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# WEEKLY WIRE

WEEK 3 • JANUARY 22, 2025

CATCH UP WITH DOUG PAYNE

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MEET PALM BEACH EQUINE  
CLINIC'S DR. CHRIS ELLIOT

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BEHIND THE CAUSE:  
GREAT CHARITY CHALLENGE  
NON-PROFIT SPOTLIGHT ON  
RWB EQUESTRIAN



# Catching Up With DOUG PAYNE

**D**oug Payne, a respected equestrian and Olympic eventer, has recently been spotted spending more time in the show jumping rings at Wellington International. Known for his versatility and dedication to the sport, Payne has achieved success across disciplines, including representing the United States at the international level in eventing. With his analytical approach and strong horsemanship, Payne's focus on show jumping highlights his ability to excel in new challenges, further establishing him as a dynamic and accomplished athlete in the equestrian world.



## **Q** What first sparked your interest in riding?

**A** We were lucky enough to grow up with horses in New Jersey, about 10 minutes from Gladstone. My mom had a training business that primarily focused on dressage and eventing, so we basically grew up in Pony Club and came up through that system. My mom judged at the Rio and Hong Kong Olympics for eventing. We were incredibly fortunate to be exposed to a lot of highly qualified instructors through Pony Club. One of them was Sally Ike, who was right there and ran jumping for the team for quite a while. We had a whole group of people who were influential early on. It was a very diverse upbringing in that sense. Growing up, the deal was that we had one horse until we went to school. After that, we had to sell whatever horse we had and manage things on our own from that point forward.

I have a degree in mechanical engineering and initially thought I'd pursue something in that field while riding recreationally. After graduating, I attended RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology) in Rochester, NY, which ran a co-op program. Two of my co-ops were with a

forensic engineer, where I worked on accident reconstructions, and I absolutely loved it

To enter that profession, there were two main pathways: earn a PhD to build a resume strong enough to be admitted as an expert witness in court. I didn't want to stay in school that long. The second option was to go through the state police, join their investigative unit and eventually qualify to be admitted in court or branch off independently. That process involved three rounds of psychological testing, physical tests and other requirements.

Unfortunately, they delayed the academy's start date, so I moved to other opportunities and went back to riding.

## **Q** What inspired your transition to show jumping?

**A** I did my first national competition when I was 18, and I didn't do my fourth until I was around 29. It takes time to rebuild and develop a whole group of horses. You make the most of what you can with what comes through the door. My niche really became riding tricky horses. We had one that was a jumper prospect, but at the time, he was just doing crossrails because nobody

could stay on him. The owners sent him to us, and he became my first grand prix horse. That planted the seed for what we've been doing since then.. We've created a pathway to develop horses for top sport, trying to buy at least one weanling a year.

About six or seven years ago, we decided to focus solely on jumping-bred horses. We stuck with eventing until our current crop of event horses started phasing out. Now, the time has come to fully transition.

We've got a string of younger horses coming up, and everything is falling into place. Some people think we just flipped a switch, but it's actually been a long time in the making. I'd say it's been about seven years since we committed to this plan

Things have slowed down a bit, and we can focus purely on jumping horses now, which we really love. We have two kids, Hudson and Abigail, who are five and seven. We try to expose them to as much as possible. Life on the road can be pretty challenging in that way, so if we can slow things down a little, it's great. In the eventing calendar, you've got two five-star events you can do domestically, or you must travel abroad. Even then, a horse is only going to do two a year, and with the lead-up competitions, you're really locked into a set schedule based on what's available. It's not like show jumping, where you can go to a four-star at ten different places on a frequent basis. That kind of flexibility just isn't possible with event horses.

### **What stands out to you as the biggest differences compared to your experiences in eventing?**

The sheer number of people involved in show jumping is so much larger. From a business perspective, it's honestly a lot easier. We're very lucky to be based just north of Durham, NC, where there are about 12 colleges within an hour. That

Another one is Quintessence. He was sixth in the 1.50m last week. We bought him as a four-year-old, so he hasn't been with us as long as Quantum, but they're the same age. His retirement plan is pretty set—when the time comes, my wife Jess, will take over riding him. For sure, Quintessence is her horse for life.

### **Do you have advice for riders who are focused on one discipline but are interested in trying others?**

All of the best riders and most successful people I've met—whether in business, riding, or sports—became comfortable putting themselves in uncomfortable situations. You have to be honest with yourself and be willing to expose your



makes it easier for people to compete at a high level while managing a more restrictive schedule.

Eventing is far more time-consuming on a week-to-week basis. On the jumping side, it's wonderful because many riders have aspirations outside of the sport but can still be successful and compete at a high level.

### **Do you have a favorite horse you're working with right now?**

Quantum Leap. He's done five stars and was the USEF Five-Star Champion at Kentucky a couple of years ago. He has a home for life—he's like a third child to us.

### **What do you look for when looking for quality show jumping horses?**

We generally buy quite young, so we look for the best breeding possible to get tendencies and characteristics that could lead to success. A very good hind end is critical—you can improve the front end, but the hind end is much harder to improve. We also look for the most intelligent horses we can find. That's harder to evaluate, but the super-successful ones are sharp and adaptable. They can handle changing situations and learn quickly.

weaknesses in front of others to get better. If you always protect yourself and never show what you need to work on, it's very hard to improve meaningfully.

Don't be afraid to step out, make mistakes, and learn from them. Everyone makes mistakes, even the very best in the world. Michael Jordan, for example, held the record for the most missed shots for years, yet he's still considered one of the greatest players of all time. You have to take the shots to get better. Without a doubt, you'll miss a few, but over time, you'll continue to improve if you're willing to put yourself out there.



## Meet Double H Farm Grooms Award Winner: TAMILES PAZZIM

By Sarah Eakin for Wellington International

The bond between horse and groom can be a powerful thing. For Tamiles Pezzim, that was evident at 'Saturday Night Lights' when she and her charge, Esi Ali, made their night class debut. They came away with the blue ribbon at the Double H Farm Grooms Award after Egypt's Nayel Nassar steered the 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse gelding to victory.

"When you like the job, you are going to be emotional and nervous before you go to the ring. It doesn't matter if it's a big class or not," said Tamiles 'aka' Tammy. "You still get excited about going there. Everybody's there watching, and you want everything to go well."

To keep things on an even keel, Tammy tried not to change things up too much on Saturday. "I tried to keep everything the

same," she said. "Even though it's a big class and it's important. The horses feel the atmosphere and he—100 percent—felt it. He understands what's going on. It has to be an intelligent, sensitive horse to feel that; he is really smart."

When Tamiles arrived at Evergate Stables in New York, Ali was already there but fairly new to the barn. Since the other grooms already had horses designated to their care, Ali was available. Tammy remembers, "He was very special. He was always very quiet in the stable, but you could tell that he's very sharp."

From then on, their friendship grew into an exceptional understanding that is evident in their everyday routine. Tamiles leaves Ali loose in his stall when she goes in to carry out daily tasks. "When I groom him or go in the stable to do something

“  
***If you're in the right organization and you have a great environment, you want to do that little bit extra. When...everyone is working together towards the same goals, things just flow differently.***  
”



with him, I don't like to tie him up. For me, it's the same when you bring somebody into your house. You have to trust them, right? I'm in his house."

It is that level of trust that Tammy recognizes does not happen with every horse. She also looked after another Evergate star horse and ride of Harrie Smolders, Monaco. As with Ali, Monaco was also able to bond deeply with her.

"That's something that you have to create with them," she said. "Those kinds of horses, when they look at you, they look you in the eye. Few horses do that. They follow you everywhere, and they look you in the eye like a dog does."

Tammy's journey began by riding western horses in her native Brazil. From there, her brother—who was working with showjumpers in Europe with Nelson Pessoa back in 2007—arranged a plane ticket for her to come over and visit. She found the show jumping "very interesting," and it was not long before she had a full-time job in Belgium. What started out as an "I will go for a year or a year and a half and see how it is..." turned into a career that led her grooming at the 2012 Olympics in London for Jamal Rahimov and ended up stateside 15 years later.

"The entire team at Evergate is very nice. We are lucky to have such a good atmosphere!" she said.

After the 'Saturday Night Lights' win when Nayel was being interviewed about Ali he was happy to bring Tammy into the conversation. "This is Tammy's first Saturday Night Lights; Ali's kind of her horse," he said. "We're nothing without the caretakers of these horses. The entire team is proud of this win."

Being part of a team is what makes Tammy's job enjoyable. "We are all a team working together," she said. "If you're in the right organization and you have a great environment, you want to do that little bit extra. When you know that everyone is working together towards the same goals, things just flow differently."



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# Richard Vogel Orders a Double IN WEATHERTECH GRAND PRIX

“

**Vogel is among the top international athletes who attend WEF annually now, and he is grateful for an environment that not only provides a high level of competition but also continues to challenge him to improve.**

”

Exactly one year ago, Cydello claimed his first grand prix victory with Germany's Richard Vogel on the derby field at Wellington International, and the duo repeated history, taking the win again Sunday in the \$140,000 WeatherTech CSI3\* Grand Prix.

Out of a field of stellar combinations, some new and some incredibly seasoned, Vogel and Cydello were among 14 clear pairs over a track set by Olaf Petersen, Jr. Vogel was nearly last to go, with just

Jessica Mendoza (GBR) behind him aboard In The Air, but ultimately his jump-off strategy prevailed.

"Cydello is an amazing horse," Vogel said of the 11-year-old Hanoverian gelding (Cascadello x Forsyth FRH). "He's had some great success since we've had him. We thought 'let's try to repeat here. We're thrilled and mega happy that we succeeded.'"

Mimi Gochman (USA) had taken the lead early on and held it for some time with a time of 38.1 seconds before Vogel stepped in and pipped

her in 37.66. She ended up second with Inclen BH, owned by DG Sport Horse LLC. Cian O'Connor (IRL) claimed third aboard Bentley du Sury, owned by Karlswood Partners, on a time of 38.51 seconds.

Vogel knew where he could be quick around the short course, but it wasn't in the same spots that most riders tried to shave off time. "Some people did seven strides from [fence] one to two," he elaborated on his plan. "He has a big enough stride, but I still decided to shape the eight [strides] and jump in the right direction over number two. I might've not been the fastest from one to two but I think I made the time up in the rollback. I knew there [could be] eight strides to the last, but I decided to do the nine because I felt I was quick enough and luckily it paid off."

Cydello's progression is evidence that a circuit like WEF can be an excellent opportunity to grow a horse's confidence and step it up into the higher levels. Vogel used WEF 2024 as an upward ramp for the horse to jump more demanding tracks, and he's been jumping almost exclusively at the CSI5\*





level—and staying competitive—ever since.

“He got more experience,” Vogel said of how Cydello has developed over the past year. “When we had him here last year it was his seventh or eighth FEI show so he was fairly green at that level. But he loves the grass and throughout the year he saw some great arenas like Aachen and Barcelona, some really good results, got more mature, more experienced, and we’re lucky that we can win classes.”

Ranked number nine in the world, Vogel is among the top international athletes who attend WEF annually now, and he is grateful for an environment that not only provides a high level of competition but also continues to challenge him to improve.

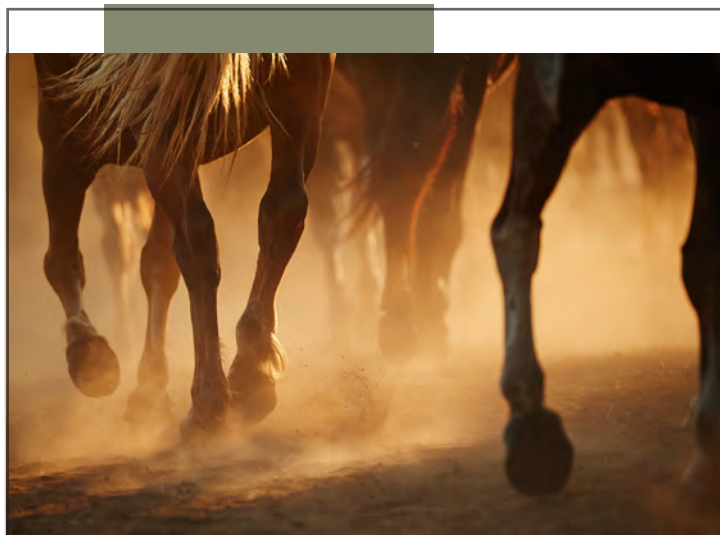
“I think that’s why we are all here,” he remarked of the level of competition at WEF. “Whether it’s a three-, four- or five-star week there’s always some of the best riders in the world here competing with their best horses. Even in this three-star Grand Prix we saw some Olympic combinations—not just riders but also horses—so that just shows you how tough the level here is. You have to measure yourself with better competitors in order to improve. It’s not easy here but that keeps us



working and improving and we really enjoy it.”

With his top horse, United Touch S, staying back home to prioritize the FEI World Cup Finals in April, Vogel has brought a less experienced but incredibly talented group of horses to hope for a similar trajectory that Cydello saw over the past year.

“I have greener and newer horses here that are supposed to step up,” he said of his string for WEF. “I find it hard to have a planned schedule throughout the whole circuit. It’s more about feeling when they’re ready for the next step and when is the time to keep them at the level or take a step down. We take it as we go.”



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# AROUND THE GROUNDS

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# CHAMPIONS GALLERY



**Questionable Encounter and Harper Clark were the Small/Medium Children's Pony Hunter champions from WEF 1**



**Perfect Products USHJA 3' Hunter champion Vincent, ridden by Owen Rodgers.**



**Lilly Herzog and Boca's Bolero collected champion honors in the Small Green Pony Hunter division.**



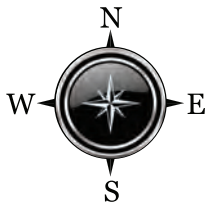
**Arctic Blue earned the Champion Equine Insurance Jumper Style Award presented by Laura Fetterman after Adrianna Forte piloted the First Blue-owned horse to win the \$10,000 NAL 1.35m Junior Jumper Classic.**



**Sandori, ridden by Geoffrey Hesslink in the 3'6" Green Hunters and owned by Meridan Farm, was awarded the Champion Equine Insurance Hunter Style Award by Laura Fetterman.**

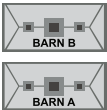


**Aventus carried Gail Maclean to a tri-color in the Older Crossrail Hunters and was champion of the FarmVet 3'3" Performance Hunter division with Geoffrey Hesslink.**



**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

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Serenella

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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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Bruno Delgrange Maître Sellier  
Barnwalkers  
IDA Development

**RING 6**

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THEAULT

**OASIS**

Charles Ancona  
La Enovesé Designs  
Devoucoux

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JODS  
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Gladiator Equine (WEF 5- 8)  
Shop Cou (WEF 9- 12)  
Equiline  
Turner & Co  
Running Fox  
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CWD  
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Parlanti  
Fratelli Fabbri  
EQUIS  
Vogel NYC  
Harry's Lemonade

**PONY ISLAND**

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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  
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**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



# RETURN TO GLORY for Mark Dorfman

Those watching Mark Dorfman in the ring aboard Can't Touch This HS would never have guessed the Long Island, NY, native took a 40-year break from the sport. Recently paired with his 10-year-old Holsteiner stallion, Dorfman has committed himself back to riding and is already shooting to the top, taking championship honors during WEF 2 in the LAURACEA 3'6" Amateur-Owner Hunter 36+ division.

"He's new to us; we got him in late August from California," Dorfman, who now resides in Atlanta, GA, said of Can't Touch This HS. "He's a wonderful horse; I

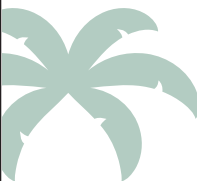
love riding him. This is only my fourth time doing this division on him. I used to ride a lot as a junior but I took 40 years off so I'm back for about the last two years. It's been a climb to get back here but it's been fun."

Training under Michael Britt-Leon, Dorfman was competing with his mare in the 3'3" Amateur-Owner division and was ready for the next step up. "We looked for a year and a half and we finally found [Can't Touch This HS] in August," he said of the search, which ultimately ended with Jason McArdle on the West Coast. "We looked long and hard for this horse. We wanted to find the

right one. Looks like he's it."

Dorfman was thrilled that all the pieces came together during WEF 2, as he still feels like every day is a learning opportunity as he gets back into the sport he loves so much.

"I'm still learning him," he said of the stage he's in with Can't Touch This HS. "He looks at everything; he puts his ears forward and sometimes can be a little spooky but he doesn't do anything. Today I was just feeling him out. My trainer rode him earlier in the week and got the spooks out so by this weekend he's been great. I was trying to make it as smooth and comfortable



# WEF STANDINGS



## MARTHA W. JOLICOEUR Leading Lady Rider Award

- Natalie Dean – 202 points**
- Erynn Ballard – 185 points**
- Charlotte Jacobs - 161 points**
- Caroline Mawhinney - 136 points**
- Jessica Mendoza – 132 points**

as we could. I'm learning to ride him well."

Dorfman's junior years were spent with Ralph and Holly Caristo, learning the ropes of hunters, equitation, and jumpers, and even placing in the top 10 at Medal Finals in 1978 as a career highlight.

Taking a break for his education, his family, and a career as a small animal veterinarian, he was pulled back into the horse world recently and dove in with both feet.

"I love horses," he continued about what brought him back. "They give me a lot of joy. I forgot how much I really enjoy it."

As for being named

champion in a highly competitive division early in the WEF season, Dorfman said "It hasn't really sunk in yet. I've been working hard and the ribbons and championships don't mean too much to me, but when you get recognized and have good rounds I think that's the important thing.

"[My goals are] to be the best I can on all my horses and to continue to have good rounds and get better," he said. "That's really it. This is what I want to do. And I'm older now so I don't know how much longer I'll be doing it but as long as I can I'm lucky and very blessed to be able to do this and have the means and the time."



## UNDER 25 GRAND PRIX SERIES

- Ariana Marnell USA – 93.5 pts**
- Emily Dehoff USA – 91 pts**
- Nina Mallevaey FRA – 89.5 pts**
- Tony Stormanns GER – 88 pts**
- Charlotte Babbitt USA – 83 pts**



## 1.50M CHAMPIONSHIP JUMPER SERIES

- Cian O'Connor IRL – 92 pts**
- Luis Fernando Larrazabal VEN – 88 pts**
- Peter Lutz USA – 79 pts**
- Charlotte Jacobs USA – 63 pts**
- Tom Wachman IRL – 54 pts**



“We are here to protect the horses; by protecting the horses, we also protect the sport.”

~ Dr. Elliot

# BEYOND THE SHOW RING:

## Meet Palm Beach Equine Clinic’s Dr. Christopher Elliott

Dr. Christopher Elliott has established an impressive resumé as an equine veterinarian. From graduating with first-class honors from the Queensland School of Veterinary Science in 2007 to becoming board-certified in Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, his passion for equine wellness knows no bounds.

Currently residing as a permanent veterinarian at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic and standing as the Veterinary Services Manager for the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) at Wellington International, the Australian native compliments the embrace of horse sport of all levels and disciplines within the Wellington equestrian community.

When asked how he found his path to equine veterinary studies, Dr. Elliott

responded, “Like most guys, I had illusions of grandeur that I was going to be playing cricket or rugby for Australia. As I got older, I decided I needed to knuckle down on my studies and veterinary medicine made sense. Since I was about 15, there was nothing else I could possibly imagine I wanted to do. My background in horses from my father’s side and my love of animals from my mother’s side led me to veterinary medicine as the perfect career and lifestyle choice for me.”

In the midst of traveling the world as an FEI vet—Dr. Elliott made his first visit to Wellington’s own Palm Beach Equine Clinic in 2012. He stepped on the grounds during the height of the busy winter season and was captivated.

“My first time at Palm Beach Equine Clinic was a fantastic learning experience and it opened my eyes to the opportunities that working in America could offer,” explained Dr. Elliott. “I had never seen anything like the concentration of elite-level horses and high-class equestrian facilities like in Wellington before. I was keen to return.”

Dr. Elliott has worked three Olympics to date, including 2024’s Paris Games. It was his time spent at the 2016 Rio Olympic Paralympics, however, that was particularly impactful. It was there that he met his now-wife and American dressage rider Kjresten Lance. After pursuing their careers around the globe, she and Dr. Elliott decided to make Wellington their

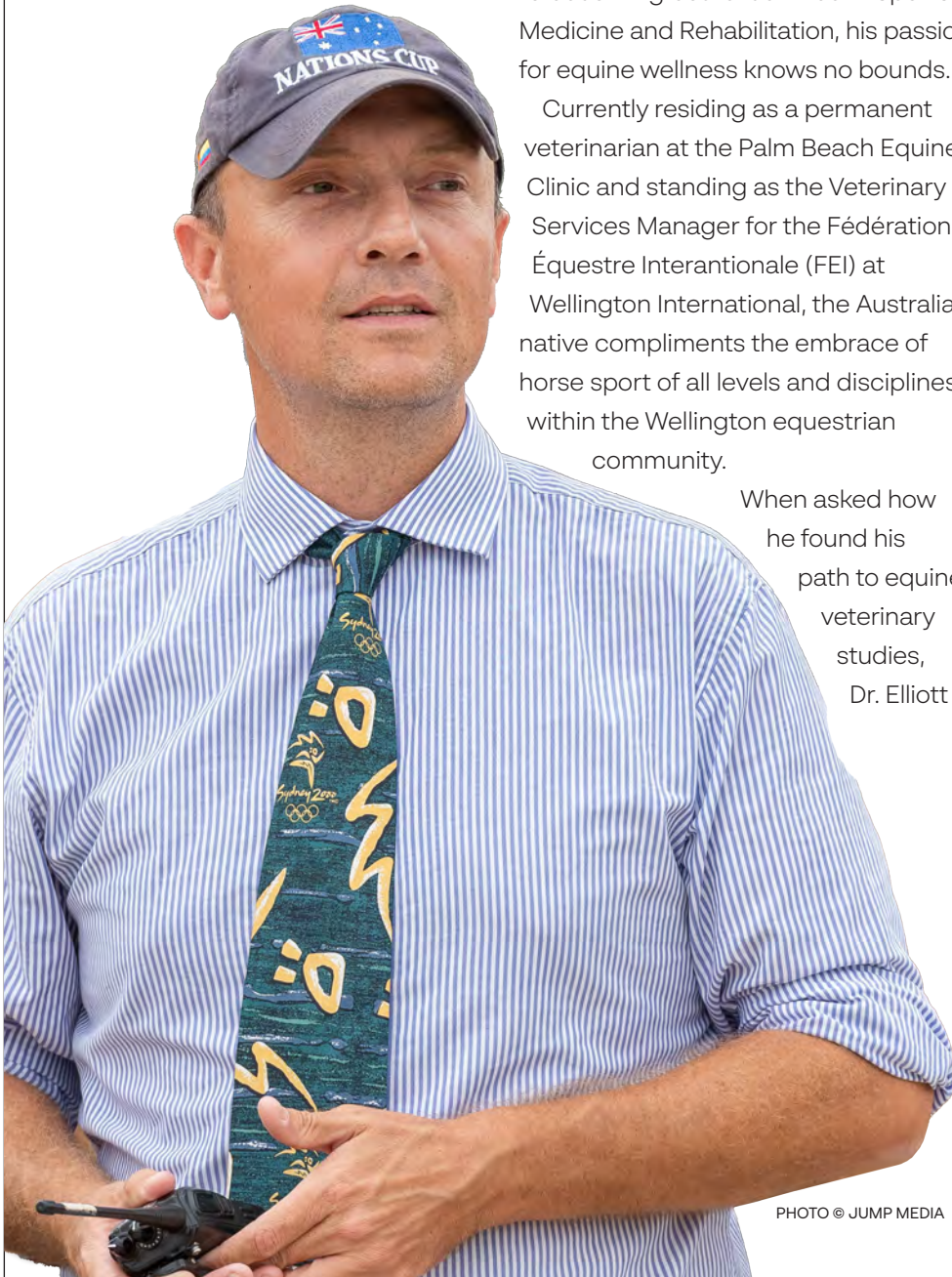


PHOTO © JUMP MEDIA



permanent residence in 2022.

Coming full circle, 10 years after his initial visit in 2012, Dr. Elliott became a part of the Palm Beach Equine Clinic team and began his role as the Veterinary Services Manager for Wellington International's Winter Equestrian and Adequan® Global Dressage Festivals (WEF and AGDF) at the start of the 2023 season.

"My role as the veterinary services manager is to be that mix between the clinical veterinarians and the regulatory veterinarians," said Dr. Elliott. "You are in the middle. As the veterinary services manager, the name suggests you manage all aspects of the veterinary services. Our number-one priority, whether it be the clinical side or the regulatory side of FEI is horse welfare. We as veterinarians need to uphold the rules, the ethics, and the morals to support these horses through their competitive career, but making sure that their health and welfare comes first."

Dr. Elliott strives to ensure the welfare of every animal in the community, not only through the enactment of his own knowledge but also by leading groups of newer and aspiring veterinarians through the clinical and competitive sides of the job.

"Currently at our clinic, we have American students, Danish students, Australian students, and Irish students all learning from us," said Dr. Elliott. "The number one thing that young vets need to learn is the basics. You've got to build the basics before you can get complicated and follow the advice of those senior veterinarians that have come before you. Follow in their footsteps and learn from them."

Whether it's show jumping or dressage, Dr. Elliott can easily be found ringside at AGDF's 'Friday Night Stars' and WEF's 'Saturday Night Lights', usually with a student learning by his side. Outside of his ringside responsibilities, Dr. Elliott can be found coordinating weekly FEI

arrival exams and horse inspections while maintaining his regular clinical work as a board certified specialist in equine sports medicine and rehabilitation, whilst still finding time to seek out a few travel adventures with Kjersten.

Most of Dr. Elliott's work as a Sports Medicine specialist revolves around orthopedic cases and trying to help horses either prevent, overcome or recuperate from injuries. After working in over 20 countries, Dr. Elliott has come to understand the equestrian sport on a global scale and how it can be shaped to consistently prioritize the health of the horse.

"Regardless of the competition level, each combination of horse and rider has specific aspirations, and it gives me great satisfaction to help achieve those goals," concluded Dr. Elliott. "Whether it be in the pony ring, at the grand prix level, or Olympic level, they all pose their unique challenges and are equally enjoyable."





# Tony Stormann's Realizes a Dream IN PALM BEACH EQUINE CLINIC GRAND PRIX



PHOTOS © ASHLEY NEUHOF

From the time he was 11, Tony Stormann would sit ringside at WEF and dream about competing in the International Arena. During 'Saturday Night Lights' of WEF 2, the 17-year-old rider for Germany made that dream come true in winning fashion in the \$50,000 Palm Beach Equine Clinic Grand Prix riding Donjon d'Asschaut from the strongest national grand prix field ever seen at Wellington International.

"This means a lot to me because I've spent nearly every winter here since I was 11 years old," said Stormann after beating out the likes of reigning Olympic Champion Christian Kukuk, world no. 6 Mclain Ward (USA), and Olympic team gold medalist Harry Charles (GBR). "Now I'm here winning the classes I used to watch with my friends. It hasn't quite set in yet, but it's really special. "It's awesome to have this

crowd of spectators who are new to horses come and watch," continued Stormann of the packed house at Wellington International on Saturday night. "You have this every week and it's quite impressive and makes it a little more exciting." From an opening round rich with talent and set by course designer Ana Catalina "Catsy" Cruz Harris (MEX), 12 combinations jumped clear to advance to the

all-deciding jump-off. With four to jump behind him, Stormmanns gave it everything he had to stop the clock at 37.195 seconds.

"The course was very difficult. There were a lot of jumps in the first round that I had to take a lot of care of," said the young rider who holds two gold medals from the FEI Junior European Championships. "In the jump-off, it was possible for me to keep getting quicker

and quicker. I was a bit late on my decision to do six strides after the double because I heard the crowd and thought I had it down. Then I heard them scream 'go!', but otherwise I don't see where I could have done much better."

Both Kukuk—winner of the 2024 Rolex Grand Prix at WEF—and Irish Olympian Bertram Allen took their best shots but couldn't catch Stormmanns. The Olympic

champion raced Just Be Gentle over the final timers in 37.337 seconds to take runner-up. Allen piloted Qonquest de Rigo to third in 37.656 seconds.

Stormmanns has had the ride on Donjon d'Asschaut, a 12-year-old Selle Français gelding (Vigo Cece x Nonstop) owned by HS Sportpferde GmbH, for only a year but has already set and accomplished big goals. "I jumped my first big classes

on him; 1.50m, two-star grand prix and we've gotten to know each other very well. We won the [Junior] German Championships this fall and now we're here."

When asked about the horse's character, Stormmanns replied, "You could compare him to an old grandpa; he's very kind, very sweet, never takes anything personally and he'll always like you no matter what mistakes you make."

Stormmanns is helped on the ground by Ireland's Michael Duffy and his mother and decorated international show jumping rider in her own right, Helena Stormmanns.

"My plan over the first course was to stick to whatever mom said," laughed Tony. "I stuck to the numbers and didn't try to concentrate on the time. In the jump-off, [the plan] was to not rush jump number one, but make sure to rush everything else."

Stormmanns ended a banner day after also finishing second in the BrainJuice Under 25 Welcome earlier in the day. His goal for the season is to now win a U25 grand prix in Wellington.



# Nina Mallevaey Makes the Most OF FINAL U25 SEASON

Among an extremely impressive roster of young riders, it was Nina Mallevaey (FRA) who topped the week's premiere BrainJuice Under 25 Grand Prix on the derby field.

Many of the U25 athletes in Wellington are already jumping the highest levels, Mallevaey herself included, but the developing riders appreciate having the opportunity to step into their own division separate from the senior FEI division

for the week. Mallevaey was one of 12 to navigate the course, designed by Olaf Petersen, Jr., fault free with My Clementine, owned by the Rein Family, and she returned to take the win over the short course.

"It means a lot," Mallevaey said of her victory Sunday. "It's my last U25 year so I really want to enjoy the circuit at WEF. I hope to qualify for the final so [today] is going to give me





some points. I'm really happy. It's the beginning of the season and the Rein family is here watching so I'm really happy."

In her third season at Wellington International, Mallevaey has enjoyed what the U25 division has taught her, hoping to squeeze as much out of her final year as she can.

"It's the second year I've done the U25 here, and it's super nice," she continued. "We compete with really good riders even in the U25. Some of them already do the top events. They have nice horses, and it's 1.45m so it's big enough. It's a good challenging circuit."

Mallevaey is still developing her partnership with My Clementine, a 10-year-old Irish Sport Horse mare (OBOS Quality 004 x Kashmir van Schuttershof), but they're progressing into new heights together. The mare recently jumped and placed in her first CSI3\* Grand Prix and even won a CSI5\* class in the fall.

"She's super fun to ride," she said of My Clementine. "She's super careful and competitive, always wants to do well. She loves to go fast so I always enjoy the jump-off with her."

With support from the Rein family, Mallevaey is hoping to accomplish big things this season, especially considering she recently took over the ride aboard Canadian Erynn Ballard's Olympic mount Nikka VD Bisschop, a mare she's begun to campaign lightly in Wellington.

"I would like to try to win the big stuff, try to win a five-star and maybe start to think about championships," Mallevaey said of her goals heading into this season. "I would really like to do some Nations Cups and to try to do the European Championships."

With eyes on more BrainJuice U25 competition leading up to the final, which takes place Sunday of WEF 10, Mallevaey also plans to compete in the CSI5\* weeks, beginning with WEF 5 aboard *Dynastie de Beaufour*.

Rounding out the top three in the BrainJuice U25 Grand Prix, Ireland's Tim Brennan took second with *Diadema Della Caccia* and Ariana Marnell rounded out the top three for the U.S. After the top placing with *Jikke-Cara*, Marnell currently leads the BrainJuice U25 Grand Prix Series standings at WEF.

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# Behind the Cause: Great Charity Challenge Partner SPOTLIGHT ON RWB EQUESTRIAN

**RWB** Equestrian grew from a girl's love of horse and began as a father-daughter bonding activity. It has blossomed into a mission-driven equestrian program with a purpose. RWB Equestrian, founded by Robert W. Burrage and guided by the professional expertise of Gianluca Caron, represents "excellence through transparency" and a commitment to creating a positive impact both in and out of the arena.

Rooted in the love for horses and family, RWB Equestrian has evolved into more than just a training ground for young riders Adrianna, Aiden, Khloe and Katie. It has become a platform for giving back. After establishing their mission that is best embodied in the slogan, "Turning Horses into Hope," they channel the proceeds from horse sales, winnings and events directly to charities that uplift Florida communities in need.





RWB Equestrian is a partner and supporter of the Great Charity Challenge at Wellington International as well as an influential supporter of non-profit organizations Elev8 Hope and Mrs. Rina's House of Blessings. Their impact has been transformative to say the least.

By supporting these organizations' mission to empower struggling families and inspire youth, RWB Equestrian has furthered their work to help support through food, education, housing and much more.

RWB Equestrian continues to thrive, producing top-tier horses in the USA and Europe under the guidance of Gemma Paternoster, while elevating awareness for Elev8 Hope and other impactful causes including the Great Charity Challenge. Their journey from a family passion to a philanthropic mission reflects a belief in using the equestrian world to drive meaningful change.

Join RWB in "Riding with a Purpose" and turn every stride into hope for those who need it most.

Learn more about RWB Equestrian, who they are and the impact they make at [www.rwbequestrian.com](http://www.rwbequestrian.com).



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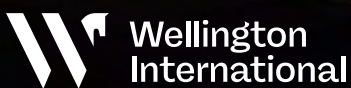
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