



For Immediate Release

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Galway Downs International Horse Trials Kicks Off World Championship Year

Temecula, Calif., Feb. 10, 2010 – At least half a dozen U.S. riders aiming to represent the United States at the 2010 Eventing World Championships will launch their selection bids at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials on March 26-28. The CIC3* at Galway Downs will be a vitally important preparation event for these riders as they head for the Rolex Kentucky CCI4* in late April, the primary U.S. selection trial for the Eventing World Championships.

Several Canadian World Championship candidates are also expected to compete in the Galway Downs CIC3*, held at the Southern California Equestrian Center, located just east of Temecula. Riders representing Mexico, Ecuador and South Africa are expected to start too.

Gina Miles of Atascadero, Calif., and McKinlaigh, winners of the 2008 Galway Downs CIC3* prior to winning the Olympic individual silver medal, will be among the favorites at Galway Downs, and they're one of the leading contenders for a World Championships birth among those currently on the U.S. Equestrian Federation's list of contenders. McKinlaigh, 16, didn't compete in 2009.

Kristi Nunnink, of Auburn, Calif., on R-Star, and Jennifer Wooten-Dafoe, of Ramona, Calif., on The Good Witch, are also on the USEF long list and are hoping their performances at Galway Downs and Rolex Kentucky will qualify them for World Championship selection. Several other West Coast riders would like to have a stellar performance at Galway Downs CIC3* to attract the selectors' attention.

These contenders include Kelly Prather, 25, and Jolie Sexson, 28, who'll each be competing in the Galway Downs CIC3*. Prather, of Bodega, Calif., earned second place in the 2009 Galway Downs CIC3* and then represented the United States at the FEI Eventing World Cup Final in Poland, last September. Prather will be looking to achieve another top performance since she's aiming Ballinakill Glory for their first start in the Rolex Kentucky CCI4* a month after Galway Downs. Sexson, of Martinez, Calif., finished third in the 2009 Galway Downs CIC3* on Killian O'Connor and then finished in the top 20 at Rolex Kentucky, the event she's aiming for again.

Heading the Canadian contenders at Galway Downs will be Olympians Hawley Bennett and Sandra Donnelly, along with veteran international campaigner Chelan Kozak.

The Eventing World Championships will be one of the eight World Championships contested by riders, drivers and vaulters from around the world during the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Ky., on Sept. 25-Oct. 10.

The Galway Downs CIC*** is a member event of the Adequan/U.S. Eventing Association Gold Cup Series, in which horse-and-rider pairs earn points at each of the eight designated advanced-level events held across the country from March to September.

The national winner is the horse-rider combination that earns the most points during the series. Galway Downs is one of the two Gold Cup events in California.

Galway Downs will also once again offer West Coast riders a CIC2* and a CIC1*, both of which are important qualifying events for other international competitions. National competition from the advanced to the novice level will also attract more than 200 horses.

For the second year in a row, the Galway Downs International Horse Trials will feature the Elite Event Horse Auction, presented by Focus on Sporthorses. All nominated horses will be presented late Thursday afternoon in the main arena. They can be tried Friday and Saturday, and the auction will be held on Saturday afternoon, after competition day has ended. All horses presented for sale must be 12 years old or younger, with a full set of leg X-rays, and veterinarians will be on hand for further evaluation.

At the inaugural Elite Event Horse Auction in 2009, 50 percent of the 10 horses presented were sold, with prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Auction manager Wendy Wergelies expects 20 horses to be presented for sale this year.

More than a dozen generous sponsors provide prize money, prizes and other support to the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. Those sponsors include: American Wood Fibers, Auburn Laboratories Inc., Custom Saddlery, CWD Saddlery, Doug Hannum Equine Therapy, Equine Insurance of California,

Point Two Air Jackets USA, Riding's Publications Inc., SmartPak Equine, Sonoma Saddle Shop, Succeed Digestive Conditioning Program, and Toklat Originals.

General admission for the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event is \$5 in advance, \$8 at the gate. VIP tickets—which include seating in the ringside tent, lunch and a full selection of beverages—are also available for \$55 per day in advance. For advance reservations, go to www.galwaydowns.com.

For more information on the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event, visit www.galwaydowns.com or call 951-303-0405. To learn more about eventing, visit the U.S. Eventing Association's website (www.useventing.com).

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