



For Immediate Release

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## **Morris Keeps No. 1 Spot On Galway Downs Cross-Country Course**

*Temecula, Calif., Nov. 3* – Heather Morris admitted that today’s cross-country performance on Genial “wasn’t always pretty,” but it was more than good enough to retain the early lead she claimed yesterday at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. With 1.6 time faults, Morris, of Lewisville, Texas, stayed atop the CCI\*\*.

A completely fault-free round elevated Leigh Mesher, of Redmond, Wash., and Mar De Amor from fourth place to second place, while Nicholas Cwick, of Saratoga, Calif., descended from second to fourth by recording 8.8 time faults on Asterix.

Morris has a lead of 6.5 penalties over Mesher, which means she can afford to lower just one rail in tomorrow’s show jumping phase to keep her lead. Cwick is another 1.9 penalties farther back.

Twice on course today, Morris took longer routes to jump less demanding option fences, decisions that caused her to finish 4 seconds slower than the optimum time of 8:00. Still, Morris thought that Ian Stark’s initial design of the Galway Downs course “rode great, exactly like I thought it was going to ride. And I especially liked that he was kind with the questions at the end of the course because Genial got tired out there.”

Some 17 of the 25 two-star starters finished with no jumping penalties, and seven of those completed the 4,430-meter course with no time penalties too. Two riders (David Adamo and Erin Kellerhouse) retired on course, and one rider (John Michael Durr) fell off and but remounted to finish.

Max McManamy also kept her overnight lead in the long-format CCI\* by riding Beacon Hill to a completely fault-free day. “It was really fun – a blast” said McManamy, 15, of riding the three-minute steeplechase phase for the first time.

The long format includes two phases of roads and tracks, plus the steeplechase, before horses and riders reach the cross-country course. The long format is the traditional three-day format. McManamy said that Beacon Hill “felt a lot different than usual when we started on cross-country – more relaxed and paying attention to me; not silly, like he can be.”

McManamy, of Templeton, Calif., hopes to take the next step in competition, to the intermediate level, next spring, after she reaches the minimum age of 16 in January.

Kristi Nunnink, the leader of the short-format CCI\*, also hopes to move R-Star up to intermediate next year, aiming for the 2008 Galway Downs CCI\*\*. R-Star “was perfect” today, said Nunnink, of Auburn, Calif. But she leads the 42-horse division by just a whisker – Tiana Coudray is just .8 penalties behind on Ringwood Magister.

R-Star is a Holsteiner mare, 6, sired by the popular Maryland-based sire Riverman. Charlotte Rather, owner of Cottonwood Ranch near Santa Barbara, Calif., bred her. “She’s very special, and my goal is to jump her around the Rolex Kentucky four-star myself. She really is the best horse I’ve ever sat on,” said Nunnink, 46.

The Galway Downs competition concludes on Sunday with the climactic show jumping phase. The short-format CCI\* begins at 10:30; the long-format CCI\* begins at 12:40; and the CCI\*\* begins at 1:45.

General admission is \$10 per day at the door.

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

*(Complete results are available at [www.galwaydowns.com](http://www.galwaydowns.com).  
Photos are available upon request.)*

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