since they began their international campaign in the fall of 2024.

"I came into this competition with all my horses to be competitive," stated Smith, whose results put her in a prime position ahead of the FEI World Championships in Aachen, Germany, in

place's nine-year-old Spiro P for several years through coaching his regular rider, Megan Sykes, the partnership was still nascent. Smith picked up the ride when Sykes took a riding break, and her goal was simply a positive experience for the gelding by Spiros Z. That experience culminated in glory as the duo moved from second to first, finishing with a final score of 29.7 penalties.

"He couldn't have been better," Smith enthused. "To be able to get on a horse and be competitive like that after riding him for a few weeks is a testa-

gold medalist Phillip Dutton claimed third on Caroline Moran's seven-year-old Darwinn, by Denver, with 31.1 penalties.

Since Smith started competing Solaguayre Cantata internationally in the fall of 2024, the pair have participated in nine FEI events, winning six and finishing second in the other three — a remarkable competition record.

"She was a total professional, ate it up, and felt like all business," commented Smith. "She has done one Intermediate, and I was glad I did the two-star this weekend because the three-star

Photos by Sally Spickard



Tamie Smith and Lillet 3



Tamie Smith and Spiro P



Tamie Smith and Solaguayre Cantata

August. "Lillet is unbelievable. She's so fast. She's such a blood horse, and her stride is beautiful — she's so rideable."

Caroline Pamukcu (USA) and her 2024 Paris Olympics mount, HSH Blake, her own, Sherrie Martin, and Mollie Hoff's 11-year-old gelding by Tolan R, finished second with 30.4 penalties. Defending 2025 champion Jennie Brannigan rounded out the all-American podium with Tim and Nina Gardner's 16-year-old Leo Von Faelz-sired gelding FE Lifestyle, securing third with 32.1.

In the CCI3\*-S, Smith's victory was achieved on a horse new to her string. Although she has known Donna Wal-


ment to the hard work Megan put into producing him. I texted her afterward, saying, 'You better hurry back, or you're not going to get your horse back!'"

In the CCI2\*-S, Smith laid down yet another sub-30 win, claiming the section on Julianne, David, and Donna Guariglia's nine-year-old mare Solaguayre Cantata, by Canturo. They led from start to finish, completing on their dressage score of 24.6 penalties to head up another all-American podium.

Meg Pellegrini piloted her own 14-year-old Twister De La Pomme gelding, Gorgeous DHI, to second place, finishing on 26.6 penalties. U.S. Olympic

was quite strong. She loped around and was unbelievable in all three phases."

In the CCI1\*-S, Ireland's Lee Maher claimed his first international win, riding HTF Charming Cooley to a final score of 29.7 penalties. Australia's Hayley Frielick finished second, partnering Dunedin LB Muze to a 30.2 final total. U.S. athlete Boyd Martin led the division heading into the final day's cross-country, but 1.6 time faults dropped him down to third. He finished with 30.2 penalties on Tamara Pollard's seven-year-old gelding Buba D'Mues, by VDL Bubalu.

— Adapted from Carolina Horse Park/  
Eventing Nation press release 



# FARRINGTON WINS \$1M

## US EQUESTRIAN OPEN JUMPING FINAL

Photo by Sportfot

*Kent Farrington and Greya*

After a thrilling five-way jump-off that went down to the last fence, hometown hero Kent Farrington and Greya won the most prestigious grand prix in Wellington International history, the \$1,000,000 Rolex US Equestrian Open Grand Prix CSI5\* on March 28, 2026, in Wellington, Florida.

The Rolex grand prix had not been won by a U.S. rider in seven years. Farrington, a U.S. Olympic jumping team silver medalist, rewrote that history from a field of 40 starters that included six of the world's top 10-ranked athletes who tackled Brazilian Olympic course designer Guilherme Jorge's track.

In front of a sold-out crowd of 10,000 spectators, Farrington, the current world No. 1, pulled off two flawless rounds under the lights on his own 12-year-old Oldenburg mare. In the jump-off, he and Greya broke the timing beam in 42.99 seconds to secure their position at the top of the podium ahead of Ben Maher (GBR) on Charlotte Rossetter and Pamela Wright's 12-year-old Toulon gelding Enjeu De Grisien, who finished second with a slower clear.

Last to go, Germany's Richard Vogel and the 10-year-old Kannan stallion Gangster Montdesir stopped the clock in 42.87 seconds in the jump-off, but when the final fence fell, the duo dropped to third place.

"You do this for a long time, and you have some good horses — maybe some great horses — and then you have horses that are an outlier athlete like Greya," said Farrington, whose result marked his and the Colestus x Contender mare's 10th five-star grand prix win. "She can do everything. She's fast, careful, scopey, and rideable. She is just an incredible horse, and that is what you are seeing [in the arena]."

Wellington International President Michael Stone said, "I've been in the sport almost all my life, and it's mind-blowing how good this grand prix was. You could hear a pin drop when the riders were on course. Then, as they came down to the last fence, everyone was cheering. It was amazing. We've always strived to elevate the sport in the U.S., and it drives us to achieve more, and to continue onwards and upwards."

### AN INCREDIBLY STRONG FIELD

In the first round, Farrington and Greya, who is cared for by Denise Moriarty, set the tone early, posting the fastest clear over the testing track in 79.87 seconds.

"It's a million-dollar purse, you have the best riders in the world, and an incredibly strong starting field," said Farrington. "I think that is what this level of competition should be about. If you under-build the course even a little bit, you could easily see 20 clears."

Going third in the eight-fence jump-off track, Greya stepped up to the challenge with customary aplomb to seal victory.

"I knew it was going to be a tough competition," added Farrington. "I really trusted her speed tonight. I tried to go fast enough to put pressure on the others but not take any ridiculous risks. I think the plan paid off."

The US Equestrian Open Jumping Final was the first of the three discipline finals of the lucrative US Equestrian Open Series, now in its second year. The eventing and dressage finals take place in the fall.

– Adapted from US Equestrian press release 

# 2026 USEF JUMPING TRAINING SERIES

U.S. jumping athletes gathered at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival showgrounds in Wellington, Florida, for the 2026 US Equestrian (USEF) Jumping Training Series held January 2-4, 2026. The series identifies and develops the next generation of top U.S. jumping athletes and included mounted and unmounted sessions. The clinicians were U.S. Jumping Development Program Chef d'Equipe and two-time Olympic silver medalist Anne Kursinski, Olympic team gold medalist Beezie Madden, and international U.S. jumping athlete and 2026 USET Foundation Whitney Stone Cup recipient, Lillie Keenan.

Athletes aged 16 to 21 were invited to participate in the 2026 edition based on their results at U.S. Jumping Pathway Programs, along with wildcard athletes, all of whom have been successful in competition at 1.40m and above.

Funds from the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation, USEF's philanthropic partner, help support these training sessions across the FEI/High Performance disciplines as part of the USEF Pathway Programs, which aim to deliver sustainable success and secure U.S. team and international championship podium finishes. ■



## P A R T I C I P A N T S

PHILIPPA AMMANN | SOPHIA AYERS | NICOLE MCMILLION  
CLARA PROPP | ELEANOR RUDNICKI | SKYLAR WIREMAN



*Clinician Lillie Keenan coached participants in a mounted session.*



*Clinician and U.S. Jumping Development Program  
Chef d'Equipe Anne Kursinski*



*Nicole McMillion and Britney PS*



*Skylar Wireman on Perte Totale De Res Nova*



*Philippa Ammann and Jarocco Blue*

*All photos by US Equestrian*

# 2026 USEF DRESSAGE TRAINING SERIES EAST COAST

The 2026 US Equestrian (USEF) Dressage Training Series – East Coast, presented by Zen Elite Equestrian Center, provided a hands-on educational experience for young dressage athletes, receiving both mounted and unmounted instruction from the sport’s top professionals. Held at the Adequan® Global Dressage Festival showgrounds in Wellington, Florida, January 2-4, 2026, coaches included USEF Dressage Assistant Pathway Coach Olivia LaGoy-Weltz, USEF Dressage High Performance

and Pathway Development Advisor and Youth Coach George Williams, and Olympic team bronze medalist Ali Brock. There were also educational seminars ranging from horse care and management to sports psychology and nutrition.

Funds raised by the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation support these training sessions that help to nurture and develop the next top U.S. human and equine athletes. ■

## P A R T I C I P A N T S

KATHERINE BRIGHT | GRACE CHRISTIANSON | MCKENZIE DICKS | LAILA EDWARDS | EILA FISK  
GIANNA FOLEY | LARK HECKMAN | AVA HOBBS | HARPER KANE | HAYDEN KANE  
BENNETT MCWHORTER | ELENA MOFFITT | AVA NOONE | ALEXIS TROUTMAN | VIRGINIA WOODCOCK



*Bennett McWhorter and Dalia*



*Ava Hobbs and Der Kleine Prinz G*



*Grace Christianson and Karieta*



Virginia Woodcock and Mollegardens Sans Souci



Laila Edwards and Farah-Jade



Hayden Kane and Sonnenkoning

## ADDITIONAL SESSIONS

### USEF PATHWAY PROGRAM TRAINING AND EVALUATION SESSIONS

U.S. Dressage Team Chef d'Equipe Christine Traurig and LaGoy-Weltz taught two additional USEF Pathway Program Training and Evalua-

tion Sessions in Wellington, hosted by Haven-safe Farm. Both sessions were for Development and Young Horse participants. ■

#### P A R T I C I P A N T S

BIANCA BERKTOLD  
LAUREN CHUMLEY  
HOPE COOPER  
EMILY DONALDSON

CHARELL GARCIA  
ELLESSE GUNDERSEN  
ASHLEY HOLZER  
HANNAH IRONS

JORDAN LAPLACA  
MARY LAURITSEN  
KAREN LIPP  
CAROLINE ROFFMAN

KATRINA SADIS  
LAUREN SPRIESER  
DAWN WHITE-O'CONNOR

### TRAINING DAYS

Training Days with the USEF Dressage Coaching Staff were also held, hosted by Five Rings Farm and Deer Meadows Farm, and were open to all-level riders, either for program-member horses, additional horses of program members, or for other clinic-applicant horses. ■

#### P A R T I C I P A N T S

LAINÉ ASHKER  
HOPE COOPER  
MEAGAN DAVIS  
LAURA DECESARI  
LAUREN CHUMLEY

CHARELL GARCIA  
CAROLINE GARREN  
LAURA GRAVES  
ELLESSE GUNDERSEN  
CHRIS HICKEY  
HANNAH IRONS

TINA KONYOT  
MARY LAURITSEN  
ADRIENNE LYLE  
MOLLY MALONEY  
ALLISON NEMETH  
MARCUS ORLOB

KYMBERLY PULLEN  
ALICE TARJAN  
JENNIFER WILLIAMS  
ANDREA WOODARD

### U25

A dedicated U25 session of the Training Series, taught by USEF Dressage Assistant Pathway Coach Guenter Seidel and hosted by Oak Meadows Farm, was held January 12-13 in Wellington. ■

#### P A R T I C I P A N T S

ALICIA BERGER  
CAROLINE GARREN  
LEXIE KMENT

ALLISON NEMETH  
SOPHIA SCHULTS

# 2026 USEF DRESSAGE TRAINING SERIES WEST COAST

The 2026 US Equestrian (USEF) Dressage Training Series – West Coast, was held at HITS Del Mar showgrounds in Del Mar, California, February 19-26, 2026. The sessions featured mounted coaching from clinicians George Williams, USEF Dressage High Performance and Pathway Development Advisor and Youth Coach, Olympic team silver medalist Sabine Schut-Kery, and USEF Dressage Assistant Pathway Coach and triple Olympic bronze medalist Guenter Seidel. The series, which helps develop the next generation of top U.S. dressage riders, also included unmounted lessons. ■



## P A R T I C I P A N T S

JOSH ALBRECHT | ELLANOR BOEHNING | SAGE CHACON  
EMME CHISHOLM | TAYLA DAMYANOVICH | TIGGY GATES  
SAMANTHA MACDONALD | MCKENZIE MILBURN | GWENYTH MILLER  
EMMA SCHNEIDER | HALEY SMITH | CLAIRE TUCKER  
NICOLA VALENTINE | MAVERICK WRIGHT | MIKI YANG



*Nicola Valentine and Everdeen*



*Samantha MacDonald and Pop Star*



*Maverick Wright and Maple Leaf Keno*



*Tiggy Gates and Hot Spot*



*Sage Chacon and Florida Primera*



*Claire Tucker and Finnur*



*Haley Smith and Heide De Luxe*



*Gwenyth Miller and Atoften Jovani*

## **TRAINING AND EVALUATION SESSION**

A USEF Dressage Program Training and Evaluation Session with Guenter Seidel was hosted by El Campeon Farms in Thousand Oaks, California, on March 30-31, open to all levels of the Dressage Pathway Program and to potential future participants, broadening opportunities to train with the USEF Dressage coaching staff.

## **P A R T I C I P A N T S**

LAURA BRANDT  
STEVE PAULSON  
MEGAN MCIVER  
SABINE SCHUT-KERY

OLIVIA MARTZ  
NADINE SCHWARTSMAN  
KATHERINE RICH-ELZIG

# 2026 USEF EVENTING TRAINING SERIES

Nine U.S. eventing athletes converged in Ocala, Florida, for the 2026 edition of the US Equestrian (USEF) Eventing Training Series, held January 7-12, 2026. The Development and Development 25 clinic was coached by clinicians Leslie Law, U.S. Eventing Team Chef d'Equipe, and the triple Olympic medalist Phillip Dutton.

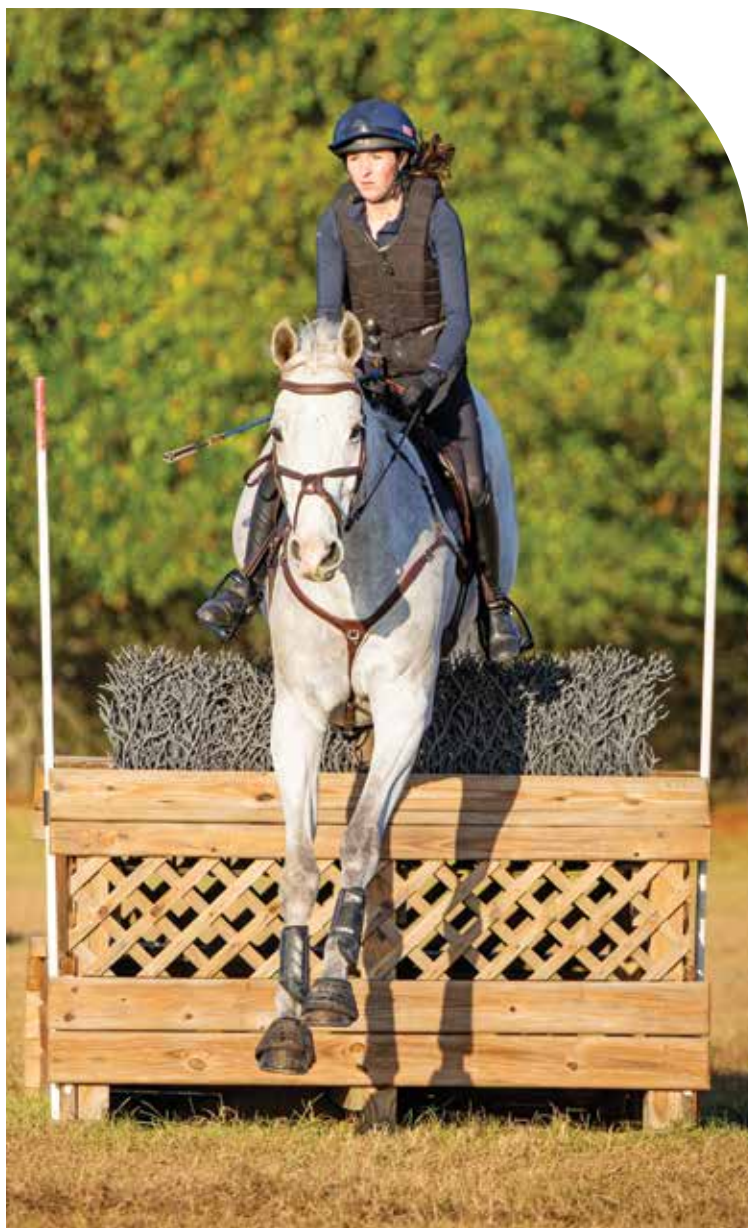
The USEF Eventing Training Series is a key component of USEF's High Performance Pathway. These sessions are designed as training opportunities within a structured environment to identify talent, standardize coaching, and develop horse-and-rider com-

binations capable of progressing to championship level.

They play a critical role in preparing up-and-coming athletes for future team competition by exposing them to consistent systems, expert guidance, and team-oriented expectations. Grants from the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation to USEF support this work by helping the U.S. to provide the gold standard in development and competition opportunities, ensuring a sustainable, robust pathway that supports excellence today while simultaneously developing the champions of tomorrow. ■

## P A R T I C I P A N T S

MEG PELLEGRINI | ALYSSA PHILLIPS | JACK CURTIS | REBECCA BROWN  
LIZZIE HOFF | ISABELLE BOSLEY | JORDAN RISKE | OLIVIA DUTTON  
MIA FARLEY



*Olivia Dutton and Jewelent*



*Isabelle Bosley and Converse*



*Mia Farley and D.A. Nixon*



*Meg Pellegrini and Penelope*



*Lizzie Hoff and Lux Like Love*



*Jack Curtis and Topgun*



*Rebecca Brown and Fernhill Quite Frankly*



*Alyssa Phillips and Centerfold*



*Jordan Riske and Zingara*

All photos by Deyn Iny Media

# COMPETITION



Photo by Leonie Minitzen

## AACHEN CPEDI

Individual U.S. competitor Kate Shoemaker and Vianne set a new world record of 80.721% in the CPEDI3\* FEI Para Grand Prix B Grade IV at Aachen CPEDI in Germany, April 9-12. Shoemaker rode the 10-year-old Vitalis mare to a trio of high-scoring Grade IV wins with large margins, including a personal best of 77.917% in the Para Grand Prix A test. The show effectively served as a test event for the FEI World Championships, which are set to take place at the venue in August. Vianne now holds world record scores in two different grades, having set new high bars at Grade II with Fiona Howard earlier in the season (see page 34) — an extraordinary achievement.



Photo by Avery Wallace/US Equestrian

## FOUR-IN-HAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Chester Weber captured the Advanced Four-In-Hand National Championship title at Live Oak International in Ocala, Florida, March 12-15. Weber delivered a masterful performance across all three phases of competition with his experienced Dutch Warmblood string. They set the tone from the outset, posting a dressage score of 32.99 to establish an early lead. Weber maintained his command through the demanding marathon phase, then navigated the cones course to complete on a final score of 159.35, securing the win — and his 23rd Advanced Four-In-Hand National Championship title.



Photo by Avery Wallace/US Equestrian

## COMBINED DRIVING YOUTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Sarah Batstone-Roberts made history by claiming the first-ever USEF Combined Driving Youth National Championship title at Live Oak International, March 12-15. Batstone-Roberts and her 19-year-old Chincoteague Pony gelding, Winston, opened their account with strong dressage marks and took over the lead from Ben Riese during the marathon phase. Batstone-Roberts turned in a clean cones round to preserve her lead and seal the championship on a final score of 99.2. Riese and his Norwegian Fjord mare, Isla, finished a close second.

# HIGHLIGHTS



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

## KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL CSI5\*

World number one Kent Farrington claimed victory in the \$340,000 1.60m CSI5\* Grand Prix presented by Hagyard Equine Medical Institute at the Kentucky International CSI5\*, held alongside the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event presented by MARS Equestrian, on April 25. Seven of the 42 starters over Guilherme Jorge's course moved to the jump-off. Farrington returned first, riding his own Mexican-bred nine-year-old gelding Descartes SR (by Caramelo x Oklund) in the horse's five-star debut, setting an untouchable time of 39.92 seconds. McLain Ward rode Michael Smith's High Star Hero into second place.



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

## LONGINES LEAGUE OF NATIONS™

In February 2026, two U.S. riders posted clears in the first round of the CSIO5\* Longines League of Nations™ (LLN) Abu Dhabi. Sarah Segal produced the fastest clear on Horatio Street Ventures LLC's 15-year-old mare Boreale De Fondcombe, by Tinka's Boy. Natalie Dean (pictured) rode the team's youngest horse, Marigold Sporthorses LLC's 11-year-old gelding Pedro Van De Barlebuis, by Echo Van T Spievel, to the second clear. The team, also made up of Skylar Wireman and Callie Schott, finished eighth. In March, Dean again jumped a clear in the first round on Pedro Van De Barlebuis at the Longines League of Nations™ Ocala, in Florida.

## ROLEX GRAND PRIX OF GENEVA

In December 2025, Kent Farrington and his own inimitable Greya triumphed in the \$1.4 million CSI5\* Rolex Grand Prix of Geneva, bettering a field of 40 combinations. Eight horses returned for the jump-off over Swiss course designer Gérard Lachat and his assistant Grégory Bodo's track. Farrington and the now 12-year-old Greya (by Colestus x Contender) jumped another clear, stopping the clock in an unbeatable 40.04 seconds. It was the second time Farrington had won the Rolex Grand Prix of Geneva after his victory in 2017 on Gazelle.



Photo by Sportfor



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*The Hamilton Farm stable complex at the USET Foundation's historic headquarters in Gladstone, New Jersey*

Photo by David Verdini