



GALWAY DOWNS

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Smith And Gallipoli II Take First At Galway Downs International Three-Day Event

Temecula, Calif., Oct. 31— Tamra Smith, of Hemet, Calif., has grabbed the first-day lead at the Galway Downs International Three-Day Event. Riding Gallipoli II to a score of 46.9 penalties, Smith claimed first place by 3.8 points in the CCI**. She also guided Chaos Theory to 11th place (57.5).

Anna Collier, of Tigard, Ore., rode Upper crust D to second place (50.6), and Anne Carr, of Everson, Wash., rode Safari to third place (50.9). Some 17 horses performed in the CCI** today, coming from California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and British Columbia.

Gallipoli, a 15-year-old, Thoroughbred gelding, is owned by Scott Kuhlman, a young rider who's a student of Smith's. "Scott isn't quite ready for the intermediate level yet, so I'm giving him some experience," said Smith. "He's an incredible, amazing horse, so I'm very excited."

Smith is especially excited about riding both of her horses tomorrow over the cross-country course designed for the second consecutive year by Ian Stark of Great Britain, a four-time Olympic silver medalist.

“The course is completely different from 2007, and it has some serious questions we haven’t seen here before. But I have faith in Ian that the jumps will ride well,” said Smith.

“This is definitely not a dressage test,” added Smith. “I predict that there are going to be a lot of changes on the scoreboard tomorrow.”

Jennifer Strauss, the leader of the classic-format CCI*, agreed with Smith’s prediction. But she’s hoping she won’t be one of those changes. She’s just moved from Lexington, Ky., to Phoenix, Ariz., and has come to ride at Galway Downs for the first time. Straus, 27, guided Another Fable, 11, to a narrow lead (45.4) and also guided Galveston, 10, to 18th place (57.9).

Susanna Holder, of Alameda, Calif., stands second on FDF Riverina (45.7), and Jennifer Miller, of Cave Creek, Ariz., stands third on Jeepers.

Another Fable is a Dutch Warmblood/Thoroughbred-cross Strauss’ aunt raised from a foal. Strauss has trained and competed him since he was 4. She’s been competing him successfully at the intermediate level and hopes to move him up to the advanced level next year. So “I decided to run in the classic format here because it was the perfect time in his education,” said Strauss.

Adrienne Hillas, of Bell Canyon, Calif., said she had “tears in [her] eyes” when she finished her dressage test on High Tower, earning a score of 42.1 that gave her the early lead in the short-format CCI*. Hillas, 21, has owned High Tower, 10, since March 2007, and she said that this was his best performance ever. Dressage “has been a very long process, especially coming up with a routine that works for him,” she added.

That routine involves taking him for a gallop early in the morning, before starting her dressage warm-up. “Basically, we gallop until he takes a deep breath,” said Hillas. And then she warms him up for his test “for at least an hour.”

She too is looking forward to Stark’s cross-country course. “There are certainly challenges out there to keep us on our toes, but I think we’re both a lot more confident,” said Hillas.

The training-level three-day event is a new feature at Galway Downs this year, and 34 riders competed in dressage today. Debbie Davis, of Clovis, Calif., took a convincing lead by scoring 26.6 on Omar. Elisabeth Nicholson, of Metamora, Mich., is second on Reveille II (28.9), and Amber Shevin, of Calabasas, Calif., is third on Weltina (29.2).

The training-level three-day event is designed to be an educational introduction to this more physically and mentally demanding level of competition, and the Galway Downs organizers have offered the riders a series of seminars throughout the event. These seminars have covered such topics as preparing and presenting your horse for the veterinary inspections, how to ride the steeplechase phase, and equipment and procedures for the 10-minute box.

Davis said that these seminars “have been extremely helpful. I couldn’t have done this without them.”

Davis and Omar completed the minimum four training-level horse trials in preparation for this three-day event (winning one and placing well in the other three). Omar was a dressage horse “who kind of hit the wall in that sport,” said Davis, and then started jumping with a show hunter trainer. When Omar was offered for sale, a friend who knew him called Davis. “As soon as I sat on him, I knew I had to have him,” she said.

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.galwaysdowns.com), for \$4.

Complete results are available at www.galwaydowns.com.