



GALWAY DOWNS

For Immediate Release

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Photos Available Upon Request

Sexson Gallops To Top Of Galway Downs International Horse Trials

Temecula, Calif., March 28, 2009 – Jolie Sexson of Martinez, Calif., finished the cross-country course with the day's fastest time to take the lead in the CIC3* at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials. On Killian O'Connor, Sexson accrued 2.4 time penalties, so she'll carry a score of 47.7 into Sunday's show jumping phase.

Just a hair behind her, with a score of 49.8 penalties, is Kelly Prather of Bodega, Calif., on Ballinakill Glory. Amy Tryon, of Duvall, Wash., dropped from second to third on Leyland (51.6). Prather had 8.8 cross-country time penalties, while Tryon had 12.4.

Overnight leader Tiana Coudray retired Ringwood Magister on course after a run-out at one of the brand-new jumps across the racetrack introduced for this event by course designer Ian Stark. Eight of the 14 starters had no jumping faults, and five horses incurred one refusal or run-out.

Ringwood Magister was the only horse to not complete the CIC3* cross-country course.

Sexson rode today with her eyes on the future: She plans to make her next start with Killian O'Connor at the prestigious Rolex Kentucky CCI4* on the last weekend in April. So her goal was to have a fast, clean cross-country round at Galway Downs. "And he was fantastic," Sexson proclaimed of the gray, Irish-bred gelding she co-owns with Tracy Bowman.

“Ian has really stepped this course up, and it’s just another example of how Galway Downs helps us West Coast riders be ready to compete in other international events on the East Coast or in Europe,” said Sexson. “My horse is so ready for Kentucky now.”

With the top three horses separated by only 3.9 penalties, the show jumping course is looming as the competition’s decider since each fallen rail adds 4 penalties. Plus, fourth-placed Hawley Bennett is only 2.3 penalties behind Tryon.

Sexson is cautiously optimistic about the final day. Admitting that her show jumping scores have been disappointing in the past, she said that she and Bowman, working with 2004 Olympic gold medalist Leslie Law, have developed a new strategy to keep Killian O’Connor relaxed on course. The strategy helped the pair win their last competition prior to Galway Downs, and Sexson hopes it will work again.

“Show jumping is always hard because of the pressure, because you want to prove that you belong here. But I’m thinking I’ve got my groove going now,” said Sexson with a smile.

Julie Ann Boyer, of Agua Dolce, Calif., took over first place in the CIC2* by riding Rumor Hazit to a completely faultless round, for a total of 47.3 penalties. Amy Tryon and Nicodemus surrendered their leading position by adding 8.8 time penalties but still hold second (52.3).

Elsie Patterson, of Woodland Hills, Calif., was also faultless on Normandy Soldier and climbed from fifth to third (53.8).

Lindsay Connors, of El Granada, Calif., added no penalties to her dressage score and still holds a comfortable lead (46.3) in the CIC1* on Ballingowan Pizazz. Amber Levine, of Santa Rosa, Calif., is second on Nantucket Red (52.3).

The show jumping phase of the Galway Downs International Horse Trials begins on Sunday with the CIC1* at 11:00 a.m. For the CIC3* and CIC2*, show jumping runs from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the gate, with children under 12 free.

More than a dozen generous sponsors provide prize money, prizes and other support to the Galway Downs International Horse Trials. The sponsors include: Succeed, Equine Insurance of California, Toklat Originals, Sonoma Saddle Shop, CWD Saddlery, USEA, American Wood Fibers, Custom Saddlery, SmartPak Equine, Doug Hannum, APF, and the clinicians and participants in Galway Downs’ annual fundraiser clinics.

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