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Dressage at Devon Day 4 First Full Day of Fantastic Performances

September 28, 2019 (Devon, PA) The first full day of performance began with 4, 5, and 6 year old tests. They were followed by the FEI Prix St Georges for Amateur CDIAm, won by Heather Mendiburu (see below) on What Happen, an 18-year old bay mare. The FEI Grand Prix CDI3* (Qualifier for Class 512 GPS) was won by Jacqueline Brooks (Cedar Valley, ON) on Westwood 5 (Wolkenstein II x Lindenbluete) a 17-hand, 12-year old, chestnut gelding.

Diana Creech, also from Canada, was second on Chrevis Christo and Jessica Jo Tate, on Faberge, took home the yellow ribbon. They'll all be part of the Grand Prix Special on Saturday night!

The last (but not least) class of the night was the FEI Grand Prix CDIW

(Qualifier for the Grand Prix Freestyle). Taking the blue, with a score of 71.587 was Lindsay Kellock from Canada on Sebastien, (Sandro Hit x Feirie Dame), a 13-year old Rhinelander gelding, just off a win at Saugerties where the pair won the World Cup Grand Prix Freestyle in only the second Big Tour competition for the partners.

The red went to Brittany-Fraser-Beaulieu, also from Canada, on All In (Tango x Leontine) , 14 year old, 17.3 hand chestnut KWPN gelding, bred by H. Verstraten.

In third was James Koford on Adiah HP with a score of 69.065. Adiah HP is an 11 year old Friesian Cross mare.

New Events

The Kid's Korral, sponsored by Quest Therapeutics, was a new addition to DaD this year. Kids enjoyed hat decorating (many worn for the first time at the Hat Contest!). The first annual DaD fashion show followed the Hat Contest, featuring stylish garb for humans and their fashionable pets.

Fun with Fancy Hats – Ladies Hat Day with a Twist

As the day drew to a close, a crowd of fashionable ladies and one brave man lined up alongside the Dixon Oval to display their attention-grabbing hats and compete in the Ladies' Hat Day contest. Among others, awards included the Country Floral, a hat festooned with home-grown dahlias; the Best Dressed Man that went to a rhinestone cowboy; and Country Chic, a hat adorned with feather peonies.

One special star was the Best Dressed Child, Moira Connell of Berwyn. She decorated her hat today with brightly-colored trimmings at the Kids' Korral, which was sponsored by Quest Therapeutics.

Joy Mossholder Sporn won Best in Show sporting a 30-inch tall hat inspired by the White Queen in Alice in Wonderland, was adorned in white silk flowers and colorful butterflies. Sporn is a Devon native, which is fortunate — she had to walk to the show because her hat did not fit in the car. She likely turned a few heads on the way.

Home-Schooling Mom Wins FEI Prix St. Georges for Amateur Riders

Heather Mendiburu, who took first place in the FEI Prix St. George for Amateur Riders, describes herself as the “consummate amateur.” Her horse, What Happen, is an 18-year-old Hanoverian who was only six when she started riding him. “I love Dressage at Devon,” she says. It’s a place where she enjoys the crowds, community spirit and the chance to rub shoulders with the “big names” in dressage.

Mendiburu is the mother of five children, who span from six- to 25-years old. Until this year, when she moved the two youngest into schools, she home-schooled them all herself. As well as raising a family, she manages Woodbourne Farm in Wantage, New Jersey, which is home to an assortment of chickens, cows and horses. Plus, she also squeezes in four to five hours of riding a day.

Mendiburu says the key to tackling all these priorities at the same time as moving up the levels of dressage is scheduling. Plus, she’s had the support of her husband and training from

the likes of Scott Hassler, Jacqueline Brooks and Betsy Skinner. With a goal of achieving 70 plus scores at all levels, she hopes to be an inspiration to all amateur riders.

Graceful and Harmonic Performances by the Vaulting Team

Late into the evening on Friday, seven young women from the American Vaulting Association's emerged from the back of the main arena, eager to amaze the audience with vaulting routines full of grace and harmony.

The American Vaulting Association's Friendship team is a collection of vaulters from several vaulting groups from around the United States. The goal of this team is to come together and publicize the American Vaulting Association, while also collaborating with other members in the organization.

The team consisted of middle school and high school students, some with more than ten years of experience. Each rider performed individually, but all connected flawlessly with the horses. The vaulters ran and leaped effortlessly onto the horses, performing a series of rotations, handstands, and other acrobatic moves accompanied by music.

Cindy Rohrer, coach of the Silver Moon Vaulters in Virginia, explained this group of girls has never before performed as a team. Also, some vaulters have never been on the horses who participate in this performance.

Heather Merrell, who was a handler in Friday night's show, is also a vaulting coach in North Carolina. She learned about

vaulting at Pony Club at a young age and never looked back. Merrell emphasized it helps to have ballet, gymnastics, or equestrian experience to break into the vaulting world. Most vaulters start at a walk, learning the basic moves and how to balance while completing complicated aerobatics on a horse's back; however, the goal is to perform at a canter.

While she loves the connection that she forms with her horse when vaulting, she also loves training them. She explained that there must be a relationship of trust between the horse and the handler for the horse to travel swiftly and safely for the vaulter. Through this connection between the horse, rider, and the handler, an impressive performance ensues, demonstrating balance and harmony.

For up-to-the-minute results, go to www.dressageatdevon.org and click on Live Results at the top of the page.

Great performances will grace both rings on Saturday. The Silent Auction will continue but will close at 6 - so get those bids in. And,

About Dressage at Devon (www.dressageatdevon.org)

Dressage at Devon has been a premier North American Equestrian event since its founding in 1975. It combines world-class dressage competition and the world's largest open breed show with the international Fall Festival show and special activities for the entire family. The six-day event attracts hundreds of riders from around the world and thousands of spectators. Dressage at Devon is a 501(c) (3) PA non-profit organization, benefitting equine education.

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