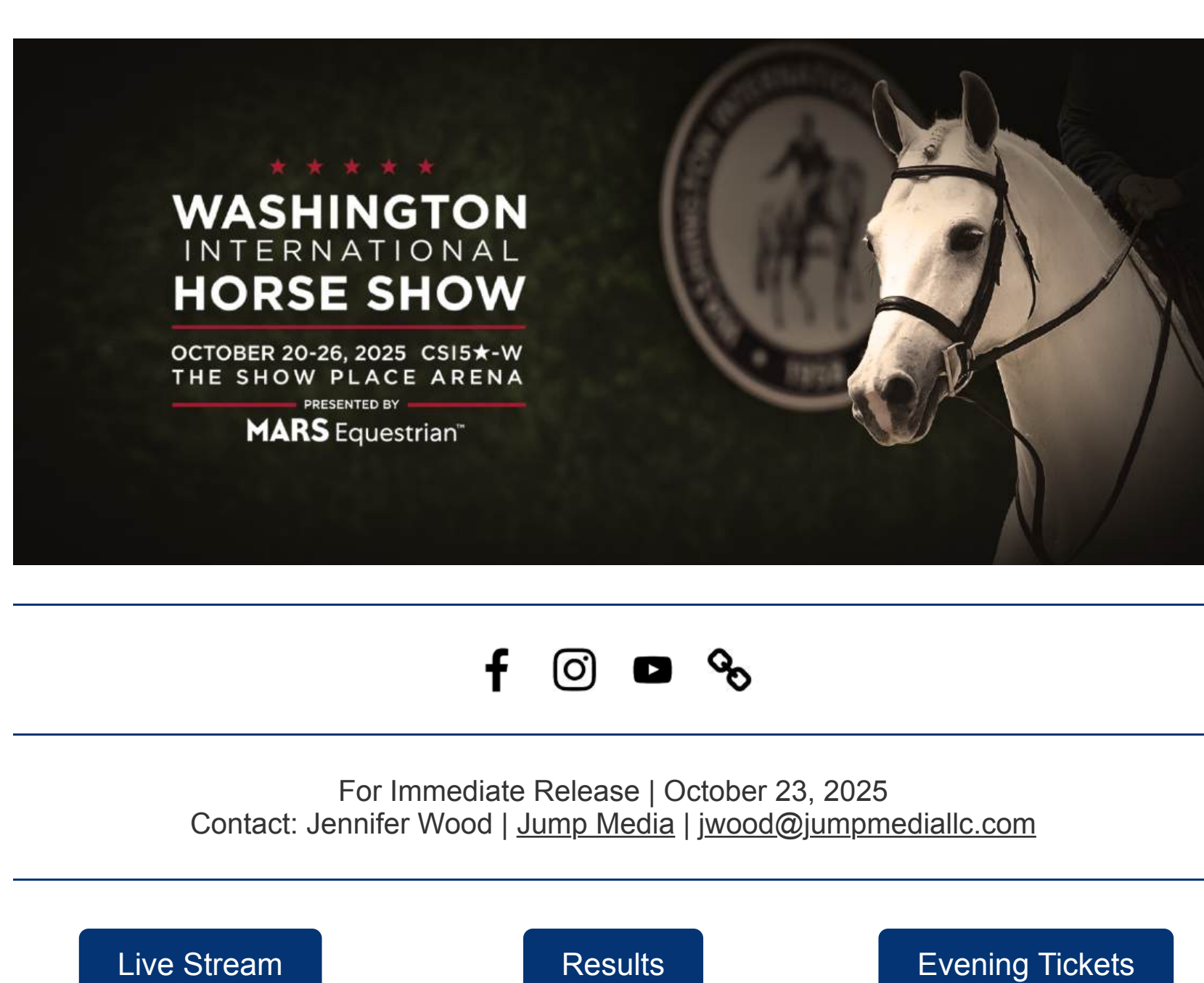




For Immediate Release | October 23, 2025
Contact: Jennifer Wood | Jump Media | jwood@jumpmediallc.com

Live Stream

Results

Evening Tickets

ALL HAIL THE FIRST LADY AS SHE AND WARD GALLOP TO VICTORY



Upper Marlboro, MD – International jumpers took to the arena on Thursday, October 24, to contest the first two classes of the CSI5*-W competition at the 2025 Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), presented by MARS Equestrian™. U.S. Olympic team gold medalist McLain Ward rode First Lady for owner Robin Cleary Parsky to victory in the \$63,000 FEI Welcome Stake. The fastest in the \$63,000 Stars & Stripes Speed Stake were Daniel Bluman (ISR) and Gemma W, owned by Blue Star Investments and Over The Top Stables LLC. Held at The Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD, the event continues through Sunday, October 26.



First Lady returned to five-star competition with a bang, winning the FEI Welcome Stake with McLain Ward. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

Course designer Nick Granat (USA) set the tracks for the night's opening class, and 28 horse-and-rider combinations competed in the opening round. Eight were clear and continued to the jump-off, while one chose not to return. Ward and First Lady set a neat and speedy time of 33.15 seconds for the win.

"I thought it was challenging enough," said Ward of the course. "Nick is a great course builder, but he builds very delicate. I thought he had the right number clear. It was a fair, welcoming test."

"In the jump-off, I know she's quick," he continued. "I thought if I could get the first two jumps done — where sometimes she can jump a little high — I had a very good chance."



Ringmaster Phil Thomas, WIHS Board Member Jon Kreitz, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy (Retired), WIHS President Vicki Lowell, and groom Lee McKeever join McLain Ward and First Lady in their winning presentation. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

First Lady, a 12-year-old Oldenburg mare (Don Diarado x Lordanos), was back in her first five-star competition since March. She sustained an injury in May that took her out of competition until she returned to the FEI ring two weeks ago in two-star competition.

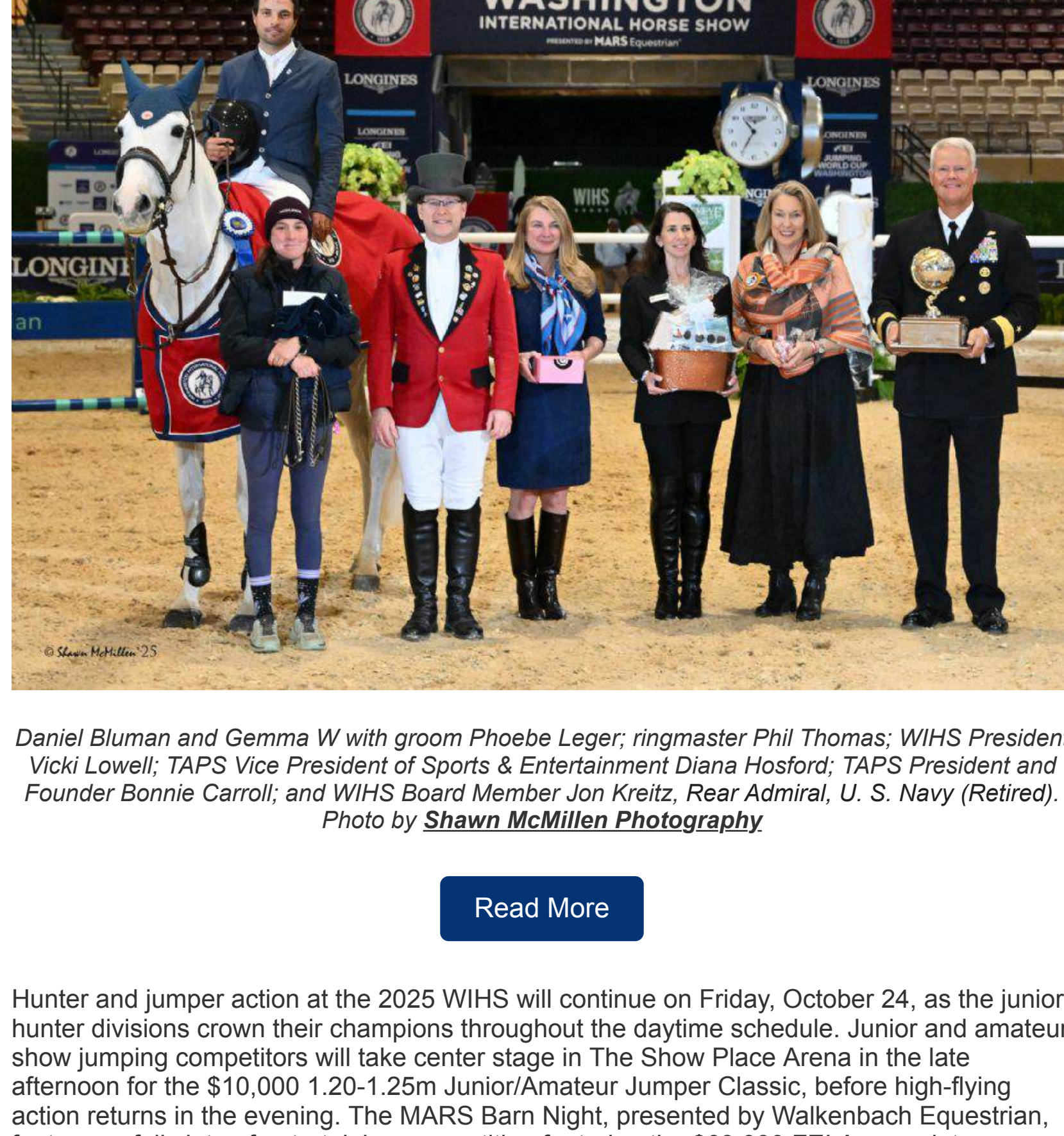
"We gave her a nice two-month rest, then legged her back up slowly, and brought her back up to the level," explained Ward. "First Lady's always been brilliant inside, but even with a few unknowns after a long layoff, I think she's picking up even further along. Maybe she was due a little rest, and now she feels fresh and really enjoying her job."

Mimi Gochman (USA) and Inclen BH, owned by DG Sport Horse LLC, finished second with a double-clear performance in 33.55 seconds, while world number two rider Ben Maher (GBR) and his own Faltic HB were third in 34.68 seconds.

BLUMAN AND GEMMA W PUT THE SPEED IN STARS & STRIPES



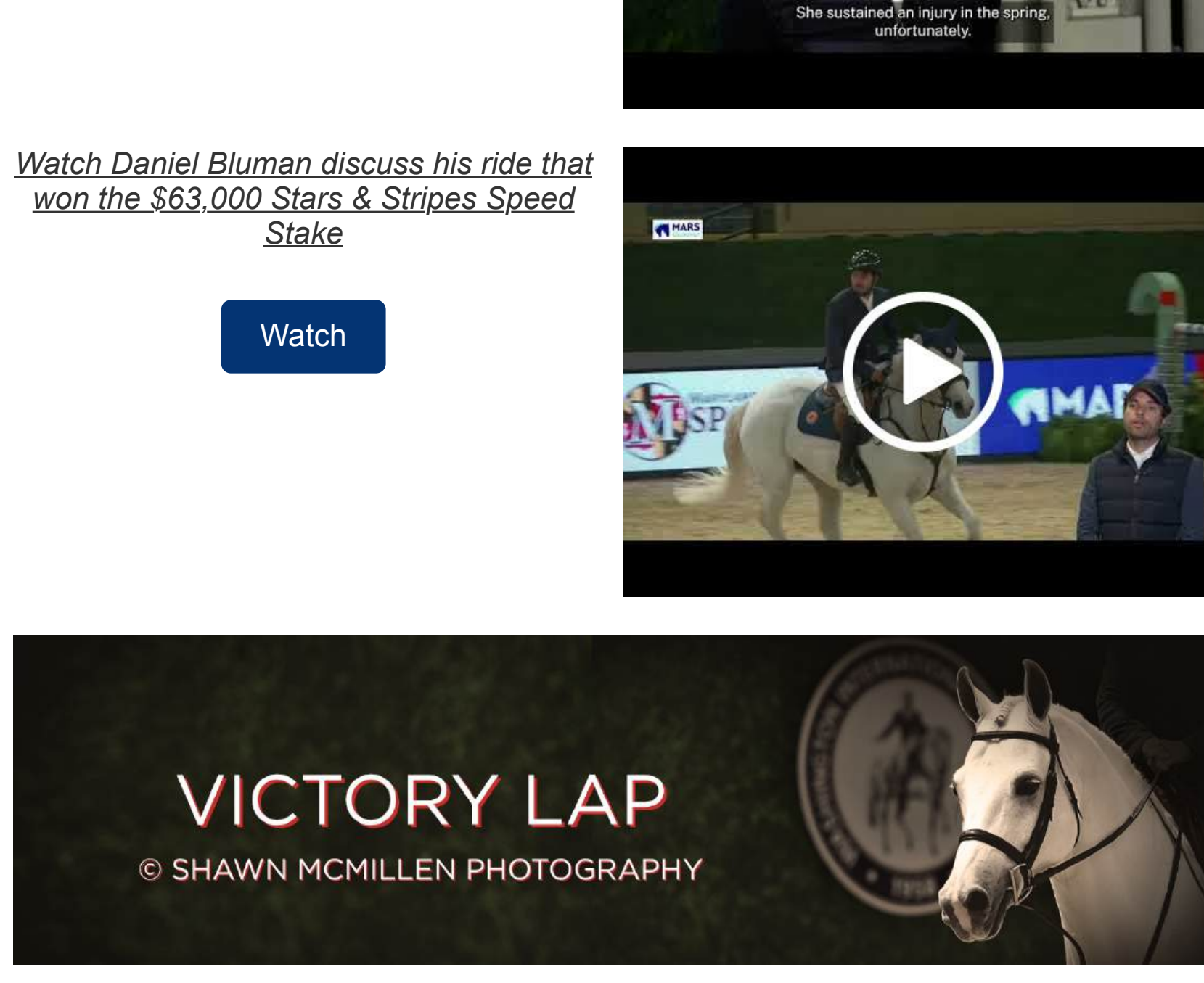
By leaving out strides and make very short turns, Daniel Bluman made it look easy when he and Gemma W cruised to victory in the \$63,000 Stars & Stripes Speed Stake. The faults-converted format class added three faults for every rail down, but by leaving the jumps up and being fast, Bluman handily took the win with a time of 54.98 seconds. It was nearly two second faster than Kaitlin Campbell (USA) riding Cosm Hased for owner Mirasol Equestrian, LLC, who stopped the timers in 56.79 seconds. Rodrigo Pessoa (BRA) and Corrie 9, owned by Artemis Equestrian Farm LLC, placed third in 57.11 seconds.



Daniel Bluman has made a winning change to Gemma W's career. Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

While Gemma W was one of Bluman's main grand prix horses for years, she has taken a bit of a step down in 2025. She has competed in some five-star qualifying classes, but mostly more 1.50m-1.55m events in lower-rated shows. It's where Bluman feels she fits best, and her record shows it; Gemma finished in the top five in 12 of 19 classes in 2025.

"It's very important to listen to your horses, and Gemma is a fantastic horse," said Bluman of the 14-year-old KWPN mare by Luidam x Unaniem. "She's given me everything since the first day that we started to work together, and I didn't want her to start feeling that she wasn't competitive anymore."



Daniel Bluman and Gemma W with groom Phoebe Leger; ringmaster Phil Thomas; WIHS President Vicki Lowell; TAPS Vice President of Sports & Entertainment Diana Hosford; TAPS President and Founder Bonnie Carroll; and WIHS Board Member Jon Kreitz, Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy (Retired). Photo by [Shawn McMillen Photography](#)

[Read More](#)

Hunter and jumper action at the 2025 WIHS will continue on Friday, October 24, as the junior hunter divisions crown their champions throughout the daytime schedule. Junior and amateur show jumping competitors will take center stage in The Show Place Arena in the late afternoon for the \$10,000 1.20-1.25m Junior/Amateur Jumper Classic, before high-flying action returns in the evening. The MARS Barn Night, presented by Walkenbach Equestrian, features a full slate of entertaining competition featuring the \$63,000 FEI Accumulator Costume class along with Sylvia Zerbin's Grande Liberté exhibition followed by the WIHS Shetland Pony Steeplechase, presented by Artemis Farms. Don't miss a minute – buy your tickets now at www.wihs.org/tickets.

BEHIND THE BLUE RIBBONS



Hear McLain Ward's thoughts on First Lady and her return to five-star competition

Watch



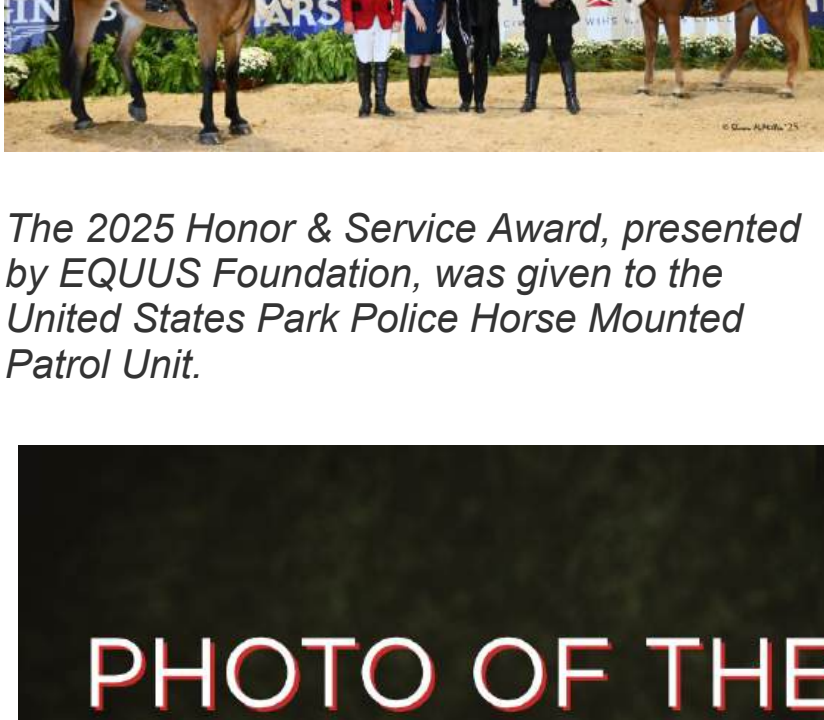
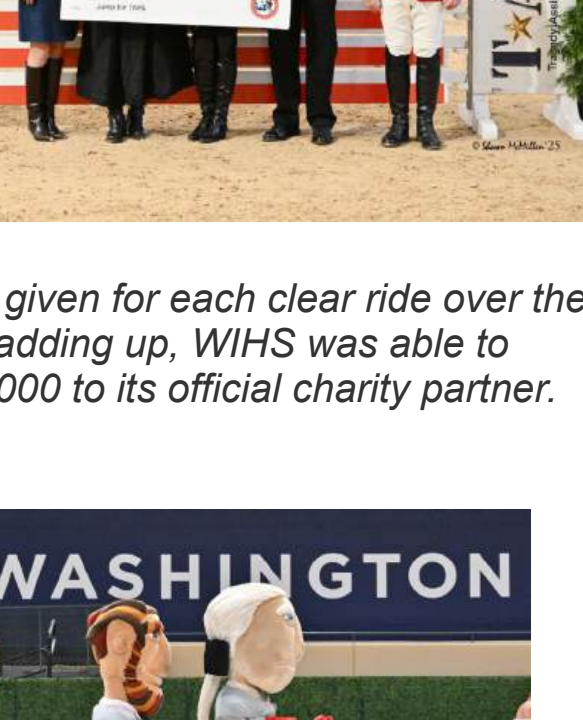
Watch Daniel Bluman discuss his ride that won the \$63,000 Stars & Stripes Speed Stake

Watch

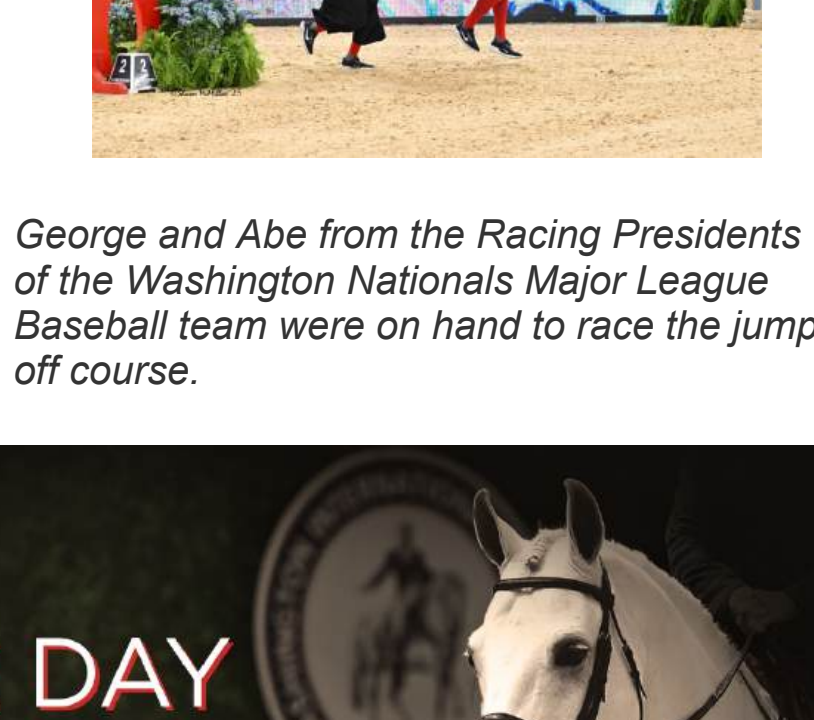


VICTORY LAP

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Mimi Gochman and Inclen BH were second in the \$63,000 FEI Welcome Stake



Third place in the \$63,000 FEI Welcome Stake went to Ben Maher and Faltic HB



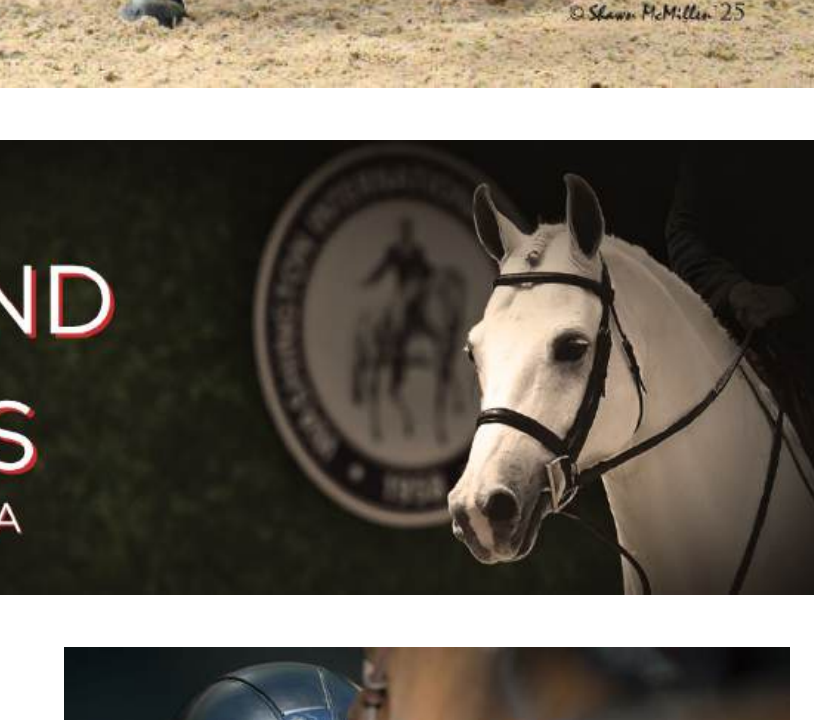
Kaitlin Campbell and Cosm Hased were just off the mark for second in the \$63,000 Stars & Stripes Speed Stake



Rodrigo Pessoa and Corrie 9 were speedy for third place in the \$63,000 Stars & Stripes Speed Stake



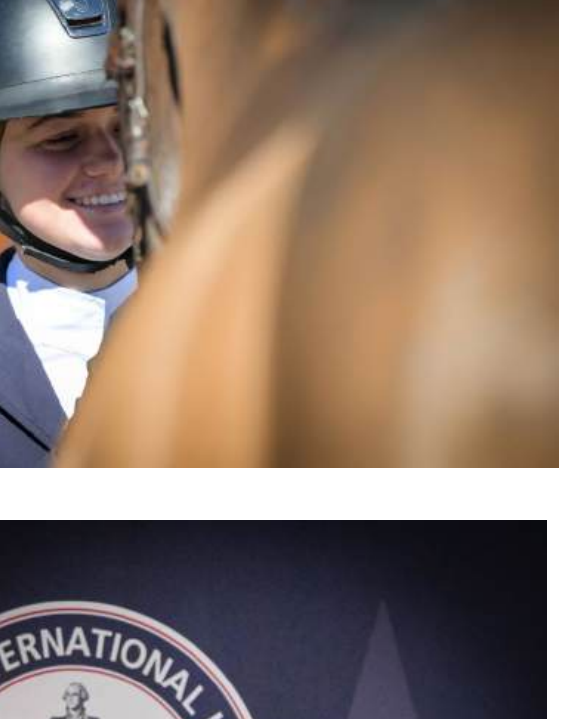
The Color Guard with Police Officer for Prince George's County Police Department, Alexander Strachan, performing the National Anthem on violin.



George and Abe from the Racing Presidents of the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball team were on hand to race the jump-off course.

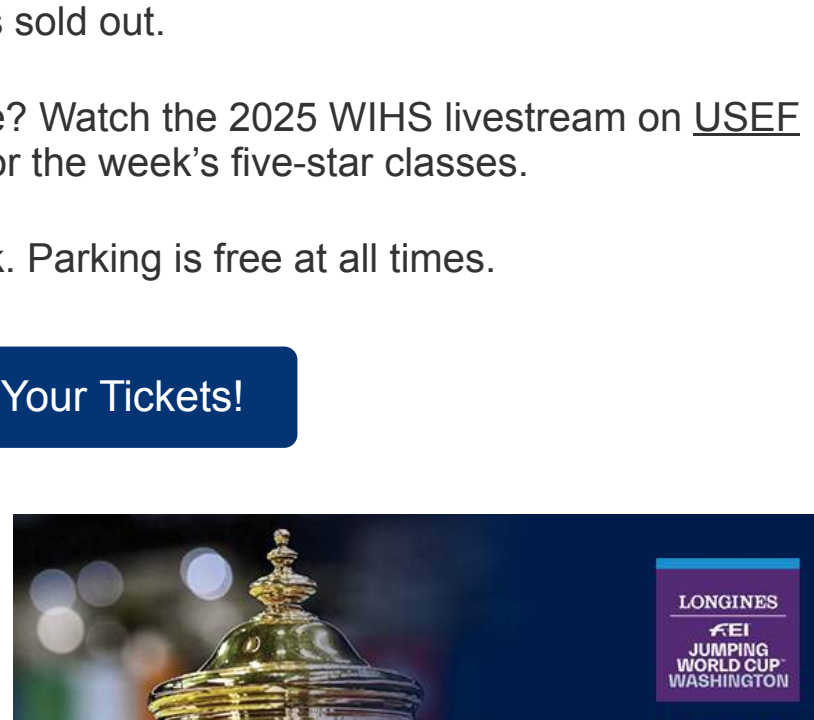
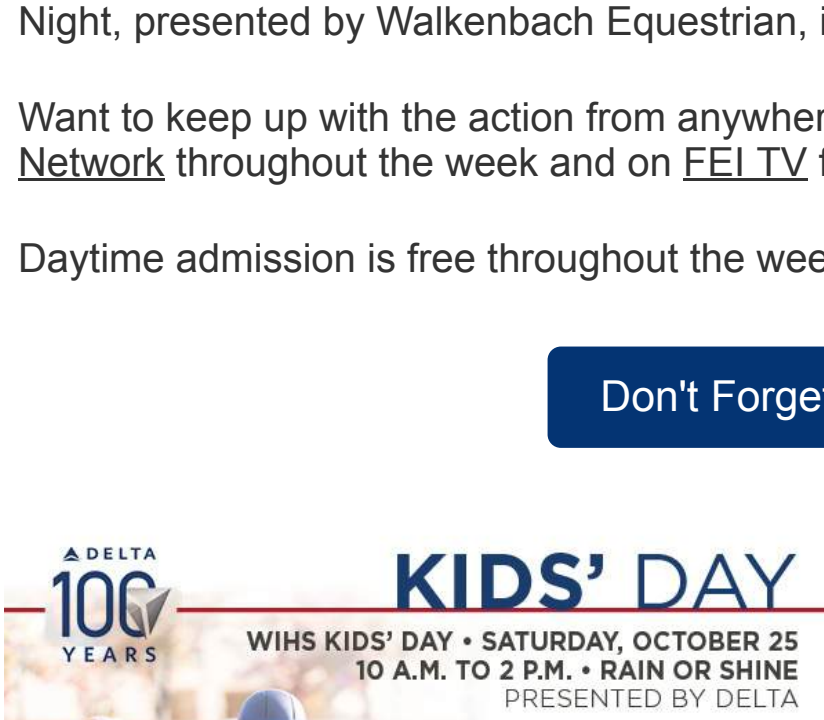
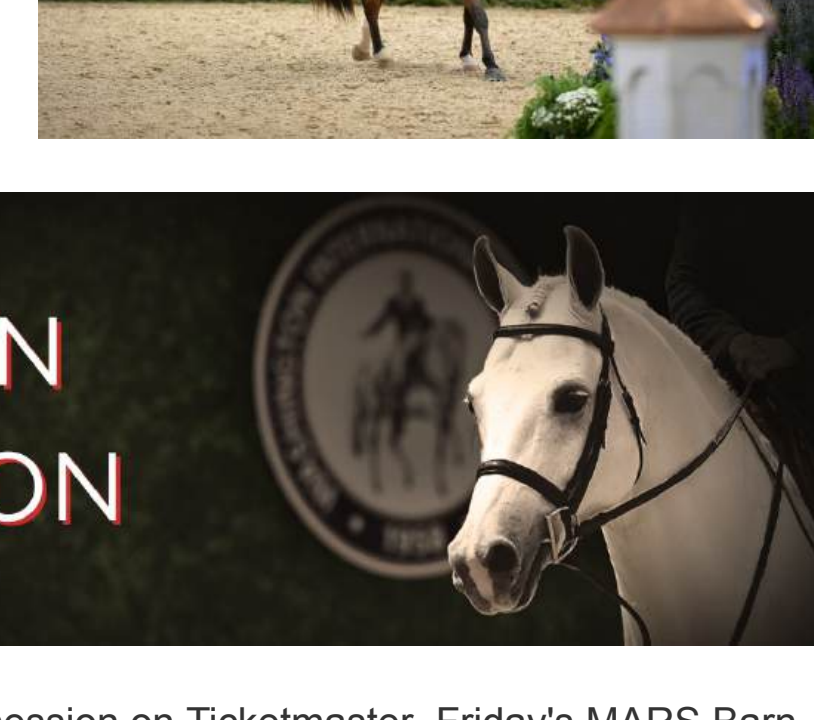
PHOTO OF THE DAY

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SHOWGROUND SNAPSHOTS

© ALDEN CORRIGAN MEDIA



COUNTDOWN TO THE ACTION



Buy your tickets today for Saturday's evening session on [Ticketmaster](#). Friday's MARS Barn Night, presented by Walkenbach Equestrian, is sold out.

Want to keep up with the action from anywhere? Watch the 2025 WIHS livestream on [USEF Network](#) throughout the week and on [EEL TV](#) for the week's five-star classes.

Daytime admission is free throughout the week. Parking is free at all times.

Don't Forget Your Tickets!



The WIHS Grand Prix Fan Guide Powered By EquiRatings is now available! [Click to Read](#)

The 2025 WIHS Souvenir Program is now available online at wihs.org/! [Click to Read](#)

For more information, visit www.wihs.org.

About Washington International Horse Show, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization

Established in 1958, the Washington International Horse Show is one of North America's most prestigious, competitive, and entertaining equestrian events with competition for international, professional, amateur, junior and child riders. Highlights include the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Washington CSI5*-W for the President's Cup, the WIHS Equitation Finals and Children's and Adult Hunter and Jumper Championships, top national hunters and jumpers, plus popular community and charity events. WIHS is an official USEF Heritage Competition. For more information, visit wihs.org.

