



# WINTER EQUESTRIAN FESTIVAL WEEKLY WIRE

WEEK 6 • FEBRUARY 12, 2025



CATCHING UP WITH  
TONY STORMANNS

WELLNESS FOR  
EQUESTRIAN ATHLETES

HOPE RESTORED:  
LAST TRULY WILD HORSES

# PROTEIN:

## The Cornerstone of Performance in the Saddle

*This article is brought to you by Daily Harvest, official smoothie provider of Wellington International*

**By Carolina Schneider, MS, RD**

Everyone knows protein is important, but do you know why? Sure, it helps build muscle, but it does a lot more than that—especially for athletes. Every time you ride, your muscles are working hard to help you grip, balance, and absorb impact with every stride. All that effort causes micro-tears in your muscle fibers. Protein is what helps repair and rebuild those muscles, which not only makes them stronger but also more resilient over time.

Not getting enough protein might make you feel more fatigued, slow your recovery, and increase your risk of injury. Protein is also important for keeping

you satiated, which is key when you are training. While everyone needs protein, athletes require more—especially for recovery. While the average person needs 0.8–1.0g/kg per day, endurance athletes should aim for 1.2–1.4g/kg, while strength-focused athletes may need 1.4–1.7g/kg.

How you get that protein matters too. Proteins like salmon and tuna provide healthy fats such as omega-3 fatty acids that reduce inflammation, while plant-based options such as beans, lentils, and tofu offer heart-healthy benefits like fiber, and antioxidants that reduce oxidative stress after exercise. A good rule of thumb is to fill about a fourth of your



dinner plate with lean protein and pair it with fiber-rich vegetables and whole grains.

As a dietitian, my go-to post-workout recovery is Daily Harvest's high-protein smoothies. They make refueling easy with 20 grams of plant-based protein from organic peas, plus fruits and veggies packed with antioxidants to support recovery—all with no added sugars. Just blend and go! I also love snacks like protein bars made from whole-food ingredients, steamed edamame, or black bean dip with veggie slices to stay satisfied anytime.

Looking for nourishing, quick-to-prepare food that fits your busy lifestyle? Check out [dailyharvest.com](https://dailyharvest.com) or scan the QR code and use code **DHWEF2025** for 20% off your first plan order over \$100. Learn more about Carolina's approach to nutrition at [hungryforplants.com](https://hungryforplants.com).



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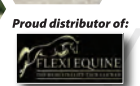
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# Rider Spotlight: TONY STORMANNS



PHOTO © CASSIDY KLEIN

**“ To me, horsemanship is not just about sitting on a horse and jumping clear over a course. It involves so much more— training others, improving horses whether you’re on the ground or in the saddle, and understanding the bigger picture. ”**

From watching at the ingate to standing atop the podium, Tony Stormanns is quickly rising through the ranks of show jumping. Despite coming from a family deeply involved in the sport, his passion for riding didn't fully ignite until he won double gold at the FEI European Championships at just 14 years old. That defining moment sparked a determination that has since led him to even greater success, including victories at the German Championships and most recently, the \$50,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic Grand Prix at WEF.

Tony, the son of Helena and Tim Stormanns, continues to develop his skills by focusing on the details of strategy and horsemanship beyond riding a course. With his sights set on a professional career, Tony remains focused on the journey ahead—one built on patience, perseverance, and the invaluable lessons learned from the horses beneath him.

### **Q How did your passion for horses begin?**

**A** My passion for riding came quite late in my career. It only developed around the age of 14 when I won double gold at the European Championships in Oliva Nova, Spain. Riding was always something I did, but I never felt particularly motivated to get on a horse by myself. It wasn't something I was truly passionate about. However, when I saw what I could achieve at such a young age—winning European Championships and gold medals—it awakened something inside me. That's how it all started.

### **Q In 2023, you achieved double gold in the Children's category at the FEI European Championships and, more recently, at the German Championships. What did these achievements mean to you?**

**A** I must say, for the first two weeks, it was difficult to process what I had achieved. Even now, I still carry it with me, and it remains one of the greatest accomplishments of my life.

### **Q How have you grown as a rider since that 2023 double gold?**

**A** I'd say I've grown quite a lot. When I was younger—around 12—it often felt like the horse was carrying me around while I just held onto the reins. There is a lot more thought that goes into navigating a course now.

### **Q What are your long-term goals?**

**A** I've been given incredible opportunities through my mother's management, my father's stable at home, and the many professional riders around me who support and guide me. I have the freedom to choose my own path, but I believe I will ultimately decide to become a professional rider.

I firmly believe in my mother's philosophy of horsemanship. To me, horsemanship is not just about sitting on a horse and jumping clear over a course. It involves so much more—training others, improving horses whether you're on the ground or in the saddle, and understanding the bigger picture.

That being said, I wouldn't call myself a true horseman yet. I still have a lot to learn and experience before I can claim that title, but I know how important horsemanship is.

### **Q What unique qualities do you think make a horse like Donjon d'Asschaut stand out?**

**A** He is best compared to a grandpa—that's the first thing that comes to mind. He's not actually that old, but he gives off that wise and steady presence. Our journey together has been ongoing for about a year now, and he has proven to be an incredibly experienced and kind horse. No matter what happens, he would never

intentionally harm me. If I make a mistake in a course, get frustrated, or misjudge a jump, he never takes it personally. That's one of the things I love most about him. On top of that, his mentality is outstanding, and he is simply an unbelievable sport horse.

### **Q You've been attending the Winter Equestrian Festival since you were 11. How does it feel now to win at a place you once watched from the stands?**

**A** I have two very distinct memories. One is of me and my friends sitting next to the ingate or in the stands, watching the competition unfold. We were horse people, but we had just as little understanding of what was actually happening in the ring as many of the spectators.

The other memory is of me winning that class, competing against the very professionals I used to watch as a kid. It's truly unbelievable.

### **Q What advice would you offer to younger riders who sit in the bleachers, dreaming of accomplishing what you have?**

**A** One of the most important things in riding—and something I remind myself of every single day—is patience. Be patient with yourself, with your horse, and with the amount of progress you make each day. Progress takes time, and every small improvement adds up over time.

# HERITAGE FARM GROOMS LUIS MANDUJANO AND LADISLAO LARA WIN \$6,000 YETI GROOMS CLASS AT WEF

*This article is part of a collaboration between HorseGrooms, Wellington International & Paper Horse Media.*

By Sarah Eakin

Heritage Farm groomers dominated the \$6,000 YETI Grooms Class held during WEF 5 and proudly supported by Ilan Ferder Stables, Sweet Oak Farm, Evergate Stables, North Star Sporthorses and North Run. Luis Mandujano topped the hunter section with Lexi Maounis' Forsini, and Ladislao Lara won the

jumpers with Grace Lowe's Kilbrackan Blue Jay.

The first YETI Grooms Class of the season—with \$6,000 in prize money on offer—saw a record number of entries. Forty-two groomers entered the class with well-turned-out horses in full tack, lined up for the judges.

Emily Williams judged the hunters and selected

Heritage's Farm's Luis with Lexi Maounis' Forsini as the winner. "I was surprised," Mandujano said. "But I am super happy."

Williams raced from showing in the 1.40m to make it for the popular WEF 5 event. "I was honored that they asked me to judge this," she said. "Between the top six, it

really could have gone almost any way. We had to really get down to the little details."

Grooms' classes at WEF have grown steadily in popularity with the aim of giving recognition to those whose work behind the scenes is essential to the success inside the ring.

Mandujano was one of



eight Heritage Farm grooms to finish in the top eight; five in the hunter group and three in the jumpers. His counterpart winner in the jumper category was selected by Jimmy Torano and Charlotte Jacobs. Lara said he was fairly confident going into the competition even though he only started working with horses three years ago when he joined Heritage Farm. "I learned very quickly," he added. "And I learned everything here at Heritage."

Lara spent most of the day preparing the horse for the YETI Grooms Class and chose Kilbrackan Blue Jay for a reason. "This is the horse that I spend most time with and I trust him," he said.

### It's All In The Details

Details proved to be the difference for the judges, and some grooms impressed with their use of creative thinking, including sunscreen, a KIND bar, and water for their riders in their backpacks. Mandujano stood out as the only groom to bring a halter with him. "You never know if you might need it," he said.

Lara, who had been a groom for six years, was surprised to win. He received a check for \$990, but concluded by saying, "It is not about the money. I am just really proud and happy for the horse."

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# AROUND THE GROUNDS

from the Wellington International Photography Collective







# CHAMPIONS GALLERY



*Zoe Rush piloted G.P.S. Brilliant Disguise to a tricolor in the Low Child/Adult Training Jumper division.*



*Marcus Au rode Designer to champion in the ESP Open Hunter 3'3" for owner Continental Stables.*



*Lisa Baugh guided Sir Santino to a championship title in the Low Adult Amateur Hunter division.*



*Chazeaux, ridden by Serenity Wol, was champion of the Vogel Children's Hunter 15-17.*



*Savannah Kelmam and Fox Creek's Chorus Doll collected a champion ribbon in the Walk/Trot ranks.*



*Elton, owned by Holman Imports and ridden by Anne Holman in the Adult Amateur Hunter ranks, earned the Champion Equine Insurance Hunter Style Award from Laura Fetterman.*



*After winning the Adequan® WEF Challenge Cup Round 5, Katanga v/d Dingshof—owned and ridden by Nicola Philippaerts—was awarded the WEF 5 Champion Equine Insurance Jumper Style Award by Laura Fetterman.*



# WEF STANDINGS



## MARTHA JOLICOEUR DOUGLAS ELLIMAN

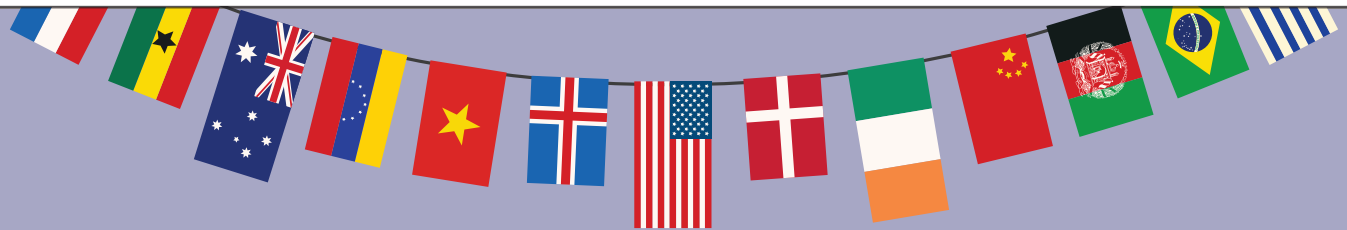


### Leading Lady Rider Award

- Natalie Dean USA – 394 pts
- Emilie Conter BEL – 306 pts
- Erynn Ballard CAN – 252 pts
- Mimi Gochman USA – 252 pts
- Lillie Keenan USA – 232 pts



PHOTO © SPORTFOT  
Natalie Dean accepts the Martha Jolicoeur, Douglas Elliman Leading Lady Rider Award for WEF 5 to retain her place at the top of the season leaderboard.



## LEADING INTERNATIONAL RIDER

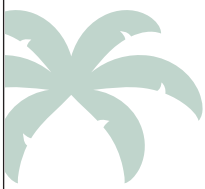
*Presented By Michael & Wendy Smith*

- Nayel Nassar EGY – 291 pts
- Luis Fernando Larrazabal VEN – 272 pts
- Carlos Hank Guerreio MEX – 266.5 pts
- Natalie Dean USA – 265 pts
- Richard Vogel GER – 229 pts

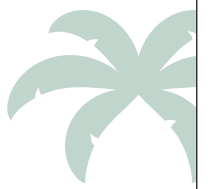
# HERMÈS SELLIER PARIS

## 1.50M CHAMPIONSHIP JUMPER SERIES

- Luis Fernando Larrazabal VEN – 163 pts
- Nicola Philippaerts BEL – 146 pts
- Cian O'Connor IRL – 133 pts
- Spencer Smith USA – 122 pts
- Mark Bluman COL – 120 pts



# WEF STANDINGS



Jeanne Reid, riding Atalante d'Uhart, currently leads the division standings in the Don Little Masters, presented by Rushy Marsh Farm.



## DON LITTLE MASTERS STANDINGS

- Jeanne Reid riding Atalante d'Uhart – 112 pts
- Lauren Brody riding Nutou – 83 pts
- Michael Smith riding Quality Time 4 – 76 pts
- Camille Pacheco Cesarski riding Flint T.S. ET – 70 pts
- Bonnie Orlowski riding Locato van het Kapelhof – 64 pts
- Patricia Hurter riding Wuali Quanti – 64 pts



## UNDER 25 GRAND PRIX SERIES

- Nina Mallevaey FRA – 159.5 pts
- Emily Dehoff USA – 156 pts
- Hallie Grimes USA – 152 pts
- Tim Brennan IRL – 134.5 pts
- Millan Morssinkhof NED – 131 pts

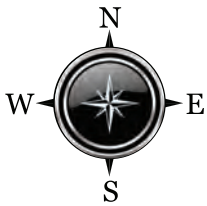


## LEADING HUNTER HORSE & RIDER AWARD

*presented by* THE IN GATE

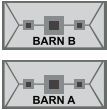
STANDINGS AS OF WEF5: 2.9.25

|   |                 |                   |         |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|---------|
| 1 | FOREVER ROMANCE | SCOTT STEWART     | 325 PTS |
| 2 | SANDORI         | GEOFFREY HESSLINK | 314 PTS |
| 3 | AVENTUS         | GEOFFREY HESSLINK | 255 PTS |
| 4 | GABRIEL         | VICTORIA COLVIN   | 241 PTS |
| 5 | MONARCHY        | GEOFFREY HESSLINK | 236 PTS |



**COMPETITION RINGS**

- International Arena
- Mogavero Ring
- DeNemethy Ring
- Rost Ring
- Grand Hunter Ring
- South Ring
- Rings 6 -12



**OFFICES & PARKING**

- 1 Exhibitor Services
- 2 Administration
- 3 Show Office
- 4 Admin Parking
- 5 VIP Parking
- 6 General Parking
- 7 Stabling / Dever

**SHOPPING AREAS**

- Bridge Deck Shops
- Farm Stand
- Hunter Hill
- Pony Island
- Ring 6 Vendors
- South Ring Vendors
- Vendor Village
- Tiki Terrace
- The Shops at Int'l Club

**SHUTTLE STOPS #**

- 1 Main Entrance
- 2 Farm Stand
- 3 Ring 6
- 4 Exhibitor Services
- 5 Vendor Village
- 6 Dever Golf Cart Rentals
- 7 FEI Barns
- 8 South Ring
- 9 South Parking
- 10 Ring 10
- 11 DeNemethy Ring
- 12 International Club

**LEGEND**

- ⊕ Medic
- 🚒 Fire Rescue
- 🚪 Gate Entry
- 🚻 Restrooms
- 🍽️ Food Vendors
- 🏧 ATM
- ♿ Handicap Parking
- 🐾 Horse Crossing
- 🛑 Shuttle Stop
- 🚌 Shuttle Route

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**TIKI TERRACE**

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Hermès  
Karina Brez Jewelry  
KAVAL  
DandyLion (WEF 1-6)  
Equestrian Stockholm (WEF 7-10)  
Julie Keyes Art (WEF 11-12)  
Serenella

**BRIDGE DECK AT TIKI TERRACE**

Dada Sport  
Michel McNabb (WEF P-2)  
Helgstrand Jewellery (WEF 3-4)  
Carol Morano Equine Art (WEF 5-6)  
Equisite Elements of Style (WEF 7-12)  
Alexander Academic Access (WEF P-1)  
DELGÉ (WEF 2)  
J Wilder Imports (WEF 3-5)  
The Calvert Collection (WEF 6-10)  
Maya Delorez (WEF 11-12)

**THE BARN AT HUNTER HILL**

LeMieux

**HUNTER HILL**

Ola' Mair Boutique  
Vanner House  
UNIQ. Jewelry (WEF P-4)  
Ryde Equestrian (WEF 5-6)

**INTERNATIONAL RING WARM UP**

Prestige Italia  
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**RING 6**

Antarès Sellier  
Voltaire Design  
THEAULT

**OASIS**

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**VENDOR VILLAGE SOUTHSIDE**

Danny & Ron's Dog Rescue  
Equestrian Team Apparel  
Optic Nirvana  
Fab Finds by Sarah  
JODS  
Sofie's Boutique  
Der Dau  
Human Touch (WEF P- 4)  
Gladiator Equine (WEF 5- 8)  
Shop Cou (WEF 9- 12)  
Equiline  
Turner & Co  
Running Fox  
Kocher Tack Shop  
Tony Hanley Supplements  
Stephex  
CWD  
Tack n Rider  
Personalized Products  
Equine Tack & Nutrition  
CM Hadfields

**VENDOR VILLAGE NORTHSIDE**

Loopy's Crepes  
The In Gate  
Ride EquiSafe  
Miki Saddlery  
Hunt LTD  
Parlanti  
Fratelli Fabbri  
EQUIS  
Vogel NYC  
Harry's Lemonade

**PONY ISLAND**

Farm Stand  
Silvia's Tacos  
Palm Beach Int'l Academy  
Florida Snow  
Hunter's Landing

**THE BARN**

Dandy Products  
FarmVet  
Josey's Laundry  
Anonymous Coffee  
Paddock Paws Veterinary Clinic

**RING 9**

Arion Sellier  
Forestier Sellier  
Sportfot  
Muddy Paws Ice Cream  
Nathalie's Café

**RING 10**

Ringside Health Clinic  
McGuinn Farms  
Magdalena's Mexican

**SOUTH BARN**

Rider's Boutique  
Zest  
Best Islands Kitchen  
Alorian Saddlery



**PLACES TO EAT**

Anonymous Coffee.....Barn 4  
Florida Snow .....Pony Island  
Harry's Lemonade.....Vendor Village  
Loopy's Crepes.....Vendor Village  
Magdalena's Mexican ...Ring 10  
Muddy Paws.....Ring 9

Nathalie's Café .....Ring 9  
Oasis Café.....Vendor Village  
BrainJuice Tiki Hut .....International Arena  
Toasties .....Vendor Row  
Silvia's Tacos.....Pony Island



# HUNTER TEAM

## In a Night under the Lights

**Nick Hanes, Ashley Weiman and Wyatt Rofey, winners of the second annual Kristen Baran \$100,000 Neil S. Hirsch Boys & Girls Club Team Hunter Exhibition.**

Hunter riders went under the lights for the second annual Kristen Baran \$100,000 Neil S. Hirsch Boys & Girls Club Team Hunter Exhibition. The event featured hunter teams of three athletes jumping a 3'3" course in the International Arena to benefit the local chapter of the Boys & Girls Club. 19 teams gave their Friday night best in hopes of taking the team title, but it was Nick Hanes, Ashley

Weiman, and Wyatt Rofey who bested the rest.

Teams consisted of a professional, amateur, and junior hunter rider. Held in a relay format, each rider jumped a portion of the 20-fence course. Scores were given from three judging panels for an average final score. Each team was afforded one drop score with the opportunity to erase their lowest-ranked performance akin to a

jumper Nations Cup. High scores of 91 from Hanes and 89 from Weiman delivered their team the victory.

Professional Hanes of Temecula, CA, piloted Queen Celeste, amateur Ashley Weiman of Ramona, CA, rode More Fun, and junior Wyatt Rofey of Brooklyn, NY, rode his own mount Becoming.

It was a night of many firsts for the winning team after forming just days before the



PHOTO © KIND MEDIA

class. Hanes was determined to get a team together in support of The Boys and Girls Club. "I called Ashley earlier this week who I know from California and told her we needed to get a team together," explained Hanes. "She flew here yesterday making today her first time in Wellington, first time under the lights in the International Arena and even her first time on this horse.

"We wanted to have fun with this class and have a team that reflected that," continued Hanes. "Wyatt is a young, up-and-coming rider who has a great partnership with his horse so together we came up with a plan of how to make tonight as fun as possible and tried to strategize across the course the best we could."

Fun was the name of the game under the lights as every ride contributed towards the mission of The Boys and Girls Club; to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Neil S. Hirsch, a significant member of the Wellington community, spear-headed the now Neil S. Hirsch Boys and Girls Club in 2012, and Neil's hope for a brighter

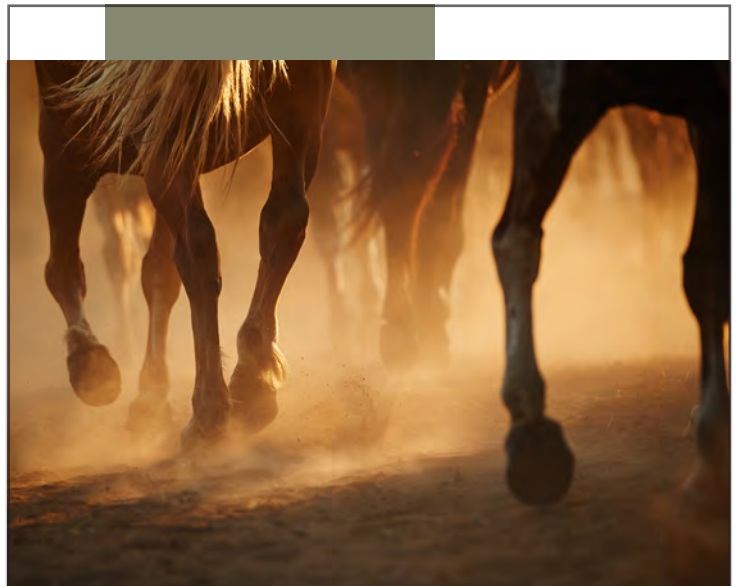


PHOTO © CASSIDY KLEIN

future has been followed ever since.

"This class is a great reflection of what Neil always wanted," said class organizer and esteemed hunter trainer Andrew Lustig. "Kristen has done a fantastic job and it's also a great night for the hunter sport."

Taking home second was Geoffrey Hesslink aboard Paisley Park, Caroline Signorino atop Salvatore, and Lily Sonneborn with Spoken. Closing out the podium was Elizabeth Towell Boyd and MTM Crossed My Mind, Elle Boyd and Hardrock Harmonie SIH, and Libbie Gordon with Spencer.



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World no. 3 Kent Farrington stormed to a five-star victory on home ground in the \$385,000 Fidelity Investments® Grand Prix aboard his 2024 FEI World Cup™ Final partner Greya in the Wellington International stadium during WEF 5.

In front of a sold-out crowd, a true test was built by 2024 Paris Olympic Games course designer Gregory Bodo (FRA) who made his U.S. debut exactly one year ago at the same event in Wellington. Despite the challenging first round, eleven pairs managed to advance to the tie-breaking jump-off. Nine of the world's top 20 athletes made up the original order with five nations represented in the jump-off.

For the second 'Saturday Night Lights' in a row, German Olympic Champion Christian Kukuk led off with his Paris 2024 partner Checker 47. They set a standard that remained at the top until Farrington returned to challenge.

Acknowledging the tough position Kukuk was in returning first, Farrington said, "In the end, our time was fractions faster. That's the difference of being a tiny bit more inside or outside in a line, and I think that's

# Kent Farrington Hails Home Win at Wellington International

## IN FIDELITY INVESTMENTS® CSI5\* GRAND PRIX



PHOTO © LAILA KLINSMANN



probably where I caught him today.

"I'm very proud of this horse," continued Farrington of 11-year-old Oldenburg mare Greya (Colestus x Contender). "I've been riding her since she was six and she's an incredible athlete. It's a great feeling to ride this horse in the ring; she's a fighter and incredibly careful. It was fun sport [tonight], regardless of the outcome. It's nice to come out with the win but I was thrilled with the horse either way."

By less than four tenths of a second, Farrington bested Kukuk—winner of the WEF 3 NetJets CSI4\* Grand Prix earlier this season and the 2024 Rolex Grand Prix at Wellington International. The U.S. Olympic team silver medalist broke the timers in

35.11 seconds to Kukuk's 35.45 as he held onto the runner-up position.

"I'm really pleased with Checker; he jumped his third grand prix here and third clear round. I'm very happy about that," said Kukuk of the 11-year-old Westphalian gelding (Comme Il Faut 5 x Come On) owned by M.H. & Partner Gbr & Madeleine Winter-Schulze. "My basic instinct told me after I came out that it wasn't enough today, and I knew exactly who was going to beat me. I tried my very best and I got a good jump-off. I think we had exactly the same strides everywhere, but in the end, I got a slow jump to the last."

Kukuk is focusing Checker on the five-star offerings while spending his first full season in Wellington and

acknowledged that his number-one goal is to defend their title in the \$750,000 Rolex U.S. Equestrian Open CSI5\* Grand Prix during the finale week of the season.

Up-and-coming U.S. phenom Mimi Gochman sat at the evening's closing press conference as an equal with some of her heroes after finishing third aboard 10-year-old Inclen BH (Stakkato Gold x Raphael). They finished third in 36.43 seconds.

"It feels incredible," said 20-year-old Gochman. "My horse jumped amazing and we had a really good plan that I tried to stick to as close as I could. When you're competing against people that you've looked up to your whole life, it's a cool

feeling and I'm super grateful to be here."

Of her DG Sport Horse-owned mount, Gochman said, "He's one of the smartest horses I've ever worked with. He has the perfect ability to do everything and he learns so quickly. We've been working on our consistency jumping clear rounds. He's always game and he's really quick across the ground.

"I've grown up watching 'Saturday Night Lights' and dreamt of doing well here," continued Gochman of the electric venue that Wellington International provides. "To have this support and be able to sell out a crowd like this is really incredible for our sport."

Echoing Gochman's fondness for competing in their home country, Farrington—a Rolex testimonee—noted, "This is a home show, a Rolex venue and I've ridden here my whole life. We have a great atmosphere, home crowd and it's always great sport. We have the best in the world with the best horses and I'm very proud that we have this level of sport here in America."



PHOTO © LAILA KLINSMANN

# LAURA KRAUT & SANDSABLAZE

Elected to Show Jumping Hall of Fame



Four-time U.S. Olympian Laura Kraut and Sandsablaze, Buddy Brown's 1976 Montreal Olympic Games mount, have been elected to the Show Jumping Hall of Fame. They will be formally inducted

during the Hall of Fame's Induction Gala on March 2, at the Wellington National Golf Club in Florida. At the induction, the Hall of Fame will also present its International Award to four-time Canadian Olympian

Mario Deslauriers, the youngest rider ever to win the FEI World Cup Final, a title he won at age 18 in 1984.

Joining them at the gala will be Katie Prudent's longtime barn manager, Francisco "Pancho" Lopez,

who was inducted last year but was unable to attend. He will receive his Hall of Fame blazer and give his acceptance speech.

Induction into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame is an honor bestowed annually upon select individuals whose accomplishments and contributions to the sport have set them apart and whose influence has had a significant impact on the sport of show jumping and the equestrian community.

### Laura Kraut

With decades' worth of experience and an impressive résumé, Laura Kraut has had an illustrious career representing the U.S. on the international stage. She has competed in four Olympic Games, three World Equestrian Games, the 2023 Pan American Games and many FEI World Cup and Nations Cup events

Kraut was named to her first major team in 1992 when she was alternate for the Barcelona Olympic Games. She made her Olympic debut in Sydney in 2000 with the all-female American team, then helped the U.S. win team gold at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Her 2008 Olympic mount, Cedric, was inducted last year. She returned to the podium at the 2021 Tokyo

Olympics and the 2024 Paris Olympics, earning team silver medals at both events. Her 2024 podium appearance made her the oldest American to win a medal at the Olympics since 1952, and the oldest female American to win a medal since 1904, breaking her own record from 2021.

Kraut helped secure medals at two of the three World Equestrian Games in which she competed, earning team silver in 2006 and team gold in 2018. She has helped the U.S. finish in the top five at all five FEI Nations Cup Finals in which she's competed, including a bronze medal in 2016 and silver in 2017. In her first Pan American Games (Chile) in 2023, she helped the U.S. to the team gold medal and placed fourth individually. She has also competed in nine World Cup Finals.

Based in Florida and Great Britain, Kraut and her longtime partner Nick Skelton run a training business that focuses on developing prospective show jumpers, both riders and horses, to their full potential.

### Sandsablaze

Sandsablaze had a storybook career that was never meant to be and may

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# HOPE RESTORED

for the last truly wild horses

PHOTO • JAN MENGR

**“If you value the natural world – if you think it should be protected for its own sake as well as that of humanity – then please support Fauna & Flora.”**

– Sir David Attenborough  
Vice-president and  
Fauna & Flora member  
since 1959.

Przewalski’s horse, the world’s last truly wild horse, has had a turbulent history. They once freely roamed the steppes of Central Asia, but, by the 1960s, decades of hunting, trapping, intensive farming and competition for grazing had driven them to extinction in the wild. But last year saw the return of this magnificent horse to the vast landscapes of Kazakhstan, after over a century. It was the result of a unique partnership - the

Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative – which brings together local and global expertise, including the world’s oldest nature conservation charity Fauna & Flora, national government and local community work.

There is nowhere on Earth like the Kazakh steppe in Central Asia. This is the largest expanse of semi-desert grassland in the world, a true wilderness. This is the habitat to which Przewalski’s horse was recently returned.

Seven horses – a stallion and six mares – were transported on a 30-hour flight from Berlin and Prague Zoos to Kazakhstan, where they were reintroduced to their native habitat. The initial seven horses are settling into their new home well.

Over the next five years, the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative and Prague Zoo plan to transport around 40 horses to central Kazakhstan to form the nucleus of a new breeding population.

Re-establishing a population of Przewalski's horse in Kazakhstan will not only help to boost their dwindling numbers in the wild, but also help benefit all the species that live on the steppe. Their dung enhances soil fertilization, boosts insect numbers and helps disperse the seeds of plants. They provide services for smaller wildlife in the landscape by facilitating access to water through their digging in dry riverbeds and lakes, and by exposing fodder hidden under thick snow cover in winter.

The partnership behind this amazing project is crucial to its success. The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative is spearheaded by Fauna & Flora's in-country partner, the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, working in partnership with the Kazakh government's Committee for Forestry and Wildlife, Frankfurt Zoological Society and RSPB. This coalition have worked closely with Prague Zoo, Nuremberg Zoo, Tierpark Berlin, and Hortobagy National Park to make the reintroduction of this

incredible horse a reality. In 2024 The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative was named a finalist for the prestigious Earthshot Prize, set up by HRH Prince William, highlighting its vital work in protecting and restoring nature.

It is an approach typical of Fauna & Flora which is a global conservation charity that protects the diversity of life on Earth, for the survival of the planet and its people, working closely with local conservation partners in well over 40 countries to save nature, together.

The charity always commits for the long term and so Fauna & Flora plans to continue supporting this groundbreaking reintroduction initiative, drawing on our long history of bringing threatened species back from the brink – from the Arabian oryx to the Antigua racer snake.

We have been using the collective knowledge and experience of our people and our partners to protect nature across the globe for more than 120 years. Worldwide, we are helping to protect and restore over 55 million hectares of crucial habitat, including forests, peatlands, grasslands, seagrass meadows and the ocean. Living in – and relying on – these habitats are millions of plant and animal species. Many are confined to a particular landscape and exist nowhere else in the world. And every last one of them is critical to a healthy planet.

**To find out more about how you can support our vital work visit [www.fauna-flora.org](http://www.fauna-flora.org)**



PHOTO © JAN MENGRO

***continued from page 18***

be unequaled in show jumping history. The chestnut Thoroughbred foaled in 1967 was meant to be a hunter and not a jumper. When he became a jumper, most thought of him as a back-up and not a first stringer, but with Brown he defied the odds and became one of the most dominant horses of the 1970s, going from the hunter and equitation ring to become a grand prix champion and a standout on U.S. teams in Nations Cups, two Pan American Games and the Olympics.

"Pappy" was purchased as a 4-year-old after Joe Darby

had shown him in the first year green hunters. He was intended to be a junior hunter and equitation horse for Brown, but Brown believed the fearless gelding could handle jumper courses. Brown started him in some 3'6" schooling and junior jumper classes and frequently found himself falling in both the schooling and show rings. It never fazed Pappy, who always got back up ready to try again, and he was soon doing bigger classes against top open jumpers.

Pappy carried Brown to the win in the AHSA Medal Finals in 1973. A year later, Pappy was selected with Brown, still

a junior, for a U.S. Equestrian Team European tour. Brown never regretted passing up that year's Maclay Finals as he and Pappy capped off the tour with a record-setting performance at the Dublin Horse Show, turning in three clean rounds to win the Grand Prix of Ireland. Brown was the youngest rider ever to win that hallowed grand prix, a record he still holds.

In 1975, Brown and Pappy won the Cleveland Grand Prix and then, as the team's anchor, clinched the team gold medal for the U.S. at the Pan American Games in Mexico City. They ended the year with two more Nations Cup wins in New York and Toronto where they also won the puissance, clearing the wall at 7'1" to claim the win.

In 1976, Brown, 20, and Pappy were on the U.S.'s fourth-place team at the Montreal Olympic Games. Pappy bowed a tendon at the Games and sat out most of the following year, showing in just one class prior to indoors. He and Brown won six classes during indoors including the President's Cup at Washington. They anchored the Nations Cup teams in Washington, New York and Toronto, where all three Nations Cups wound up with jump-offs. Pappy went clean in all three jump-offs, leading the U.S. to wins at Washington and New York.



PHOTO © SPORTFOT



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