



For Immediate Release

Houston Dressage Society Hosts Another Outstanding USDF Region 9 Championship Show

Houston, Texas - (Oct. 28, 2016) - If regional dressage championships are successful when amateurs, kids and pros shine in their Training Level to Grand Prix rides, then the Region 9 Great American Insurance Group/United States Dressage Federation Dressage Championships and Southwest Dressage Championships and HDS Autumn Classic was a huge success. Hosted by the Houston Dressage Society (HDS), the Great American Insurance Group (GAIG)/USDF Region 9 Championships and Southwest Dressage Championships (SWDC) were held at the Great Southwest Equestrian Center in Katy, Texas, Oct. 6-9.

Isabel Gregory, a high school senior from Lake Highlands, Texas, rocked it when she not only placed first in every Junior/Young



Isabel Gregory and Rock Star earned FEI Prix St. Georges scores higher than competitors in some PSG Open and AA classes. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.

Rider class in which she rode 16-year-old Oldenburg mare Rock Star (Rubinstein I-Lorance), she often bested the scores of the professionals and adult amateurs (AA) in the same class. On Oct. 6, she and Rock Star claimed the blue ribbon in the FEI Prix St. Georges (PSG) with a 65.00 percent, topping the scores of the Open and AA PSG classes by more than five and a half percentage points. On Oct. 7, she upped the ante by scoring a 69.386 percent in the PSG in the SDWDC class, and on Oct. 8, she again notched a first place win with a 66.316 percent in the GAIG PSG. On Oct. 9, they finished with an amazing trifecta of an 85 percent in the USDF Dressage Equitation 14-18 Semi-Final Medal class, a 67.944 percent in the SWDC Fourth Level Test 3 class and a 73.167 percent in GAIG Fourth Level Test 3 class.

"Isabel has been riding with me for five to six years," said her trainer Yvonne Kusserow of Rocking M Stables in Dallas, Texas. "She has a very good base. She is very fair to the horse and she listens to what I am saying. She is a good student in that, even if she is very frustrated, I wouldn't know. You can really work with someone like that."

Kusserow is a licensed "Pferdewirtschaftsmeisterin," one of the few Federation Equestrian National certified trainers in Germany and America. While at the show, she was presented the eighth annual USDF Region 9 Teaching Excellence Award from The Dressage Foundation in which she will receive a \$5,000 grant. The grant is for demonstrating

adherence to sound dressage principles and the ability to communicate these principles so that students develop themselves and their horses in a logical, progressive and humane way up through the levels.

"I am thrilled," she said. "We are trying to figure out now what the whole region can do to benefit from the money - maybe a clinic. We don't know yet."

Another product of the active HDS youth program is Andrew Phillips, now the head trainer at Shoofly Farm in Cypress, Texas. He came up through the ranks in the HDS shows and rode in his first recognized show as a 12-year-old.

"I grew up in Houston and went to my first recognized show at the Great Southwest Equestrian Center," he said, adding that his experience with the HDS has come full-circle. "Now, I'm in my first year as head trainer at Shoofly and doing well. The show was a great way to cap off my year. It couldn't have gone better."



Yvonne Kusserow rode Rusty 324 in the SWDC FEI Intermediaire I-Open, the GAIG FEI Prix St. Georges-Open and the GAIG FEI Intermediaire I-Open. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.

In fact, Phillips had a great show. On Oct. 6, he and Kimberly Rathmann's Valentino, a 14-year-old KWPN gelding (OO Seven-Nilzefonda), earned a 70.526 percent for the blue ribbon in the SWDC Intermediaire I Open and on Oct. 8, the pair earned another first place in the GAIG FEI Prix St. Georges Open with a 70.132 percent. On Oct. 9, they again claimed the blue with a 68.816 percent in the GAIG Intermediaire I Open. Phillips also notched a first place finish on Youke of High Meadow Farm,



Andrew Phillips and Valentino notched three blue-ribbon finishes at the show. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.

year and qualified for [the U.S. Dressage Finals in] Kentucky, and did the same this year at Grand Prix."

Raisbeck and Bodi rode in four Grand Prix tests over the four days of the show, which she said sounds like a lot, but he settled more with each ride now that he understands that the show ground is an OK place to be. In fact, as the competition continued, their Grand Prix scores rose steadily from a 60.10 percent to a 62.50 percent and a 64.10 percent, and then a final score of 62.5650 percent to net two Grand Prix blue ribbons in

Rathmann's 9-year-old Friesian gelding (Anton 343-Geartsje Fan't Feidfjild), in the Prix St. George-Open, and two first place finishes in Third Level Test 3 on Empire, a 7-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding (Jazz-Kadette) also owned by Rathmann.

Another professional, Christy Raisbeck, had an outstanding show on Herslev Mark's Mister B, also known as "Bodi," a 13-year-old Danish Warmblood gelding (Michellino-Herslev Mark's Candy) owned by her client, Gon Stevens. Raisbeck's Freestyle Farm is just 20 min away from the Great Southwest Equestrian Center in Fulshear, Texas. Bodi is the third horse she has brought up to Grand Prix.

"We bought him four years ago from Sharon McCusker for Gon to ride," she said. "Two years ago, Gon gave me the ride on him to focus on training him to Grand Prix. We showed I-2 last

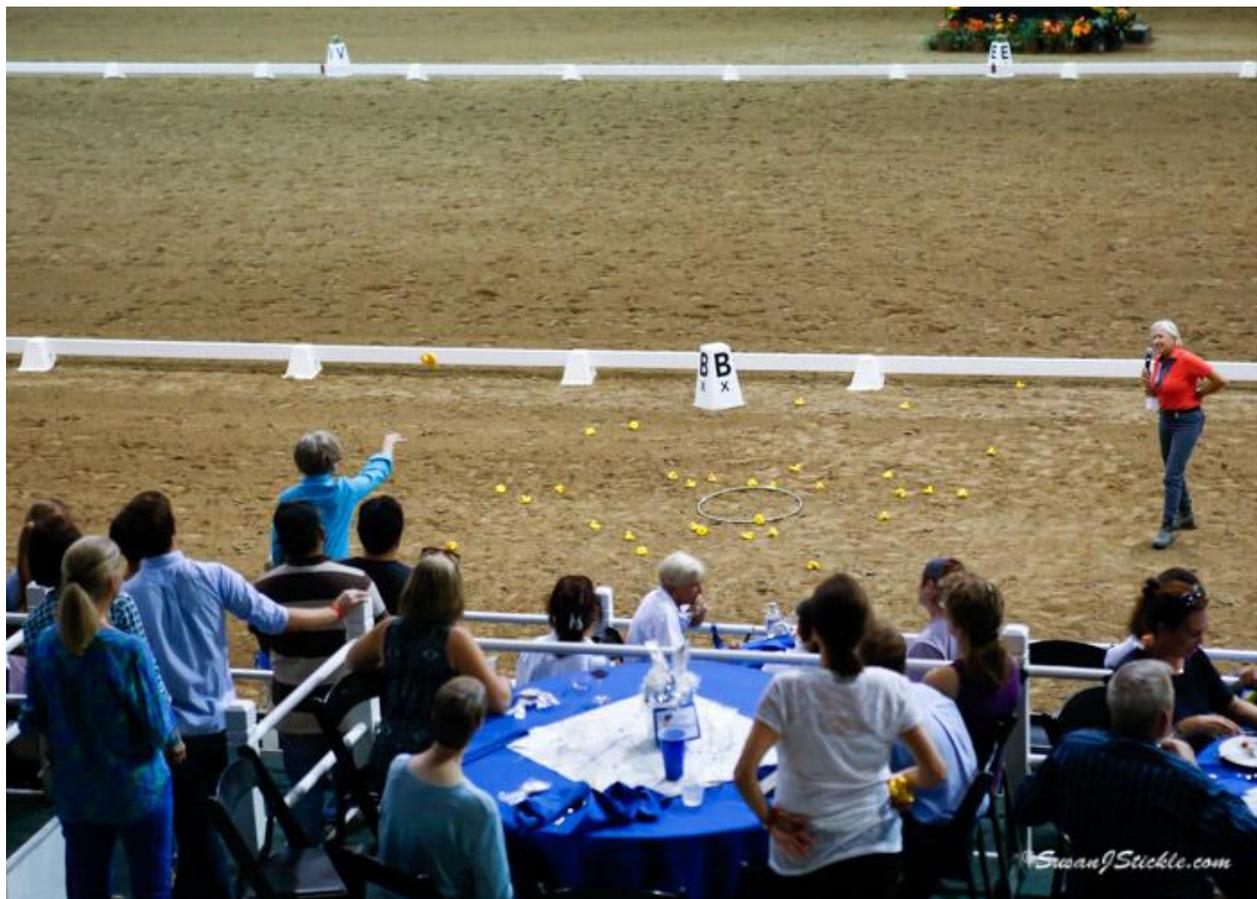
the Open classes in the HDS Autumn Classic, one Reserve Championship in the GAIG/USDF Region 9 Grand Prix, and one fourth place in the Southwest Dressage Championships.

"Bodi has a super talent for piaffe and passage," she said. "He has big expressive changes and nice pirouettes, which are only hindered by me getting ahead of myself in the test. My hopes for the future are for Bodi to get stronger and more confident, and for me to settle down to ride the test more methodically at the show like I do at home!"

Raisbeck had nothing but praise for the show and the Houston Dressage Society. The event not only featured four full days of competition, but a Saturday night gala with a fun "Duck Toss" to raise money for the youth riders, a barn basket silent auction, a scavenger hunt and the camaraderie of friends.



Christy Raisbeck and Herslev Mark's Mister B improved their Grand Prix scores as the competition progressed. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.



The "Duck Toss" was an entertaining way to raise funds for the HDS Youth program during the Saturday night gala. Photo by Susan J. Stickle.

"HDS does an amazing job organizing the shows," Raisbeck said. "Leslie Rohrer is the HDS president and show chair, and she and her super army of volunteers work tirelessly to pull off great shows all year, culminating in the championships. Judge Sandy Hotz told me that the judges love to come to the shows here, and think Great Southwest is a top-notch facility."

To see the show results, go to showsecretary.com/rs.asp?Show_ID=605. To learn more about the Houston Dressage Society, go to houstondressagesociety.org, and like them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HoustonDressageSociety.



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