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

**Dressage at Devon Day 6
Freestyle Performances, Stick Horses, Markey the Unicorn and
More**

September 30, 2019 – (Devon, PA) – Youth dominated the showgrounds on Sunday, the final day of Dressage at Devon 2019. From the well-attended Blessing of the Animals, led by Father Larry McCormick, to young children excitedly riding their newly made stickhorses down the centerline of the Dixon Oval, to children posing with Markey the Unicorn, to the FEI Young Rider's Freestyle, future dressage stars were everywhere you looked (often with proud parents looking on).

The FEI DCIU25 Grand Prix Freestyle was won by Tanya Strasser-Shostak (daughter of top rider Evi Strasser) on Renaissance Tyme, a 16 year old Oldenburg (Royal Diamant x Valencia), another familiar name in the world of dressage and, of course, at Dressage at Devon.

Bottom line? The future of dressage riding looks great.

FEI Young Riders Freestyle

Hannah Irons, 19, of Queenstown, Maryland, and Scola Bella (Scolari x Walona), a 10-year-old Hanoverian, put in an impressive performance to win the FEI Young Riders Freestyle class with a score of 73.485, a personal best. Hannah is a member of the Region 1 (USDF) North American Young Rider Dressage Team that claimed the championship in August.

Irons has been riding Scola Bella, a.k.a. Bella or Queen Bella, for two years. However, 2019 was her debut in the show ring. Irons is grateful for being able to lease Bella courtesy of Dressage4Kids, an organization dedicated to encouraging riders under 21 to become true horsemen. In 2018, after Bella sustained injuries and required time off, Irons learned that she had to be flexible in her goals. Instead of showing, Irons used the year to shore up their relationship and build the trust so essential to enhancing performance, especially in the show ring. “She has to trust you. You have to have a strong connection with her before you ask for more expression.”

Irons is proud of what Bella accomplished at Devon, demonstrating the same level of performance they have at home. That’s challenging in any show environment, especially one as electric as Devon. “It’s my favorite show,” says Irons. “There’s a community feeling. The crowd knows the sport and enjoys it.” Plus, as a bonus, her grandparents came along with her mother to cheer her on.

A Conversation with Olympic Dressage Rider Jacqueline Brooks

To Dressage at Devon fans, Jacqueline “Jacquie” Brooks is a familiar face. After all, to the spectators’ delight, she returns frequently. “Devon is my favorite. Look at it,” she says with a sweeping arm gesture towards the Dixon Oval. For Brooks, it’s about the atmosphere. “The townspeople coming out to support it. Last night, people were coming out from town who had never seen a horse, and they were asking for autographs,” she says.

Brooks started competing with Westwood, a 12-year-old Hanoverian early in 2019. She describes him as a calm, quiet, cuddly horse who finds all his work equally easy. “To have a horse that can do all the movements of the Grand Prix is rare,” she says. “Usually, they have one movement that’s more difficult for them.”

When comparing him to D Niro, a.k.a. “Goose,” the Swedish warmblood gelding that she retired at the end of 2018, she says, “They are unusually similar horses. Both are big and strong, which I like, and they’re very strong in the contact.” Westwood, however, is taller, a slightly more elegant mover and a little more emotionally fragile than D Niro. He loves being in the ring and doing his job. However, if Westwood tries too hard, he can become overly sensitive, so Brooks approaches his training slowly and steadily. She hopes to move from steady 68s to 70s, stepping up their scores in small, manageable increments.

She notes that part of the challenge in bringing a horse along in North America is that there are not many venues like the Devon Horse Showgrounds. “You may have the opportunity five times a year to come into a venue like this, says Brooks.” She explained that at many other venues, the show and the stay at the grounds is much longer so the experience is very different.

For complete results, please visit www.dressageatdevon.org then click on the “Live Results” link at the top of the page.

The weather cooperated – even a stray storm waited until after the last ride on Saturday. Horses and riders were at their best, the new events (Diamonds, Denim and Dressage and the Silent Auction) were a hit. Next year, will be even better. Mark your calendars for September 22 to September 27, 2020!

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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