



GALWAY DOWNS

For More Information: Contact

Press Officers John Strassburger & Heather Bailey

[707-217-5072](tel:707-217-5072)/phoenixfarm@hughes.net

Collier Jumps to the Lead At Galway Downs International Three-Day Event

Temecula, Calif., Nov. 2— Anna Collier and her spectacular jumping chestnut Uppercrust D have been knocking at the door of a big win for some time, and after a nearly flawless show jumping performance, she found that her time had come. They lowered only one rail to finish first in the CCI** at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event with a score of 56.2, ahead of Canadian Kerry Johnston aboard the striking black stallion Warrick (57.5). Johnston won the tiebreaker, giving third to Tamra Smith and Chaos Theory, who also finished on 57.5 penalties.

Smith had been leading with her other horse, Scott Kuhlman's chestnut Thoroughbred Gallipoli II, but two fallen rails and a refusal dropped them to ninth place, giving the win to Collier.

“I was definitively surprised to win,” said Collier. “I thought I'd be second or third. It's been awhile since I won a three-day.” She'd previously won the Galway Downs CCI** eight years ago aboard her previous mount, Leopold.

Collier credits trainer John Camlin with her win here. “He kind of forced me” to come here she said with a laugh. “He felt I needed the seasoning, and he said he was sure we could win. He’s helped me bring this horse along from the very beginning.”

Collier plans to continue working on their confidence at the advanced level and to compete at the CIC*** at the Galway Downs International Horse Trials in March. “[This weekend] definitely helped both of our confidence levels,” said Collier. “It’s just a great way to end the season.”

Second-placed finisher Johnston traveled more than 30 hours over three days to get to Galway Downs, and was rewarded with her best-ever placing in her fourth CCI**. She moved steadily up all weekend to finish on her dressage score and take home the red ribbon. She found Warrick, a 10-year-old Hanoverian/Oldenburg by Wodan, out of a Furioso mare, at a farm in Alberta three years ago. He was unstarted, but once he went in to work, he progressed rapidly. He started competing at the intermediate level after only two years under saddle, but now she is going slowly.

“I’m trying to get him really solid at the level before we move up,” she said.

The Summerland, B.C., resident works as a lab assistant when not teaching and training, and she stands and breeds Warrick herself. She credits her lifelong coach Terese Washtock with her competitive success.

“I always though my goal was just to compete at the CCI** level, but now I want to do more,” she said with a smile.

David Koss and Ben Cruise took home the Mia Eriksson Memorial Trophy for the highest-placed young rider in the CCI** division.

In the classic-format CCI* Jennifer Miller and Jeepers continued their steady climb to the top of the leader board by performing a flawless show jumping round to take first on a score of 48.9. Overnight leaders Jennifer Strauss and Another Fable lowered one rail to fall to second (49.4), and third place went to Suzy Hettich and Given Half A Chance (54.0).

The Canadian veterinarian pulled out a hat trick this weekend—she is the owner, breeder and rider of the 8-year-old Oldenburg by Pikadero out of a Thoroughbred great-granddaughter of Secretariat.

“I’m just thrilled and flabbergasted to win,” said Miller. “We just tried to do our best. The best part about this horse is his great attitude. He’s very enthusiastic about his job.”

Miller has ridden at this level for many years and had completed other classic-format events, but this was the first time with Jeepers. “His personality suits this format,” she said of her decision to run the leggy chestnut in the classic format. “He jumps one fence on the cross-country and is like, ‘OK, where’s the next one?’ He just can hardly stand himself.”

Miller was thrilled with the courses at Galway Downs. “The cross-country was great--it was a lot of fun and was a wonderful design. I thought the show jumping was also a very good track—challenging, and it suited the long format,” she said.

Miller currently lives in Cave Creek, Ariz., and trains with Frederic Bouland, whom she credits for his help in bringing Jeepers along. She was also the team veterinarian for the Canadian dressage team at the Olympics in Hong Kong in August. As grand as that experience was, nothing quite tops the special horse she’s brought in to this world.

“I’ve waited a lifetime for a horse like this,” she said with a smile. “He’s been exceptional from the beginning—even in the round pen as a baby his movement was fantastic and he was so catty. He’s just a delightful character.”

The classic-format CCI* also hosted the USEF Western Junior/Young Rider National CCI* Team Championship. First place went to the combined team of Areas VI and I: Suzy Hettich/Given Half A Chance, Katherine Erickson/Dually and Jillian Terzian/Bemont BallyGowan. Second place went to the Area VII team of Lexy Funk/Candy, Amber McCluskey/Huadoreysa and Lucia Clemetson/Proper Precaution.

In the CCI* without steeplechase, overnight leaders Robyn Fisher and Lady Calido held on to their overnight lead with a clean show jumping round that kept them just ahead of second-placed Gina Economou on Colby and third placed Elsie Patterson and Normandy Soldier. The win represents a return to the world of eventing for Lady Calido, who has competed at the advanced level but suffered a tendon injury on October of 2006. She has spent most of 2008 competing as a show jumper with Fisher, who decided on the spur of the moment to bring her to Galway Downs. Fisher was clearly ecstatic to have her Holsteiner mare back.

“I love her, I love her, I love her,” exclaimed a beaming Fisher. “Having her back is better than your first crush. She’s the horse of a lifetime for me, and I’m so lucky to have her. I have a very special bond with her, and it’s something I’ve yet to find with another horse.”

Their triumph came despite Fisher feeling that she could have ridden the show jumping phase a bit better. “I have a bad habit when I’m nervous that when I don’t see something, I keep picking until I do, and a few of the jumps we got way to the base,” she admitted. “But she’s so good and tries so hard, and she jumped me out of those spots.”

Fisher is uncertain what the future holds, but is clear what her priorities with the mare will be. “I think I’ll continue to do both eventing and jumpers, but just be very selective about where she runs. Galway will be one of the few events in California she’ll do.

“I want to protect her,” she continued. “I don’t have any huge plans, I just want to continue enjoying and learning from her. Maybe have a few babies in the next few years.”

This year the Organizing Committee, volunteers, officials and competitors are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. First run in November 1999, Galway Downs is the longest-running CCI** and longest running CCI* currently held in the United States, and it has provided dozens of West Coast riders with upper-level competitive opportunities previously unavailable in California.

A special poster commemorating the event’s 10th anniversary is available at the event and on the Galway Downs website (www.galwaydowns.com), for \$4.

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Training-Level Three-Day Event Ends With a Nail-Biting Finish at Galway Downs International Three-Day Event

Temecula, Calif., November 2— Less than a rail separated the top three horses and riders before the show jumping phase of the training-level three-day event at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. In the end Amber Shevin of Los Angeles and her Hanoverian mare Weltina emerged triumphant following a flowing double-clear round to finish on her dressage score of 29.2.

Second place went to Debbie Davis of Clovis, Calif., and Omar, who dropped a rail at fence 3 to lose their overnight lead and finish on 30.6. Taking third was Marissa Marcotte of Danville, Calif., and her own Falcon, who finished on their dressage score of 30.8.

“It feels really cool [to win],” said Shevin. “It’s not every day you can participate in something like this and win. I feel really lucky.”

Shevin has owned the 8-year-old Weltina only since February, but she’s found the experience of the training-level three-day event to be an important milestone in her relationship with her horse. “It’s been such a great experience—I learned a lot, and all the conditioning and prep work really helped my partnership with my horse,” she said.

Shevin’s show jumping round looked smooth and polished, and Shevin credits both the effect of the classic format and the luck of the draw. “She usually has an edge before the show jumping, and today she didn’t,” said Shevin. “She wasn’t tired at all, but she just felt ready to go in the ring.”

Shevin also was able to avoid some of the reverse-order-of-placing jitters when she was allowed to go earlier in the ride order to accommodate her coach’s cross-

country ride time. “Usually I would get nervous,” she admitted. “So it was nice to go early.”

Shevin hopes her good finish at Galway Downs will be a stepping stone to future successes. “I would love to be running around at prelim in the spring, and I hope to do the [classic-format] one-star here next fall. We need to do a lot of work before it can happen, though,” she said.

“I want to thank [organizer] Robert [Kellerhouse] for putting this on, and I hope he’ll have a half-star every year, because it’s such a great opportunity. I also want to commend Ian [Stark] because the cross-country course was awesome—I loved the changes and they made it easy to have a safe ride,” concluded Shevin.

Although Davis ended the weekend with a red ribbon instead of a blue, she too was ecstatic with her experience at Galway Downs.

“I loved it! I learned so much, and I’m very grateful to Robert and everyone who made this happen. I couldn’t have done it without the generous helpfulness of everyone here. It’s just been wonderful for me,” she said.

For Davis, the experience has been educational, and it’s furthered the training and experience of her horse, a relative newcomer to the sport of eventing. The 12-year-old by Juventus was imported from Holland as a 3-year-old and had started life as a dressage horse.

“I have a sharper, bolder horse,” she said. “He really learned to jump out of stride like he never could have learned without the steeplechase. He’s fitter and more prepared for my goal of moving up to preliminary. I can’t conceive of a better opportunity to prepare for [the next level] than this.”

Third-placed Marcotte and her horse Falcon, an 11-year-old Hanoverian/Thoroughbred-cross, are also newcomers to the sport, and in fact are only part-timers. The pair concurrently competes at fourth level in straight dressage. After succumbing to pressure from her trainer and boss Alexis Hellfrich, she tried eventing for the first time last year. Although dressage is her first love, she enjoys eventing and was delighted with her first classic format.

“It was a really cool experience. I almost didn’t sign up for it because I was a little afraid of the fitness required and the speed of the steeplechase,” she admitted.

But, after taking part in the steeplechase school with Ian Stark available to all the riders and attending the many educational clinics offered throughout the weekend, her confidence soared. And, after seeing the positive changes in her horse, she is sold on the classic format.

“He was going from the very beginning,” she said of her cross-country round. “It usually takes a couple of jumps to get warmed up, but not yesterday.”

The horse she had after phases A, B, C and D gave her her first double-clear show jumping round at the training level.

Marcotte, 19, attends Diablo Valley College and rides at Denville-Kanani farm, doing both dressage and eventing. She has worked for eventing trainer Alexis Hellfrich there for 2 1/2 years. She hopes Galway Downs continues to hold the training-level three-day event, because she hopes to compete in it again in 2009.

“I don’t really plan on moving up anytime soon,” she said with a laugh. “I think I need a few more of these.”

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