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for more information, contact
Ginny Simon, 610-889-2036,
gsimon@projectmarketinginc.com

Nothing Dampens the Sprit at Dressage at Devon

Dressage at Devon 2015: Day 5

(October 3, 2015) Devon, PA - For the first time in its 40 year history, a deluge of rain and the concern for the safety of the riders made it necessary to postpone the FEI Grand Prix B, the qualifier for the Grand Prix Freestyle, until today. As a result, the Grand Prix Freestyle was moved to Sunday. So, Saturday's schedule looked a little different than in the past 40 years. But it was a truly exciting day with great performances.

FEI Intermediaire 1

The day in the Dixon started off with the FEI Intermediaire 10 CDI3, won by Folkestone (Fidertanz x El. Kattulika), a 9-year- old Oldenburg gelding. Rebecca Langwost-Barlow is a USDF Gold, Silver and Bronze Medalist and one of the earliest USDF certified trainers to the Fourth Level as well as a world-ranked Grand Prix rider – and a Dressage with the Experts commentator. Speaking of Folkestone, she said “the carriage on that horse was really impressive. He had by far the most consistent uphill balance and engagement. The rider rode very accurate corners and used them very well.”

“At this level you’re looking for a horse that has a good attitude, has the desire and has ability. You don’t expect it all during the whole test. There were a few horses that demonstrated raw talent and it will just take time. Others may not have been as talented but they had super ridability. “ We can look forward to seeing many of these horses in upcoming shows.

Young Riders Shine Through the Rain at Dressage at Devon

Today, young riders from three different countries braved the rain and wind to show off their horses in the FEI Young Rider Individual Test and the FEI Young Rider Grand Prix.

S-Judge Debbie Rodriguez provided commentary for the events through the “Dressage with the Experts” program. Rodriguez explained that these events show case up-and-coming young riders. The FEI Young Rider Grand Prix is limited to top-level riders between the ages of 16 and 25. Megan Lane, of Loretto Ontario, Canada, took home the top prize in this class with Deer Ridge Equestrian’s San D’or, a 10-year-old Westfalen gelding. The pair scored an impressive 69.884%. Rodriguez commented that the judges rewarded Lane’s risk taking in showing off her horse’s bold movement, elasticity, and quality of gaits. According to Rodriguez, the class was full of “savvy competitors” that embodied the highest level of competition.

Earlier in the day, Juan Matute, Jr., took home the blue ribbon in the Young Rider Individual Test on Juan Matute, Sr.’s Quantico Ymas, a bay Hanoverian gelding. Matute, Jr., riding for Spain and based out of Wellington, Florida, scored 68.816% to top the class of seven. Rodriguez explained that the judging for this class focused on the frame and balance of the horse, rather than just the individual movements during the test. She noted that riders and horses, such as Matute and

Quantico Ymas, who were able to demonstrate a more advanced level of frame and carriage, were rewarded.

FEI Grand Prix Special Open CDIW

Canadian rider, Leah Wilson Wilkins, and her mount, Fabian JS, rode to the top of the class in the FEI Grand Prix Special Open with a score of 69.608%. “He shines in this test,” says Leah of the bay gelding, “it just flows nicely.” She explains that the Grand Prix Special test includes many transitions and an extensive amount of passage, ideal for displaying the talents of an elastic horse. “I can rev him up in the trot extensions and then coil him down for the passage.” Owned by Maria Simpson, Fabian is sixteen and according to Leah, he is a late bloomer because he does not have an extensive show history. The pair will be wintering in Florida, but Leah cannot say what comes after that. After all, when it comes to horses, it’s hard to predict the future. “I’m just enjoying the moment,” she says.

Danish Pair Tops the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle Qualifier

The top riders of this qualifier will ride Sunday morning in the much-anticipated Grand Prix Musical Freestyle. The winner of this evening’s event was Mikala Gundersen, riding My Lady, turned in the blue ribbon performance in the FEI Grand Prix Freestyle Qualifier, earning a score of 72.24%. The bay Danish Warmblood, owned by Janne Rumbough, impressed spectators and judges with her suppleness, swing, rhythm, active piaffe and more. Mikala, who grew up in Denmark, now lives in Wellington, Florida. The equine team, however, maintain roots in Denmark. They travelled to Europe in both 2013 and 2014 to compete with the Danish Team; the highlight of their competitions was the 2014 World Equestrian Games in France.

The Tempel Lipizzans Continue the Classical Dressage Tradition

On Saturday, spectators enjoyed presentations by the Tempel Lipizzans. They exhibited gravity defying moves in their airs above the ground segment and joyfully danced in unison during the quadrille. The performances were made possible by four centuries of selective breeding and a strict adherence to classical dressage training. Many of the horses that graced the Dixon Oval are descendants of the 20 Lipizzans imported from Austria by Tempel and Esther Smith in 1958.

As the founder of the Tempel Steel Company, a manufacturer of steel parts, Tempel's work was centered on power, accuracy and bringing parts together to produce something greater. It's not surprising that when he and his wife saw the Lipizzan horses perform one night at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, Austria, they were captivated. The gentle Lippizans reflected the qualities Tempel admired. They were strong, moved with precision and worked in concert to create an inspiring performance. Even though the Smiths had not previously been involved in the equestrian world, they decided to bring the Lippizans from Austria to the United States. They wanted to preserve the breed along with traditional European ways of breeding and training. So the Lippizans traveled by boat to New York City, then by van to northern Illinois. Austrian riders, veterinarians and trainers made their way to Illinois too.

While the traditions of classical dressage were preserved, the Lippizans' entertained their audience was less typical. Owned by the Tempel Steel Company, the Lippizans played a key role in client entertainment. After Tempel died in 1980, his daughters, Martha and Linda, took over. Today, the horses are privately owned and perform to the public, pleasing crowds such as those at Dressage at Devon.

Tempel's granddaughter, Esther Buonanno, the program director, says, "I have an appreciation for how my family preserved the classical way in which our horses

are trained.” Their trainers understand that each horse is unique and needs to move forward at its own pace, so they do not seek shortcuts. Instead, they work with each horse according to its strengths and readiness. Buonanno says she believes that Lippizans take longer to mature than some other breeds, but they generally learn quickly and are eager to please. It’s worth the wait. Watching them perform as an ensemble is magical.

The Lipizzans will perform Sunday at Dressage at Devon. For approximate times, visit www.dressageatdevon.org.

Dressage at Devon Beneficiaries

As part of its mission, Dressage at Devon is pleased to provide financial support to four well-deserving organizations. They are the Sebastian Riding Associates(also celebrating their 40th anniversary), Work to Ride, Delaware Valley Combined Training Association and the Dressage Foundation.

Dressage at Devon would like to thank all those who worked to minimize the impact of the weather and all the competitors for their flexibility.

Dressage at Devon takes place September 29 – October 4 at the Devon Horse Show Grounds in Devon, PA. Dressage at Devon tickets are \$10 for general admission. Children 4-12 are \$5 and children under 3 are admitted free. Reserved seating is \$25 on Friday, \$35 on Saturday and \$10 on Sunday and is available online at www.dressageatdevon.org. General admission is available at the door.

About Dressage at Devon

Dressage at Devon, the largest CDI show in the US and the largest open breed show in the world, combines world-class international dressage competition and one of the world's few complete sport horse breed shows with the family fun of an International Fall Festival, featuring food and shopping for all tastes.

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