



For Immediate Release

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Galway Downs International Horse Trials Offers New Twists On Course

Temecula, Calif., Feb. 4, 2009 – The sport of eventing is all about cross-country, and this year's Galway Downs International Horse Trials (March 27-29) promises spectators and competitors a host of new challenges. Course designer Ian Stark has made significant alterations to almost half the CIC*** cross-country course at the Southern California Equestrian Center, home to California's most important spring event competition.

“The course should have quite a different feel to it,” said Organizer Robert Kellerhouse.

In addition to the CIC***, Galway Downs will offer a CIC** and a CIC*, each recognized by the Federation Equestre Internationale. Galway Downs will offer national-level competition from the advanced level to novice level. The courses for all levels have been redesigned with Stark's unique touch.

The biggest change the CIC*** competitors will see is that, for the first time, the cross-country course will wind through the infield of the race track adjacent to the cross-country course. Stark, the four-time Olympic medalist from Great Britain, wanted to take advantage of the undulating

terrain in the racetrack's infield and has built obstacles that cleverly use the undulations that will test the horses and riders.

Stark has also created a new combination at the first water combination and built an impressive new corner to lead horses out of the second water combination. All told, Stark has made changes to approximately 14 of the three-star cross-country jumps.

Gina Miles, the 2008 Olympic silver medalist who won the 2008 Galway Downs CIC*** on her Olympic partner McKinlaigh, insists that the event plays a significant role in preparing West Coast riders to be competitive anywhere in the world. "Galway gives us a chance to run over a serious track to prepare for any competition," said Miles. "I really loved Ian's new course last year. He really gave us some new tests, so I can't wait to see what he does this year."

The Galway Downs CIC*** will also be 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.

In 2008 Californian Tory Smith, a full-time student at UCLA, claimed the Adequan/USEA Gold Cup title on her own Bantry Bay.

A new feature at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials will be the Inaugural Elite Sport Horse Auction, presented by Focus on Sporthorses. All nominated horses will be available to be observed and tried on Thursday in the main arena, and the auction will be held on Saturday afternoon, after the 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.

More than a dozen generous sponsors provide prize money, prizes and other support to the Galway Downs International Horse Trials. The sponsors are listed on the Galway Downs website.

General admission for the Galway Downs International Horse Trials 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 Horse Trials and the Elite Sport Horse Auction, 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).

[Reminder to all media representatives: Requests for media credentials must be received no later than March 23. Contact the press officers.]