



## THE 2020 TOKYO OLYMPIC GAMES WILL BRING AKIKO YAMAZAKI FULL CIRCLE

*The ardent supporter of U.S. Dressage is looking forward to seeing her passion merge with her heritage.*

BY MOLLY SORGE

Attending the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games will be an emotional experience for Akiko Yamazaki – and not only because she hopes her horse, Suppenkasper, will be named to the U.S. Dressage Team with rider Steffen Peters. When Yamazaki sits down in the stands at Equestrian Park at Baji Koen, she'll be sitting next to her mother, Michiko, who is the person who inspired her love of horses, and her two daughters, who share their passion for riding.



Photo by Arnd Bronkhorst

Akiko Yamazaki and her Ravel, who competed in two Olympic Games, won the FEI Dressage World Cup Final, and earned team and individual bronze at the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.

“

My mom attended the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 as a spectator,” Yamazaki said. “Now we’ll go to watch the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games at the same venue, and hopefully we’ll be watching one of our horses compete. My mother is going to be 79 years old, and she’s really looking forward to going back and watching the Games in Tokyo. We are three generations of riders. It’s coming full circle.”

For Yamazaki, who sits on the Board of Trustees and serves as the Secretary of the U.S. Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation, that feeling of legacy is a big part of why she loves equestrian sport so much. Her mother introduced her to riding when she was young, and now Yamazaki’s daughters have not only grown up immersed in the sport but have also developed their own passion for riding.

“I remember my older daughter, who was five at the time, dancing beside the arena at Aachen with Shannon Peters during the sound check,” Yamazaki said. “That moment stands out to me, to think now that she’s taller than me and has become a serious rider herself.”

That daughter, Miki Yang, is now 15. She competed at the 2014 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games (WEG) in Caen, France, on the USA Vaulting team when she was just 10. The following year, her team won the bronze at the 2015 FEI World Junior Vaulting Championship at Ermelo, the Netherlands. Yang now has turned into a competitive dressage rider. In 2018, Yamazaki and Yang both showed at the U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions—Yamazaki riding Chopin R in the U. S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) Intermediaire I Dressage National Championship and Yang showing Garden’s Sam in the USEF Children Dressage National Championship, which she won. Yamazaki’s younger daughter, Emi Yang, 11, is an avid vaulter and budding dressage rider as well.

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Dear Friends,

As you read this, we will be getting ready to turn the calendars to 2020 and kick off an exciting Olympic year! We're looking forward to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, and we'll be celebrating at our Take Me To Tokyo fundraiser on January 17 at Deeridge Farm in Wellington, Fla. It will be a fantastic evening with some truly unique items available in the live and super silent auctions. We hope to see you all there!

In 2020, we'll be focusing on the public phase of Raising The Bar, the Campaign for the United States Equestrian Team Foundation, with a goal to raise \$40 million.

In this issue of the newsletter, we're highlighting the accomplishments of USET Foundation Board member and Secretary Akiko Yamazaki. She's owned medal-winning dressage horses for U.S. teams and has been a dedicated supporter of U.S. equestrian sport for more than 10 years. The Tokyo Olympic Games are very special to her as they're taking place in her ancestral home, Japan. Akiko will get to watch the Games with her mother, who sat in those same stands to watch the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, and her daughters, who share her love of horses.

Akiko's family has embraced life with horses; even her non-horsey husband, Jerry Yang, who can be found at international championships with a camera in hand, documenting the memorable moments. They're an example of how equestrian sport can be enjoyed in a variety of ways by multiple generations. Akiko is also a passionate supporter of young talent in the sport, helping build a foundation for championship success in future years.

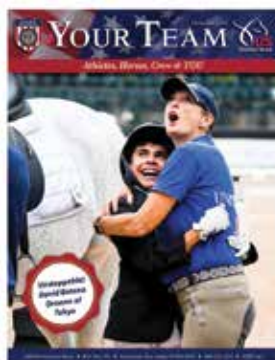
That long-term strategy is such a big part of our U.S. teams' success. We're coming into the Tokyo Olympic Games with strong FEI World Equestrian Games™ Tryon 2018 (WEG) results. Last year at the WEG, the U.S. Show Jumping Team took gold, and the U.S. Dressage Team claimed team and individual silver. We're thrilled with those performances and look to build on them in 2020 in Tokyo.

It should be fascinating to see how the teams for Tokyo develop, as we have so much up-and-coming talent across the disciplines. In his article in this issue, U.S. Equestrian Federation Director of Sport Will Connell discusses the different ways we can measure success for our athletes and horses. Medal-winning performances get their start long before the spotlight of international championships shine. Working on developing young athletes and horses into reliable performers on the international stage is an investment in future success.

Just as winning a medal is a team effort, helping those athletes and horses excel is also a team effort, with donors and support staff making invaluable contributions. We're committed to our goal of \$40 million with the Raising the Bar campaign, and we can't do it without you!

Happy Holidays — Go USA!

Bonnie Jenkins  
Executive Director



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Check out the November issue of *YOUR TEAM* at USET.org  
Meet one of Cavalor FEI's Best Grooms of the Year  
Unstoppable David Botana Sets His Sights on Tokyo  
Katelyn Baldino's Happy Place  
*And more!*

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



## YAMAZAKI FULL CIRCLE

*Continued from page 1*

"What's lovely about this sport is how it keeps going," Yamazaki said. "It doesn't just end with one horse or one competition. I'm so lucky that I get to re-live some of these moments through different horses, and now through my daughters. There have been so many great moments."

### CATCHING THE BUG

The 2020 Olympic Games will also be an anniversary of sorts of Yamazaki's start as an owner of High Performance dressage horses more than a decade ago. As the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were on the horizon, Yamazaki and her husband, Jerry Yang, decided they wanted to support Peters with a horse for the U.S. team in Beijing. Yamazaki had gotten to know Peters through a horse sale and admired his talent and system for developing horses. "My husband and I are both of Asian descent, and we thought it would be special to have a horse that represented us as part of Team USA Beijing," Yamazaki said.

Yamazaki and Jerry had gotten a taste of ownership at the international level when Yamazaki asked Peters to take over the ride on her Lombardi 11 in 2005 when Yamazaki was expecting her first daughter. "That led to him going to Aachen and [winning the USEF National Grand Prix Dressage Championship] at Gladstone in 2007. He ended up being the reserve horse for the Beijing Olympics in 2008. We kind of stumbled into High Performance ownership accidentally with Lombardi, but with Ravel it was a very deliberate decision. Once we got a sense of what it was like to be attending these great shows with Steffen, and being part of Team USA, we caught the bug," Yamazaki said.



Photo by Susan Stickle.com

*Akiko Yamazaki and Chopin R*

Through their Four Winds Farm, Yamazaki and Jerry purchased Ravel for Peters to show in late 2006. He and Peters represented the U.S. at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, went on to win the 2009 FEI World Cup Final, won at Aachen, took two individual bronze medals at the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games (Kentucky), and rode for the U.S. again at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Ravel retired after the 2012 Olympics.

The Four Winds Farm-owned Legolas 92 filled Ravel's shoes well. With Peters, he claimed team and individual gold at the 2010



Photo by Annan Heppner / Phelps Media Group

*Akiko Yamazaki and her Rosamunde with groom, Eduardo Garcia*





Photo by Mary Adelaide Brokenridge / Photos Media Group

Akiko Yamazaki with Steffen Peters and Legolas 92



Photo by Ken Bradick / Dressage-News.com

Michiko, Miki, Emi, and Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang

Pan American Games (Toronto), contributed to the U.S. team effort at the 2014 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games in Caen, France, and then helped Team USA take a historic bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Suppenkasper looks like the next star of the Four Winds string, as he and Peters served on the silver-medal U.S. team at the FEI World Equestrian Games™ Tryon 2018.

"There's nothing like seeing your horse with the American flag on its saddle pad and being part of that team, where everybody's wearing the Team USA jacket," said Yamazaki. "There's an electricity in the air that pressure brings. In all the teams I've been part of, everybody has been such a team player, and it's been such an enjoyable experience."

Through those experiences, Yamazaki has also witnessed how the USET Foundation and the USEF work together to make success possible. "I think people sometimes don't realize how much it takes to send a team to international competitions, not just financially, but also logistically," she said. "The work that the USET Foundation does on behalf of the High Performance teams, raising the funds, allows the USEF staff members to focus on what they need to do in terms of logistics. It's such great teamwork between the two organizations."

While Yamazaki treasures the medals her horses have won, she values the human bonds she's formed over the years even more. "Steffen, his wife Shannon [Peters], our vet Rodrigo Vazquez de Mercado, Tom Meyers the physiotherapist, and our groom, Eddie Garcia Luna—we're like family," continued Yamazaki. "We know each other so well now. It's such a team based on trust. You don't have to say much to each other; we know how to perform as a team. That's been a great accomplishment in itself, and we've been together as a team through a lot of ups and downs."

## SUCCEEDING AS A FAMILY

Yamazaki is an accomplished rider herself, competing to the CDI3\* level. She rides three horses a day at Four Winds Farm in Woodside, California, and travels to Steffen's base in San Diego when she can to train in addition to meeting Peters at shows.

"Even though I'm an amateur, I'm serious about my riding," Yamazaki said. "I wanted to be exposed to the highest level of sport. When you're an owner, you get access to the warm-ups and some training sessions that you have the privilege to see up close. It's a tremendous learning experience to be able to watch all these top riders working with their horses and with their coaches."

Competing warmbloods at the upper levels is a far cry from Yamazaki's beginning in horse sport. While she's of Japanese heritage, she grew up in Costa Rica. Her mother rode and got Yamazaki and her siblings started in riding lessons. "We were mainly jumping, because there wasn't much dressage in Costa Rica then," Yamazaki said. "Nobody had a warmblood! I had a nice Thoroughbred, but he was a not a dressage horse."

Yamazaki competed all through high school in Costa Rica, but packed her tack away when she left to attend Stanford University (California). She studied industrial engineering and met her husband, Jerry, while on a study abroad stint in Japan. They married in 1997 and settled in California, where Jerry co-founded Yahoo! Inc. As his business was getting off the ground, Yamazaki was working as a management consultant.

While she left her career 20 years ago, Yamazaki is anything but idle. In addition to her busy riding career, she's also very active in philanthropy and service. Along with her work with the USET Foundation, she's also the chairman of the board at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and a co-founder and director of the Wildlife Conservation Network. She also serves on the Advisory Councils of both the Woods Institute for the Environment and Cantor Center for the Arts at Stanford University.

With the USET Foundation, Yamazaki helped to fund the USEF Dressage Development Program for six years starting in 2012. "For me, it was one of the best things in terms of being able to help up-and-coming riders advance through the pipeline to High Performance teams," said Yamazaki. "I received so many letters and cards from riders who participated in the programs. Some of them have gone on to represent the USA. Through my funding, I've also developed close relationships with [Dressage Development Program coaches] Debbie McDonald and Charlotte Bredahl. That has been very rewarding, to see people of that caliber giving back to the sport in such a meaningful way. If I can be part of that, it's a great honor."

Yamazaki put her riding on hold while she was in college and through the early days of her career and marriage, but when life allowed her to start again, she re-ignited her passion. "Jerry said, 'OK, you can ride a horse, but no jumping, please,' and that's how I started in dressage," she said.

A sales horse brought her to Steffen's farm 20 years ago, and their relationship has only evolved since then. "I'd always been an admirer of his riding. He has a system that I believe is very correct. He develops the horses in a very supple way," said Yamazaki.

Yamazaki treasures the close-knit team that her family has formed with Steffen and his support network. "To be able to participate as an owner family has also been a really rewarding thing," she said. "Jerry isn't a rider, but he enjoys every bit of it as much as we do. Our daughters have been attending these competitions since they were infants, and just the experience of being able to see the top of the top in these incredible venues has been an amazing experience for them and us."



Photo courtesy Akiko Yamazaki

## RAVEL'S LEGACY

Ravel, now 21, lives with Yamazaki at her Four Winds Farm. He retired from Grand Prix competition after competing with Steffen at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Steffen's assistant trainer, Dawn White-O'Connor, rode Ravel briefly, then Yamazaki rode him for two years.

"He was the best schoolmaster in the world," Yamazaki said. "But then he told me he didn't really want to do it anymore, so then we just went out on the trails for a while. Now he just spends his days in the paddock. He still goes on the treadmill twice a day, so he's in good shape."

His competitive legacy lives on, however, with his offspring. White-O'Connor is competing an 8-year-old son of Ravel's, Galeno Gimli, as well as a Grand Prix horse Yamazaki owns, Bailarino. And Yamazaki has two Ravel sons and a grandson at home at Four Winds. Yamazaki's daughter, Miki, is showing the six-year-old Rhapsodie de Espagnole with the goal to qualify for the USEF Junior Dressage National Championship in 2020. "I didn't breed that horse thinking he'd be my daughter's horse, but they're a match made in heaven," Yamazaki said.

Miki's trainer, Hillary Martin, is showing the eight-year-old Gaspard de la Nuit at third level. Also in the barn is a three-year-old, Luchero de la Noche, by Gaspard de la Nuit and out of Akiko's retired Grand Prix mare, De La Noche. Yamazaki names Ravel's offspring after pieces of music that Joseph Maurice Ravel composed.



# HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Will Connell, USEF Director of Sport Programs, discusses setting and achieving high performance goals.



Will Connell

For those dedicated sports fans sitting in front of their televisions next July and August during the Tokyo Olympic Games, it will be easy to see who is winning Olympic medals. So, by default, will it be easy to define who has been successful?

Maybe so, in the eyes of some, but how is success defined, even on the ultimate and most public of world stages? Is a personal best success or is success only standing on the podium? This conundrum is multiplied when trying to define success or measure progress during the four years leading up to an Olympic or Paralympic Games. But define and measure we must—both in order to track progress and also to justify investment, whether that be invest-

ment in an athlete or investment by funding bodies or individuals.

A high-performance sport program that is purely focused on the Games may have very few competitions that are truly critical pre-Games and so the use of field-of-play results are not always a true gauge of measuring progress. Whilst no doubt sacrilege to some, winning at the right time is a more effective methodology than expecting to win every time.

*So how do we measure progress within the U.S. Equestrian (USEF) programs, especially the Olympic and Paralympic programs?*

As with other sports, this is achieved through the use of Targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Targets are clearly defined achievements, usually results that must be achieved at a defined time. KPIs are more a measurement of quantifiable factors that can be applicable to measuring the progress of an athlete, horse, or program. In doing so, the KPIs should acknowledge the value of the investment and demonstrate the effectiveness of the pipeline that helps an athlete progress along the pathway.

For example, take a young athlete who has a young horse with Olympic Games medal potential and also a more experienced horse that is being used to educate and advance the athlete. The

KPIs would map out the progress of the young horse, focused on progression and experience. As the horse's career progresses, the focus will move from gaining experience to delivering results that will bring it to the attention of the Selectors and then, of course, help deliver a medal. Meanwhile, the athlete's progress can be worked on and measured by analyz-

ing, with the coach, their effectiveness with the older horse.

Externally, we agree each year on KPIs and Targets with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). An easy example of a Target would be the 2018 World Equestrian Games (WEG) and then the 2019 Pan American Games when Olympic qualification was the primary target for the Olympic disciplines. The dressage and show jumping teams achieved this at the WEG, and the eventing team did so at the Pan Ams.

In this four-year cycle, Olympic qualification wasn't the target for the Para-Equestrian dressage team because an analysis of likely performance suggested that finishing in the team medals, which would be required for Tokyo qualification, wasn't achievable. The 2018/2019 Target for Para is to achieve Tokyo team qualification through the Ranking List (and yes, we are on track to hit the Target!). Targets can be taken a little further with "Stretch Targets." These are targets that would indicate that performance has exceeded expectations; for example, a Medal Target for Tokyo could be between one and three team and individual medals, with a Stretch Target of four to five total medals.

KPIs are perhaps more of a science (some might argue an art!), as they are indicative rather than definitive in terms of monitoring performance, progress, or return on investment and they form an important part of the discussions we have with the USOPC.

KPIs can be simple in nature and refer to trending results, for example, "Increase the average score of the top three Elite dressage combinations (excluding #1) in the Grand Prix Special by 1.5%," or "utilize more than 10 different show jumping athlete/horse combinations at the three North American League Nations Cup Qualifiers (Wellington, Florida; Langley, British Columbia; and Coapexpan, Mexico) and the Winter Equestrian Festival Nations Cup Competition." KPIs can become more complex and more challenging to track, for example when they're linked to injury rates and recovery times.

We also utilize KPIs and Targets within the Sport Programs, but this has been a developing process since the 2016 Rio Olympic Games and is more beneficial in some dis-





ciplines than others. Ultimately, we want to be able to set Targets and KPIs for each program, each year and over four years.

*In 2019, we achieved a number of result-based Targets linked to younger athletes in reining, endurance, dressage, show jumping and vaulting, which was exciting for the future.*

Another area we have sought to expand is setting Targets and KPIs for athletes within a framework of a six-month review. This is important not only to ensure we are working with the athlete to monitor performance development, but also to ensure that the financial investment made in athletes is measured against development and performance. This is not purely about holding athletes to account, but more about a partnership to ensure the funds we are lucky enough to have are effectively targeted. Discussing KPIs and Targets with the athletes also challenges coaches and program managers to really evaluate how we can help and support athletes.

The final area where we have introduced greater measurement is with performance-related grants, including the USET Foundation grants that athletes receive directly. This year was the first time we have done this. As part of the application process, we asked athletes to explain what their personal targets were and how they felt they would benefit from the grant. After the targeted competition, the discipline's Technical Advisor and the athlete review the competition and compile a report. This is primarily to challenge the athlete and the coach to identify performance gains and areas for focus, but it also provides an explanation about how the grant funds have been used for the USET Foundation.

Working with KPIs and Targets continues to evolve within the equestrian programs, but as the process develops, we can start to measure more areas and track progress. For example, we can examine tracking the talent identification process, athlete review outcomes, evidence-based performance profiles, and coaching for continual professional development.

We must never become reliant on the process of KPIs and Targets as the sole determination of success, but being able to demonstrate and measure the progress of athletes and their horses is an increasingly important piece of a professional program.



Photo by Shannon Brinkman

McLain Ward, Adrienne Sternlicht, Laura Kraut and Devin Ryan



Photo by Annan Hegner / Phelps Media Group

Robert Dover, Kasey Perry-Glass, Adrienne Lyle, Steffen Peters and Laura Graves





# A Solid Finish for U.S. Team in FEI Driving World Championships for Pairs



Steve Wilson with Favory Fáraó and Tuzes



James Miller with Bolino D and Checkmate



Jacob Arnold with Endorro and Mr. Lindsey G

The U.S. Driving Team of Jacob Arnold, James Miller, and Steve Wilson traveled to Drebkau, Germany, for the FEI Driving World Championships for Pairs on Sept. 11-15 and returned with a top-10 finish after confidence-building performances.

The team got off to a strong start in the dressage phase, standing fourth. After a solid marathon day, the team was in fifth, and at the conclusion of the cones phase on the final day, they stood in eighth. Arnold, who has represented the U.S. Driving Team in World Championships for Singles twice and in the World Championships for Pairs once before, was the top-placing U.S. driver individually as he finished in 22nd.

"I was really happy with how our teams all ended up," said Arnold. "It was James Miller's first championship, and he did a really good job all three days. Steve Wilson is my employer and supporter; the horses I'm competing are owned by Steve. He was nice enough to let me drive, and he did a great job, as well. It was a really fun week."

"I was really happy with my dressage test; that was the phase I've been focusing on this year," continued Arnold, who drove Wilson's 10-year-old KWPN gelding Endorro and Wilson's 15-year-old KWPN gelding Mr. Lindsey G in the dressage and placed sixth individually in that phase. "I was very happy to be sixth in the world with a 45.71. I've worked a lot with the trainers we have, Mieke van Tergouw and Claudio Fumagalli, and they've done wonders."

Wilson is a four-time USEF Advanced Pairs National Champion and made his championship debut in 2017 at the FEI Driving World Championships for Pairs in Lipica, Slovenia. In Drebkau, he drove with confidence in all three phases. "What a fantastic experience—a highlight of my life," said Wilson. "I started driving 11 years ago, and my motivating goal was to make the U.S. Driving Team. Competing with James Miller and Jacob Arnold was a real honor. They are both talented horsemen. I have some disappointment that we didn't place higher, but I'm full of pride that we did place eighth, only a few points out of the medals."

In his first World Championship performance, Miller drove into the top 20 individually in dressage and finished his weekend with the best U.S. cones result. "I have a lot of confidence in cones, and I had a good feeling going into the day. It was a tough course, but I knew that my training had been going well, so I was able to produce a good result," said Miller.

Miller has played polo and is married to veteran driver Misdee Wrigley-Miller, but he's only been driving competitively for two years. "I've been around the sport for quite some time, but I've only competed myself for a short time," he said. "Being able to compete alongside Steve and Jacob certainly made it a worthy experience. I think it's great to be able to compete for the United States, and I think our sport is wide-open for new competitors. I would encourage anyone who has any aspirations in horse sport that they look at American driving as an opportunity not only to develop in a new equestrian sport, but also as a chance to possibly represent their country."

"We all worked great as a team," said Arnold. "I think everyone really pulled together and worked together. The team vet, Jonathan Furlong, did a great job. Our crew we had taking care of the horses—grooms and navigators—were all wonderful; we couldn't have done it without them. It was a good team dynamic."

—Molly Sorge







# U.S. Drivers Have Strong Showing at FEI Driving World Championships for Ponies

Pony power took center stage at the FEI Driving World Championships for Ponies, and two U.S. drivers turned in excellent results on Sept. 25-29 in Ászár-Kisbér, Hungary. Mary Phelps represented the U.S. in the Pair Pony division, and Leslie Berndl drove for the Stars and Stripes in the Single Pony division.

Phelps, from Columbia, Kentucky, drove her team of American Shetland ponies, lovingly known as “The Flying Gangsters,” into 12th place in the Pair Pony division of the World Championships. She drove Al Capony, her nine-year-old American Shetland pony gelding; Buggy Malony, her 12-year-old American Shetland pony gelding; and Kimba, her 13-year-old American Shetland pony mare, in the competition.

Phelps, wearing a red, white and blue hat, drove to a score of 63.36 in the dressage phase. An efficient trip over the technical marathon phase, designed by German course designer Josef Middendorf, brought their total score up to 113.09 penalty points and vaulted them up into the top 20 of the overall standings.

Phelps and her ponies finished the weekend strong with a win in the final phase, the cones. They were the only team to complete the cones course with zero faults, picking up just 1.55 time penalties. The win in the cones propelled Phelps to 12th in the overall standings.

“Something just clicked,” wrote Phelps on her own HorsesDaily.com. “As long as Kimba and Al can go fast they are happy, and they did, turning handily at all the tight turns. I kept thinking, ‘I must be clear, I don’t see any ring crew running to pick up balls.’ After we went through the final cone at 20, I had completed my first Pony Driving World Championships.

“Then I heard the result. I couldn’t believe it, and I cantered out the arena pointing to my ponies as the crowd cheered. Then I finally let myself cry,” continued Phelps, who spent the summer in the Netherlands training with Bram Chardon.

“These little ponies [Al Capony, Buggy Malony, and Kimba] were the smallest in the competition,” said Phelps. “I want to inspire people and help grow the sport, and we are doing it with classic American Shetland ponies!”

Berndl, of Lexington, Kentucky, turned in a consistent performance in all three phases to complete the Single Pony division of the competition for the U.S. She drove

Teresa Kandianis’s 15-year-old Norwegian Fjord mare Sweetwater’s Zorah Belle to a final score of 193.22 penalty points.

Berndl has been part of the USEF Developing Athlete Program for Combined Driving. She and “Zoobie” earned a score of 67.25 in the dressage phase to kick off the competition. Leading off as the trail blazers for both the marathon and cones phases for

the U.S. contingent, the duo earned 112.62 penalty points and 13.35 penalty points, respectively.

“I’m so proud to have represented the Fjord breed in the highest level of sport,” said Berndl. “I think my pony proved what a heart of gold can do. She truly is one of the best ponies in the world.”

– Emily Daily



Mary Phelps with Al Capony and Buggy Malony



Leslie Berndl and Sweetwater's Zorah Belle

Photos by Kristina Horvath/Hofnet

# Take Me To Tokyo



## SAVE THE DATE

for a benefit to support our  
United States Equestrian Teams  
at the 2020 Olympic  
and Paralympic Games

Friday, January 17, 2020

Deeridge Farm  
Wellington, Florida

For details, visit [USET.org](http://USET.org)



# VERDURA

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# MICHAEL PAGE HONORS HIS MEMORIES

## with Stall Naming at Gladstone

Michael Page, Olympic eventing medalist, former chef d'équipe, respected judge and sought-after clinician, wanted to pay tribute to his horses and the facility where he trained. He combined his missions on one special afternoon at the U.S. Equestrian Team Foundation stables in Gladstone, New Jersey, where he celebrated with family and friends on a sparkling August day, a month before his 81st birthday.

"My life has been special because of what transpired here," explained Page, as he stood in the courtyard of the historic facility. He saluted Gladstone as well as Grasshopper and Foster, the horses who were his partners when he rode for the U.S. Equestrian Team during the 1950s and '60s. He claimed team silver at the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games riding Grasshopper and team silver and individual bronze at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games with Foster.

Gladstone is also where Page met his wife, Georgette, who was then Foster's groom. At their party at Gladstone, the couple brought guests down to the lower level of the stables, where their love story first began. It was there he had seen her as he walked toward Foster's stall. That spot has now been memorialized with a stall plaque honoring Grasshopper and Foster. "Best day of my life. Georgette Page. 12/15/66" reads the bottom line of the plaque.

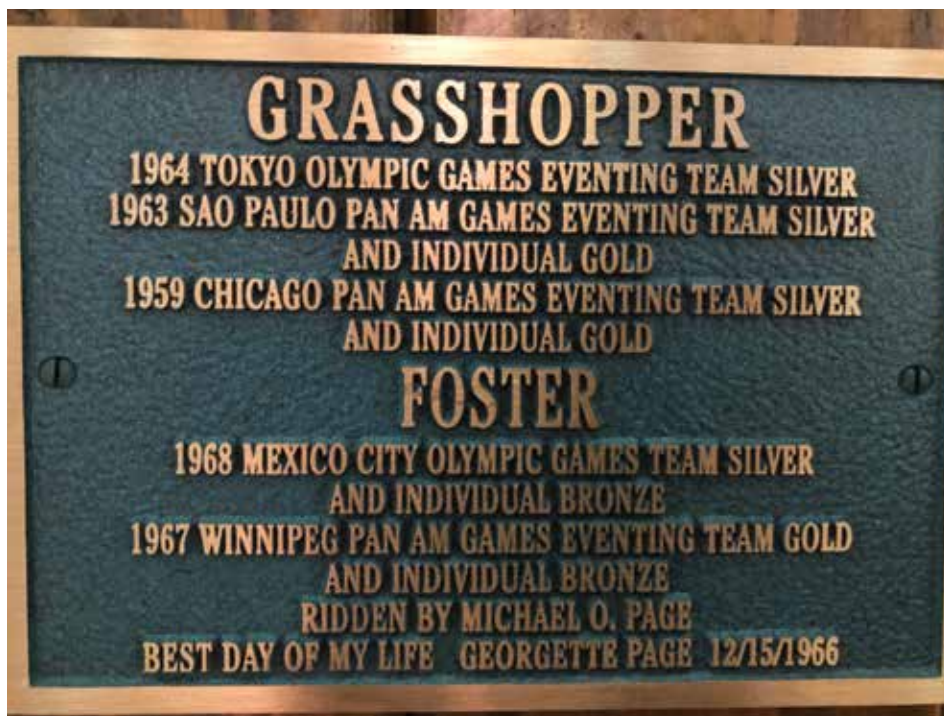
Michael shared many touching and humorous stories with those attending his ceremony. "Those of us who lived through this period of time owe a lot to what happened here at Gladstone," he said.

"To see it look the way it used to look 50 years ago is exciting," Michael said of the USET Foundation's management decisions that led to extensive work on what can only be called a hallowed facility, which is more than 100 years old.

The Pages' son, Matthew, expressed his respect and admiration for his father's "pretty remarkable life," Matthew said. To see them here on the [tack] trunk where they met is a good experience they can share and hold onto. It's really nice."

USET Foundation Executive Director Bonnie Jenkins has known Michael since he judged her in the days when she was a junior rider. "He's somebody who appreciates the sport and what it's done for him. To see him come back to Gladstone and know how much it means to him, it's pretty special," she said.


"Everybody on the staff works togeth-



er to make sure we can be good stewards of this building and this facility. We're happy we can continue to do that for Michael and other riders who trained here, and for the next generation who will use it as well."

Stall naming privileges are available for a tax-deductible charitable gift of \$100,000 for the top floor of the building and \$50,000 for the lower floor, payable over a multi-year period. The money goes toward far more than just a bronze plaque affixed to a stall. While the donation pays tribute to the horses for which it is designated, it helps further the Foundation's mission of supporting U.S. athletes and horses in their efforts to compete and excel at the Olympics, Paralympics, World Championships, Pan American Games, World Cup Finals, Nations Cup events, and other top international competitions. The Foundation funds competition, training, coaching, travel, and educational needs of the country's elite and developing horses and athletes for international competition, in partnership with the U.S. Equestrian Federation.

Other horses celebrated with plaques are Olympic medal-winning eventers like Giltedge and Prince Panache, Olympic double gold-medal show jumper Touch of Class, and FEI World Cup Dressage Final winner and Olympic team bronze medalist Brentina.

 – Nancy Jaffer



Georgette and Michael Page

Photo by Nancy Jaffer



# ELLIE FERRIGNO Finishes Strong to Win

## Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – EAST

Ellie Ferrigno made her catch-riding experience work for her in the Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – East on Oct. 5-6. The 17-year-old from Newtown, Connecticut, clinched the title by impressing the judges—Sue Ashe and Molly Ashe-Cawley—with her ability riding unfamiliar mounts in the horse switches of the final work-off at U.S. Equestrian Team Foundation headquarters in Gladstone, New Jersey.

Ferrigno earned a spot in the final-four work-off by placing fourth in the overall standings after the first three phases. She'd ridden Discovery-O, the junior jumper she leases from Derbydown, to top scores in the flat, gymnastics, and jumping phases. The four riders in the work-off all started on a clear slate, riding their own mount first and then completing the course on the other three riders' horses. Ferrigno rode all four horses to clear rounds; her top three scores totaled 269 for the win.

"After [the gymnastic phase], I took a big, deep breath and felt really good about the final day," said Ferrigno. "I ride so many horses all the time, so going into final four I was so excited. After each horse I would get off and say how much I loved riding their horse!"

Ferrigno hadn't participated in many horse switches in equitation finals, but she's used to riding unfamiliar horses thanks to her trainer, Val Renihan. She rides a lot of sales horses and green projects for Renihan. "I own one equitation horse, FRH Remarkable, and he is fantastic, [but] I get to do many other things. I've been able to spend time developing good hunters," Ferrigno said.

The junior jumper division is where Ferrigno usually shows Discovery-O, the horse she started leasing in June. "He is the horse I can always count on," she said. "I don't have an extensive partnership with him, but every class he goes in, I feel like he tries his hardest. I'm so proud that in the final four he was such a good boy for every person."

The Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Program encourag-



Sue Ashe, Molly Ashe-Cawley, Val Renihan, Ellie Ferrigno aboard Discovery-O, Emily Smith and Daisy Farish

es junior and young riders to develop the skills that will allow them to succeed on the international stage in the future. "I find it such an honor to be able to take the top spot in this final," said Ferrigno. "It's such a cool thing to do a final where US Equestrian is watching you and looking for people to be up-and-comers in the sport. It was a big honor to compete at Gladstone."

Ava Stearns, riding North Run's Acer K, claimed the reserve championship, while Sophee Steckbeck took third place riding

her Itteville and Dominic Gibbs finished in fourth aboard his Cent 15.

The French Leave Memorial Perpetual Trophy, donated by the Gerald A. Nielsen family, was awarded to Ferrigno as the champion, while the Leading Trainer Award, donated by the late Mr. Hugh J.B. Cassidy, III, was presented to Ferrigno's trainer, Valerie Renihan. The Grappa Trophy, donated by Sarah Willemann and awarded to the best horse, was given to Cent 15.

– Molly Sorge



Ellie Ferrigno and Discovery-O



Photo by Nancy Jaffer

Photo by The Book LLC



# EMMA CATHERINE REICHOW Hits the Mark at Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – WEST

Emma Catherine Reichow, 17, had set a target for herself to win the Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – West, and on Sept. 20-21, Reichow fulfilled that dream by taking the win. “I have competed in this final three times, and it’s always been a huge goal of mine to win,” she said.

Reichow, of Menlo Park, California, rode a catch ride, Highpoint Farm LLC’s Campitello 5, in the first three phases of the Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – West in San Juan Capistrano, California. She had only shown Campitello 5 a few times before the Finals. The 12-year-old Hanoverian gelding, owned by Highpoint Farm LLC, earned the Gulliver Perpetual Trophy, donated by Karen Healey, as the event’s best horse as selected by the judges.

The gymnastics phase followed with tests including a trot-in one-stride combination, rollbacks, a line requiring striding adjustability, a bounce, and a triple combination. The track for the jumping phase on the second day challenged riders with a serpentine line up the diagonal of the grass field with the open water as the second element. Reichow’s score of 81 in this phase moved her from sixth into the final four for the work-off.

In the work-off, Reichow was joined by Grace McReynolds, Parker Cliff, and Skylar Wireman. Each rider completed a short course on their mount, then switched to each of the other riders’ horses. With just a two-minute warm-up and two warm-up jumps allowed for each horse, the riders had to adjust quickly. They entered into this final phase with a clean slate of scores.



Emma Catherine Reichow and Campitello 5



Emma Catherine Reichow and Campitello 5

Platinum Performance/USEF Show Jumping Talent Search Finals – West judges, Lillie Keenan and Wendy Peralta designed the courses in collaboration with Anthony D’Ambrosio, who also served as Technical Delegate. In the Rider’s Meeting the afternoon before competition began, both judges said they were looking for the classic American style of a forward seat with connection, ridden effectively yet with compassion.

The flat phase tested riders’ basic dressage movements such as the counter-canter, shoulder-in, and extended and collected gaits with and without stirrups.

Reichow showed her skill and adaptability by turning in solid rounds on each horse, finishing with a total score of 327 from her three highest-scored rides. McReynolds claimed second riding Katharina Gebauer’s Springfield Hill, Cliff took third on her own Fanadwest Rebel, and Wireman finished in fourth on Haven Farms’ Hot Pants.

A consistent competitor in the equitation, hunter, and jumper rings, Reichow also helped the Zone 10 Young Rider team take the silver medal at the Adequan® FEI North American Youth Championships in August. This year marked her debut in

FEI Jumping World Cup™ qualifying grand prix classes.

The USEF Talent Search Program encourages young and junior riders to develop the skills needed to become an effective jumper rider, preparing them to become the next generation of top international riders representing the United States. With a span of ages from 14 to 18 years old represented in the final four in this competition, DiAnn Langer, U.S. Jumping Youth Chef D’Equipe, was elated. She commented, “We’ve always looked at the Talent Search and the winners of the Talent Search as our up-and-coming High Performance riders and they have never disappointed.”

– Molly Sorge







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# U.S. YOUNG RIDER JUMPING TEAM COMES TOGETHER FOR GOLD AT FEI JUMPING NATIONS CUP™ YOUTH FINAL CSIOY

Translating individual success on home turf into team success abroad is an essential skill for athletes, and the five young riders who traveled to Opglabbeek, Belgium, for the FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Youth Final CSIOY showed they're capable of doing just that on Sept. 29 by capturing the gold medal.

"I'm very proud of my team," said the team's Chef d'Équipe Anne Kursinski, who led Natalie Dean, Sophie Gochman, Brian Moggre, Giavanna Rinaldi, and alternate Lauren Fischer to the victory. "We hardly ever get to do this in the States. It's always individual competition. They came together beautifully as a team, and they worked fabulously. I'm really thrilled with them because they are the future of our sport."

The team won the qualifying round with just one fault after Rinaldi and Dean jumped clear. Moggre had four faults, and Gochman had one time fault. In the final round, Rinaldi, Dean, and Moggre all jumped clean, leaving the team on a score of zero and allowing Gochman to not jump.

The U.S. Young Rider Jumping Team took the gold medal on zero faults, while Great Britain won silver with two faults and Denmark earned bronze on four faults. It was the third gold medal that the U.S. Young Rider Jumping Team has won this year under the guidance of Kursinski, including earlier wins at the FEI Jumping Nations Cup CSIOY in Wellington, Fla., and at the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Hagen CSIOY.

"It was an incredible opportunity for all of us to see the Nations Cup format and do this as a young rider," said Dean. "I think our team really pulled together and got along well. It was a really fun experience for all of us. All of us want to be on a senior Nations Cup team at some point in our careers. This is a really good stepping-stone for learning the team environment."

The FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Youth Final CSIOY is modeled after the Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup™ Final and prepares up and coming athletes for the demands of international team competition, while fostering team unity and national pride.

The U.S. qualified a team for the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Youth Final as a result of Zone 10's second-place finish in the Young Rider Team Competition at the Adequan FEI North American Youth



Giavanna Rinaldi and Arsouille du Siegneur

Championships (NAYC) in August, a key developmental event for the U.S. Jumping Program and its youth athletes. Two of the five members selected to the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Youth Final team secured an individual-podium finish in the Young Rider division at NAYC, while the three additional combinations were appointed through discretionary selection.

"It was just a great team to work with," said Kursinski. "They are all so talented,

and rode so well under the pressure. It was the first time in Europe for most of them. To have the real U.S. team experience abroad, there's just nothing like it. They just handled [the pressure] beautifully.

"I think this Final for the youth is fantastic," continued Kursinski of the FEI Jumping Nations Cup Youth Final. "The experience, there's nothing like it. It's what they need at this stage of life."

– Molly Sorge



Natalie Dean and Don's Diamant



# Olympic Show Jumpers Sign Copies of “Riding for the Team” Book

Fans lined up with copies of the U.S. Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation’s new book, “Riding for the Team” at a book-signing event at the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) on Oct. 26. Olympic show jumping athletes McLain Ward, Kent Farrington, Margie Engle and Robert Ridland, who all appear in the book, signed copies and posed for photos with eager enthusiasts.

It was the debut of the 302-page hardback, coffee table-style book full of memories and images, which was available for sale at WIHS all weekend. “Riding for the Team” features the stories of 47 athletes who have served on championship teams for the United States in all eight interna-

tional equestrian disciplines and recounts their struggles, triumphs, and journeys to the top of the sport. Renowned equestrian journalist Nancy Jaffer compiled and edited their stories into the book.

“The compelling stories collected in this volume, as told by the athletes who have become part of equestrian history, demonstrate how to make dreams reality, while acknowledging sacrifice as the other side of achievement,” Jaffer writes in the opening introduction. “Those who compete at the highest level share several characteristics in addition to the love and appreciation of the horse. All have demonstrated singular focus to achieve excellence, putting aside other pursuits as they strive

to represent their country.”

The book is a sequel to “Riding for America,” published in 1990 and also compiled by Jaffer. “Riding for America” highlighted key figures on the American equestrian scene from 1976 to 1990. It followed the tradition of the 1976 volume, “The USET Book of Riding: The First Quarter Century of the USET,” which was produced by the late USET chairman emeritus and Olympic show jumping gold medalist, Bill Steinkraus.

Published by Trafalgar Square Books, “Riding for the Team” is available to order on the USET Foundation website, with proceeds benefitting the USET Foundation.

— Molly Sorge



Photo by Jump Media

Kent Farrington, McLain Ward, Nancy Jaffer, Robert Ridland, and Margie Engle



# ERIN SYLVESTER AND MIA FARLEY

## Claim Trophies at The Dutta Corp. Fair Hill International

The Dutta Corp. Fair Hill International has a special place in Erin Sylvester's heart, as she's local to the Fair Hill, Maryland, area and she completed her first two-star CCI at the event years ago. Winning the CCI4\*-L on Oct. 16-20 and also claiming the USET Foundation Gladstone Trophy as the highest-placed U.S. athlete in the division was one of her major career goals.

well for a while now. We've hit a few bumps in the road during the season, so it was great to put that all behind us and have a good weekend."

Mia Farley, 19, won the USET Foundation's Markham Trophy as the highest-placed U.S. young rider in the CCI4\*-L. "The Markham Trophy means an incredible amount. I never would have imagined placing as well as I did," she said.



Photos by Shannon Erickson

Mia Farley and Fernhill Fine Diamond

"It feels amazing," said Sylvester, who hails from Cochranville, Pennsylvania. "It takes a lot of hard work to get here, and then it takes a little bit of luck. Someone said this weekend that I'm following in the footsteps of countless other top competitors who have won the [USET Foundation Gladstone] Trophy. It means so much to me. This event is home turf for me and they get such a huge crowd here, and that makes it all the more special."


Sylvester, rode Paddy the Caddy, a 12-year-old bay Irish Thoroughbred gelding owned by Frank McEntee, to a final score of 34.3 to secure the victory. "He has endless heart to do the best he can when he's in the ring," said Sylvester. "It's been my goal to get this event done and done

"Coming from California, it's always been a goal of mine to come to Fair Hill and experience the track, and I never would've thought that I'd finish as well as I did. I'm lucky to have my horse."

Farley, from San Juan Capistrano, California, rode in both CCI divisions and captured the reserve championship in The Dutta Corp. USEF CCI4\*-L Eventing National Championship aboard BGS Firecracker, her nine-year-old Irish Sport Horse mare. The young rider scaled the leaderboard after each phase for the reserve championship to end on a 38.3 and bring home the USET Foundation's Markham Trophy. "Overall, I had so much fun all week. I feel incredibly lucky to be here," said Farley.



Erin Sylvester and Paddy the Caddy

Farley also rode in the CCI3\*-L and was the recipient of The John H. Fritz Trophy, which she'd also won in 2018, as the National Champion in the USEF Young Rider Eventing National Championship with Fernhill Fine Diamond, Charlotte Zovighian's Irish Sport Horse mare, with a score of 36.80.  - Molly Sorge



# Remembering

## MAJ. GEN. JONATHAN "JACK" BURTON

One of the founding fathers of U.S. equestrian sport, Gen. Burton left an enduring legacy when he passed away in 2019.

Former U.S. Equestrian Team (USET) Executive Vice President Maj. Gen. Jonathan "Jack" Burton, who was admired throughout the equestrian world, played a major role in developing horse sport into what it is today in the United States.

Gen. Burton, who died May 29 in Tucson, Arizona, at 99, personified dedication and fairness both as a member of the military and a civilian. He made a seamless transition from serving in the U.S. Cavalry to decorated soldier and military commander, serving in three wars, and he then became a prominent figure on the post-World War II equestrian scene.

"The ability to lead other men in combat is a rare skill, and he found a home in the Army," noted Jim Wofford, an Olympic eventing medalist and a lifelong friend of Gen. Burton.

The general served equestrianism in many ways: as a judge, steward, committee member and inspiration, remaining an important part of the sport until just a few years before his passing. He served as a horse show official for the last time when he was 92.

Gen. Burton always made it his business to stay fit enough to do his job, whatever it was, and he rode with the Loudoun Hunt in Virginia into his 80s.

The native of Illinois was a member of the ROTC at Michigan State College when he graduated in 1942 during World War II. Four days later, he began an intensive six-week cavalry course at Fort Riley, Kansas, before being shipped to El Paso, Texas. There, as part of the First Cavalry Division, he patrolled the U.S.-Mexican border, "looking for spies, saboteurs, or whatnot," he recalled during an interview.

*"He never takes the elevator, even if his room is on the 10th floor," Sally Ike, the US Equestrian Director of Licensed Officials, observed a few years ago.*

But his time on horseback once he was serving with the Army turned out to be short-lived. His outfit, without horses, was shipped to the Pacific. He was in Australia when he saw an attractive blonde dancing during a gathering at a hotel.

"I cut in on her, got her phone number, and it went on from there," he remembered. "When we took the Admiralty Islands, we spent six months building a naval base, and they let us go down to Australia on leave. I called her up and said, 'Let's get married.'" He and Joan had two children, Jonathan Jr. and Judy Lewis.

The soldier didn't get back to horses until after the war, when the show circuit started up again. Although the Army had been mechanized, he was assigned to the cavalry school at Fort Riley, where he was the instructor for the last two years that horsemanship classes were held for officers.

While it was clear that the cavalry was nearing its end, the Army sent a team to the 1948 Olympic Games in London. Officers dedicated themselves to training the jumpers, eventers, and dressage horses



Photo by Blumenthal Photo



Photo courtesy U.S. Eventing Association

for the Olympics, which had not been held since 1936. In preparation for London, the Army team jumped at the biggest shows, including the National at Madison Square Garden, as well as Dublin and Geneva.

"I was a junior officer, so I would travel with the horses. We'd go in baggage cars equipped to haul horses. When we shipped horses to Europe, we went by boat. It took about 11 days," remembered the general, who helped with cleaning stalls.

In 1947, the same year he was U.S. Three-Day Eventing Champion, Gen. Burton won the National Horse Show's international individual show jumping trophy with Air Mail, besting the legendary Mexican General Humberto Mariles, whose country's teams dominated competition at the National for a decade.

Although Gen. Burton was selected for the 1948 Olympic jumping and event-



ing teams, his horse went lame, and he found himself in the position of helping his teammates as reserve rider. After the Army gave up its team in 1950, the fledgling U.S. Equestrian Team was formed. Jim Wofford's father, 1932 Olympian Col. John "Gyp" Wofford, the USET's first president, asked Burton, who was in Europe with the Army horses, to bring back any he thought suitable for the 1952 Olympics.

"I returned by boat with 12 horses that could be used on the team, one of which was Democrat. He could jump, he could three-day and he could dressage. He was a Thoroughbred bred by Gordon Russell in the Army remount system," Gen. Burton recounted. He chose well. The fledgling USET won the bronze in eventing and show jumping, with Democrat playing a role in the latter success, then going on to major victories at the National Horse Show and elsewhere.

While Gen. Burton had hoped to ride on the 1952 team in Helsinki after missing his chance four years earlier, the Army had other plans for him, and he was off to serve in Korea. He finally made the eventing squad in the 1956 Olympics. He fell off Huntingfield during those Games in Stockholm, when the horse stumbled coming off an 11-foot drop on cross-country. Burton was picked up by the horse's owner and thrown back into the saddle so he could complete the test.



Photo courtesy U.S. Eventing Association

"When I arrived at the finish line, the Swedes saw I was incomprehensible and put me in the ambulance," he said. After doctors determined Burton had a concussion, they said he shouldn't ride in the stadium jumping the next day.

"There was no point, because one of the other U.S. riders got eliminated in jumping and the other was eliminated in cross-country. But I probably should



Photo by Nancy Jaffer

Jimmy Wofford and Jack Burton

have," he said wistfully, "so we at least could have had a horse finish."

That wasn't his last experience with the Olympics, as his involvement with horse sports took another turn when he became an official. He judged eventing at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, as well as several world championships, and was on the appeals committee at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He was manager of the U.S. Olympic Team in 1976 and chef d'équipe of the dressage team at the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

After two tours of duty in Vietnam, Gen. Burton retired from military service in 1975. He held the decorations of Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Purple Heart, and the Army Commendation Ribbon.

Gen. Burton then served as executive vice president for the USET between 1976 and 1985. He was president of the U.S. Combined Training Association for three years and was inducted into the USEA Hall of Fame in 1999 and the Dressage Hall of Fame in 2007.


Eventer Denny Emerson called Gen. Burton, "the Johnny Appleseed of the eventing world," because it seemed that wherever the general was stationed, an event would spring up. He got Pony Clubs involved and started local combined training associations. He went on to serve as president of the U.S. Combined Training Association (now the U.S. Eventing Association) and wrote the first U.S. rulebook for eventing.

Following World War II, there was nothing in the way of civilian eventing. The sport was known as "the military," appropriate since it had started as a test of cavalry officers' mounts. "The Army once a year

had an Olympic-level three-day event," Gen. Burton remembered. "It was the graduation of the advanced [officers] course. That was the only eventing in the U.S."

In 1953, he was asked to come to Tennessee and help put on a civilian event. "We went down to Percy Warner Park, where there was a steeplechase course. We added some tires and barrels and made a cross-country course. We didn't have a rulebook, so I copied the FEI rulebook," he said.

What would be a training/preliminary-level event today attracted about a dozen riders, including some from Canada, and the sport grew from there.

Gen. Burton was interred at Arlington National Cemetery, and his memory was honored at the USEA's annual meeting in Boston.  - Nancy Jaffer



Helen Gordon and Gen. Jonathan Burton

Photo courtesy USEA Foundation Archives



# Roxanne Trunnell Claims Adequan®/USEF Para Dressage CPEDI3\* National Championship

## ADEQUAN® U.S. PARA DRESSAGE TEAM TRIUMPHANT IN TRYON FALL 2 FEI CPEDI3\* TEAM COMPETITION

Some of the nation's most talented para-equestrians gathered at the Tryon International Equestrian Center in Mill Spring, North Carolina, on Sept. 13-15 to compete in the Adequan®/USEF Para Dressage National Championship and Tryon Fall 2 FEI CPEDI3\*. After three days of fierce competition, the Adequan® U.S.

Para Dressage Team was victorious in the team competition, and Roxanne Trunnell was crowned the new National Champion.

Trunnell, who hails from Rowlett, Texas, claimed the national title with Dolton, a seven-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by Flintewood Farms LLC. A final cumulative score of 75.24 percent

secured the pair's top honors in the prestigious championship event.

"We really have been working on solidifying the scores, and it feels like it's all coming together. I loved how he just kept marching in the walk. We're hoping to make it to [the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo], so that's what we'll be working on," noted Trunnell, who's no stranger to the winner's podium, having represented Team USA at the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games™ Tryon and earned the individual bronze medal for her accomplishments.

"I haven't been with Dolton for very long, and the partnership is really forming," Trunnell said. Performing their freestyle to music from the soundtrack from "Forrest Gump," Trunnell and Dolton scored a 79.33 percent in the FEI CPEDI3\* Freestyle Grade I, earning the highest score of the weekend.

Trunnell's ultimate goal is to earn a spot on the U.S. Para Dressage Team for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games next summer. For now, she'll focus on fine-tuning her and Dolton's skills before making their next CPEDI3\* appearance in Wellington, Florida, in early January. "It will be a lot of training and working on accuracy with the geometry," Trunnell noted.

Taking home reserve championship honors was David Botana of Portland, Maine, who partnered with Lord Locksley, to earn a cumulative total of 74.318 percent.

Botana, 17, is one of the program's top emerging riders and has quickly formed a strong partnership with Lord Locksley, an 18-year-old Trakhener stallion owned by Margaret Stevens. The pair, who debuted this past winter in Wellington, Florida, concentrated on establishing a stronger bond this summer, as Lord Locksley is a former FEI Grand Prix horse, but has adjusted amazingly well to his new responsibilities.

"It's a big transition from international Grand Prix stallion to Grade I Para. He's taken beautifully to it," admits Botana. "It's taken us a while to get into a groove, but now we're in a perfect balance where he knows that as soon as I put my foot in the stirrup we're just going to walk, and that's it."

The pair secured some of their highest marks throughout the competition, includ-



Roxanne Trunnell and Dolton with Andrea Woodard



ing an impressive 75.29 percent in the FEI Para Grade I Individual Test.

Emma Jameson of Spartanburg, South Carolina, and Cortesana LA, a 12-year-old warmblood mare owned by Misha Marshall, were presented with the Adequan®/USEF Para Dressage CPEDI\* National Championship in their debut together.

"This is my first ever CPEDI and I just jumped in with both feet. My horse is absolutely amazing, even when I'm a little bit unsure of what I'm asking her, she knows," said Jameson. "I'm her first para rider and figuring out the partnership didn't take very long. From the first lesson, she knew exactly what I was asking for."

Trunnell followed up on her individual title by contributing to the Adequan® U.S. Para Dressage Team win in the team portion of the FEI CPEDI 3\*. The U.S. riders finished on an impressive team score of 439.58 to take the win, while Canada earned a collective score of 416.07.

Chef d'équipe Michel Assouline led Team USA, with FEI World Equestrian Games medalists Rebecca Hart, Kate Shoemaker, and Trunnell, and 2016 Paralympian Sydney Collier, who all performed consistently across the different Grade tests to help take the title. Trunnell and Dolton scored 74.88 percent in the FEI Grade I Team Test and returned to earn a 73.57 percent in the FEI Grade I Individual Test.

The new partnership of Collier, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and All In One, a 10-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by Going for Gold LLC, earned scores of 71.607 percent and 71 percent in the FEI Grade III Team and Individual Tests, respectively. "For this weekend, we wanted to come out and be consistent," said Collier. "I really wanted to work on my geometry. Being a visually impaired rider, geometry can be one of the most difficult things to nail for me, so I've been working at home at perfecting my step counts and that's how I do my geometry."

Shoemaker, from Peoria, Arizona, has an established relationship with Solitaer 40, a 13-year-old Hanoverian gelding she co-owns with Craig and Deena Shoemaker. They recorded a 73.08 percent in the FEI Grade IV Team Test and a 73.04 percent in the FEI Grade IV Individual Test. "I think this was some of the best work we've gotten in the arena," Shoemaker said. "We had some really amazing moments in there and that's what I'm excited about. I think, regardless of the scores, they were personal best tests for us."

After securing the first individual medal for the U.S. Para Dressage Team at last year's FEI World Equestrian Games™



Back row: Michel Assouline, Kate Shoemaker. Front row: Roxanne Trunnell, Sydney Collier and Rebecca Hart

Tryon, Rebecca Hart of Wellington, Florida, and El Corona Texel, a 10-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by Rowan O'Riley, once again proved their consistency for the team, producing a score of 71.22 percent in the FEI Grade III Team Test and a 73.77 percent in the FEI Grade III Individual Test.

"We changed our routine up a little bit coming into this event, which was intimidating because when you change things at a big championship things can go one of two ways, but it's really worked for us," said Hart. "I'm doing all of the warm-up myself with Tex and it's made a much more symbiotic-type relationship with my horse."

Many of the riders aiming for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games utilized

this important event to help gain their qualifying scores, spend time in front of international judges, and perfect their tests in world-class venues.

Assouline was delighted with the team's performance and the improvement they've made throughout the summer in preparation for an intense year of competition preceding next year's Games.

"For me, this is a dream competition because of the progression," Assouline said after the team's win. "I've been working on improving the scores, and we've had fantastic scores here. Our drop score was a 71 percent, which is a dream for any team. All of the team members were 71 percent or above and today we averaged a 73 percent."

— Emily Daily



David Botana, Laureen Johnson – Director of US Para-Equestrian for U.S. Equestrian, Roxanne Trunnell, Michel Assouline, and Sharon Decker – COO Tryon International Equestrian Center

Photos by Andrea Evans / US Equestrian



# NATIONAL WINNERS CROWNED AT U.S. DRESSAGE FESTIVAL OF CHAMPIONS



Nick Wagman and Don John



On August 21-25, 160 of the country's top dressage competitors took center stage at the Lamplight Equestrian Center (Wayne, Illinois) for a shot at earning national titles across the 14 divisions at the 2019 U.S. Dressage Festival of Champions.

Nick Wagman (San Diego, Calif.) had an incredible week, clinching two victories. He and Beverly Gepfer's Don John captured the USEF Grand Prix Dressage National Championship, after earning a 76.140 percent score in the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle and an overall score of 73.287 percent.

"What a way to end the season!" said Wagman, who was the 2018 USEF Grand Prix Dressage Reserve Champion with the 11-year-old KWPN gelding. "Last year was our first real season of Grand Prix. So a year later we're more confirmed, stronger, and more settled in the test. We went to Europe, and that did a lot for our confidence as well, so I think it's all just starting to show in the ring here."

"Nick is an amazing horse trainer, and the bonds he has created between himself and the horses he rides is something almost inexplicable!" said Gepfer. "He is a talented man, and we are so

lucky to be able to support his dreams in riding our horses."

As part of the winning honors, Wagman was presented with the United States Equestrian Team (USET) Foundation Grand Prix Trophy, which was given to the USET Foundation by Franklin Mint in 1978.

In addition, Wagman was awarded The Patsy Albers Award, which was established in 2012 in special remembrance of Albers who was one of the nation's best-known figures at dressage shows across the country. This award is presented to the highest placed rider in the Grand Prix division who represented the U.S. at the North American Youth Championships. The \$1,000 award provides financial support to a High Performance rider for continuing education and training.

"I've been riding dressage most of my life," said Wagman after winning the award. "To have competed at the North American Youth Championship in 1993 and now be riding Grand Prix alongside America's other top riders is just proof that this sport is a lifelong endeavor. It takes so much to be able to pursue the top. I'm honored and grateful to receive the generous Patsy Albers Award."

Continuing his winning streak, Wagman also cemented the Markel/USEF Developing Horse Grand Prix Dressage National Championship with Elizabeth Keadle's nine-year-old KWPN gelding Ferano, finishing their week with an overall score of 70.041.

"[Winning the national championship] certainly exceeded my expectations with Ferano," said Wagman. "I came here just excited to be part of it. To come out winning is unexpected, but pleasantly welcome."

Kathy Priest (Versailles, Ky.) and her eight-year-old Oldenburg mare Damon's Fantasy won the blue ribbon across all three tests to win the Markel/USEF Developing Horse Dressage Prix St. Georges National Championship. The pair earned a 72.500 percent in the USEF Developing Horse Prix St. Georges Test for an overall score of 72.598.

"This mare is one I've had since she was four years old, so I was looking forward to doing this with her," said Priest. "I was really happy that she had good energy in [the ring], and that's what you have to have for the future, so I felt like even with a few little



Kathy Priest and Damon's Fantasy



mistakes I could get her back and concentrated, and she wanted to go and work for it. I want a grand prix horse. I feel like she has that quality."

Endel Ots (Wellington, Fla.) and Lucky Strike claimed top honors in the USEF Intermediaire I Dressage National Championship. He and the nine-year-old Hanoverian gelding owned by his father Max Ots earned a Freestyle score of 74.810 percent for an overall score of 74.255 percent.

"This is a great way to end a year," said Ots. "My dad lives nearby, and to have him be here and see us has been wonderful. To come here for [the young horses] and the development [classes] has been wonderful and a dream come true."



Photo by Susan/Strickle.com

Endel Ots and Lucky Strike

To honor his success, Ots was presented with the USET's Intermediaire I Trophy, donated by Ivan Bezufloff, Jr.

Following the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle, Claire Manhard and her 16-year-old KWPN mare, Wilfonia, won the USEF Young Adult 'Brentina Cup' Dressage National Championship, earning an overall score of 68.236.

"It's amazing to see how far I have come in a year," said Manhard. "When I was here last year, I felt all over the place, and this year I felt like I knew what I was doing. It's crazy to be considered the national champion. I am so grateful for that experience and the title."

After competing at the Festival of Champions for the past several years, 20-year-old Kayla Kadlubek (Fairfax Station, Va.) now has a national title to her name. The Discover Dressage USEF/USDF Emerging Athlete Program member and her 18-year-old Hanoverian gelding Perfect Step finished atop the pack in the USEF



Photo by Susan/Strickle.com

Claire Manhard and Wilfonia

Young Rider Dressage National Championship after achieving an overall score of 71.422 percent.

"[This] has [not] sunk in yet... it's something you dream about for years, then to make it actually happen is incredible," said Kadlubek. "I couldn't do this without my horse; he has been with me every step of the way. Lendon Gray and Suzanne Dansby, I am so grateful for them and for allowing me to ride this horse. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. He has opened so many doors like this for me, and I am so grateful to have him as my partner."

– Emily Daily



Photo by Susan/Strickle.com

Kayla Kadlubek and Perfect Step

## Other winners included:

USEF Junior Dressage National Championship: Jori Dupell (Wilsonville, Ore.) and Fiderprinz 2

Markel/USEF Young Horse Dressage Four-Year-Old National Championship: Michele Bondy (Wilsonville, Ore.) and Sonnenberg's Kain

Markel/USEF Young Horse Dressage Five-Year-Old National Championship: Emily Miles (Paola, Kan.) and Sole Mio

Markel/USEF Young Horse Six-Year-Old Dressage National Championship: Michael Bragdel (Colora, Md.) and SenSation HW

USEF Pony Rider Dressage National Championship: Lucienne Bacon (Atherton, Calif.) and Bonnaroo

USEF Children Dressage National Championship: Lexie Kment (Palmyra, Neb.) and Manatee

USEF Dressage Seat Medal Final 14-18 Championship: Mackenzie Peer (Overland Park, Kan.) and Quantum MRF

USEF Dressage Seat Medal Final 13 & Under Championship: Kasey Denny (Hutto, Texas) and Feyock



# U.S. TEAM HAS GREAT SIXTH-PLACE FINISH

## at FEI Endurance World Championships for Young Riders & Juniors

A pair of team veterans and good friends combined efforts with a first-timer on the U.S. team at the FEI Endurance World Championships for Young Riders & Juniors for an impressive result on Sept. 18. The prestigious 120-kilometer competition was held at the San Rossore Racecourse in Pisa, Italy, during the Toscana Endurance Lifestyle event.

Kate Bishop, 16, Katelyn Baldino, 21, and Maria Muzzio, 21, all finished the ride with strong placings to put the U.S. team into sixth place, with Kimberly Loutzenheiser, 16, and Alex Shampoe, 17, also competing for Team USA.

"This is a really good result for the program," said the U.S. team's chef d'équipe, Mark Dial. "This is the fastest we've ridden, and the best team finish we've had since I've been with the program." Dial was named U.S. Endurance Team Technical Advisor and Chef d'Equipe in April of 2015.

"This was a great group," Dial continued. "They rode to instructions, and they could communicate any issues they were having. They were riding some very good horses. Over the past several years, we've

put together an incredible staff. I have to give the staff credit, too—our vet staff, Kristen Brett [USEF Director of Dressage and Endurance Programs], and the selectors. We've put together a really good program and we're starting to see the results."

In her first U.S. team appearance, Bishop, of Raleigh, North Carolina, rode to the top individual placing, finishing in 41st with LR April Breeze, Lisa Green's 12-year-old Arabian mare. A crew member handed Bishop an American flag as she approached the finish. "I held it high as we cantered across the finish line. That was my favorite moment of the whole ride," Bishop said.

"My horse was amazing," Bishop continued. "We went faster and faster on each loop, which was really great. I was impressed with how she performed. She came into the vet checks and pulsed really well, which she's really good at. My crew and team were amazing as well. The whole team was really close; it was fun getting to know everyone."

"Things went extremely well for Kate," said Dial. "She was riding a really good mare that has an incredible heart. She rode to instructions all day long and



*Maria Muzzio and Landroval*

did a really good job. She's a strong young rider. She's someone who could be in the program for a long time to come."

Team veterans Baldino and Muzzio rode and finished together, placing 56th and 57th respectively individually. They also held U.S. flags up high as they cantered across the finish line. "They brought a lot of maturity and stability to our younger riders," said Dial. "They're both incredible young riders; they're easy to coach. We were lucky to have them because they were the rock for the team."

Baldino, of Marietta, Georgia, rode Melody Blittersdorf's nine-year-old Arabian gelding, Traction. "My goal for this competition was to let Traction have a good, fun day on the course and take good care of him," Baldino said. "I think we accomplished that wonderfully. He was having a lot of fun out there, as was I. It was wonderful to cross the finish with a horse who was very happy with his job."

Dial noted that the course at Pisa was quite flat and fast, without many terrain questions. The U.S. riders made sure to monitor their horses' response to the heat and humidity and adjusted their pace accordingly.

"We met the goals and the plans [Dial] set for us for each loop," Baldino said. "Our priority was no matter what to take care of our horses, and we definitely accomplished that."



*Kate Bishop and LR April Breeze*





All photos by Mark Baldino

Alex Shampooe on Dude Free Gold, Kate Bishop on LR April Breeze, Kimberly Loutzenheiser riding DM Michaelangelo, Katelyn Baldino with Traction, and Maria Muzzio riding Landroval

Muzzio, of Clifton, Virginia, was pleased with Landroval, Natalie Muzzio's nine-year-old Arabian gelding, in his first championship ride. "He was amazing. He's so young, and he has some maturity things to work on, but he did so well," Muzzio said. "It was nice and cool when we started, and all the horses were on fire. They all had their ears perked and were all business. The main goal was to finish the competition with at least a team of three riders, so having our team place sixth was so great."

Baldino and Muzzio competed together in the 2015 FEI Endurance World Championships for Young Riders & Juniors and have been friends ever since. "The best thing was that Kate and I got to finish together," said Muzzio. "After starting in this program together and having been on teams together before, with this as our last year together, it was really cool."

The team made the decision to retire Kimberly Loutzenheiser and DM Michaelangelo, Rae Shumate-Tysor's 10-year-old Arabian gelding, after the second vet check, based on the welfare of the horse. Alex Shampooe and Dude Free Gold, Valerie Kanavy's 11-year-old Arabian gelding, were unable to advance to the fourth and final loop. In the best interest of Dude Free Gold, the Veterinary Commission elected to eliminate the combination during the compulsory re-inspection.

"Everyone rode with the plan to take good care of their horse and help their teammates when needed, and I think

everyone accomplished that," Baldino said. "We worked together as a team really well. We did a lot of checking in to make sure that everyone was getting what they needed when we were out on the trail together."

Baldino also acknowledged the contributions of the support staff that helped make the team's success possible. "All of

these people, whether it's USEF staff or our families and friends, pulled together," she said. "We had 45 people helping out, taking care of us and the horses and making sure we had everything we needed. It leaves you speechless when you see that many people working together to help you achieve your goal. 🐾 – Molly Sorge



Kate Baldino and Traction



# U.S. EVENTERS TEST OUT NEW OLYMPIC FORMAT AT MILITARY BOEKELO CCIO

The Land Rover U.S. Eventing Team of Tamie Smith, Liz Halliday-Sharp, Jennie Brannigan, and reserve Matt Flynn joined Chef d'Equipe Erik Duvander in Enschede, the Netherlands, on Oct. 9-13 for the Military Boekelo CCIO4\*-L, which served as the final event to test the new Olympic format of teams of three horse/rider combinations plus one reserve before the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Smith and Mai Baum finished as the top-placed U.S. pair, posting a final score of 31.9 for 11th place out of a competitive field of 97 starters. "Having the opportunity to compete at Boekelo this year was invaluable. At this level, it is about how to shave every tenth of a point off your score. Observing and competing with the best in the world is something the U.S. riders must continue to do in order to rise to be the best," Smith said.

"I'm grateful to have had this practice to ride on a team and strategize how to produce our best result," Smith continued. "My lessons learned with each trip abroad have catapulted my results at future competitions. I would not have been able to gain this exposure without the continued support of USEF's sponsors and USET Foundation donors who are helping the team become the best."

Halliday-Sharp and Cooley Quicksilver were competitive throughout the weekend, finishing in the top third of the standings. "This week in Boekelo was particularly useful, as it was not only a chance for me to be in a team scenario with a young, up-and-coming horse, but it also gave us the chance to test out the Olympic format," Halliday-Sharp said. "I think both horses and people have learned a lot this week, and we will all come away knowing what we need to work on to continue improving our competitive performances."

Brannigan's cross-country round didn't go according to plan with Stella Artois, but she enjoyed the supportive team atmosphere. The team reserve, Flynn, making his team debut with Wizzerd, completed the weekend in the top half of the standings.

The Boekelo team participated in a four-day training camp before the competition where the athletes prepared statements of their performance expectations and identified their goals for the trip. They then completed a post-competition questionnaire and interview. "The four days spent at training camp were useful in that



Tamie Smith and Mai Baum



Matt Flynn, Tamie Smith, Jennie Brannigan, Liz Halliday-Sharp, and Erik Duvander

the riders had time to get comfortable with me, and I had time to get to know the combinations better, as the majority of these horses were not on the High Performance training lists," said Duvander.

"This team was about investing into combinations that could be competitive in three years' time at the 2022 World Equestrian Games," Duvander said. "I am very positive about the possibilities around this group of riders and the quality of the

horses. I was also delighted to see more than 50 owners and supporters who made the effort to come out to the Netherlands and support our team. I hope it was a joyful experience for them and an opportunity to connect more with what we are aiming to achieve in the High Performance program. I wish in the future to regularly replicate this experience for our supporters at Boekelo."



– Molly Sorge



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