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New Champions Are Crowned and a Queen is Bid Farewell on the Third Day of Great American/USDF Region 7 & California Dressage Society Championship Show

By Yellow Horse Marketing for the California Dressage Society

As the third day of championship dressage competition concluded at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center in Burbank, Cal., a new crop of champions proudly wore new tricolor sashes while a "grand dame" of the international Grand Prix arena was honored during evening festivities at the 47th Annual California Dressage Society Championship Show, held in conjunction with the Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 7 Dressage Championships, September 25 - 28, 2014.

Future stars of dressage sport were on display as the five and six-year-old divisions of the CDS Young Horse Futurity concluded today after two rounds of intense competition. The five-year-old KWPN gelding Encore (Jazz x Aloha by Sir Sinclair, bred by Lisa Dickman) had two solid performances at First Level to earn a combined average score of 72.544% and the Open Futurity title for owner/rider Amy Miller of Fullerton, Cal. The elegant U.S.-bred gelding scored the win after placing fourth in the country at this summer's Markel/USEF National Young Horse Dressage Championships in Illinois. "I was so pleased with him. He comes out so consistent every day, and always gives 110%," said Miller. "He's very talented but what's even more special is his personality. I can take him anywhere and do anything. There's never a ride where I don't feel like he's there for me." In the Adult Amateur division of the Futurity, last year's four-year-old winners Kate Mullen and Elnieta (Dutch Warmblood mare, Dayano x Silnieta by Silvano, owned by Kelly Casey) led from start to finish across both tests for a combined score of 70.722% to be crowned champions in the five-year-old division.

In the six-year-old division, both a son and daughter of the sensational High Performance Grand Prix mare Breanna claimed the Open and Adult Amateur titles. First the judges were impressed with Quincy, Jennifer Mason's Oldenburg gelding (Quaterback x Breanna by Brentano, bred in California by Mason), awarding him the highest overall average of 73.335% for two Second Level tests under rider Nicholia Clarke of Wildomar, Cal. Also victorious was his half-sister Finesse (2008 Oldenburg mare, Festrausch x Breanna by Brentano, bred in California by Mason) on an average score of 69.696%. "She's got great bloodlines there, but she's also so consistent and such a pleasure to work with," said owner/rider Lisa Bradley of Aliso Viejo. "She's a wonderful ride, and I'm so excited about her future."



Amy Miller & U.S.-bred Encore won the CDS Young Horse Futurity for Five-Year-Olds. Photo: Jennifer M. Keeler

Great American Insurance Group/USDF Region 7 Championships were presented in a multitude of divisions, including several in the Junior/Young Rider ranks. At Training Level, Paige Dobbie of Moorpark impressed the judges to earn a winning score of 73.300% with her Dutch gelding Denali. Shelby Rocereto of Livermore rode her own Dutch mare Chapeau to the winner's circle on a score of 69.940% in the Second Level Junior/Young Rider division, while Paris Richman of Monte Nido, Cal. rode Carol Fatuzzo's Dutch gelding Talent to claim the JR/YR Fourth Level Championship (67.688%). Brianna Relucio of San Ramon, Cal. had a lovely test with her Hanoverian gelding Wynsum to win the Junior Team Test Championship on a score of 68.581%, while Jamie Pestana (Livermore, Cal.) rode her longtime partner Winzalot in the JR/YR Intermediate I Championship with a winning score of 70.855%.

Topping the field of Adult Amateurs at First Level was Sarah Keever of Altadena, Cal., who earned a winning score of 67.177% with her own Hanoverian gelding Royal Glory. In the Open Third Level Championship, U.S. Olympic Team member Jan Ebeling of Moorpark, Cal. presented a promising new star for owner Anne Romney as he rode the six-year-old Oldenburg gelding Santo Domingo to top a huge field of 28 entries on a score of 73.141%, while the Adult Amateur division at this level was topped by Nancy Szakacs, who followed up her freestyle win on Thursday with another championship victory aboard her own Wesfalen gelding Rudi Regali on a score of 71.218%. In the FEI divisions, topping the leader board in the Open Prix St. Georges Championship was Leslie Webb of Bakersfield, who piloted Harmony Sporthorses' Dutch Warmblood mare Harmony's Armani to their second title in as many days on a winning score of 74.211%. Anne Seemann (Livermore, Cal.) rode her Dutch gelding Veneciano to earn the Adult Amateur Prix St. Georges Regional Championship (67.697%), while Kelly Krambs of Paso Robles rode her Danish gelding Rampart to the win at the Adult Amateur Grand Prix level with a score of 61.950%. Kimberly McGrath of Yuciapa, Cal. and her Grand Prix partner Winslow (owned by Arianthi Feronato) added another trophy to their display case by winning the Region 7 Grand Prix Open Championship with a score of 67.350%.

In addition to Regional Championships, CDS Horse of the Year titles were awarded at First, Second and Fourth Levels, as well as Intermediaire I. In the Open First Level division, Hilda Gurney expertly piloted her lovely young Oldenburg gelding Lotta Silver to a narrow victory over a large field of competitors to take the McLeod Perpetual Trophy home to Moorpark with an overall combined score of 74.820%. In Open Second Level Horse of the Year, an average score of 73.117% earned Quincy and Nicholia Clarke their second victory of the day and the Bengt Lungquist Memorial Trophy for owner Jennifer Mason. Meanwhile, Jan Ebeling earned a second straight win for the day, this time with the eight-year-old Hanoverian gelding Bakari (owned by Anne Romney) to claim the Pal Kemery Perpetual Trophy for Open Fourth Level Horse of the Year on a score of 72.315%. In the large Open Intermediaire I Horse of the Year division, the talented Hanoverian gelding Winzalot continued to live up to his name with a unanimous win under both judges for owner/rider Jamie Pestana with a score of 75.132%, while the Adult Amateur division and T.D.I. Systems Perpetual Trophy was won with a score of 69.671% by Z, a Dutch Warmblood gelding owned and ridden by Alix Curry of Pescadero, Cal.

An impressive group of juniors and young riders also sought to earn CDS Horse of the Year awards. At First Level, Shelby Rocereto of Livermore topped the field riding her own Dutch mare Chapeau to an impressive two-test average score of 73.510%. FEI Young Rider veteran Jaclyn Pepper (Santa Rosa, CA) and her Dutch Warmblood gelding Taboo concluded their final season in the Young Rider division with a repeat win in the CDS Junior/Young Rider Prix St. Georges Horse of the Year Championship (68.289%). Talented juniors also showed off their riding skills in two divisions of the CDS Dressage Seat Equitation Challenge: for riders 13 and under, Christian Simonson of Ventura partnered with the Lusitano gelding

Zambo FRC for the win with 74.000%, while Kelsea Nataren of Chino Hills, Cal. rode her Welsh gelding ME Imagine to top the 14 - 21 division on a score of 75.000%.

Additional CDS Championships were awarded in the Fourth Level and Grand Prix Freestyle divisions as part of afternoon and evening entertainment. Janelle Dunn (Turlock, Cal.) already won the Great American/USDF Region 7 Fourth Level Freestyle Championship on Thursday and earned another victory today in the CDS Fourth Level Freestyle Horse of the Year class with her Oldenburg gelding Rainier on 69.917%. Michelle Reilly of Encinitas, Cal. earned her first international Grand Prix win in the spring aboard Sharon Roberts' charismatic Dutch gelding Umeeko, and tonight the pair added another victory to their resume by winning the CDS Horse of the Year Grand Prix Freestyle and the Lt. Col Hans Moeller Trophy on a score of 72.563% for a crowd-pleasing and challenging performance.

But the highlight of the evening was an emotional career celebration for the superstar Grand Prix mare Rafalca. Over seven years of competing at the international Grand Prix level with Jan Ebeling, the charismatic mare owned by Ann Romney, Beth Meyer, and Amy Ebeling garnered headlines in mainstream press and made "dressage" a household word as part of the 2012 United States Olympic Team. Devoted fans packed the stands for one last chance to Rafalca as she entered the arena for a very special encore of her wildly-popular musical freestyle. From the moment the familiar Usher-themed music started, fans were cheering and by the end of the performance were on their feet. "Being from the West Coast we wanted to make sure that CDS members got to see her on her very last outing," said Ebeling of Rafalca, who looked fit and fresh in her final public appearance. "It was an enthusiastic crowd and she loved every minute of it."

Championship competition concludes on Sunday with final divisions of Regional and CDS Championships. Complete daily results, schedules, and additional competition information about the California Dressage Society Championship Show is available on the CDS website, www.california-dressage.org.

The California Dressage Society, formed in 1967, is a non-profit organization devoted to furthering interest in dressage. It is one of the largest dressage organizations in the nation with more than 4,000 individual members in its 36 Chapters and a rich history of equestrian sport on the West Coast.